

The Seven Secrets of Mr. Magpie

a seven part story by Corrupting Power (<http://www.patreon.com/CorruptingPower>)

Part One – Sorrow

Sunday mornings were usually the time I hated the most, but this particular Sunday morning was even worse than normal, because I was out in my driveway, trying to clean puke out of my car. I'd left it in the driveway for the night. My house was up in the high hills of San Jose, and while that meant the house was worth quite a bit of money, it was the only damn asset I had in the world, beyond the car.

My 2014 Honda Civic was the thing I'd bought with the bonus I'd gotten from Arcadia Games after we'd shipped *Blackweather Bastards*, a third-person action-adventure game that had gone on to sell three million copies. A month after we'd shipped it, they'd given us all large bonuses. Five months after that, they'd laid every single fucking one of us off, claiming the sequel was going to be done by a team in the Philippines, and now that we'd put the basic formula together, we were 'redundant.'

I'd been a 3D modeler, rigger and animator for Arcadia Games, but 2014 was the year when everything crashed, and a dozen videogame studios in the Bay area went tits up, and the market for talent was over saturated and people were hiring talent for pennies on the dollar. So despite the fact that I was incredibly talented and had one of the best portfolios in the business, there was shit all for me to do, because no one wanted my services at a rate that would let me continue to get by, or they wanted me to move half way across the country, to make half of what I'd been making before.

So to make ends meet, I'd taken up driving for Uber, using my Honda Civic as the only asset I had to make money. I was mostly driving the weekend shift, hauling mindless twenty-somethings up to the city, or downtown, then back home again when they're shitfaced beyond what anyone can tolerate. There's surge pricing that's supposed to make up for it, but then, from time to time, things would go sideways and I'd get stuck holding the bag.

Last night, the last group of passengers I'd picked up had been incredibly dodgy, but the surge pricing had been high, and I hoped I could get them home fast enough that it wasn't going to go south. I couldn't have been more wrong, because half way through the forty-minute drive, one of them had blown chunks all over my back seat, and because they'd had the window down and didn't understand how airflow worked, it had blasted all over the back window and even gotten into my speaker grills. It was fucking horrible.

That wasn't even the worst of it.

"Mr. Magpie!" the voice of my neighbor, Mrs. Choi, said to me, walking from her driveway to mine. There was a large moving truck parked in her driveway, and men were heading into her house. "Mr. Magpie, what so ever are you doing to your car?"

My name's Rafael Corvis. My family is from some combination of Italy, Turkey, Greece and any other Mediterranean country you can think of, which means I have dark enough skin for people to think I'm Persian. My last name means crow, which means my lovely old neighbor Mrs. Choi calls me...

"Mr. Magpie!" she said, stepping over to look into my car, shaking her head. "What has happened here?"

"Some kids puked all over the back of my car last night while I was driving for Uber, Mrs. Choi," I sighed.

"Does not this Uber company pay you for this sort of thing?" she said. Mrs. Choi was an Asian woman in what had to be her seventies or eighties. She was well dressed, but had a slight hunch to her, although she refused to use a cane, even though she probably needed it. She also had the thickest glasses I'd ever seen on a real person before. "It is a horrible business you are part of. I know it is not your fault. You are simply unlucky, Mr. Magpie."

"Uber bills the passengers for some of it, but they're only billed like a hundred bucks, and it costs at least a couple hundred to get a good detailing job, and it's money out of my pocket, so instead

I'm here on a Sunday morning cleaning all the shit out of my car.”

“You do not deserve this horrible mistreatment, Mr. Magpie.” She leaned her head into the backseat of my car, and suddenly reeled her head back in horror. “How much have these children been drinking? It reeks of hooch and death in there. These children are awful people.”

“You don't know the half of it, Mrs. Choi,” I said with a sigh.

“Tell me, Mr. Magpie. You must tell me.”

I clenched my hand into a fist around the sponge, crushing it in my hand before forcibly letting out a deep breath. I didn't want to tell her, I didn't want her to know how awful people can be when they're drunk, but for some reason, I felt compelled to tell her. “The fucking punk called me a... he called me a sand n-word.”

Mrs. Choi looked aghast, raising a hand to her mouth. “This is unacceptable.”

I glanced back over my shoulder, seeing the men starting to carry things out of her house, loading them onto the truck. “Mrs. Choi, I would've helped you pack things up,” I told her. “You should've told me you were leaving. Decided you just didn't want to stay up here after Mr. Choi died last year?”

She waved a hand in my direction. “When he passed, there was nothing left for me here, so I am moving in with my granddaughter down south. Too many ghosts walking these hills for my liking. I know the ghosts like you, Mr. Magpie, but I am a walker of the old ways, and those of us who keep secrets do not do well in the hills.”

“Still, I could've helped you get things squared away, Mrs. Choi.”

She laughed at that, looking at me with a soft smile. “I cannot believe you, Mr. Magpie. Even when you have vomit on your hands and a mess at your feet, you are still volunteering to help others by doing more work you do not have to do... I do not understand how you can be so dogged and relentless with even more labor when you have... all of this.”

I smiled at her softly. “I liked you as a neighbor, Mrs. Choi. You and Mr. Choi were always nice to me, even when you didn't have to be. You could've kept to yourselves, like the Wilsons on the other side...”

“Fah!” Mrs. Choi scoffed. “Edgar and Janet Wilson are a pair of reclusive pensioners who are afraid anyone under the age of 60 is a hippie or a drug addict or both. They liked your grandfather, Arturo, the one who left you the house, but they were afraid you were too young for the neighborhood. But I liked how you reached out to me and my husband when you moved in, how you were trying to do everything you could to make the transition easy on us. You never had loud parties, you never brought your drama out onto our street. You were a very good neighbor, Mr. Magpie, and you do not deserve all the misery life has given to you.”

I shrugged a little bit, tucking some of my feathery black hair behind one of my ears. “This is the life I live, Mrs. Choi. Not really much I can do about it, as far as I know.”

“Well, Mr. Magpie, you have not been living up to your name, so before I go, I am going to help you,” she said, walking closer to him. “Give me your hand, Mr. Magpie.”

“I don't know that...”

“Your *hand*, Mr. Magpie,” she said to me in a tone that made it clear I was not to argue with her. I had only heard that tone a few times from her in the four years since I'd moved into the house, and it wasn't one I liked hearing.

“Okay, Mrs. Choi.” I dropped the sponge into the bucket of water, shook my hand to get the water droplets off it, then extended it out to her.

Her old, wrinkled fingers curled around my wrist and fingers, one hand holding onto my arm, the other onto the hand itself. Her voice grew quiet and I had to listen carefully to hear what she was saying beneath her breath. “*One for sorrow, two for joy, three for a girl, four for a boy, five for silver, six for gold, seven for a secret never to be told.*”

There was a feeling of electricity racing up my arm as the words left her mouth, like I was

holding onto a live wire, or one of those old carnival arcade endurance tests. You ever see those things? The “hold on for as long as you can” volt-o-matic or whatever.

When she released my arm, I felt a rush tingle up it before it dissipate, as I looked up at her. “What... what just happened?”

Mrs. Choi smiled at me, almost smiled *through* me, in a way that I found more than a little unsettling. “I have given you seven secrets, Mr. Magpie, seven secret ways and paths that will bring your karma back into alignment. You were surrounded by seven demons of pain and suffering, and I have shooed them away and replaced them with seven secrets to... course correct for you. You have helped so many others in your time,” she sighed. “You deserve to have someone help you. So I have done this. These secrets, they will expire in time, and I hope that will be enough to keep the ghosts of the hills from bothering you. If not, well, they are only ghosts, and the worst they are capable of is only the worst you are capable of doing to yourself. You will be fine. Better than fine. You will find your life returning to a good place once more.”

“How will I know what these secrets are, Mrs. Choi?”

She laughed, a laugh as old as time and as powerful a hurricane wind. “My dear Mr. Magpie, you would not be able to miss them for all the world. Thank you again for all you have done for me over the years,” she said, moving to hug me. “This does not even our ledger, but perhaps it puts me most of the way out of the red. Take care of yourself, Mr. Magpie. And enjoy seeing your karma finally return from the pits it has been cast into.”

I tried to get her to tell me more about this, or anything, but she simply laughed it off, changing the subject to her, her granddaughter or the state of my car before the movers came over to ask her to come and tell her whether some things needed to be loaded or were to remain with the house.

My work on the car continued for at least another hour, trying everything I could to get every last bit of vomit cleaned up, but it took me another half an hour to pry off the grills on my speakers so I could spend fifteen minutes cleaning out the speakers themselves.

I didn't even notice Mrs. Choi driving off, although I did see the truck take off after her, the “For Sale” sign sitting on the lawn. In the coming days, I'd find out she didn't leave a change of address form with the post office, and that I didn't know where her granddaughter lived other than 'down south.' That could've been as close as Santa Cruz or as far as San Diego or anywhere in-between.

California is too long.

There isn't much for an Uber driver to do on Sunday if you aren't doing the walk-of-shame drive homes from people who've hooked up with someone they don't want to talk to in the morning, and I lost all of that time cleaning, disinfecting and trying to get the fucking *smell* out of my car, using enough Fabreeze that my car reeked of piña coladas,

I didn't know what else to do other than let the car sort of naturally air itself out, and I figured I'd just start in again on Monday morning, doing the commuters in the morning and the evening, a bunch of people taking a digital carpool to their jobs up the peninsula or to a BART station because they didn't want to leave their precious Beamers at the parking lot for day.

For the next few hours, I spent just pattering away on my computer, building a new model, getting it textured and rigged. It was a mecha like the Gundams I'd grown up watching, and Arcadia Games had been just starting to do concept and prototypes for new projects when they'd laid us off a year or so ago. I'd decided to keep fiddling with some of the ideas I'd been playing with back then. I was just starting to do preliminary animation with it when there was a knock at the door.

I so didn't want to answer it but the knocking continued and continued, and eventually I decided I just couldn't ignore it any longer, so I got up and walked out of the bedroom I'd converted into my little workspace studio, down the hall and opened my front door to the shock of a lifetime.

Standing on my front porch was the asshole who'd thrown up in my car last night, dressed in a hoodie with an Oxford College patch on it and track pants, but I could see there was someone behind him, despite his tall frame blocking most of my doorway. His name was Alistair. “Hey, you're Raff

right? I don't even remember a bit of what happened last night, but apparently I threw up in your car?" Now that he was sober, I could tell he had a British accent layered in his voice. Proper London posh, I thought. It made me hate him even more. "I'm, ah, I'm here to make restitution for my poor actions, and to try and compensate for the sorrow I brought you last night."

I wanted to punch this fucking prick in the face right now, but I had a thousand questions running through my head, not the least of which was how the *fuck* did he find out where I *lived*? There was supposed to be a layer of removal between Uber passengers and Uber drivers. There was no fucking way for him to know where I was.

"Well, they billed you a cleaning fee for the car," I told him.

"It wasn't even as much as one of my bloody handkerchiefs," he said. "That isn't proper. It's embarrassing. Can we come in? We... we want to make this right."

I still didn't know who was standing behind him, but the look on this guy's face said he wasn't going to leave until we'd seen this through to the end, so I stepped back, giving a shrug. "C'mon in, I guess," I said, walking from the entryway over towards the living room just off to the side.

Alistair moved in first and walking in directly behind him were two young women, both of whom had been with him last night. The shorter of the two girls was a Chinese girl dressed in high fashion, looking like she was preparing to walk a runway in front of cameras more than having a conversation with someone, a loose red silk blouse, a black leather skirt and leather thigh high boots. The taller of the two was a redhead, dressed very similar to Alistair, a zip-up hoodie and a pair of black track pants.

The Chinese girl had seemed so hideously embarrassed by Alistair's behavior last night that she'd tried to apologize for him, but she hadn't given me a cash tip or anything, even after he'd thrown up all over the back of my car. She, naturally, had been sitting up front, so she hadn't gotten almost any puke on her tight red dress that had put her sizable tits out on front street.

"Hey, Raff," the Chinese girl said to me. "I'm Madi. I don't think I introduced myself last night. This is Alistair's sister, Saffron."

"Hey," the redhead said, trying not to keep eye contact for long. She was cute, in her early twenties, with lots of freckles all over her face, sky blue eyes looking down at her hands. Last night, she'd been in the back with Alistair, and she'd also been throwing up, although she'd managed to get at least some of it into a bag she'd brought with her. Last night she'd been dolled up in a little cocktail dress designed to draw the eye to any one of her considerable assets, from her slender thighs to her toned ass to her ample bosom, all of which seemed like they were also covered in freckles.

I moved to sit down in my arm chair, and the three of them took the couch, Alistair on one end, Saffron on the other with Madi in the middle. "So why are you here?"

"When..." Madi started, then stopped then started again. "When Alistair called you... when he said what he said last night, I fucking *dumped* his ass." Madi was gorgeous, wearing a sort of frilly top that showed plenty of cleavage, and her ass was killing that poor skirt. "I had to dump him all over again this morning when he woke up, because he was fucking blackout drunk when he said it, but the fact that he said it at all, that he even *thought* it at all, that's so fucking sketch I can't even fucking handle it."

"I want to—"

"Shut the fuck up, Alistair," Madi said to him, shoving a finger in his face. "Don't you think you've fucking said more than enough, motherfucker?"

"Sorry," Alistair mumbled.

"So, he needs to learn some fucking humility, so he's gonna have to get punished, and I don't mean, like, some minor shit, I mean some major fucking abuse and shame," Madi said. "That's what I'm gonna do. That's what she's gonna do."

"What the hell does *that* mean?" I said. This whole thing was strange, especially the way Saffron kept fidgeting, and how Alistair's expression read like he was unwilling to do or say anything

unless he was told to do so.

Madi sighed and stood up, reaching across Alistair to extend her hand out to Saffron, helping her to her feet. "For the next seven months, we are *your* girls," she said, extending a hand towards him before closing her fingers in, those long nails of hers clicking a little as they got together. "No, that's not entirely accurate. *I'm* your girl, and *she*," she said, gesturing to Saffron, "is your plaything."

"Excuse me?"

Saffron unzipped her top and slipped it off, tossing it aside, revealing she didn't have anything on underneath it, her perky tits dusted with loads of freckles, her small nipples a rosy shade of pink, her skin pale and almost completely untouched by the sun. Then she kicked off her shoes and pushed her pants down to her ankles, exposing the rest of her body, a small, neatly trimmed garden of burnished copper curls over her pussy.

"Any time you want someone to fuck, you can call me," Madi said, "you can call her, or you can call both of us, and we will come running." She licked her lips, a wicked smile widening on her face. "And no matter which of us you call, *this* asshole," she said, gesturing to Alistair, "is going to have to come and watch."

I glanced over at Alistair, whose face had turned a dark shade of red, almost matching his sister's bush, but he didn't speak. No one had asked him to.

"Alistair doesn't learn until something's shoved in his face, so he's going to watch you have your way with either or even both of us," Madi said. "And we're two different flavors, because we want you to have all the options you need and deserve. If you want someone who's going to be your equal in the sex, you should look to me. If you want someone who's just something for you to shove your dick into, you should look to Saffron. I'm the girlfriend experience. She's going to be a good little fucktoy, a sweaty, sticky fuckhole cum catcher, aren't you Saff?"

"Yes ma'am," Saffron said, folding her arms behind her back, to make sure I had an unobstructed view of her entire body, keeping her legs partially apart, another deliberate choice in her posture.

"I don't—"

Madi moved over to me and put her fingertip to my lips, shushing me. "You think this is all some kind of joke, don't you? Some kind of dare or something?"

I nodded at her.

"Well, it's not. It's... it's a balancing of the scales, a setting right of horrible wrongs. Not just the wrongs he inflicted on you, but all the other people he's hurt since him and his sister showed up here three years ago. They've been a right pair of twats, and they need to settle their debts. Hers aren't anywhere near as bad as his are, but they're still rather atrocious. So by using her, degrading her, debasing her, treating her as a series of holes for you to fill with your cum, you'd actually be doing her a favor. With this much karmic horror in her ledger, she'd be an absolutely fright if you let her walk out of here."

Mrs. Choi had been talking about her ledger just a few hours ago, and for a moment, I wondered if this was related to what she'd said to me then.

"And you agree with her?" I said to Saffron.

Her voice had this weird mix of posh English and vaguely Scottish undertones. "Aye, sir. I've been a right cunt, and I need someone to abuse me like I have been abusive to others," she said, looking down at me, trying to lean in, as if to make her tits hang a little more, to draw my eyes to her supple flesh. "She hasn't even told you the worst of it..."

"The worst of it?"

"Well," Madi said, as she started to unbutton her blouse. "She's not even legally old enough to drink in this country, so she was drunk illegally last night. She's only nineteen, but she just flashes her UK passport around and the bouncers 'round here don't even think to check her. She's not even a UK citizen any more, since their parents emigrated with them here to the states." She tossed her blouse

aside, no bra on to keep her firm tits in check. They were large and curvy, and I had to suspect they were enhanced, especially on Madi's relatively slim figure.

Saffron moved closer and dropped down onto her knees, her hands reaching up to rest on my thighs. "May your little cum guzzler suck upon your cock, Master?" She looked up at me with those imploring blue eyes. "She desperately wants to begin working on her redemption."

Alistair had turned his eyes away, and Madi caught that out of the corner of her eye as she stomped over in her leather boots to reach out and slap him with a hard crack, his cheek flushing in flaring pain. "Don't you *dare* take your eyes off of this, you little fucking weasel," she hissed at him. "You're lucky this sorrowful secret is being kept behind closed doors."

Wait, I thought to myself. Sorrow? Secret?

No. Fucking. Way.

What the *actual* fuck, Mrs. Choi? What have you gotten me into?

"Sorry, Madi," Alistair said in his effete English accent.

She slapped his other cheek, this time even harder. "You don't apologize to *me*, you fucking worthless sack of shit! You apologize to *him!*" Her fingertips grabbed his chin and lifted his head up to turn his eyes towards me.

"My sincerest apologies, Mr. Corvis," he said, his voice cracking a little. "I will not look away again, no matter how difficult it becomes to watch."

"I'm..." Saffron said quietly, "I'm a rather good cock sucker, sire. Let me show you how I can begin fixing my ledger." She nuzzled her face along the inside of my thigh, slowly bringing her pale freckled slender fingers up to my waist, unbuttoning my jeans, unzipping them. She licked her lips as she reached into my boxers, and when she pulled out my cock, I could audibly hear her gasp a little bit. "You have such a beautiful cock, sir," she purred at me. "I cannae help myself."

She started to wrap her lips around the head of my swollen dick, the erotic sights in front of me impossible to stay soft, her tongue gently painting saliva over my skin, flicking a droplet of precum into her mouth. But while she seemed to want to start soft, Madi had other plans.

"She's a cum guzzling slag, Mr. Corvis," Madi said, grabbing a fistful of Saffron's red hair in her fingers, before forcing the girl's face down onto my cock until I could feel the tip of it bracing its way into her throat, a slightly panicked coughing noise fluffing around my shaft before Madi pulled Saffron's face back and off my cock. "Say thank you for the dick, whore," Madi said, keeping Saffron's eyes pointed up at me.

There were tears streaking down her cheeks, but her tongue was hanging out, and the expression she had on was one of erotic delirium, not pain or sorrow, as she licked at her lips before trying to nod at me, as much as Madi's hand in her hair would let her. "Thank you, Master," she panted. "She loves being facefucked until you get your fill of gglllckkkk!"

Madi shoved Saffron's face back down onto my shaft once more, and gestured with her other hand for me to take over holding the teenager's red mane. My hands grabbed onto either side of her head, and pushed her face down onto my cock, making sure she was coughing a little each time, but Saffron was clinging onto my thighs, not trying to push herself off my dick, but almost giving me encouraging squeezes, as if to reassure me that I wasn't doing anything she didn't want me to.

"You like seeing your sister being a good little cocksucking whore, Alistair?" Madi said over to him. "You think I *ever* forgot you called me 'Saffi' that one time when you were drunk? She doesn't want you, you utter prick. *I* don't want you *anymore* either," she said as she unzipped the skirt and let it drop to the floor, showing she didn't have on any panties beneath, her snatch completely shaven bare.

"I'm sorry, Madi," Alistair said.

"Yeah," Madi sneered. "You are. You totally are. You are a sorry *excuse* for a man. Worthless. Useless."

Saffron was doing most of the work at this point, and I was mostly just pushing her head down for show, as she was giving me probably the best blowjob of my life, her fingertips cradling and

trawling along my nutsack, a wicked little sensation I'd never really had before.

“You swallow most of what he gives you, Saffi, but you better not swallow *all* of it, because you're gonna gimme some,” Madi commanded, as Saffi nodded in affirmation.

It was the sort of thing I wanted to savor and delight in, but my body was just unaccustomed to this much attention being paid to it. My head started to lean back a little bit, trying to focus, trying to prolong the moment, but I knew I wasn't going to last.

Madi stepped behind my chair, pressing her tits against the back of my head before she slowly tilted my head down. “Open your eyes, Mr. Corvis,” she purred at me. “I want you to see this little teenage fuckhole's *face* when she finally starts erasing some of the red from her ledger. Doesn't she look pretty? Go on, flood the whore's throat.” Madi slid one of her hands down my chest and started raking her fingernails up along my shirt. “Give the slag some cum to savor.”

Saffron's big blue eyes were looking up at me with as much desperation and eagerness as she could get in them, her tongue swirling over the head of my cock, as both of my hands lifted from her head and grabbed onto the armrests of my chair, clenching on them as I started to spew hot cum into Saffron's mouth, my toes curling hard in my leather workshoes. The redhead began to shiver and I thought I heard some sound like spilling water, but it was impossible to discern clearly in my compromised mental state.

I could hear Alistair groan a little, as Saffron hummed happily on my shaft, swallowing the first couple of spurts before keeping the third one in her mouth, slowly popping her lips off my dick, keeping her lips pressed together as she turned her head up, looking at Madi, standing behind me.

Saffron moved to stand, and I could see the insides of her thighs were glistening and wet. Madi stepped around from behind me and then crouched down a little, the thigh high boots having three inch heels in them, making her much taller than the redhead. Once the two were around on even level, Madi grabbed Saffron's hair and pulled her lips to her own, kissing her fiercely, her tongue sliding into Saffron's mouth, making sure to get whatever was left of my cum that Saffron had kept for her, Madi even moaning into the kiss, her legs shaking just a little.

Eventually, the two girls broke from their kiss, as Madi licked her own lips, making sure there wasn't any of my cum lost to her. “Mmmm... we were lezzing it up even before I broke up with you, Alistair. I think I realized early on I was much more into *her* than I was into *you*, but I figured if I broke up with you, you'd try and cut her out of my life.”

“You're right, Madi,” Alistair said, his face pained. “I would've.”

Saffron giggled, reaching up to tap on Madi's shoulder before pointing at the floor where she'd been kneeling just seconds before. “Look at the mess I made when I came,” she said, giddily. “The way he was face fucking me made me squirt.”

Holy shit, had she *really* cum just from sucking my cock? I looked down and there was a small clear puddle on my wood floor between my feet, glistening in the light.

“Oh I know *just* what to do with that,” Madi said. “C'mon, Mr. Corvis, get up. You're just getting started.” She pulled me to my feet, making sure I didn't step in the pool of girlcum. My pants and boxers were around my midthigh, which made it a little harder to walk, but Madi and Saffron made sure to keep me balanced. “Alistair, get over there and lick that up.”

Alistair's face turned an even darker shade of crimson than I thought the human body capable of. “You can't possibly be serious.”

“Do you want me to ask *him* to tell you to do it?” A look of fear and shock crossed the young man's face, as he slowly stood up, shaking his head in Madi's direction. “Down on your fucking hands and knees, you horrid shit. I want you to *crawl* over there, and lick up every drop of that mess.”

Alistair shivered in fear, but he dropped down to his knees and then began to crawl across my floor before he lowered his face down, and began to lick at the splash on my wood floor.

“That's it, asshole. Tongue bath that dirty fucking floor just for a taste of Saffi's gash, the only taste you're ever going to fucking get, you sicko.” Madi and Saffron led me across the room towards

the couch that he'd just been sitting in. "Now, blowjobs are great and all, but I think it's time you raw dog your little teenage fucktoy, don't you?" Madi leaned in and whispered into my ear. "She's on the pill, so it's okay, but I don't know if Alistair knows that or not," she said quietly before nibbling on my earlobe. "I won't tell if you won't."

Saffron moved to grab one of the footstools in front of the couch, a wide rectangle that had been one of the pieces of furniture my grandfather had left me with the house that I'd actually kept. I'd never really known what they were for, but seeing Saffron position herself, I wondered what kind of kinky shit my poppop had gotten up to over his life, because it seemed like this footstool was made for this. She slid up onto her knees on the edge of it, and placed her hands down before shifting to move down onto her elbows, looking back over her shoulder at me. "How's this, sir?"

"Mmmm..." Madi said to me. "You'll be able to really slam fuck the little cunt like she deserves with her like this. You better leave her with a sore pussy or I'm going to be disappointed. I want her to be walking funny for days. Here, let me see your phone." She made a grabby hand gesture at me as I crouched down to slide my hand into the pocket of my jeans, fishing my cellphone out, holding it up to my face to unlock it before holding it out to her. Once she took the phone from my hand, she grabbed my wrist, and brought it down to rub my fingers across her shaven snatch. I couldn't help myself and pushed my middle finger up into her pussy, seeing her quiver in delight, before it slid out and she brought my hand up to my lips, so I could taste her cunt on my fingertip. "Just a reminder, that's yours too," she giggled before she pulled away, stepping around to the other side of the footstool. "C'mon, Saff, if you want him to do it, you gotta sell it."

Alistair had finished licking up the floor, so he moved to sit in the chair just in time to see his sister looking back over her shoulder at me, a needy little whimper slipping from her lips. "Please, sir. I want you fuck me like a good little slag. I want to feel you breaking my cunt. I want you to plow my pussy so hard I'm having to force myself not to fall over. Make my fucking tits swing beneath me, sir. Slap my ass until it's as red as my minge. Rearrange my guts. Stuff me full of your spunk until it's dribbling down my whorish thighs. Split me open and mark your slut, daddy," she purred. "Show my scumfuck brother how a *real* man fucks a bitch that belongs to him."

Madi moved to point my phone at Saffron, snapping pictures with my phone's camera. "That's it, sir. Adjust her karma by taking your fill from her cunt."

The height of the footstool was perfect and I only had to widen my stance a little extra to line up perfectly with Saffron's fire furred pussy pointed back at me. I lifted my hand and spanked her ass with a loud crack, and she only moaned eagerly back at me. With my cock positioned correctly, I pushed forward and slid my cock as deep as I could into her tiny tight twat, feeling her clenched snugly around me. Her fingertips clenched onto the edge of the footstool, gripping it fiercely as a whorish moan melted out of her throat.

"Oh *fuck* yes yes yes fuck fuck fuck *fuck* that's a big cock oh fuck I'm such a full fucking *slut* it feels like it's in my fucking belly Jesus fucking Christ that's such a good dick fuck me fuck me fuck me..." she started hissing frantically. She was easily the tightest pussy I'd ever been inside, and it almost felt like her body was having to adjust to accommodate me, even though I'd never thought of myself as having that big of a dick. I kept one hand on the small of her back, to sort of keep her in place.

I pulled back, gave another slap to her ass and pushed forward once more, before I felt her begin to shiver chaotically.

"Fuck fuck I'm cumming I'm cumming," she spat, "I'm fucking cumming already what the fuck is happening to me oh fuck I'm such a whore I'm *such* a whore oh fuck I don't deserve to feel this good, I'm such a fucking slag cumming cumming *cumming!!!*" Her voice got higher and higher before devolving into a high pitched squeal that shrieked through the air as I felt her tighten and vice grip around my prick, giving me no room to push or pull, just merely filling her as the orgasm clawed through her like it was rending her soul from her body, even after only a minute or two's worth of

actual fucking.

After the orgasm finished, she collapsed, her shoulders falling as she face planted on the footstool, her body tilting her knees keeping her lifted up only by proxy that she hadn't tipped over yet, because the girl was clearly unconscious, having momentarily blacked out from the orgasm, as Madi licked her lips, having captured the whole thing on my camera's phone.

"I think you short-circuited your Saffi slut, sir," Madi said to me devilishly, rubbing her thighs together. "Which means I guess I'll have to take over."

I slowly slipped my still stiff cock out of Saffron's snatch, both of my hands holding onto her hips so she didn't topple over, sliding her down onto her belly safely after I was no longer inside of her, a maniacal little giggle coming from her pale body. "Christ on a pogo stick," Saffron whispered. "I think I touched God, and she said unto me, 'You are one lucky bitch that I went with this instead of the path of pain.'" She giggled almost terrifyingly at that.

Madi moved to sit me down on the couch, pushing me to sit on one side, an armrest beneath my left arm. She crouched down and gestured for me to lift my legs. Once I did, she removed my shoes, then my socks, pants and boxers, setting them all aside. "No no, Saffi, that's going to be *my* job today. You see, back when your brother and I were dating, there was one thing he always wanted to try, but I always told him no."

"You wouldn't," Alistair said, terror on his face.

"I would and I will," Madi said to him, finishing getting my clothes put neatly on a nearby table. "He paid for these tits," she said, turning to face me. "He wanted bigger, but I didn't want to have to get spinal surgery in a few years, so this is as big as I would take. I think he hoped that if he gave me these," she said, hefting her own breasts, "that I would let him do what I'm about to let *you* do."

"Madi, no," Alistair said. "Don't do—"

"Shut the *fuck* up, Alistair," she yelled. "In fact, you know what? I want you to jerk off while you're *watching* this, but you can't fucking cum, you hear me, shitbag?"

"Madi—"

"Did you fucking *hear* me?"

Alistair sighed, looking defeated and crestfallen. "Yes Madi."

"You deserve *so* much worse than this anyway, asshole," she snarled at him, as she moved to straddle my thighs, facing away from me. She moved to lay atop me, her back on my chest, as she reached one hand up to run her fingertips through my fine black hair, clawing her fingernails against my scalp, while her other hand reached to grab my right hand, lifting it up to lay it atop one of her tits. "Give it a squeeze. Feel what he paid for and is never going to fucking get to touch again."

Whoever her surgeon was, he'd done good work, as the flesh was soft and pliant to the touch. I'd dated a girl with a bad boob job several years ago, and they'd always felt immobile and almost inflexible. Madi's felt remarkably natural, and if she hadn't told me they were enhanced, I doubt I would have ever known.

She forced my hand downward and brought it to rest against her pussy, her fingertips atop mine using my hand to caress her cunt, rubbing down against it. "You're gonna have to enjoy this pleasure another day, sir, but whenever you want it, my cunt belongs to you, for the next seven months. It'll be our little secret, never to be told."

Sitting in the chair I'd been sat in only minutes ago, I saw that Alistair had unbuttoned his slacks and fished out his cock, and was stroking it slowly, although his face was ashen white, clearly knowing where this was going when I didn't.

"It's a good thing Saffi slicked up your dick so much," Madi said, leaning forward so that she could reach and grab my cock. "Are you watching, Alistair? I want you to get a good look as Mr. Corvis... as my *Master* is slowly pushing his cock up," she said, rubbing my cock across her pussy before slowly dragging it downward as it dawned on me where this was heading, "into my *tight*, Asian, *virginal* ass..."

On the last word, she pressed the tip of my dick right against her asshole, and I could feel it was slick, so she'd been rubbing either her own juices or some lube against it when I wasn't looking, and the mushroom head of my circumscized cock popped through that tight anal ring, as she let out a loud roar of overwhelming pleasure and pain running together, her tan skin suddenly blossoming in a wash of goosebumps, as she clenched for a moment before letting out a tiny little yip sound.

She held there, only the first inch of so of my cock lodged up her back door before she finally relaxed enough to start sliding further down it, moving to push herself further and further onto it as she leaned back more, finally lifting her legs up, grabbing my hands to make me hold onto the backs of her thighs, keeping her legs spread wide and lifted high.

"You feel so fucking *good* in my ass," Madi said quietly to me. "I want to ask you to go slow, but I'm *yours* and you get to decide what we do. For the next seven months, your word is law. If you want to take it tender, I will coo and say thank you, but if you want to rip open my unexplored ass on your *monster* cock, I won't be mad, and I *won't* say no..."

"We can take it slow," I said to her, realizing I hadn't spoken in minutes.

Madi moaned appreciatively at me. "Thank you, Master, thank you thank you thank you... but you'd better cum in my ass at the end of this... I won't let you take it out of my shitpipe until you do... Now that I'm doing this, I wanna do all of this..."

Both of Madi's hands were reaching up to play with my hair, and both of my hands were holding onto her thighs, so it came as a bit of a shock when I felt fingertips toying with my balls, but I glanced over and saw that Saffron had rolled onto her back on the footstool and had one hand playing with my plums.

"When I first hooked up with your sister, Alistair," Madi moaned, "she told me all the shit you said about me behind my back. How I was a 'two-for-one deal' because I was both Chinese *and* American. How you were using me to scratch your 'yellow fever,' you racist *fuck*. And I went along with it, to my inconsolable *shame*, because you spent so much money on me. That made me your *whore* and I was so afraid to go back to my little life without the money, but after last night, I wouldn't fuck you again for all the money in the fucking world. And you're gonna have to spend seven months *watching* me get fucked in all the ways you wanted to fuck me."

Saffron's thumb rolled over one of my nuts and I felt Madison tense up a little as I could feel Saffron's other hand pushing a few fingers into Madi's exposed pussy, curling them up to hit that ultra sensitive zone inside her cunt.

"Every twisted deranged fucking thing you wanted to do with me," the Asian girl continued, "I'm gonna do with *him*. You remember how you wanted me to drag out my old school uniform from Mercy High? The navy and gray plaid skirt and the buttonup shirt? I'm gonna wear it over here next time, and I'm gonna be the *perfect* little schoolgirl *slut* for him while you're watching uselessly in your fucking corner of *shame*."

As she talked, she was starting to bounce up and down on my cock, feeling it grease in and out of her rosebud with no slight effort, her words punctuated by moans and whimpers, pain and pleasure all mixed into one overwhelming brew bubbling up inside of her body.

"I'm gonna call him *Mister Corvis* and give him the perfect schoolgirl/teacher fantasy, and make sure he blows a load in each and every fucking hole on my body," she groaned. "And I'm gonna be certain that the last load of that day is blown all over my fucking *face* while you watch. Then I'm gonna take your phone and take a picture of me like that, cheeks dripping spunk like a dirty whore, so you *never* fucking forget what you lost, you piece of *shiiiiitnnnnnggghhhh!*"

Madi turned her head and kissed me hard, whining into my mouth as her tongue desperately tried to cling to mine, mashing her lips against mine like I held the breath of life.

"Do it, do it daddy, you gotta blow that hot load up my tight young *innocent* untouched ass, be the first man, the *only* man to stuff my butt full of spunk full of hot steamy fucking daddy cream please please let me take that sorrow and please please fucking *cum!*"

She started spasming and quaking, with the rhythmic clenching of her sphincter giving me no chance at all to resist her, and for the second time that morning, I found myself blasting endless waves of jizz into some girl whose last name I didn't even know.

The orgasm was so intense, my eyes tilted toward my brain and I trembled along with her before eventually the waves of ecstasy subsided and rolled back into the fog, as I realized I'd stopped breathing and started once more, drawing in lungfuls of air before exhaling them again. Madi laughed, demented and psychotic, turning her head again to kiss me once more, but this time much more gently and tenderly.

“Thank you for beginning to accept our apologies for the sorrow we've brought upon you, Mr. Corvis. For the next seven months, whenever you want this, any of this, it's yours. And we're going to make sure we're here at *least* once a week, so you better pick a day for that now,” Madi purred at me. “All three of us.”

Saffron slipped her fingers out of Madi's pussy and brought them up to smear them on the Asian girl's lips before standing up, glancing over at her brother. “The fuckwit actually followed the rules,” the redhead said to her friend.

Madi slowly pulled herself up and off my cock with a wet slurping sound, a tiny toot of air escaping to make both girls giggle, as Saffron helped Madi to her feet. The two girls walked over towards Alistair, who had his hard cock in his hand, still slowly jerking it, as if he went too fast, the thing might just go off.

“Take your hand off it, shithead,” Madi scolded, as Alistair complied. Then Madi clapped her hands on either side of it, bringing them together in a hard smack on both sides of the man's prick. I saw him wince hard, coughing as the pain rushed through him. “You don't get to cum at all anywhere any time for the next seven months, unless its accidental and you're asleep, and you'd better pray that doesn't happen because if it *does*, you are going to suck every droplet of your own spunk that you can from your pajamas and sheets.”

Saffron started pulling on her clothes again, a shy smile on her face as she lifted the fingers that had been cradling my balls up to her lips, licking them clean before tugging on her hoodie. “This could've been so much worse, Madi,” Saffron said to her.

“You got that right, Saff,” Madison said, scooping up my phone once more, pointing it at my face before swiping so she could unlock it. Then she typed at the iPhone for a minute or so before tossing it to me. “There you go. I'm under Madi (GFE) and she's under Saffron (FS), just in case you forget. I called both of us so we've got your number as well.”

“Thanks?”

Madison shook her head, leaning down to kiss me one more time. “Thank *you*, Mr. Corvis. You could've been *much* meaner about all of this, because we *literally* can't tell you no, to *anything*. After the seven months, we'll change our phone numbers and never see you again, but you can keep all the pictures, a memento of our time together. Our little secret, never to be told.”

Mrs. Choi, I thought, I don't know whether to be angry or eternally grateful, but the one thing I am definitely...

...is shocked.

Part Two – Joy

The next seven months, I saw either Madi or Saffi once a week, and they always brought Alistair in tow with them. I felt bad for the guy at first, but after a few weeks, he began confessing every sin of his life to me until I told him to stop, and the guy was an endless well of shitty behavior. Nothing completely criminal, at least not that he confessed to me, but if there was any chance he could fuck someone over by making a decision, that was *always* what he was going to do.

He'd called ICE on the family maid because she'd turned down his advances and wouldn't fuck him. When his best friend got arrested because he was holding onto a bag with Alistair's drugs in it,

Alistair claimed his best friend was a dealer to ensure that he personally didn't suffer any repercussions for his actions. And that was supposed his best fucking friend. He'd tormented and bullied kids at every school he'd ever gone to. He'd cheated on every girlfriend he'd ever had. It was like a neverending, bottomless pit of shit and cruelty. It made it much easier for me to tolerate his ever present observing eyes, even if I didn't like it. Some people are built to be an asshole, but that's not me.

Which, it turned out, was fine, because while Saffi mostly just wanted to ignore his presence, Madi absolutely enjoyed the shit out of punishing her ex-boyfriend. It felt like Alistair just became a stand in for every person who had ever treated her terribly in her life, and the fact that Alistair agreed that he deserved all of it and worse just seemed to push her to push *him* further and further into his shame and penance.

I tried going a week without calling either of the girls, just to see what would happen, and I thought I was getting away with it, but come that Saturday morning, they showed up at my house together and refused to let me turn them away until I'd used at least one of them. I thought about trying to push it, but when Saffi began stripping on my front porch, in what could've easily been in view of the neighbors if not for the hedges around my door, I ushered the three of them inside and gave in. It was the last time I tried arguing with them about it.

The strangest part of the whole thing was the way it all ended. The last time we had together, both Madi and Saffi were incredibly sweet to me, making a full day of it, taking loads of pictures and videos on my cellphone, even making Alistair work as a camera man in our own little private porno for a day. Instead of torturing Alistair, the two girls were focused on making sure we had a great time together, and Alistair just sort of drifted into the background, as if they wanted me to remember how good they were to me, instead of how horrible a shit Alistair was. The girls insisted on staying the night, curling up on either side of me as we all fell asleep.

When I woke in the morning, they were all gone, and true to their word, I haven't heard *from* them or even *about* them since. I tried doing some internet research – I'm not completely useless when it comes to those kinds of things – but after a day or so, it dawned on me... I didn't know anything about them for a *fact*.

I didn't know their last names, and, I realized, I didn't know that the names they'd given me when they showed up on my doorstep the first day *were* their *actual* names. I didn't know where they lived. Uber didn't give us records of passenger's names, and I hadn't remembered what Alistair's actual name was on the day, and now seven months had passed and I didn't have anything to go on.

The phone numbers were dead ends, and the lines had been disconnected. I even tried running reverse image searches on their faces, taken from some of the copious photos and videos they'd left me as mementos, but those turned up dry as well. There are nearly eight million people in the Bay Area, and I still have no idea of those three remain among them, or if they've since relocated back out into the wider world.

I wondered for a long while whatever became of them.

I still wonder.

As soon as the trio disappeared from my life, I started pondering when the next secret was going to drop, but it seemed like things went silent for a while. My life had gone through a number of changes during the months the girls had been in my life. I stopped driving for Uber when I began to find contract work for my skills as a modeler and animator again, maybe three months after Alistair had first appeared on my doorstep. Nothing permanent, mind you, but enough gigs here and there that I was making enough to keep my head above water, and that gave me the freedom to get away from the horrible model that Uber was presenting as a 'business' and not 'exploitation,' which it absolutely was. I'd done the math, and taking into account gas and mileage, Uber was paying less than minimum wage, generally. And Uber considered the wear and tear on my car as “my problem” not theirs. So fuck them for that. On top of that, some asshole had complained that I didn't have free bottles of water in my car, and rated me 1 star because of it. A single rating meant next to nothing, but it was yet another nail in

the coffin after why I left. I could go on for hours, but I won't.

Despite how definitively I'd been sure that Mrs. Choi had gifted me some sort of magic, as the months passed with no second secret coming, I began to think that maybe it was all just one sort of weird, freaky coincidence.

God, looking back, I wish I hadn't been so complacent upfront. Or, maybe not complacent, I guess, but observant? Later on, I would know exactly when secrets were arriving, but at this point, I hadn't figured that out yet.

Her house, interestingly enough, hadn't sold yet, and I'd contacted her real estate agent to ask if he knew how to get in touch with her, and he said while he could pass on messages and mail to her if need be, he wasn't to give her new residence out to anyone, for privacy reasons. That irked me, even if I understood why.

Any answers I wanted regarding this were going to come on their own time, not on mine.

I did a little bit of research into the magpie nursery rhyme, but despite how well known the verse was (and how there were multiple versions of it), there wasn't a lot in terms of what any of it meant, beyond the fact that magpies were often considered bad luck, and that the number of them you saw had some sort of mystical importance.

I've always hated magic numbers.

As months turned into seasons, my obsession with the rhyme started to fade as I wondered if maybe that had been all there was to it, and that what I'd experienced was all there was to it. I'd later look back and think trying to write it off was a one-and-done was one of the stupidest things I'd done over the course of my life.

Nearly seven months after my last day with Madi, Saffi and Alistair, my second secret arrived.

It was a Saturday afternoon, and I was at home playing *The Witcher 3* when there was a knock on my door. I debated not answering it, but the house is far up enough in the hills that generally someone at the door was either Amazon dropping off a package or a neighbor asking to borrow something. Very rarely it would be somebody's daughter or granddaughter trying to sell Girl Scout Cookies, but that seemed unlikely since it was January of 2015. (I can never remember when 'that time of year' is, no matter how much I enjoy the cookies.)

I stepped away from my Xbox One and headed to the door, opening it to find a very unexpected and highly familiar face on the other side, even if it was one I hadn't seen in almost a decade. "Freya?" I said, unsure of what the hell was going on.

"Hey Raf," she said, that easy going smile melting any resistance I had in second, as she pushed a long curly strand of blonde hair back over her shoulder. "Can I come in?"

Even though it had been nine years since I'd seen Freya Thompson, I wasn't ever going to forget her. I'm only 5'7", and Freya is a good foot taller than I am, even way back when. She never lorded it over me, but I always felt a little small next to her.

Freya had been my girlfriend my junior and senior years of college, and I'd hoped that we were going to stay together, but a few weeks after college graduation, she told me she had gotten a job offer in Copenhagen, and that she was going to take them up on it, even though we'd been talking about moving to California together.

We'd both been interviewing at a lot of Californian companies, and I knew she had offers from several companies in Los Angeles and in the San Francisco Bay Area, but she'd decided that being an investment banker in Denmark was what she wanted to do, and whatever she and I had (or what I *thought* we had, I guess) wasn't strong enough to keep her from that.

She broke up with me that night, and moved all her stuff out and over to her friend's place the next day. A week later, I had the offer from Arcadia Games, and I relocated from Chicago to Oakland in the summer of 2005, which put me only about an hour's drive away from my grandfather, Arturo, my Mom's dad. He and I became good friends, and when he passed away in 2010, he left me his house in the San Jose hills, which I moved into, somewhat cementing my home in the bay.

Freya and I hadn't spoken since the night she moved out.

"I, uh, yeah, sure, I guess?" I said, stepping in so that she could move into the house. "What the hell are you doing here? Shit, how did you even *find* me?"

She laughed a little bit, that joyous chiming sound like freshly fallen autumn leaves, as she moved into the house, heading towards the living room. "I originally came here to ask your grandfather if he knew where to find, so imagine my surprise when I found out you were living here now. I'm sorry he's gone, but he lived a good life. How old was he when he passed?"

"Ninety-two, although the neighbors thought he couldn't have been a day over seventy, even up to his last days," I said, looking her over.

Freya had put on a little weight, but it looked good on her, because back in college she'd been rail thin, and I'd always worried that she was starving herself. She had on a long navy summer skirt, loose and billowing, like it wanted to flap and dance in the wind, and a black top that left most of her arms and toned belly exposed, revealing a pierced navel, which was a new addition since I'd seen her last. She had a large satchel-like purse that could have easily concealed a small dog or a large handgun. Even with the heavy, chunky black rimmed glasses on her beautiful face, she looked more like a yoga instructor going out to visit a crafts fair than the corporate banking raider I suspected she still was. She still wore her natural blonde hair long, leaning slightly more towards curly than wavy but still mostly in that mid range. I also noticed a diamond ring on her finger with a stone large enough to have cost a small fortune for some lucky man.

"That's a good run," she said with a warm smile, her blue eyes still as bright and shining as ever. "So how have you been?"

"Some days are better than others," I said, quoting one of my favorite song lyrics at her. "I was *fun*employed for about half a year or so, but before that, I'd been with the same company since I moved out here. Now I've been getting regular contract work, but no steady employment, so good money, but no benefits and no job security. That's life in the games industry, though, I guess. I see you're doing well. That must have set your husband back quite a pretty penny."

"Fiancé, actually," she said with a slight pip of laughter. "And yes, I imagine it very much did, although I couldn't bring myself to ask. "You'd like him, Raf," she said, looking directly at me. "His name is Christof and he's originally from Germany. In fact, he's sort of the reason I'm here."

"Oh, how's that? We both know you haven't been hiding some secret love child from me all these years," I said, maybe a shade more bitterly than I would've liked.

When I was thirteen, I was diagnosed with testicular cancer, and to prevent it from spreading, they had removed one of my testes. I'd gone through a yearly screening since, but the cancer had never returned, and they felt comfortable declaring me cancer free. I'd had a prosthesis installed, so I felt more normal and appeared more normal, but the removal of one of my balls had lowered my sperm production significantly. While most men with only one testicle were able to father children, my doctor had repeatedly told me that it would be highly unlikely that I would be able to get a woman pregnant, as my one remaining testicle wasn't producing a normal amount of sperm.

I made peace with that when I was in high school.

It had been something of a sticking point between me and Freya, as she desperately wanted to be a mother, and I'd had to tell her about the medical problems that would probably keep me from being a father, without a lot of luck or a significant amount of medical help. The subject had only come up a couple of months before we'd graduated, and I always suspected it played a bigger part in our split than she wanted to let on.

"That's harsh," she said with a soft sigh. "Probably fair, but still harsh, I guess. I know it did have a bit of an impact on our relationship, but I couldn't pass up the job and that made more of a difference than anything else. And you were never going to move to Copenhagen, were you?"

"I dunno," I said with a sigh. "You never asked, did you?"

"I knew what the answer was going to be," she replied. "The video games industry doesn't have

a good inroad into Denmark.”

“I think by that point in our relationship, I deserved to be asked, don't you?”

She shrugged a little bit, but then nodded. “Looking back on it? Yeah, I made mistakes. I'll own that. I was young, and I was only thinking about myself, which wasn't fair to you. We were in a relationship, and I should've taken your feelings into account and I should've talked to you before I made any decision. It's easy to see that now, looking back, all the mistakes I made, like leaving and never calling or checking on how you were doing. You could've called me as well, though.”

“By leaving without saying goodbye, you made it pretty clear you didn't want to talk to me ever again, so I was respecting your wishes,” I told her.

“Everyone's an idiot at that age. We were just getting out of college,” she said. “We weren't adults; we were barely more than giant toddlers.”

“Why are you *here*, Freya?” I asked her, hoping I wasn't coming across as *too* rude, but this woman I'd spent two years emotionally invested in had left me without so much as a hug, and now, nearly a decade later, she had walked back into my life and acted like the break wasn't as big a deal as I remembered it being.

“So I'm getting married in a few weeks,” she said. “And instead of having bachelor and bachelorette parties where we do all sorts of stupid shit as our friends goad us on, things we have to keep from one another, Christof and I came up with... something different. Can I just show you?”

I had no idea what she was talking about. “I mean, I guess? Am I going to be angry?”

“I truly don't know, Raf...” she sighed, reaching into her back to fish out her cellphone, a large screen iPhone. She unlocked it, tapped on it a few times, then stood up, walked over and held it out to me. “I hope not. Here.”

I took the phone from her hand, and she remained standing there. On the screen there was a movie of her and the guy I assumed was her fiancé, Christof, sitting on a very expensive looking couch. At that point, I figured I should just watch the damn thing, so I pushed play, and the video started to play, with Christof speaking first.

“Hey, I'm Christof and this is my soon-to-be wife Freya, and we're recording this video for exactly two people – my high school sweetheart Lara, and Freya's college boyfriend Rafael. Hi Lara!”

“Hi Raf!” the video version of Freya said to me, waving.

“Before we get married, we wanted each of us to have one last taste of someone other than the person we're going to be with the rest of our lives, and so we wanted to go back to the best lover each of us had before now.”

“For me, that's obviously you, Raf,” she said to me on the video, “and for Christof, that's Lara. We're each going to have one night where we have anything goes sex, Lara with Christof and Raf with me, so that we don't enter our marriage with any regrets.”

“It is sort of a one-night-only hall pass, I guess is the expression,” Christof said, his voice lightly tinged with a German accent. “And it is not being unfaithful, because we both know about it. In fact, it is happening at the same moment.”

“You see, while I'm playing the video for you, Raf, Christof is also playing this video for Lara, across the globe,” video Freya said to me.

“And we are going to have a little competition,” Christof said with a smile. “Who breaks first. You see, Freya and I have a bet, who is better at seducing. If I can convince Lara to touch me first, I win. If Freya can convince Raf to touch her first, she wins. The prize isn't of any concern to either of the two of you, but I do hope you'll give me a fighting chance, Raf.”

“And I hope you won't make it easy on him, Lara,” Freya's image said on the phone.

“Once it's settled, assuming you're both interested, both pairs can have up to twelve hours of no-holds-barred, whatever-you-want sex,” Christof said, “as long as neither party gets bruised or broken, since we're getting married in a week, and a black eye or bruising around the throat wouldn't be a good look for that.”

“Most importantly, it's *just sex*,” Freya's recording said. “No need for emotional attachments or worrying about saying the wrong thing, because there are *no* consequences for you afterwards, for either of you.”

“Neither of you have been part of our lives for quite some time now,” Christof's image said to me, and to this Lara person, somewhere else in the world, I guess. “So neither of you are invited to the wedding, but if you want to be friends again after this, that would be just fine. On the other hand, if you want us to disappear from your lives again, we will both happily do that as well.”

“Just think, Lara,” Freya's voice on the video said. “You can do whatever you want to with him, however you want to. Anything he didn't want to try back in high school, it will be a *joy* for him to do.”

Joy? I thought for just a moment before nodding in silent recognition. Right. *Two for joy.*

“And the same for Freya, Raf,” Christof told me. “She's always spoken fondly of you as a partner, but I know she has a couple of hangups, and I bet you'd take great *joy* in making her get past them. This is your chance for that.”

I knew what he was talking about, of course, because as much fun as Freya had been, she'd also been something of a prude in the bedroom, wanting to stick to just a couple of basic positions, and never once giving me head while asking for it all the time. When I heard the Chris Rock bit about women who don't give head – “They still *make* you?!” he'd said – it clicked with me hard. Hell, she didn't even like doggy position the couple of times we tried it. Missionary and cowgirl were her two speeds and damned be asking for anything else.

“Just remember, Christof and I have a wager riding on this, so the longer you can resist, the better it'll be for the winner. We can touch you, but can't take any of your clothes off without your permission, and as soon as one of you two touches your partner sexually, that person loses. So hold out as long as you can,” Freya's video double said. “And thank you for giving us a chance at closure, with one last night of intense passion. Give him hell, Lara! Good luck!”

“And good luck to you, Raf,” Christof said to me. “I know you're a man of steel. Be strong.” He raised a fist in solidarity to me, as the image froze, reaching the end of the video.

“So are you game?” Freya said, taking the phone back from my hands. “If not, I need to let Christof know and move on to my second choice. I just got a text message from him saying Lara's agreed to it.”

It was ridiculous, to be sure, but there was also something about getting over someone by getting them under you one last time, and maybe, I realized, I'd never fully gotten over being abandoned by Freya, just as college ended.

Fuck it, I thought. I didn't really have anything to lose.

“Yeah, hell with it,” I said. “Why not?”

“Okay one sec,” she said, tapping a button to make a call on her phone, holding it up to her ear. “He's game. Ready then? Three. Two. One. Begin.” She hung up the phone and tossed it onto my coffee table as she moved closer to me with a wicked smile.

The thing I will tell you about Freya is that she has always known how to use her size to her advantage, to make people feel intimidated by her presence. She was 6'7” and played basketball while we were in college. She was good too, with a long reach and strong sense of what was going on around her at all times. The first year or so of us dating, she would lean over me during arguments, to get me to back down quicker, but by the time we were seniors, I'd grown immune to that trick, and I was pleased to see that whatever resistance I'd built up to that particular mannerism of hers, it was still holding inside of me.

“I know you're thinking you want to resist as long as possible, Raf, but believe me when I tell you, I *am* going to win this, whether you like it or not,” she said, that overly confident smile I remembered all too well making its reappearance. “So you might as well touch me so we can move on to the fun parts.”

This *was* going to be theraputic, I thought to myself, as I slid my hands off the armrests of the

chair and folded them behind my back. “Jesus, Frey, you always did *love* to hear yourself talk, as if the sound of your own voice was the greatest music you could ever hear.”

She smiled at me, taking off her glasses, setting them on the coffee table next to her phone, before turning her gaze back at me. “I seem to recall you liking it a great deal yourself, Mister. I know how dirty words make your cock twitch. I bet they still do,” she said, reaching forward to smooth one of her hands along my cheek before running her fingertips through my scraggly black goatee. “I remember how I wouldn't let you grow facial hair when we were dating, because I thought it would be all scratchy when you were going down on me.”

“A favor you never returned, I'd like to remind you.”

She giggled, trying to sound like the twenty-year old girl I'd met in sophomore English composition class. “I'm a good little cocksucker these days, though. If you want, you can just push my head down and give it a go.”

“Or I can not fall for your obvious ploy,” I said, rolling my eyes. Freya had always overestimated her ability to manipulate people. “No dice. Maybe later, though.”

“C'mon Raf,” she said, her fingertips trailing along my collarbone slowly. “Wouldn't you love to just hold my head down, force your cock into my throat and just hold it there until I'm coughing around it, my eyes all watering up? You can fuck my face like you've always wanted to, make me gasp and plead for air, all the while I'm still begging for more?” She placed her other hand on my knee and smoothed it along my thigh. “I bet if I rub against this cock, I'm gonna find it nice and hard, aren't I?”

“You can't take my clothes off, Freya,” I warned her. “Those are your rules, remember?”

“I can't, but I can rub your cock through them,” she said with a giggle. “That's technically within the rules.”

I unfolded one of my arms from behind my back and grabbed the wrist of her hand on my cock, pulling it over to the arm of the chair, holding it there forcibly. “Then I suppose so is this, isn't it? In fact, I could just tie you up and leave you there for as long as I wanted, and that's not touching you sexually.”

She stuck her tongue out at me, rolling her eyes. “You're no fun. Fine, I won't touch your cock until after the game, although I might rub up against it every so often.” She turned to rub her ass against my crotch for just a minute, giving it a little bounce before standing up again, pulling her hand back from mine only long enough to drag her fingernails across my chest through my t-shirt. “We were good together, Raf, and with what I've learned over the years, we could be so much better. I can be whatever you want.”

“What if I don't want *you*, Freya?” I said. I knew that in the end, I was going to give in. The years had only made her more beautiful, and knowing it would be a nothing off limits, no consequences fling was certainly appealing, but I wasn't going to make it easy on her. The heartache over the years had built in some resentment inside me that was doubling as armor. “What if nothing you do can make me want to touch you?”

She rolled her eyes again, grinning at me. “Give me a *little* credit, Raf,” she said, sliding her fingertips along the back of my head. “I'm just getting started, and I'd like to think I'm pretty good at getting guys all worked up, what with my strong thighs, my luscious ass and my firm tits. Ooo! I don't know if you noticed, but they're bigger now than when we were together. I know you always tried to make me feel better about having small tits, but after I moved to Copenhagen and I found out how cheap it was to get them done, I got them enhanced, so they're nice and big now. I even shelled out a good amount of money to make sure they were as good as possible. No scarring, they feel natural, they aren't too big for my frame... now I'm just a pretty girl with the size of tits I always should've had growing up. You want to touch them?” Her fingertips were toying with her top.

“I'm not going to, Freya,” I said, starting to see the fun in the game, especially watching her pout every time I told her no. “Not for a good long while.”

“Well, I guess there's no reason I can't show them to you,” she said, grabbing her top to pull it

aside, her tits dropping one at a time like strikes on a drum, dum dum, and she was right, they were much fuller than they had been in college. Back in college, Freya had wavered between an A cup and a B cup, depending on how her diet was for the particular month. Now she was easily a C cup, if not a D cup, and they did look entirely natural, large heavy swells of soft flesh capped with dark pink stiff nipples, one of them a little bit longer than the other, like maybe it had been pierced at some time, but wasn't any more. "See?" She made a hand bra for herself, clutching her large breasts in her fingers, squeezing on the massive mounds, a delighted look crossing her face. "And they're still, like, totally sensitive. I was worried I wasn't going to be able to get a nipplegasm after they did it, but I still absolutely can." She licked her lips slowly, then brought one of her breasts up to her mouth, proving she could flick her tongue against it before letting the mound fall. "You remember that time you made me cum just from playing with my nipples while we were at my little sister's play? God, I felt like such a dirty whore, trying to swallow my moans, biting down on my sweater even as you were twisting my nip and making me cream my jeans. I had to wear my sweater around my waist, 'cause I was afraid the dampness would seep through and show."

"Hey, you *bet* me I couldn't get you to do it, because we were surrounded by people, and you'd be too nervous," I scolded. "That's what you said to me, remember?"

"Oh, I remember," she said with a nod. "And I remember I stiffed you on the bet too, because I was *sooo* confident you wouldn't be able to do it, I agreed to let you fuck me bent over something..."

"...which you never let me do..."

"...which I never let you do... but you could do it now... You could bend me over this coffee table and ram me until my knees go weak... You could shove me down on all fours on your couch and ram me from behind... whenever you touch me, your twelve hours of 'anything goes' starts, so why are you waiting?" Her fingertips were tugging her skirt upwards a little bit now, swishing it around as it lifted to expose her calves. "You can grab this, flip it over my head and pound away..."

"Except that I'm not going to give you the satisfaction of winning, Freya," I told her.

"Come *onnnnnn*, Raf," she whined. "Don't you wanna fuck me? I know I wanna fuck you... that's why I'm here... other than Christof, you were the best fuck I ever had..."

"And that's why you're losing, Freya," I told her. "Just like back then, it's all 'you you you' and never about me, what I want, what I need, what I'd like." I shook my head with a smile. "God, you always *were* like this, weren't you? Unable to think about anyone other than yourself for any length of time, even if you really wanted something. Shit, I can do this all damn day..."

She frowned for a second, the mask of unbreakable confidence shattering in that instant, as she looked at me with genuine concern, as it dawned on her that she was *entirely* capable of losing this little game with her husband-to-be, and that I wasn't the pushover I'd been in college.

She may not have changed, but I certainly had.

"Then what do *you* want, Raf?" she said, deciding to see if it was in her to switch tactics. "Do you want a woman who pushes you around? Do you want a whimpering little virgin, so shy, but so willing for you to take her? Do you want a wanton, desperate slut, so blind with lust for you that she'll do anything, say anything, just to get your affection? What is it you want out of a woman, Raf?"

I chuckled, nodding my head. "Yeah, that's what I figured. You don't even *know* what I want, Freya, because you thought I should just consider myself lucky to be with you. So we always ate where you wanted to eat, watched the shows you wanted to watch, listened to the music you wanted to listen to, but you never bothered to learn the things that made *me* happy, never took the time to figure out how to give instead of receive."

"Raf," she whined. "Even if you aren't going to do it, tell me what it is... you're right. I was a shitty girlfriend, and I didn't care about you like you cared about me. I see that now. Shit, maybe that was the point of all this, that both Christof and I confront the mistakes we made in the past so we don't make them moving forward, because I don't know enough about what he likes, what turns him on. So help me learn, help me learn how to make amends and how to better please a partner instead of

thinking like a stuck up bitch the whole time.”

“Asking isn't enough, Freya,” I told her, shaking my head. “It's a start, and shit, maybe it's where *you* need to start, but you need to be able to learn how to read your partner, how to spot the subtle signals. Shit, do you even know what turns Christof on, because I don't think you ever figured out what turns *me* on. Maybe you just lucked into it from time to time.”

She groaned, her face scrunching up in frustration, as she moved to sit on my lap, her legs on either side of me, just inches between her titflesh and my face, as if she knew pressing her boobs against my mouth would be a step too far. “Then *tell me, Raf*, so I can do that! I'm trying to turn you on, and I just don't get it!”

I decided to help her out and give her at least a starting point. “It's real simple, Freya. I even played a song around the house all the time, hoping you would get the idea. Like Cheap Trick said, 'I want *you* to want *me*.' You need to make me feel important, to feel wanted, to feel needed. Every chance you got, you made it clear that was I was just holding the seat until someone better came around, and I know you think it was just playful teasing, but that shit stung, and it hung over my head for a long time.”

She looked like she was about to say something so I cut her off and started talking again. I wasn't done; shit, I was barely getting *started*.

“You never wanted *me*, you just wanted a cock around whenever you needed it. You wanted someone to bolster your confidence and you never wanted to do anything to boost mine. Fuck, most of the time, you were trying to make me feel worse about myself, so that I wouldn't ditch you. At least that's how it felt at the time. I could've been anybody, because you didn't give a damn about me or what I wanted. When you told me you didn't suck cock, I said okay. When you told me your ass was exit only, I said okay. When you told me you only liked sex when you could make eye contact, I said okay. You set down all these rules, and I respected them... but fuck, Freya, you never once respected *me* or what *I* wanted.”

The look on her face said that I had shattered her worldview, and suddenly she was looking back at all the experiences we'd shared in our two years together in college in an entirely new light. I wasn't trying to be *mean*; I was trying to get *through* to her, to make her consider things from a point of view other than her own.

“I should've broken our relationship off after just a few weeks, but I started believing you when you told me I couldn't do any better, that I'd end up alone and that nobody would love me if you didn't. My friends back then *hated* you, because they said you treated me like shit, and I just kept telling them that they didn't know you like I did, but now I can see that *they* were right, and I *should* have gotten clear of you, because you never put anybody's needs above your own. You can't take take take and never give anything back. Maybe you aren't that way now, but you certainly were when we were together, and to me, it doesn't seem much like you've changed.”

Honestly, it almost looked like she wanted to break down crying, and from my coffee table came a sound from her phone, a quick blast of Beethoven's “Ode To Joy.” She looked over her shoulder with a slight sniff, fighting back the tears, before she looked back at me. “Well, it doesn't matter now,” she sighed. “You won, I lost. Or, I guess, Christof won. Either way I still lost.”

I took her hand in mine, holding it gently. “Can I tell you the *most* important thing you need to keep in mind right now?”

“That I'm a failure?” she sniffed, the tears threatening to come hard and fast. “No no, I got that already, Raf.”

“You're *not* a failure, Freya,” I laughed, rolling my eyes. “You're past the hardest part now – admitting to yourself that you *have* a problem. That's always the first step towards *fixing* the problem. You don't have to stay the way you were. And maybe you're already part way there. Christof asked you to marry him, so clearly you aren't as bad as you were back in college.”

“Well, I'm still way too selfish a bitch,” she said, settling her ass down on my knees. “Even

now, thinking back to all the things I demanded that I get my way for the wedding, fuck, it's a wonder anyone wants to be with me."

"Then change," I told her. "Figure out how you can give a little, or give a lot, and where compromising won't kill you. Remember how I went with you to your sister's play, and then like a month later, I had to go to that formal dinner for the opening of my friend's art gallery, and you just refused to go with me? I asked like twice, and both times you gave me some lame excuse."

She nodded, having pushed back the tears now, but still being near that edge of crying. "Fuck! I do that to Christof, too!" Freya leaned down and hugged me hard. "I needed this. Fuck I needed to hear this years and years ago, Rafael, but I don't think I would've been ready before now. And I am going to make it up to you. For the next twelve hours, I'm going to focus entirely on you. I was going to sort of half-ass it before, since I figured if there was anything you wanted that I *really* didn't want to do, I could weasel my way out of it, but now I want to know what you want." She kissed my cheek then turned my head and pressed my lips against hers, her tongue sliding into my mouth as she moaned into me, her hips scooting just a little bit forward on my lap. "Beyond me wanting you, because fuck, when Christof and I came up with this idea, I... my *pussy* got wet at the thought of getting to fuck you again."

"You don't have to lie to me and say I was the best you ever had, Frey," I said with a soft laugh.

She shook her head emphatically. "I wouldn't do that to you, Raf. And you aren't the best, but you were the *second* best, behind Christof, and I think Christof got the benefit of all the other guys over the years breaking down some of my prudish barriers." She leaned in and flicked her tongue along the shell of my ear. "I was fingering myself thinking about getting the chance to suck you off for the first time in my hotel room this morning," she whispered at me. "I hoped you'd be standing up, with me down on my fucking knees. I knew I hurt you, and I felt like if you wanted to hurt me back, well, I'd been such a bitch that I probably deserved it. And I kinda liked how it felt, knowing I'd be punished by the man who'd earned that right more than anyone else."

"Let me see the phone," I told her.

"What?" she said.

"Let me see the phone," I repeated.

She slipped from my lap, looking at me shyly, then picked it up, unlocking it before holding it out to me. "You don't trust me, huh? I guess that's fair. I'm not above being a lying, manipulative bitch."

I took the phone from her hand and saw the message from Christof from a couple of minutes, saying "I win" with a photo attached of a woman's hand wrapped around what I assumed was his cock, and I have to say that while Christof's dick certainly looked longer than mine, it was also skinny as a garden hose, no real thickness to it at all.

"Okay," I said, standing up. "Just wanted to be sure." I handed the phone back to her, and then grabbed her shoulders and forced her down onto her knees, but even then, she was still too tall to be face level with my crotch. "Unfold your legs."

"God yes," she said, her sky blue eyes looking up at me adoringly, lifting one leg to unfold it before doing the other, sitting on her ass with her legs in a V shape surrounding me. "I want this. I want you to do this. I want you so bad, I'm itchy and wet."

"Prove it."

Freya licked her lips and then nodded, reaching down to draw up her long, flowy skirt until it was at her waist level, exposing she hadn't worn any panties on underneath, lifting the skirt up and over her head, setting it aside before she reached a hand down to rub two fingers across her snatch, pushing her middle digit in before sliding it out, holding it up to me, an offering for me to lick up.

"Clean it off yourself," I said to her, a tiny hint of that lingering frustration still rolling around inside of me. "You know what bothered me the most about you not sucking cock, Freya? The fucking hypocrisy of it all, because you wanted me to eat your pussy every fucking chance you got. And I did. I licked you out until my tongue was sore and my jaw ached, and never once, not one fucking time did you return the favor."

She reached up and started unbuttoning my jeans frantically. “Then I've got a lot of cock sucking to make up for it, don't I?” she said, before yanking my pants and my boxers down to my ankles with one hand, the other reaching up to stroke my cock, bringing it to her lips, pushing her mouth down it like she was going to die if she didn't force the head of into her throat. She was groaning with excitement, drooling and slobbering all over my shaft, as she pulled back long enough to inhale a deep lungful of air and then instantly dove her face back down again, her eyes tilted up the entire time to hold my gaze, almost daring me to look away.

It was almost like Freya was trying to make up for all the time she'd spent *not* sucking cock, and was determined to show me what she'd learned over the years. I was clearly benefiting from time she'd spent practicing with other men, because in the end, she was a voracious cocksucker, bobbing her head up and down in a frenzy, never once breaking eye contact. I wanted to put up a good fight, I honestly did, but she was *relentless*, suckling and smacking her tongue all over my dick until finally, there was just no way I was getting out of it.

“I'm going to cum,” I said to her, fully expecting her to pull her head off, but instead, she pushed her mouth all the way down to the base, her hand reaching up to fondle and squeeze my nuts, until I had my load coaxed from me, and she was doing everything she could to swallow it down, finally sliding her head back until her lips formed a seal around the head of my shaft, her other hand stroking the base of my cock like she wanted to make sure she got any of my jizz she might have missed.

After licking me clean, she popped her head off, still keeping her eyes on me. “Hopefully that's a good start on showing how much I want to please you,” Freya said to me. “I think I was so against sucking dick when I was younger because I thought somehow it was giving up control, but eventually I realized what incredible power I had when I was blowing a man, and the huge amount of trust he was putting in me, letting me get my teeth near his most sensitive bits.”

“Weren't you asking me to fuck your face earlier?” I asked her. “How are you in control then?”

“Well, I'm fighting for control at that point, and that sort of push and pull seemed like it would be good in a sexual relationship, isn't it?” she said, looking up at me with a wild, almost dizzy smile. “And we're just getting started, aren't we?”

“Anything I want, huh?” I asked her, placing a hand on my hip, the other hand reaching to get some of her Nordic mane of blonde hair from her face.

“That was what I said, and I'd be a right shit if I didn't abide by those rules,” she said, licking her lips, making sure she'd gotten all of my cum from them. “What's next?”

“Do you *want* there to be anything next?”

She looked up at me with an almost drunken smile, rolling her eyes a little. “We're only getting started, Raf. And you've got free reign of this body for the next twelve hours. Not only *can* you do whatever you want with it, I *want* you to slake *any* thirst you have with me. All the things I always said no to in college, I'll do them all now, if you want. I figured we'd go at it for two or three hours, sleep for five or six, and then wake up and go at all over again to wrap up, but if you think you can keep it up for twelve hours—”

“If your erection lasts longer than four hours, contact your physician, Freya,” I said, which made both of us laugh. “But I think that's a doable plan.”

“And you're a doable *man*,” she purred at me. “And I want you to do *me*. So how do you want me?”

I have a nice little footstool in my living room that was one of the few pieces of furniture I kept from when my grandfather left me the house, but I'd never really found a good use for it, before that moment, when I pulled it over, setting it in front of the couch. Then I decided that I could put Freya to a real test, see if she meant it. So I grabbed my phone, setting the camera on video, placing it on the couch, pointed right at the footstool. I tilted my head towards the footstool, and then looked back at my Nordic giant goddess on the floor. “Go on, then.”

She stood up and moved to sit down on the footstool, facing me. "Like this?"

"Are you having a laugh?" I said, shaking my head. I stepped over to her and pulled her to her feet, spun her around and pushed her knees down onto the footstool, then shoved her forward hearing her giggle as her hands landed on the far end of the rectangular footstool. "You know the camera's on, right? Just so we're clear on that?"

"You want a keepsake of me begging you to ram your cock in me even harder?" she said, looking straight at the camera. "I told you, I can't say no to anything. Do you want me quiet or loud? Innocent or dirty?"

"I don't know that you're capable of being truly dirty, Freya, so let's see if you can prove me wrong," I said, kicking off my shoes and pulling off my pants and boxers and finally my shirt, so that we were both naked.

"Over the years, I've come to love a challenge, Raf," she purred, lifting one hand up and pushing it between her legs, taking her middle and pointer fingers and spreading the folds of her snatch for me, as she looked back over her shoulder at me. "And I want to be fucked until my eyes roll back into my goddamn skull, until I feel like my cunt's been stretched to the breaking point, like a good little whore who's been used so much, her legs don't work and she can't stand up. Look at what a wet bitch you have on her knees before you, Raf. Ready. Willing. Wanton. Needy. *Eager*." She looked forward again, staring straight into the camera. "C'mon, Raf. Fuck my brains out. Plow my pussy so hard that I'm still feeling it when I say 'I do,' in a couple of weeks."

"You think you can handle this?" I asked her, placing my left hand on her hip, using my right hand to get my cock lined up before I pushed into her twat, feeling just how wet she truly was, even as she moaned, a shiver running up her spine. I lifted my now free hand up and slapped it down on her ass with a good hard crack, spanking the flesh, hearing another moan burble from her throat.

"I'll go one further, Raf," she whimpered. "I know the chances of you knocking me up are low, but it's a good time for me, and if it happens, I'm going to keep it and Christof's gonna raise it as his own, and you don't even have to be around for it. That's what you won... the chance to fucking *breed* me. That all you got?"

Now that I was inside of her, my other hand reached up and grabbed her mane of hair in my fist, giving it a sharp yank, which made her gasp and then giggle. My hand on her hip slid down and pulled on one of her thighs, making her spread her legs wider, as I rammed my hips against her ass, banging into her, even as I could hear her tits jiggling beneath her, knowing that the camera was catching a great angle of that.

"Fuck yes!" she squealed. "Do it, do it, god, fucking do it. Pound it, pound your little slut, fucking rail it, rail me, drill that hole, drill your hole, harder harder harder fuck I want it I want it I want it I want it!" Her voice was dancing up and down the octaves, her face looking directly into the camera of my phone.

I gave her head a shove downward and watched as her arms splayed out forward, her chin resting on the top of the footstool, her ass clapping against me each time I railed into her, and I was plowing her hard and fast, as I could feel the footstool starting to scoot a little bit, so I yanked it back into me, pulling her hard onto my cock, feeling her pussy walls quivering around me, like she had forgotten what a thick dick I had.

"Harder harder harder Jesus I'm gonna fucking cum fuck fuck fuck I can't fucking believe it don't stop don't stop don't stop don't stop oh god oh god oh god fuck my pussy my pussy oh fuck I'm fucking cumming I'm cumming I'm cumming I'm fucking cumming my bitch brains out oh my fucking god you baaaaasssttttaaaaarrdd!"

Her body was lost in a sea of shakes and shivers, spasms trying to milk my dick and when she lifted one of her hands up and slammed it down as a fist, she clamped down hard on my cock, and all I could do was blast a heavy load of hot jizz against the back of her cunt, filling her up with spurt after spurt of cum.

“Oh my fucking god,” she cooed, finally placing her hand on the footstool to lift her head and shoulders up off the surface of it. “I think I feel my belly's paunchy with your cum. Did you fucking inflate my snatch?”

I laughed a little bit, shaking my head. “You don't need to stroke my ego, Freya,” I said to her. “But I do feel a couple of pounds lighter.”

“Don't tell me you're going to tap out already,” she giggled, sliding forward, letting my cock pop out of her, pressing her thighs together as she rolled onto her back. “Surely there's other things you always wanted to do with me,” she purred, swaying her legs to and fro, to punctuated each word. “Any. Thing. You. Want.”

“If you're suggesting what I think you're suggesting, Freya, I'm certainly not going to take you up on it if you don't want me to.”

She smiled like a teenage girl trying to tease her first boyfriend into doing something naughty. “I want you to walk away from this with no regrets, Raf,” she said sensually at me.

“I'm too thick for—”

“I've been training,” she said, licking her lips. “With plugs. Started small. Worked my way up.”

“Ever done it before?”

“Nope,” she said, still swinging her closed legs back and forth. “Wanted to save it for you.” She rolled her legs all the way to one side, to show me her toned, pale ass. “Told Christof I was gonna do it with you.” She reached back and peeled her cheeks apart, to show me her winking anus. “He said to tell you he envies you, but that you should definitely do it.”

“I can tell you've never done it before because you're *going* to nee—”

“It's in the bag,” she said with a scampish laugh. “Want me to get it?”

“Tell you what,” I said to her, not believing she would do this in a million years. “If you've got lube in there, and you can actually tell me to do it, then we can.”

She rolled off the footstool and headed over for her bag. “Oh I'll tell y—”

“On camera,” I said to her. “And you don't know what I'll do with the videos.”

Freya rolled her eyes with a grin. “You might jerk off to them, or maybe show them to another partner later, neither of which is a thing I'd be bothered by,” she said, opening up her bag, grabbing a bottle of clear lube, tossing it to me. In return, I tossed her the phone, which was still recording.

“Then hold the camera to film yourself, looking at me, telling me that you want it,” I said, as I moved to sit down on the couch. I opened the bottle and started to drizzle the clear liquid over my cock.

She brought to phone up to hold it in front of her face, but just off to the side so that she could look directly at me. “I've never been fucked in the ass before, Rafael, but I want you to do it. I want to feel you sodomizing me. I want to feel you jamming your cock up my virgin asshole. I... I know it's going to be a lot. I mean, a lot a lot. But I want it. Blow my mind. I wanna feel it. I...” She looked down and licked her lips once more, then looked back up at me again. “The first time I put a plug into my ass, fuck, it felt like my body was being... changed... pried open... I was a little scared... but what I've learned is that it's *good* to be scared, and to challenge those fears... to push yourself. I didn't know that, back when we were together, because... well, because I was trying to prove that I wasn't just big physically, but big emotionally too.” Freya held out her hand, and I handed the bottle of lube to her. “So how do we do this?”

“Lube your ass up and then you can sit on my cock, so if it's too much—”

“It won't be too much—” she said, smearing lube on her fingers before reaching down to spread it all over her back door.

“*If* it's too much, you can just get up.”

She moved over towards me, holding the camera on her face as she straddled me reaching beneath her to grab on my slippery dick, wiggling it back and forth before getting it lined up. She took in a deep breath, pursed her lips together and finally said, “Fuck it, let's do it.”

I felt her slowly pressing down against me, and while her sphincter was tight, she had been

training it over the past few weeks or months, because the tip of my cock forced its way inside of her ass without too much work.

“Ffffffuck that's big that's big you've got such a big fucking dick, Raf, and my fucking virgin ass is soooo fucking tiny but it feels so fucking good even though it hurts a little bit but I fucking love how it feels oh shit why the fuck was I so scared fuck fuck fuck fuuuuck!”

She slammed her hips down, forcing my cock hilt deep into her ass. I figured I was in for a slow ride, but instead she was going at it like she *wanted* it to hurt a bit, one hand holding the phone, sometimes focusing on her face, sometimes pointing it at my cock stretching her ass open or my cum leaking out of her pussy, but after a minute or so, she dropped it on the couch and just started pogoing on my dick over and over again until the sheer tightness of it set me off, and when I started cumming, I think she did too, although it was hard to tell, considering she was squealing the whole fucking time.

We sat there, my softening cock getting pushed quickly out of her ass, before she finally kissed me again. “Shower, nap, then round two?” she said with a giggle.

“The first two for certain,” I said, “and we'll see if I'm able to do the third after all that.”

“Oh you will,” she purred, stroking my chin. It's our last great hurrah...”

Part Three – A Girl

Remember how I was telling you that I had gotten out from underneath the oppressive thumb of Uber and their shitty business practices? Remember how proud I was that I gotten away from the dumpster fire they kept foisting onto those of us desperate enough to drive for them?

“You looking for Sheila?” a gorgeous blonde in a tiny black dress asked me, her date holding the door open for her.

“I am if you're looking for Raf,” I told her. “Hop on in.”

Yeah, well, sometimes desperation gets the better of us. The water heater at the house had crapped out and I found myself suddenly very desperately needing a few grand to cover the check I'd just written for its replacement. Oh, I had the money, sure, but it was going to tap into most of my fallback money, and I still needed to pay for minor quibbles like, y'know, food. So I decided to do a weekend ferrying drunks around, hoping like hell I'd catch a few majorly long drives to make up for the insane amount of money Uber was taking from the fare, not to mention the stupid price of gas.

It was the fall of 2015, and the presidential primaries were looming close. At this point, I figured I still had another month or so before the third thing from Mrs. Choi popped up in my life, but this was the one that made me realize how the system was built.

Between the first and second secrets had been seven months, but between the second and third, there was only a six month gap. After the events I'm going to relay to you, I'd figured out that the fourth secret would come five months later, the fifth secret four months after that, the sixth secret three months after *that* and the seventh and final secret around two months from then. That meant I was going to be through Mrs. Choi's presents within 27 months total, or two and a quarter years.

But, of course, I didn't know that when I went out driving that night for Uber. I assumed there was still a month before shit would get crazy. Maybe that's why it all caught me so off-guard.

Sheila, the blonde who slipped into the back of my car, was heartbreakingly gorgeous. 5'11” (and that *wasn't* including the four inch heels she was wearing), just a little bit tan, with Midwestern blonde hair, dressed in a daring little black dress that had one of the most daring cleavage dip lines I'd ever seen, plunging down almost to her navel, offering more than generous eyefuls of firm, youthful tits straining against the black fabric that was clinging to her flesh. She also had ridiculously long legs, almost on display up to her hips, the center of the black dress hanging low, but the sides having slits in them that nearly reached her waistline, offering a virtual smorgasbord of exposed tanned and muscular flesh. Her lips were painted a lustrous hue of red more brilliant than the stop lights I'd spent most of the night staring at. Her winter blue eyes were ringed with smoky makeup that gave her almost a femme fatale feel, although the smile she was offering me was definitely pure black widow vibes all the way,

and you know what? I wouldn't have minded just one bit being her prey, if that was what it took to get her to show me just a little bit of affection. She had to be an actress or a model or just someone who traded on those looks for a living, because I was certain I was far from the first man whose heart had been trampled on simply by *seeing* this magnificent creature.

The guy who got in next to her I immediately wanted to beat the shit out of.

"C'mon, buddy, let's get this show on the road," he said, pulling the door shut behind him.

"Seatbelts," I told him, tapping two fingers to my collarbone, as if to reaffirm that I wasn't driving anywhere until he had a seat belt on, as the blonde dutifully pulled hers on, clicking it in place.

"Man, fuck that," he growled in a drunken slur at me. "I ain't putting on no fucking seat belt."

"Put it on, Roger," Sheila said to him, her voice full of unspoken threats that carried the weight of a thousand fists, and just like that, he was doing his best to pull the seat belt to click it in place. "Two stops okay?"

"It's your nickel, lady," I told her. "As long as the meter's running, she goes where you tell her to, long as it's not down to Los Angeles or anything."

"Nothing that far," she said with a smile, as Roger shifted and sort of slumped back into the corner of space between my seat and my rear passenger door. "Up to Fairfield then down to San Ramon."

We were in downtown Oakland currently, so while it was a bit of a drive, longer drives were generally better and considering this was during surge pricing, I was happy as hell to make that kind of a haul of this lady's wallet. "Sure, I can do that. It's probably faster, though, if I do San Ramon first then Fairfield."

"It's fine. I prefer sticking to the order I've chosen, if you don't mind," she said with a soft smile, placing one of her hands on my shoulder. At that point, she could've told me to drive the car off the Bay Bridge and I probably would've done it. Her touch was so kind and gentle. I was starting to wonder if the lady herself was made of the kind of magic Mrs. Choi had been throwing around. "How's your night been so far, Raf?"

"A bit of here, there and everywhere," I told her, "but a handful of fun stories. I started the evening by taking five guys over to the City for a bachelor party, but man, had they picked the diciest strip club in SF to go to, so on the way over, I was able to talk them into changing to a better place, so they'll have a nicer evening, even if it costs them a little more."

"That was kind of you," she said to me, that warm charm lingering on her face. "Where did you end up sending them?"

"Centerfolds," I told her. "The rates are a little bit higher but the girls have always seemed friendlier, nowhere near as pushy, and they know how to handle first timers better than most of the other strip clubs around there."

"Wise man," she said. Sheila glanced over and scowled at Roger. "If you throw up in this car, I will make your life a living hell. If you think you need him to, ask the driver to pull over."

Roger nodded, his eyes clearly out of focus. "I'm good. Imma be good," he mumbled, telling me that he wasn't going to be good at all. I made it a point to stay over in the slower lane, so in case I needed to haul ass to pull into the emergency blowout area.

"What else have you had walk through your doorway tonight, Raf?" she asked, as I was happy to have the attention turned back on me and away from Drunky McDrunkerson.

"Couple of college girls going out on their weekly bender. Some kids who needed a lift home from Homecoming. And a stoned guy who just needed a lift to and from the 7-11, but ended up buying like half the damn shop. He ended up giving me an entire bag full of 3 Musketeers. You want one? I'm not kidding, I've got like twenty-something of them."

She laughed, and it was the greatest melody I'd ever heard. "No thank you, but at least he brought you some to share, I guess? He get you a drink as well?"

I nodded. "Bought me four Orange Vanilla Cokes, but I only drank one. The other three are in

the trunk right now. I'll have'em later.”

“Pull over,” Roger said suddenly, and I immediately slowed and brought the vehicle off the road and onto the edge of the concrete. The vehicle hadn't even reached a full stop when he pushed the door open, turned his head and started puking out the side of the car. I'd need to stop and check the door itself and door frame, but it looked like he got almost all of it out of the vehicle, so that was something. While he was doing this, Sheila hopped out of the backseat, walked around the car and moved to get in the front passenger's seat, making sure I got a damn good look at as much of that exposed cleavage as she could give me when she did. After four or five heaves, Roger wiped his mouth off with the sleeve of his expensive silk shirt and then pulled the door shut again. “Thanks. Go.”

I brought the vehicle slowly back up to speed, having to watch carefully that no vehicles were in the slow lane to accidentally slam into the back of us. It wasn't exactly the kind of thing most people were on the lookout for on a Friday night after the bars closed, so I had to be on my toes and make sure nothing went sideways. “This what you do full time?” she asked me.

“Nah,” I told her. “I'm a 3D modeler and animator for videogames, when there's work to be had, but the last several years, the market's been going through something of a rough patch if you're not already established at a studio. I do this as a side gig to pick up a little money here and there, although it's mostly just short-term gain at a long-term loss.”

“If that's true, then why do it?” she said, turning a little bit, folding one of her legs up so I could see pale flesh almost all the way up to her crotch, the flap of dress covering just the smallest amount of her thighs, leaving most of the beautiful canvas of skin exposed to my casually glancing eyes.

“I'm not exactly at a place where I can shrug off sudden unexpected misfortunes in my life, and when my boiler broke down, I had to find some way to cover the fucking thing. That means picking up a handful of weekends doing this and trying not to pay too much attention to how much the mileage is racing up on the car.”

“I think we have all gone through phases like that in our lives, Raf,” she said with a smile, one of her fingers reaching out to draw along my forearm resting on the center console. “Things where we feel like we don't have control over anything or anyone. But you'll get through it, like we all do. And you will be stronger for it. I felt that way until I got out from under my father's thumb.”

“So what do you do for a living, Sheila, if you don't mind me asking?”

“Why would I mind?” she replied, licking her lips just a little bit. “I'm... an event planner, of sorts, as well as a kind of talent scout. I organize... very specialized parties... for *very* wealthy clients who are willing to pay quite a sizable amount for, shall we say, unique experiences.”

“Normally I'd complain about how vague you're being, but that much money, I imagine people are also paying for their discretion,” I answered with a laugh, which she joined in with.

“That they are, Raf. That they are.” Up close, I could see she had a small mole of skin between her eyebrows, but somehow the minor blemish just made her *more* beautiful, as if it was an establishing piece to assure the viewer that this was, in fact, a real woman, and not someone who'd just walked out of their dreams. “But I have a reputation of being able to deliver an incredibly *specific* service, given enough time and patience. And that's made me wealthy enough that I don't need to be concerned with money too much.” Behind us, a cop lit up his flashers and pulled in behind me. “Are we doing something illegal?”

“No, but I'm taking it a bit slow because of your friend in the back. I'm sure it'll just be a minute,” I said, bringing the car back onto the shoulder as the police car pulled in behind us. I had my Uber tags displayed, but I'd been told by a cop not too long ago that apparently drunks were trying to slap on Lyft or Uber stickers onto their windshield while they were drunk, thinking it would provide some level of protection.

The spotlight was shining into my side mirror, keeping me engulfed in the light as a pair of officers got out of the car, one moving on the passenger's side, the other moving along the driver's side towards me, as I rolled the window down.

"How's it going tonight?" the cop said to me, shining a flashlight into the car, checking out Roger's semi-unconscious form before turning the light onto Sheila then me.

"Not too bad, officer," I said to him, trying to be as warm and friendly as possible. "Was keeping the speed a little low in case I had to pull over again for the guy in the back to puke some more. That why you pulled me over?"

"That and you've got a taillight out," he said to me. "License, registration, proof of insurance?"

I sighed and nodded. "Reg and insurance is in the glove box. Can I open it?"

"Slowly," the cop responded. I'd been through all of this with one of my white friends once, and he'd just immediately gone for his registration, but the first time I tried that, I heard the cop's hand resting on his sidearm, like I was going to draw down on him or some stupid shit like that. The joys of being anything other than white in this country. I took the registration and proof of insurance out of the glove box, and then fished out my driver's license, as the cop took all three from me, his partner still keeping a light on Roger in the back seat. "Stay here. I'll be right back." He headed back to his car, leaving me and Sheila sitting basically alone, with the cop's partner on overwatch.

"Why'd you ask if you can open the glove box?" she said to me.

"Because while being brown isn't as bad as being black in this country, it's still not as easy as being white," I told her with a sigh. "Did you see the taillight out when you walked up on the car?"

"No, but I wasn't paying much attention to it."

"Shit. Okay, yeah. Sorry about the hold up."

"No no," she said, reaching over to squeeze one of my hands. "For all the shit the night's given you thusfar, you're being remarkably calm about it."

"No sense in losing my damn head over it," I told her as I saw the cop starting to walk back.

"Alright son," he said, despite the fact that I was probably slightly older than he was, as he handed me my paperwork along with a ticket, all of which I put into the glove box. "I've written you up a fix-it ticket, so as long as you get it repaired and show it to an officer in the next 30 days, there's no fine associated with it. Thanks for your service in getting drunks home. We truly appreciate it. Have a good night."

"Fuck you PIG!" Roger drunkenly shouted from the back seat, as I reflexively winced.

"I'm gonna let that slide, sir, but if you repeat that kind of behavior, I'm going to take you downtown for drunk and disorderly," the officer said to Roger, who just stuck his tongue out in response. "I dunno how you do it, brother, but you have the patience of a saint." The cop patted me on the shoulder then gestured for his partner to head back to the car.

I slowly brought the car back onto the highway and brought it back up to speed, because I could hear Roger fidgeting in the back seat again. The fact that he'd just verbally assaulted a cop didn't bode well for the rest of my night, I figured. It was closer to three than two in the morning now, and I still had plenty of driving to do.

Most of the rest of the drive up to Fairfield was pretty quiet, with Sheila preferring to keep quiet and just look out the window, although she did her best to make sure her thighs were always front and center for my eyeline if I ever looked over in her direction.

The address she'd given me was one of a stripe of fifty or so nearly identical McMansions, each of which ran probably a couple mil, but with no real soul or personality to them. There was a bright red Jaguar out in front of this one with custom vanity plates that read "RGRSRYD" which made me hate this prick even more.

"Okay Roger, you're home now," Sheila said. "Time for you to get out of the car and head into your home." She reached behind her seat to grab his leg and shake him from his slumber, forcing him to wake up suddenly. "You're home, Roger. Up and at'em."

He sat upright suddenly, and took several seconds to figure out how to unlatch the seat belt, the dumb ass. Once he got that done, he was able to get himself out of the car easily, although closing the door behind him took notably longer. I was looking forward to pulling the car back when I realized he

was trying to open the front passenger's door. "C'mon Sheila, gethafuck outta tha car," he shouted.

"I don't think so, Roger," she said to him through the glass of the window. "Now go into your house and go to bed."

With a speed that made even me a little nervous, there was suddenly a switchblade in his hand, snapped out and at the ready, as he tapped the point of it against the glass. "Opena fuckin' car, you fuckin' *whore*," he snarled. "After how much I fuckin' paid for dinner tonight, you fuckin' *owe* me... now get outta fuckin' car or Imma cut you."

I could hear Sheila's breathing get quick and shallow, and by this point, I'd fucking had it. This guy had been making my night a living hell for nearly an hour now, and while I'd like to think of myself as a patient man, even my patience has limits. I put the car into park, killed the engine, reached into the door's little well pocket and grabbed my ballistic baton.

"You don't have—"

"I got this," I said to Sheila, as I opened my door, stepped out of the car and snapped my ballistic baton into the extended position. "Shit, at this point it'll be therapeutic..."

For those of unfamiliar with a ballistic baton, it's a collapsible metal billy club used by security guards and bouncers all over the place. I think you're supposed to have a license for them in California, but fuck if I was gonna let that stop me. It makes a very satisfying SHUNK sound when you extend it, and usually that's enough to give somebody second thoughts about getting in my way. Not Roger, though, who seemed confident that even in his inebriated state he'd be able to do more damage to me than to himself with that switchblade.

"C'mon you fuckin' towelhead," he spat at me. "Come get your medi—"

Funny thing about drunks – they tend to talk a lot of trash, and never *ever* expect someone to hit them while they're doing it, which is why I cracked him across the face with the end of the baton, watching him whip around, clinging onto his switchblade, but nearly falling onto the ground. He didn't seem to want to go down lightly, though, and regained his wits, the smack across the head probably having sobered him up a bit, adrenaline coursing through his veins now.

"Takin' cheap shots, huh? Yeah, about what I expect—"

I mean, fool him once, shame on me, fool him twice, shame on him. If the moron wanted to keep monologuing me, I was going to beat the shit out of him for free while he was doing it. This time I followed up the blow to the head with a smack into his forearm, hitting him strong enough to make him drop the switchblade.

At that point, I could do whatever I wanted to, so I gave him a couple more strikes across the ribs, making the guy double over in pain, as he started to vomit onto his own sidewalk. I moved over to where he'd dropped the switchblade and kicked it as far away as I could before moving back over to Roger, who was groaning and whimpering.

"Next time you decide you want to get drunk and be an asshole, Roger," I said, looming over him. "Do everybody a favor and *stay the fuck at home*." I crouched down so I could collapse the baton back into its smaller form by hitting the narrow tip of it directly down onto the concrete. Then I stood up again, got back into the driver's seat of my car, started the engine up and pulled the vehicle containing myself and Sheila away.

"You... you truly didn't have to do that, Raf," she said to me after a couple of minutes of us driving, like the shock of it all had been too much for her to say anything up front. "He could've seriously hurt you."

"Drunk like that's more likely to hurt himself with a knife than he is hurt anybody else, but he still might've put his hand through the window, and then we've got ourselves a much bigger problem," I told her. "Besides, you called for the car, and he's too drunk to remember the plate on the car, so the minute he got out of the vehicle, he officially became somebody else's problem."

"What if one of the neighbors had a doorbell camera or something?"

"Then I'll happily use the footage on my dashboard camera to show that he pulled a knife on me

and threatened both my passenger and myself, and I was clearly defending myself,” I told her as the car moved back onto the highway. “Guy’s lucky he’s just gonna be ending up with a few bruises. I should’ve broken his fucking arm for drawing a knife on me.”

I drove in relative silence for the next ten minutes or so before she spoke again. “So Raf, I’ve decided I’m in your debt for your behavior tonight, and I’ve been trying to come up with an appropriate compensation for it.”

“You really don’t have—”

“Now while your service tonight has been exceptional, it’s not entirely enough to cover one entire use of my services,” she said, just talking right over me. “But if I were to get a chance to enjoy my skills as well myself, well, that might be around an even exchange of debts. So tell me, Raf, are you straight, gay or bi? No judgment, no matter what your answer is.”

“I’m straight,” I responded.

“Would the presence of another man put you off? Or could you handle a second man in the bedroom as long as he didn’t get intimate with you?”

“I mean, as long as he respects that I’m straight, I guess I’m not bothered by it.”

“Excellent,” she said. “Then I think we have an accord. Are you busy tomorrow evening?”

“I’d been planning on driving for the night,” I told her sheepishly.

“If I paid for your water heater, would that free up your evening?”

“I, uh... I guess it would?” I said. “Isn’t that going to muck up our ledgers?”

She laughed, as if I suggested that adding a drop of water into the ocean was going to cause tidal waves across the planet. “My dear boy, men and women across the globe typically pay hundreds upon thousands of dollars for a single use of my services, more commonly millions or tens of millions, but I’ve rarely been able to indulge in my own services myself, simply because I haven’t seen anyone worth going through the effort for. For you, though? I think you will be my exception. We’ll have two encounters, one for you, and one for me. I’ll even let you have yours first, as I feel perfectly comfortable that you won’t renege on our deal, and it’ll take some time for me to line up what I will need for our second encounter, whereas what *you* will require I already have on hand. It was originally supposed to be for Roger, seeing as he paid for it, but since his threats of violence violate the contract, he’s forfeited his payment, so you can reap the benefits instead.”

“What exactly *are* your services?” I asked her, almost not sure I wanted her to tell me.

She laughed once more, shaking her head. “Oh no no *no*, my sweet summer child, to tell you would ruin the surprise of it. And it’s been far *far* too long since I’ve been able to surprise someone with this. In the circles I run in, everyone knows *exactly* who I am and what I offer. But you? Your eyes will be the size of your headlights when I arrive tomorrow night. What part of the Bay do you live in?”

“Far northeast San Jose,” I told her. “Almost on Mount Hamilton. I inherited the house from my grandfather.”

“Excellent,” she said. “Far from prying eyes. The address?” She took her cell phone out from her pocket, opening up a contact for me as she dutifully typed my name, cell phone number and address into the contacts screen. “Very good. I’ll handle the rest for my part tomorrow then. It’s up that private road here,” she said, gesturing to a pathway that I probably would’ve missed if she hadn’t been pointing it out. The Uber app just wanted me to stop and let her out here, but I moved up the private road before stopping at a gate. She handed me her keys. “Wave them in front of the box.” I took them from her, reached out my window and gestured with them at the callbox and sure enough, the gate beeped and started to open as I handed her back her keys. “Up to the front door, if you please.”

I rolled the Civic up the long driveway and saw a much more elegant mansion waiting at the top of the hill, refined and restrained, but with a certain sense of classical identity, lots of soft light and cast shadows around the relatively modern looking structure. While Roger’s McMansion had oozed schmaltz, this was pure class all the way. “Quite the pad you’ve got,” I whistled. “Your services buy you all of this?”

“Mmhhh,” she agreed quietly. “And in just four years of operation, too.” I brought the car up to the base of the steps, and shifted into park. “I’ll tell you all about it tomorrow when we see each other again. I will be at your place at seven o’clock sharp, so we can have a bit of time to go over the rules and sign the paperwork before the fun starts. You do not need to dress up, but I would appreciate it if you would shower beforehand. Cleanliness is next to godliness and all that. Also eat beforehand. I’m sure you have questions, but they can wait. It’ll all make sense tomorrow, Raf, you’ll see.” She leaned in and pressed a kiss to my cheek before pulling back just an inch or two, then turned my head and dipped down again to kiss me once more, this time full on, a lustful almost hungry sexual passion burning in there, our tongues briefly touching before our lips parted once more, and that wild, almost incorrigible smile danced across her face once more. “I’ve chosen well indeed,” she purred. “This’ll be fun. I’ll see you tomorrow, Raf. Be ready for my arrival. Until then, good night.”

She slipped out of the car and headed up the steps, that dress flicking left and right, and I couldn’t take my eyes off that amazing toned ass of hers until she was practically at the door, when she looked back over one shoulder, winked at me, and then disappeared into her house.

What the fuck had I gotten myself into?

I ended the fare, which had turned into a couple hundred dollars, and then turned the app off for the night, before making my way back down home.

Getting to sleep that night was a major bitch, and I woke up relatively early, as if the idea of sleep was anathema to the experience I was expecting, but I didn’t even really know *what* I was expecting, so I mostly just kept myself busy around the house.

Around six o’clock, I ran out to Mod Pizza and picked up a personal pizza for dinner, because I didn’t trust myself for my cooking, and about 6:30, I hopped through the shower, drying my hair out almost right up until seven. I threw on a good t-shirt and some black slacks and tried to be patient, but let me tell you, that was a fucking challenge.

As promised, at seven sharp, there was a ring on my doorbell. I moved over to the front door and opened it to see Sheila waiting there, dressed a gray shirt with a faded red Coca-Cola logo on it that was tight enough I could make out the outline of her bra on through it and a pair of dark blue denim jeans that were slung low enough that I could make out a bit of her tanned stomach in a crack of exposed flesh between the bottom of the shirt and the top of the jeans. Her blonde hair hung loose down to her collarbone, dark brown at the top but near platinum at the tips. She was wearing some makeup, but it was far more casual than last night, the lipstick a soft shade of pink. She looked like the quintessential Midwestern girl next door dream girl.

“Hey Sheila,” I told her.

“Nope,” she giggled at me, and I realized that her voice sounded slightly different, as she walked into my house and I saw that standing right behind her... was *her*.

Again.

“That’s Annie,” Sheila said to me. She was dressed the exact same – t-shirt, jeans, light makeup. She had her hair the exact same. I was seeing double. She grinned, pointing a finger at my face. “And *that’s* the look worth too much to pay for. C’mon.”

She moved into the house and as gobstruck as I was, I closed the door shut and moved into my living room, where the two identical women were sitting next to each other on the couch, both smiling and waving at me.

“I know what you’re thinking, Raf,” Sheila said to me. “But I assure you, Annie and I aren’t at all related. I’m from California and she’s from Arkansas. I’m also a couple of years younger than she is. Come, you can read through the paperwork and sign where you need to while I tell you a little bit how Doppelganger Dreams came to be. And I got you a cashier’s check for ten thousand for your water heater. I figured that would cover it. I wasn’t really certain how much they cost.”

“That’ll more than cover it,” I said, taking the check from her, folding it and putting it into my pocket. “Tell me about this... whatever this is.”

Both of the women smiled at about the same time, and the sensation of seeing double was almost disorienting. “About six years ago, just before I graduated from college, I was at one of my father's dreadfully boring parties, and I found myself talking to one of his older, wealthier friends, whom shall remain nameless. The man in question, whom I simply call Mister X, had a new girlfriend, a woman half his age clearly looking to peel off a bit of his cash in exchange for her company, but Mister X seemed happy with the arrangement. And as a tossed off remark, he said to me, 'What I wouldn't give to have two of her, just for one night.' Well, I responded to him, 'Well, what *would* you give for that?' And the challenge was set. You see, Raf, you may not know this, but every person in the world is said to have between two and ten near doppelgangers scattered across the globe, but because the world is so vast, we never really get the chance to meet any of them. I, however, have built a business model around fulfilling that particular fantasy, and it was all born from Mister X's tossed off remark. As it turned out, thirty million dollars was what he would give for that particular experience, which I split three ways with his existing partner and the woman I found to be her double.”

Annie had reached forward and was lightly dragging her fingertips across my thigh, not pressuring, merely promising allures to come.

“Over the past six years, I've provided this service say forty or fifty times in total, a once in a lifetime encounter, never to be repeated. A woman wants to see what it would be like if she had two of her husband or boyfriend. A man wants that identical twin fantasy but better, because they're not related, so they'll usually play with each other in addition to him, unlike real sisters, who would never entertain even the notion of such a thing. In one case, I actually had a doppelganger each for both a wife and husband, and that was a little foursome they'll never forget,” Sheila said with a little giggle.

“What's the contract all about?” I said, looking at the five page document she'd slid in front of me, trying to read through it, but the pair of perfect angels in front of me was making it very difficult to concentrate. “There's a lot of dense legalese here.”

“The long and short of it is this – you're welcome to take as many pictures and videos as you like of tonight's events, but anything explicit is for your eyes only. Anything that's risqué but doesn't contain nudity, you can show those pictures to whomever you like in a one-on-one encounter, but you cannot post them to social media of any kind, nor show them to groups of people. This allows you to have mementos, ones that I can use to advertise my brand, but also keeps our privacy respected,” Sheila told me.

“That seems fair.”

“You cannot bruise, injure or wound either of us, not that I expect you to, and you cannot force us to engage in any sexual activity or activities which we might find unappealing, although you'll find that there's very little we won't do. This is more for your comfort, when we're in the other half, just so you know. Also, Annie isn't going to talk almost at all tonight. The voice is the one part of the illusion that's almost impossible to get right, so to bypass it, it'll just be me talking.” She licked her lips a little bit. “Also, I'm going to be referring to her as 'me' all night long, to further reinforce the fantasy that it's just me, only me, here with you, and I'm somehow inhabiting two bodies. While I know you're straight, I'm bisexual, as is Annie, and the idea of making out with myself, well, it's always been a delight I've been looking forward to,” she said, leaning in to kiss Annie, like a mirror image of a woman, mouths pressed against each other in a wanton kiss before pulling apart again.

“*Damn.*”

“Indeed, Raf,” she giggled, one of her hands on Annie's thigh, the other tapping the paperwork. “The last part of the contract just has you assuming liability for anything that happens to me or, well, *also* me during our encounter tonight, and sets the expiration period of our encounter at seven am tomorrow morning, although we reserve the right to be a little lenient with that, if we want to sleep in. If you don't mind signing for your girl here?”

Three for a girl...

I wondered for half a second if I was getting in over my head, then decided, fuck it, yes, I was

definitely getting in over my head, but this was the kind of life experience that I simply couldn't pass up on. I picked up the pen, initialed in the three places I was supposed to then signed the contract. Sheila smiled, taking the contract and pen and tucking them into her oversized purse – they both had identical purses, even. Annie even had the same mole right between her eyebrows. The two of them stood up and pulled me to my feet, as Sheila squeezed my ass a little bit. “Lead me to the bedroom?” she said to me. God, it was weird, her saying 'me' instead of 'us' but I realized I was going to have to get used to that.

I slipped an arm around each of their waists and moved to lead them down the hall then up the stairs before heading back down the hall again to the furthest, deepest corner of the house, the master bedroom, a large and truly decadent room for a California house, but my grandfather Arturo had liked a lot of room. Once we were in the bedroom, Annie reached into my pocket and pulled out my cellphone, leaning her head against one of my shoulders while Sheila leaned her head on the other, as Annie snapped a selfie of the three of us. She didn't just take one, but a dozen or so, as the two of them struck various poses, from flirty to coy. Then she set the phone on a timer, dashed over to place it on top of my dresser, then sprinted back, so I would have a full body shot, both of the girls thrusting their tits out on display beneath the matching Coca-Cola shirts.

“Give me just a minute, Raf, although you can get started,” Sheila said, reaching into her purse to take out a series of GoPros, turning them on and scattering them around the room. “All of this footage will be given to you, naturally. I want you to be able to watch all of this any time you like, otherwise it wouldn't be much of a gift now, would it?”

Annie moved to push me over to the edge of the bed, shoving me to make me sit down on the edge of it as she dropped down onto her knees in front of me, her hands reaching up to unbutton my slacks, dipping in to fish out my cock, as I felt Sheila sliding up onto the bed behind me, a GoPro in her hand, as Annie moved to wrap her lips around the head of my dick and pushed her face down deep onto it, practically inhaling my shaft.

“Mmmmm,” Sheila purred against my ear. “I'm such a good little cocksucking whore, aren't I? Look at me go.”

Her other hand reached down to brush some of those blonde locks out of Annie's face, making sure I could see those blue eyes looking up at me adoringly.

“Tell me I'm a perfect little dick sucking slut, Raf. Tell me you love how my tongue feels against your balls,” Sheila laughed along my neck.

“God, you're fucking good at this,” I said, entirely uncertain how I was supposed to be talking my way through any of this, but deciding to just go with the flow. “I can feel your tongue against the base of my shaft when you push your mouth all the way down. You're not even choking on it.”

“Of course I'm not,” Sheila said to me. “The girl next door in your fantasies growing up never choked, did she? Of course not. She was that perfect mesh of innocent and carnal, virginal and pure, right up until she decided to have her way with you, and then whorish and slutty down to her fucking core. I know how I look, Raf. Like the sort of small town girl who grew up just down the street, who was something of a tomboy until she came into her own sexuality in high school. Probably a cheerleader or an actress in the school play, or maybe both. Too tall and lanky for the boys up until that last year in high school when these tits of mine suddenly filled out, and then right away all the boys were fighting to get my attention, but I didn't have eyes for any of them, did I?”

Annie reached down and pulled her shirt up and over her head, tossing it aside, exposing a rather basic navy blue bra that looked like it struggled to contain her breasts, her body bordering somewhere between a B and C cup, and she'd chosen to go for the B cup and have it be almost bursting than a C cup and have it a little loose. When she did, Sheila also took her shirt off, revealing a perfectly matching bra.

“We'd always been making eyes at each other in math class,” Sheila said to me, her hands reaching down to pull my shirt up and over my head, casting it aside. “You'd always been too shy to ask me out, and I'd always thought you wouldn't want anything to do with a beanpole like me, but now,

well, now I had these *huge fucking tits*, and I thought to myself, 'maybe I can get him to notice me *now*' so I started wearing tighter t-shirts around you, sitting next to you all the time, and yet you were always a perfect gentleman, no matter how furiously I was trying to get you to look at my tits. My luscious, gorgeous tits. *These tits*," she said, as both her and Annie reached back to unhook their bras in the back, pulling them off, tossing them aside, as four marvelous breasts were exposed to me.

I glanced over at Sheila, then back at Annie, and sure enough, they were identical in every regard. Small pink areola, not much darker than the rest of her flesh, with thick, swollen nipples jutting out like tiny pencil erasers.

"*God*, I've got great tits," she said to me, reaching forward to pinch one of Annie's nipples hard enough to make the girl moan, her blue eyes rolling closed for a moment, making her push her head down as far as she could onto my cock, feeling the head of it pressed against the back of her throat. "I can't wait to watch them jiggling when you're fucking me."

Annie's fingertips started to cradle my balls, grope and rolling them between her slender fingers as she started to bob her head quick and ferociously, going from tip to base again and again, turning her mouth some each time she pushed down or pulled up, to make her tongue drag twisting lines along the length of my shaft.

"Fuck, you're good at this," I whispered. "I'm not gonna last long."

"You don't have to, dear Raf," Sheila purred at me. "Give me that first load of hot fucking jizz. Hold my head down and make me take all of that fucking spunk you've got stored up. Give it to me! Let me fucking drink it!"

I'm only human, and my body was overwhelmed with sensations, so I started to flood Annie's mouth with shotgun blasts of hot fuck cream, feeling her moan eagerly over my shaft while doing her best to keep a seal on, her lips preventing any of my sauce from dripping out, before the spasms stopped, and she pulled her head off my dick with a pop, keeping her lips together as Sheila slid from behind me to move down onto her knees next to Annie, and then kissed her, the two of them sharing one of the messiest snowballs I've ever seen, my jism smearing all over their faces, even as they were licking it off each other.

I'd just cum, but I gotta tell you, I was fucking hard again in *seconds*.

"God you taste good, Raf," Sheila said to me. "Even better when I'm tasting you off my own fucking whore face," she said, giving Annie another lick before sliding her hand down Annie's stomach. "But you're just getting started, aren't you? Because once you'd gotten a taste of farm girl blowjobs, you wanted more, oh you wanted oh so much more. Which was good, because I wanted to *give* you more. I wanted you to stop seeing me as little girl Sheila who you'd played Little League Soccer with for a couple of years, but as wanton woman Sheila, who wanted to fuck you so hard your balls ran dry, who wanted to ensure you didn't have any sexual fantasy left unturned. I didn't just want to be your girlfriend, Raf, I wanted to be your slut, your fucktoy, your cum catcher whore who never *ever* let you go home if there was still jizz to be drained from your balls."

The two of them stood up from the floor and both started removing their shoes and jeans at the exact same time, almost like a rehearsed dance move but mirrored, Annie lifting her right leg while Sheila lifted her left, although maybe it was the other way around. When Sheila wasn't speaking, it was very easy to forget which was which. Beneath the jeans, they both had on matching navy blue panties, not exotic lingerie, but the kind of panties that fell right into that girl next door fantasy they were selling me. And they were quickly shucked anyway, leaving them both completely naked. Each of them had a small triangle shaped thatch of dark brown hair above their pussies, and it was meticulously matching, the two of them impossible to tell apart.

They pushed me over to the leather armchair I had in the corner, the one my grandfather had left me that was perfect for sitting and watching television in, but it was clear the girls had different things in mind for me, because as soon as my ass hit the leather, one of them was crawling up and into my lap, sliding one leg over one of the chair arms before repeating the process with the other, her toned ass

brushing across my upper thighs until my stiff cock was resting against her pelvis.

“Do you remember the first time we fucked, Raf?” Sheila said to me, establishing she was not the one in my lap, but standing right behind her. “I told you my hymen had broken when I was doing gymnastics, but that I was still a virgin, and I wanted you to be my first. My parents weren't home, and I knew we only had a couple of hours, but I couldn't wait, I needed it, needed *you* so fucking bad, so I convinced you to get naked and sit my father's chair, knowing you'd think I was just going to blow you again, but then I stripped down too, and moved to sit in your lap.” Sheila said to me as Annie's hips started to undulate a little, letting the bottom of my cock rub against the outside of her wet slit. “And once I did, you knew we were going to *fuck*, but instead of just charging in, I remember you asked me if I was okay with this, if it was what I really wanted.” I couldn't tell where Sheila was pulling this fantasy history from – it certainly wasn't from *my* personal past, but maybe it was from her own, or maybe she was trying to invent some sort of shared history that we *could* have had – but it was still incredibly hot, wherever she was drawing it from. “It was so sweet of you, which made it even better when I just pushed my virginal pussy down onto your cock.”

Sheila had adjusted Annie and before I knew it, I was sliding inside of Annie's cunt, and she couldn't help but let out a furtive moan, a shiver running up her spine, her head tilting to one side in the moment of it.

“God, I remember how fucking *full* I felt. I knew you had a *big dick* but I hadn't realized how it was going to tear my poor little pussy up, but I fucking *loved* how it made me feel, like I was being pried open and turned into a woman in front of your very eyes. My cunt was clinging onto your cock, so fucking snug and tight, and when I drew my hips up for the first time, Jesus, it was like nothing I'd ever fucking felt before, like I was touching God.”

One of Sheila's hands had slipped down and was rubbing her fingertips against Annie's clit while her other was smoothing over my neck and shoulder, as she leaned down and pressed her lips against mine over Annie's shoulder, Annie's face nuzzling in against us until Sheila broke the kiss to allow Annie to join in, kissing both Sheila and myself in a wild three way lip lock.

Sheila's fingers dug down hard on Annie's clit, even while Annie started to bounce in my lap, the angle not letting her draw up or down too much, but it wasn't going to matter, apparently, as Sheila's fingers were doing more than their fair share of work.

“I remember feeling that orgasm threatening to destroy me, to break me in fucking *half* but not being able to look away from it,” Sheila said to me. “And when I came, Jesus, I was one fucking *loud bitch*.”

Whatever Sheila was doing to Annie's snatch, it set her off harder than almost any woman I'd ever seen, her body contracting all around me as Annie looked upward and started with a whisper and ended with a shout, “ohfuckohfuck shit shit shitshitshit I'm cumming ohfuckingJesusshit fuck FUCK FUCK FUCKING CUMMING FUCK ME FUCK!”

I could hear the difference in the way they spoke, but it was such a hot moment that I didn't give a shit, instead feeling Annie's cunt trembling around my dick in delirious shakes and shivers before her body slumped forward against mine, Sheila's fingertips moving up to rub some of Annie's pussy juices along my lips, letting me taste her.

“*Fuck* I'd never cum like that before,” Sheila said to me. “But I wanted more. I wanted to be grabbed and rammed and plowed and fucked like a bitch in heat, like some desperate slut who just needed *dick* inside of her, over and over again...”

Sheila moved to pull Annie off of my cock and back to her feet, but Annie must've really cum very hard, because her legs were unsteady, wobbling a little like she could fall over at any moment, so Sheila moved to lay her down on her back on top of my bed, her calves hanging off the edge of it. As I started to stand up, I watched as Sheila pushed Annie a bit further up and onto the bed, and then crawled over top of her, on her hands and knees straddling Annie before reaching back and giving her own ass a slap with one of her hands.

“I was ready for my first time doggy style,” Sheila said to me, looking back at me. “And I didn't want it gentle. I wanted you to fucking *rail* me. I wanted you to hammer that dick into my tiny little cunt until it was fucking *sore* and you'd stretched it to a mold of your exact fucking size. I wanted you to grab a fistful of my hair with one hand, one of my hips with the other, and fuck me like you goddamn *meant* it, like you fucking *owned* my tight young *snatch*.”

I'd learned how to grab hair before, so I lined up the head of my cock first, making sure it was pressed against Sheila's pussy, Annie's body beneath hers, and pushed the first inch or so in, so that I wouldn't slip out. My left hand moved to the base of Sheila's neck as I spread my fingers wide and pushed them up into her hair before grabbing a fistful of it, my hand on her right hip yanking her back as I cranked a hard tug on her mane of blonde hair while thrusting my hips forward, barreling that cock of mine into her flagrantly wet twat, feeling her gush and drip all over my shaft as I started to clap those cheeks, making her booty jiggle and wobble each time I smacked forward, her voice getting a little whiny and nasally even while she kept on talking.

“Fuuuuuck it felt so fucking good, getting drilled, getting pounded, getting *filled* full of your fat fucking *dick* over and nnnhhh over again...”

I could see Annie's hands were starting to make their way around Sheila's body now, and the two girls were even kissing every now and again, although the coarse thrusts I was giving her were making it difficult for their lips to remain together for long. Each time I pulled on Sheila's hair, I felt her squeeze down a little bit harder on my cock, clearly a sensation she loved feeling, so I lifted my hand from her hip and reached forward to slide my fingertips across her exposed throat, giving it a soft and very cautious grip, which made her tremble *hard*, maybe even setting off an orgasm, I'm not entirely sure. I was clearly nervous about it, but when I felt a hand on my wrist, maybe Annie's, maybe Sheila's, I couldn't quite tell, pressing my hand more *strongly* against Sheila's throat, I gave it a bit more force, the filthy noises from Sheila's mouth only getting more energetic.

There was a tapping on my wrist, and I let my hand slide from Sheila's neck, as she clearly had more to say.

“Fuck, I think I'd cum three or four times before I felt you starting to get close, and that was when it dawned on me... I hadn't made you wear a condom... I was letting you fuck me bareback... and that thought, as dangerous as it was, turned me the fuck on even *more*. God, I knew what we were doing was risky, that if you knocked me up, my daddy would be on the porch with a shotgun and you'd have nowhere to run, but fuck, I knew I *wanted* it too much to stop. Shit, I wanted you to *breed* me, to put a baby in my belly, to show every fucking stupid boy in school that you knew how to fuck a woman proper... that you wouldn't let her away without marking her fucking cunt with your cum... C'mon, Raf... nut me up... do it... creampie your little bitch... fucking squirt it in me... I'm gonna fuckin' cum with you... cum on... cum cum cum cum cum CUM CUM!”

Whatever she wanted, she was going to get, and I gave her long blonde hair a sharp yank right at the moment I felt my body fire off, making sure her spine was bent and that my cock was as deep as I could get it stuffed inside of her cunt when I started blasting more of my spunk inside of her, my balls doing their best to wring themselves dry as they painted the inside of her womb with as much cum as I had left inside of me, setting her off on another loud and squealing orgasm, no words this time, just an ear-splitting shriek of pleasure that slowly died down into the most wanton sexual moan I'd ever heard.

I released her hair and her face slumped forward against the mattress for a moment before she started giggling with a sort of deranged hopped up sexual energy, eventually looking over her shoulder at me. “Fuck, it's not even really my *turn* and I'm fucking enjoying this,” she said to me, licking her lips. “But I wasn't done yet. Oh no.”

At this point, I was a little exhausted, feeling like I'd just run a marathon as my softening cock slipped out of Sheila's pussy with a sloppy wet splorching sound, my cock dripping from pussy onto Annie's tummy beneath her, pooling in her navel.

“You see, I wasn't done claiming my man, or making my man claim me...” Sheila moved to

climb off of Annie's form, as the two of them both grinned at me, licking their lips. "We had one thing left to do, and I was going to be *damned* if I didn't make you own every part of me before I was through..."

Sheila moved to roll over and slipped beneath Annie, cradling her torso between Sheila's legs, as she stroked Annie's face, both of their eyes deadlocked on me. It was remarkable about identical they looked to one another, even like that, but I couldn't take time to appreciate the view because Annie lifted one of her legs up, reaching down to hook her fingers behind the back of her knee, then doing the same for the other, but once she had her legs up like that, Sheila took over holding them before Annie's hands dipped down and grabbed the cheeks of her ass, pulling them apart, exposing that cotton candy pink asshole of hers to my view, it clenching and winking at me a little bit.

"I wanted to tell my girlfriends when I went back to school on Monday that not only wasn't I a virgin any more, there wasn't *any* part of me you hadn't fucked," Sheila said to me, her fingertips squeezing Annie's thighs tenderly, as Annie bit her bottom lip at me cutely. "I knew I'd already slicked up that dick of yours with my pussy juices, and that you'd just pop right in, even if you were fucking huge, because I wanted it. I wanted to be your anal whore, even if it was just for one night..."

My erection had returned as quickly as it had disappeared, and without even consciously doing it, I found myself lining up the head of my dick against that pucker and pushed right in, seeing Annie's blue eyes rolling back into her skull as she let out a bestial groan, less human and more primal, sounds ripped from her ancestors, as she gripped hard onto her own skin, one of Sheila's hands moving down to massage and stroke against Annie's clit and pussy.

"God, it felt *soooooo* good taking your dick in my cute perky ass," Sheila purred at me. "Just look at how much my face scrunched up, how *big* you fucking felt, barging your way into my back door... I'm such a pretty little butt slut for you..."

The look on Annie's face almost made me think she wanted me to stop until I felt one of her hands reach and grab onto my hip, yanking back on me, like she'd sensed I was going to pull back and instead wanted me to go deeper.

It was insane how tight she was, so while I was thrusting as best as I could, I knew I wasn't going to be able to hold out particularly long. The fact that I'd cum twice already was probably all that was saving me from a quick finish.

My hips pushed my cock in and out of her clenched ass, both Sheila and Annie moaning and whimpering, the two of them even kissing every so often. "I'm such a good little slut, aren't I?" Sheila said to Annie, who only nodded in response. "God, I love getting fucked in the ass. Split me open and paint me up, Raf. Let me feel you creaming in my virginal asshole, planting your flag and your seed. Please? Cum for me?"

Both of them were biting their bottom lip in a perfect emulation of each other, and I was almost afraid I was going to see triple, so I started thrusting faster and faster before finally my body could resist no longer, and my head leaned back as I spewed what little jism my body had left to give into Annie's asshole, feeling her writhe and squirm as I did, like the sensation of feeling me spurt into her colon was giving her another orgasm.

We sort of laid there in a lump of spent human flesh for a couple of minutes before I stood up, pulling Annie to her feet, followed by Sheila, the three of us heading in to take a much deserved shower together, letting the hot water steam up the mirrors.

"You better not be too exhausted, Mister," Sheila told me while we were toweling down. "We've got at least a few more rounds in the morning after we've had a good night's rest."

"I'll do what I can," I laughed, "but double your pleasure, double your exhaustion."

That made both girls giggle, and it was easier to tell them apart when they were both making noise, Annie's voice (and laughter) a little higher in pitch.

After I'd toweled off, Sheila took her phone and started taking lots of pictures of my naked body, from all sorts of angles, from my body hair to my build to even taking a few videos just capturing

how I walked. I also watched as Annie reapplied a bit of makeup, adding the mole back between her eyebrows that had washed off in the shower. As much of doppelgangers as they were, there were still a few minor details that had needed to be added to complete the illusion, and watching her reapply it make me appreciate the level of craft they had gone to in ensuring the duplication was perfect.

The three of us climbed naked into the bed, but Sheila affixed her phone to a selfie stick before she did, and for the next twenty minutes, she captured an endless number of images of the three of us from all directions, in a variety of poses, although I think my favorite is just the one where the two are resting on either of my shoulders, bodies spooned up against mine, my arms wrapped around them, looking like the king of the world.

And Sheila was right. I would pay my half of it five months later, even if it was a hell of a thing for me to have to do. Talk about your fucking head trips...

Part Four – A Boy

Five months is just about enough time for you to forget about something, but even if I had forgotten, Sheila clearly hadn't, because in spring of 2017, my phone popped up with a text message from Sheila, whom I hadn't heard from since our insane encounter last fall. "Saturday still good for you?" the message read. "Kept your schedule clean for me?"

"You didn't tell me when we were meeting up again, but I always honor my end of any contract. What do I need to know?" I sent back.

"Expect to be picked up at five o'clock, and you two can talk it over on your way up. You'll be coming up to my house, which you've seen before, and the engagement lasts until seven the next morning, although as per our previous encounter, if all parties want to sleep in, that will, of course, be fine. Your mirror will bring you an outfit matching their own, so you don't need to worry about picking out the right attire for the night. Other than that, you saw how I behaved in our encounter. All I ask is that you show me generally the same courtesy, within your previously stated boundaries."

"Got it," I typed back. "See you Saturday."

I sort of knew what generally to expect, but there's really no way to prepare yourself for meeting your doppelganger. So when I opened the door to see a man looking so much like me that it almost felt like looking into a mirror instead. His hair was styled slightly different, and it looked like there was a bit of makeup on his chin, I think hiding a scar although I didn't feel comfortable asking.

"You are Rafael?" he asked me, his voice tinged with a thick Spanish accent, which made the illusion fall apart. "I am Pedro. I will be your sombra, your shadow. I will take my lead from your actions, follow your motions. I will mostly remain quiet, because, as you say, my voice does not match with yours, and we do not want to destruir el espejismo, to break the mirage. Come, let us get you changed and then the car will take us up to the señorita's house."

The outfit was something refined, elegant, sleek and stylish, a black button-up shirt that we both left half unbuttoned, a red silk scarf which I needed to wrap around my neck (which I could see was covering up a tattoo on Pedro's collarbone), black silk boxers and black loose fitting slacks, along with a pair of black loafers and accompanying black socks.

One thing I noticed was that my feet were slightly larger than his, but I decided that was probably something no one other than he and I would really notice. I tried to think back if there had been minor differences between Sheila and Annie, and while I could remember there was a mole that Annie had needed to apply with makeup, other than that, there wasn't anything that immediately stood out to me. I guess that when you're looking at yourself, you tend to spot the discrepancies a lot more than you would if it was someone else.

Pedro and I didn't talk much at all during the drive up, although I did catch him a few times taking a look at me, adjusting himself a bit. He'd clearly decided it was more important for him to look like me than it was for me to look like him, although he did do a bit of styling to both his hair and mine, shaping them both to be about the same, which can sometimes be a problem with getting out of control,

considering how feathery and poofy it can be sometimes. I guess since our hair types were so similar naturally, though, Pedro had plenty experience with styling it, and doing so on my hair was just like doing it on his own but in reverse.

Sheila had gotten a limo to ferry us up from my place in San Jose to her home in San Ramon. Now for those of you not familiar with the San Francisco Bay Area, let me say that San Ramon is a *very* nice area of the Bay, with lots of remarkably wealthy people having very nice houses on expansive bits of property. Sheila's property was even gated, so when the limo pulled up, the driver had to roll down his way to press the buzzer to let us drive up to the house itself.

I'd seen the mansion from the outside before but as soon as we got out of the limo, I could take a look at the grounds for the first time, and there was so much open space, it almost felt more like a park than a private home, the grass neatly trimmed and well-kept paths, a few benches scattered around the space, including next to an actual pond with what looked like real koi fish swimming in it.

The building was that sort of new modern look, although there were stabs at incorporating some classical European architecture into it around the edges, like the gargoyles that were ringed around the top of the second story. The whole home was, of course, that sort of stucco beige that was so popular among homes in the Silicon Valley and Napa County.

I walked up and rang the bell, and Sheila answered the door almost immediately. She had chosen a slippy red dress that hung loosely over her frame almost like it was draped cloth instead of an actual outfit. The neckline was plunging daringly down almost past her waist, and she hadn't bothered to putting on high heels, not that she really needed them, I know I said her height was 5'11" before, but looking at her this second time, I realize she might've actually been a little taller than 6', her long slender arm reached up to keep the door propped open, a wide grin on her pearly whites. "You know, I always wondered if I'd want my own services," she said to me, "and now I'm glad that I decided to take myself up on it, just for the once."

She stepped out of the doorway and ushered us into her home. "The illusion isn't as important to me, Pedro, so I don't mind if you talk a bit over the course of the evening," Sheila said, brushing her fingertips across his face as he walked past, so no matter how good the illusion was, there were still subtle enough differences between the two of us for her to tell us apart. "The effort's more important to me than a perfect show, because a fellow magician always knows where to look for where the misdirections are."

"Yes, ma'am," Pedro said with a shy smile. He was far more nervous about this than I was, I guess because I'd sort of seen in first hand from the other side, while he was going through all of it for the first time.

The inside of her house match the exterior, with a sparse amount of furniture scattered around the room, lots of open space all over the place. Her living room looked like it had only a single couch with a couple of chairs on either side of it, and I couldn't even spot a television. It looked like the furniture was pointed at a fireplace, although there wasn't a fire raging within it right now. She led us past it for the moment, however, and brought us into a dining room, an elegant long glass table with only two place settings, which made me arch an eyebrow as I looked at it.

"Dinner?"

"Mmm," Sheila said. "You and I can have dinner, and your shadow can bring us dinner and then have a different sort of meal. Not that I think he'll mind."

I saw Pedro continue to walk past us and head around a corner before he returned a few minutes later with two plates containing rather highly refined meals, looking like they were prepared by a professional chef, scalloped potatoes and grilled salmon. Once he put the plates down, he walked out of the room and then brought back three glasses full of red wine, setting one out for me, one for her and the third for him to have at some point.

Once he placed the wine on the table, he moved to drop down onto his knees and slowly started to crawl beneath the table. I know I smirked, but I tried to push the look off my face and be respectful

of the moment as he kept moving on his hands and knees closer and closer towards her, as she spread her legs nice and wide for him, the long stripe of fabric pretending to be a dress pulled to one side to expose that she indeed was wearing no panties beneath.

As my shadow moved to slip between her thighs, his hands resting atop them as he leaned in and began to slowly lap at her pussy, she continued a conversation with me as if nothing was happening, something I think gave my shadow a little encouragement to bring his A-game.

“So, now that you don't have to be driving to get a new hot water heater, did you stop driving for Uber again?” she asked me with a wry smile, picking up her glass of wine, swirling it around in her palm's grasp.

“It's just a water heater,” I teased. “Hot water doesn't need heating. But yes, without that particular sword hanging over my head, I hung up my driving shoes, at least for a while, until the next crisis springs up. But there's always another problem springing up on the horizon, I suppose.”

“And what are you doing instead?”

“I'm back to doing contract work in 3D modeling again,” I said, seeing her do her best to keep her expression as neutral as she could, although every so often I could see a slight twitch on her face, or her holding the fork a moment before bringing food to her mouth, as if she was trying to summon her concentration back up, as my shadow continued to work his tongue against her slit. “It's not full time work still, but it's enough to pay most of the bills and keep me afloat. How about you? Did your little dispute with Roger cause you any trouble in the long run?”

“Oh, Roger stamped his feet and complained about it, but all the people who know both him and I, they all like me much better,” she giggled a little bit, kicking off her shoes, moving to rub one of her bare feet along Pedro's side, as he pushed his tongue inside of her, making her whimper just a little bit, her eyes closing for only the briefest of moments. “Other than that, my work has been going excellently. I had a couple of clients recently who were extremely delighted with my results, including one whom I can't name, because you would know her, as she's rather famous. She was so pleased with my results, however, that she's gone out of her way to introduce me to an entire new string of clients I likely wouldn't have gotten as easily without her. That should be great fun, a whole new world of people entirely unlike the ones I've been working with so far.”

“That sounds like it excites you,” I said with a wry grin, finishing off my salmon. “Like you haven't had a real challenge in a long time.”

“Oh, I'm very good at what I do, Raf,” she said, her heel dragging slowly along my shadow's back as he continued to lick and suckle at her pussy. “But with rich businessmen and women, they're not true perfectionists, and I could get away with mistakes here and there. This, this is dealing with celebrities who often want someone who looks identical to their partner, who is often *also* a celebrity, which you can imagine makes things somewhat easier for me, but also somewhat more difficult in terms of ensuring discretion.”

“You mean in terms of just getting people to keep it quiet?”

She nodded, finishing off her meal. “Exactly. Everyone wants to brag once they're a starfucker, so making sure that these people aren't going to go bragging about the experience takes an added layer of scrutiny and review.”

“And my shadow?” I said, gesturing with a smile as he slowly started to pull back from between her legs, at her motioning, of course, certainly not of his own volition. “Was *he* difficult to convince to keep quiet?”

“Not at all,” she said with a smile, pushing the plate away from her as she moved to stand up. “He was more than happy to take the money, have the experience and then go back to his life in a sleepy little coastal town not too far from Valencia, on the eastern coast of Spain. This is his first trip to America, and his vacation will let him spend a week or so both in San Francisco and down in Los Angeles before he returns home with a head full of memories he'll treasure for the rest of his life. I may even let him keep some photos or video, considering how little he said he gets out and travels, so he'll

have something to remember all this by. Now let's move to this some place we can be a bit more free, where I've already got the cameras set up." She reached down and helped Pedro to his feet as I stood up as well, letting her lead us back down the way we'd came and then off the other direction, heading deeper into the house itself.

I was sort of surprised by how many of the exterior walls were almost entirely made of glass, giving the whole place a sort of voyeuristic flair, although no matter which direction I looked, it felt like it was too far for anyone to be able to see us clearly. I couldn't be *certain* of that, though. Down the hall was a room within the glass chambers, however, that had nice solid walls, and a massive oak door, that she pulled open, allowing Pedro to walk in, followed by me.

Inside was a bedroom that screamed post-post-*post*-modern, with a very heavily reinforced bed that was only at around knee height, but was easily triple reinforced, so I'm certain that whatever kind of activity Sheila wanted to get up to in here, the bed would be able to endure it. The sheets were a sort of eggshell white, with cream colored pillows, the rug filling most of the room a soft white with a large blue circle in the center of it that peeked out from beneath the edges of the bed.

"You have no idea what a leap of faith this is for me, Raf," she said with a playful smile. "I've always sort of preferred treating lovers like I do clients – one night performances only, no repeats, so you have a distinct advantage over what I normally have in this room."

"Mmm," I replied. "Last time, you were telling me a story, painting a picture of a shy couple, both too nervous to make the first move, until finally the tension broke, and the walls came tumbling down. It felt like it was drawn from personal experience. Was it?"

Sheila unfastened the dress and let it fall to the floor, kicking it aside, leaving her in all her nude glory. "I hadn't planned to do any of that," she said, an almost shy look crossing her face. "It all just sort of came to me in the moment, like I wanted you to know who I was and where I'd come from, and what experiences had made me into who I am today. But..."

"But what?" I asked when she trailed off and remained silent. Pedro slowly began removing his shirt, and I took my cue from that and began removing mine as well.

"As much fun as it has been to set up these sorts of experiences for clients, that was the first time I'd ever taken part in one, and I found myself feeling... naked. Vulnerable. Exposed. But for some strange reason, I was comfortable around you, as if I knew you weren't going to take anything beyond as far as I wanted you to."

I was in the middle of taking my pants and boxers off when Sheila stepped in close, her hand reaching down to stroke my cock, her touch so much softer and tender than I remembered it being, as she smiled at me.

"And I was worried you might be nervous about doing this sort of thing," she said to me as she slowly dropped down to her knees, moving to press a kiss to the tip of my cock. "So many men are nervous about having a second man in the room with them."

"It's a little easier," I said with a gasp as I felt her lips wrap around the head of my dick once more. "When the second man is sort of just... *me*. I mean, two men in the same room, they're both sort of jockeying to see who can perform better, who can satisfy better, but here, which *me* is the better *me*? That's... that doesn't make a whole lot of sense."

She giggled a little, popping her head off my cock as she nodded. "Oh I bet. Now don't go thinking this is the main course, alright?" Before I could ask what she meant by that, she shoved her face down the length of my shaft until her lips were wrapped around the base of my dick, my balls wedged up against her chin, even as I felt her throat trying to push me out, but she held that moment for what felt like an eternity before drawing back enough so that she could inhale a heavy breath, giving another delirious burst of laughter rolling from her lips onto my shaft.

"Now you're just showing off for the cameras," I told her with a sly smile.

"Oh, you want me showing off, do you? C'mere, over to the bed." She moved over towards the corner of the bed, climbing up and onto it, getting on all fours as she turned around, wiggling her hips

at me as she curled a fingertip towards Pedro. "Let's try something I've definitely never done before. I believe the term is spitroasting?"

Pedro was more than happy to step up towards her face, trying to pull her long blonde hair into a tail to use as a guide even as her mouth lowered down onto his cock, which I was surprised looked remarkably like mine, although I think perhaps he was a bit longer but also thinner, as Sheila started thrusting her face onto his shaft as I moved in to stand behind her, pressing the head of my cock against her pussy only to feel her suddenly lunge back onto me as she moaned around Pedro's prick.

He moved his knees up onto the edge of the bed as Sheila shifted onto her elbows, letting him get a better angle so that he could thrust into her face more. It also put both him and I at eyeline together, and he smiled at me, his left hand lifting to offer me a questioning thumbs up gesture, as if to make sure everything was still to my comfort, so I shot him one back, even as I began to bounce Sheila's hips a bit more firmly against my cock, my right hand grabbing a handful of the top of her ass to wedge her back into me a little faster, the forward bucks of my hips making her buttocks jiggle and ripple each time my flesh collided with hers.

A minute or so later, I saw that Sheila had figured out an angle that let her bring her left hand up to tickle along the underside of Pedro's nutsack, which actually coaxed a groan from the man's lips, his face wrenching up a little bit.

"I think if you keep that up, Sheila, my shadow may have some dessert for you."

She let his shaft slip out from her lips as she looked back of her shoulder at me. "What about you, Raf? Close to giving up that first ghost?"

"Oh, I've been pacing myself because I didn't know how you wanted all this to go..."

"I don't mind him having sloppy seconds if you don't, Raf... he's *your* shadow, not the other way around," she moaned, stroking his dick, keeping it close to her face.

"Sure, but I don't see a reason to be rude about it," I said to her before glancing up at him. "Sloppy seconds, go?" I said, pointing my thumb upwards. "Or no go?" I said, pointing my thumb downwards, just so that in case there was any language barrier, he would understand.

Pedro turned to point his thumb upwards before speaking. "I'm game for literally anything," he said.

"Mmmm... that's what I like to hear," Sheila replied. "Then why don't you two fill me up, m'kay? Nnnhhh... because that's what I want... to be dripping fr- nnngh!"

As if he sensed it would be a good move, Pedro pushed his cock back into Sheila's mouth once more, as I thrust hard against her pussy, the two of us compressing her down a little bit, wedged between two hard cocks that weren't going to let her pull away from being trapped there.

I lifted my hand up and brought it down in a hard slap against one of Sheila's well-toned asscheeks and she gave a squeal of delight, trying to force her mouth harder onto Pedro's cock, although she let it pop from her mouth long enough to shout "Oh! Fuck! Yes!" only to whimper and whine some more.

No matter how much the sensations were delighting her, Pedro couldn't resist whatever working over her tongue was giving his shaft, as I saw his face clamp tightly together, his nostrils flaring. As he did, her thighs started to butterfly a little, her other hand reaching back to up at her own clit and tease my balls a little. The unexpected touch was the one thing I needed, so I imagine just as Pedro was blasting a load of cum into Sheila's mouth, I was dumping my own up and inside of her cunt, feeling the walls of her twat trying to milk and suckle that spray deeper inside of her pussy.

Her mouth popped off his dick with loud smack, as she almost cackled, a shake of her head to pull her hair from Pedro's hands as he looked down at her before crouching down, pressing his lips against hers, I'm sure tasting a little bit of his own cum upon her lips before they broke the kiss. "God, my belly feels so warm and tingly, Raf, and we're just getting started. But I'm ready. I want the thing I've been thinking about for weeks now..."

Sheila pulled from between us, sliding my cock out of her pussy with a slurp, before she

grabbed Pedro's hips and pulled him onto the bed, pushing him onto his back, as he laughed, reaching behind him to get a couple of pillows to prop up under his head and neck, while Sheila slowly climbed over him, crawling atop of him before grabbing his cock, giving it a few hard jerks to make it stiff again before lining it up, dropping her hips down onto it, her spine curling backwards just a little bit more. Pedro moved to pressed his lips against one of her nipples for a moment before she shoved him back down into the pillows, looking over her shoulder at me, her hands pressed against the mattress on either side of Pedro. She gestured over to the nightstand where a tube of clear lube was resting. "C'mon, Raf... slick up then fill me up. Let me fucking feel it."

I was a little bit nervous about this, but found that I felt that tension passing as I moved to get on the bed with them, grabbing the tube. I drizzled quite a generous amount down her crack, and then more than a good dollop along my shaft, stroking it just a bit to smear it everywhere. I tossed the tube next to Sheila, because she would know far better than Pedro or I if more was needed. I had to position myself rather carefully, placing my left knee down between their mess of legs, lifting my right leg up to place my foot over to the side of them, as Sheila reached a hand behind to pull her cheeks a little wider apart while I lined the tip of my dick up against her asshole, beginning to push forward.

"FUCK!" she howled. "Do it!"

When I started to slide my way into her ass, I could very much feel the presence of Pedro's cock through Sheila's fleshy walls, but sensations were so marvelously delightful that I couldn't spare much time to think about it.

"Fuck fuck fuck I feel so fucking full so fucking full... fucking fuck I'm fucking *filled*..."

We both mostly let Sheila control the movements and the motions, both he and I doing a little bit of pushing and thrusting, but for the most part it was just letting her thrust back and down then up and forward, like she was trying to get us both as much inside of her as she could.

Neither Pedro nor I was talking much, doing what we could to listen for audio cues about what she wanted from us, but after a minute or two, it sort of became like that Billy Idol song, and all she wanted was 'more, more, more' so we did our best to keep slowly turning up the pressure and pace.

I'm not gonna lie, it was a little weird the first time we were both pressed deep enough inside of her that I felt his balls brush against mine, but the sensation passed and the resulting wanton roar of pleasure from her lips made it all worth it, so we kept on going.

"I've never... I've never let anyone cum up my ass before, Raf..." she panted and wheezed. "But I want *you* to... I want to feel it... god, your fucking shadow is churning up all the cum you hosed against the back of my cunt... do it, you marvelous fucker... let me feel like you're both pouring into me... Stuff me like Thanksgiving turkey... flood my fucking holes!"

I could feel Pedro start to gush inside of her pussy, which made her clamp down with both holes, and the tight vicelike lock of her rectum held for only a second before easing up, and once it did, I started cumming as well, which made her start twitching around me, and again those sensations drained my balls dry until I could feel my cum sloshing inside her, starting to seep out around the edges, as she started to giggle like a crazy person.

"Fuck! That was the best fucking thing ever!" she said, pulling forward to slide herself off both of our cocks. And in one of the filthiest sights I've ever had, she turned around and gave Pedro's cock a quick lick clean, getting both his cum and mine from earlier into her mouth as she started to giggle once more, eyeing me slyly before pushing her head down onto my softening cock, sliding her mouth down to the base of it once only to let it slip from her lips, as she purred contentedly.

While we had a shower afterwards, the only things we did for the rest of the night were basically cuddle her, smothering her between our bodies like a human compression blanket, keeping her warm and snuggled until daybreak.

When the morning came, she gave Pedro a small bag, which I assumed contained his payment and any copies of the recordings she might have made for him, and sent him to wait outside for the Uber while she had a few last words with me. "Thank you for all of that. Not just the carnal fucking of

a lifetime, but the warm aftercare that so many men are utter shit at. While I don't think you and I will ever share a bed together again, if you find yourself in need of my services, I might still be in your debt, and can probably give you one more experience at a scaled rate.”

I laughed at her, tilting my head. “I doubt I'll ever take you up on that, but I guess it's good to know the offer's there.”

She looked shy again, almost as if she hadn't expected there to be an actual emotional connection between us, before she leaned up and kissed my lips gingerly. “You're a good man, Raf. Take care of yourself, will you?”

“Only silver, gold and secrets left to worry about,” I muttered to myself. “I'll be fine...” I said loud enough for her to hear me as the Uber outside honked. “They're playing my song...”

To my great surprise, it wasn't the last time I'd see Sheila, but I don't think I'll ever forget that expression of both satisfaction and sadness on her face as I walked out that door, like my departure was something she was carving into her memory bank for all eternity.

Part Five – Silver

So, by this point, I think we can agree I'm not a complete idiot. I'd recognized there was a pattern in how long things were in between their occurrences and it was descending. That meant I should expect the fifth gift or secret or whatever to be springing up sometime in August of 2017.

There was something strange about *knowing* what the timeframe was. Like, having no indication it was coming was part of the fun of it before then, but now that I knew I had four months before it came back around, there wasn't any pressure or anticipation of things going off in the middle of it.

That wasn't too bad, and it had let me back off driving for Uber, because I'd been starting to go crazy with that shit. There's only so many dumb fucking twenty-somethings any one person can be expected to tolerate, and during the summer, they tend to get even crazier than usual. Not entirely sure what that was all about, but there were times the previous summer where they'd get into the car after finishing their night at the bar and begin doing everything shy of having actual sex in the back of my vehicle. And we were repeatedly told not to rate customers less than five stars unless it was absolutely necessary.

The deciding factor was when they even called me up to ask me about why I'd rated a customer one-star. I informed them that she'd been giving the guy a handjob in the back of my car despite me telling them to stop.

You know what their reply was?

They asked me if I had recorded *footage* of them doing it.

When I told them that I hadn't, they informed me it would be my word versus hers and that they typically believed riders more than they did drivers. That was the sort of thing that was typical of the company, at least back in in 2017. They told me that if I didn't have footage, they were just going to reverse my rating. *But* they weren't going to reverse the 1-star rating that the *passenger* had given me. Because I got *so* many ratings in a night, they felt that a single 1-star rating on *my* record wouldn't be anywhere near as impactful as my 1-star rating of *them*.

I informed them it was likely to affect how much driving I did for them moving forward. They said they understood that and hoped I would reconsider, since I'd done such excellent work for them over the past few years. I said that I'd have to have a long think about it, and they'd be able to tell what my decision was based on my activity moving forward.

So after that phone call, I decided I was going to start hustling even harder to avoid having to drive for that shitty company ever again. That meant I needed to up my portfolio, start hustling for new clients and just in general up my game professionally.

That was going to come to figure in a lot of things for the tail end of my tale, but I didn't realize that. It would actually play into more things than I thought it possibly could. But let's not get ahead of

myself.

I found it odd, but once I started pushing to get things done and to find new gigs, I started seeing that there was a need for people with my skillset again. And that was nice to see, because I very quickly picked up that I shouldn't be mentioning rates or taking on large scale gigs.

In fact, more than a couple of times I was talking about picking up short term work and people were asking me if I'd considered going back to work on a full-time basis to which I responded yeah, of course, but I'd need a reasonable salary and a bit of actual stability.

That always seemed to be the sticking point.

And always they had the same story.

They hadn't quite found funding yet. They were working other jobs on the side and needed someone who could do the same. They weren't ready yet to pay anyone salaries, because nobody had any money.

It was a refrain he kept hearing over and over and over again.

“We'd love to have you join us. We can't pay you anything.”

And as much fun as a lot of these projects sounded, none of them paid the bills. And I have bills to pay, y'know? The house may be paid for, but I still had to pay utilities, phone, internet, food, the whole lot. And the cost of living in the Bay Area isn't anything cheap.

On the plus side, I was getting a load of leads for contract gigs, and that wasn't terrible. I hadn't really been pulling my weight in doing outreach to search for work, and I guess that's on me. The work had been there during the dry spells, I think, but it had been harder to find.

Mrs. Choi's house also finally had the “for sale” sign adjusted after years on the market to a “sale pending” sign. The real estate market especially in the Bay had been more than a little rocky, but I think Mrs. Choi hadn't been willing to lower her price even a penny, so the house had remained on the market for what felt like the longest time ever.

While I'd been sleeping, I'd gotten a phone call which had gone straight to voicemail from an unknown number. It came from an unknown number but I recognized the voice from the very first syllable. It was Mrs. Choi.

“My dear Mr. Magpie! My house is being sold, so my granddaughter Cori will be coming by relatively soon to do an inspection. I want her to come by and see you, for her to say hello! It's been years since you two have seen each other, so be sure to welcome her when she stops by!”

It had been years since I'd seen Cori – she'd been a high school student the last time she'd come by, and that had been at least three or four years ago, but she'd seemed nice enough. A bit hyperactive, but super friendly and kind. She'd been fascinated by watching me work, how I'd built a digital model, got it rigged up and could make it move around my screen in such a short period of time. It wasn't well textured, but she'd always assumed that making videogames was something being done by nameless, faceless drones in an office park somewhere.

I made a note that I was going to have to ask her for her grandmother's new address, putting it on a post-it note on my fridge. It was up a surprisingly bit longer than I thought it would be.

During my downtime, I did a little bit of searching to see if I could find anything more about Madi, Saffron and Alistair, but that came back dry. I also got a card in the mail from overseas with something that absolutely blew my mind. It was a baby announcement, from Freya. And in looking at the picture, I knew why she'd sent it to me in a heartbeat. Between Freya and Christof, there was no way they'd produced a kid with such dark hair.

That was *my* kid in the picture.

During the morning after, right before Freya had left, we'd had a talk about what to do if, against insanely overwhelming odds, she had gotten pregnant from our encounter. I'd told her that as long as Christof was cool with it – as she'd claimed he was – then the two of them could just raise it as their own, and they didn't ever need to bring me up. I'd like to keep tabs on the kid, so if they could just send me a picture once a year, that'd be more than plenty.

I'd never really planned on being a parent, and the idea of having a kid was more than a little terrifying to me. But the idea of my lineage not dying out when I died? That was kind of a nice thought to have. I didn't want to interfere with Freya's life, so I wanted them to basically not worry about me getting in the way of anything.

This, it seemed, was the announcement that I had indeed fathered a child with Freya, and that she and Christof were going to raise it in Denmark without the kid having any knowledge that his father wasn't his biological father. If the two of them were happy with it, then who the hell was I to tell them otherwise? Who was *anybody* to tell them they shouldn't have had it?

Just last year, I found out that as part of Christof winning, he got the right to father a child with his high school sweetheart Lara. Lara and her partner, Abigail, had been talking about adopting a kid or going through IVF, but had come to an accord that if Christof in his farewell to singledom night could get Lara pregnant, the two women would keep that child. The two couples had briefly entertained the idea of swapping the children at birth, but in the end, the mothers felt they would be too attached to the children they had carried within them for nine months to let them go, and so Christof's child stayed with Lara and Abigail, and my child stayed with Freya and Christof.

The photo also included the child's name.

Krage Schumann.

Schumann was, of course, Freya and Christof's last name, and Krage I'd learn quickly was Dutch for crow.

He really was an adorable baby. Every year they send me a picture, and that's always nice to get. I also get a yearly phone call from Freya, usually in the middle of the night, to talk about what's going on in both my life and hers, and for them to give me little updates on how Krage's growing up.

One of the things about working in the games industry is that there are loads of mixers going on, some on a monthly basis and some on a quarterly basis, where loads of small and indie game developers from around the Bay Area (as well as a handful of larger ones) have a cocktail party that doubles as both exposure for the developers as well as a chance for them to get free focus testing.

GameMix, GameDevJam, GameScramble, Cindy's Indies, NoBudgetParties... the list goes on and on and on. I've got a standing invite to most of them, but there's only so many nights out seeing the same odd indie titles that I can manage. But it's good networking and so I try to get to each one of the parties at least once a season.

That was true for all of them except GameScramble, which was held at a games incubator in downtown San Francisco. You're probably not familiar with the idea of a games incubator, so let me try and break it down for you. It's like a co-location, where a bunch of tiny game developers (studios with usually only 1-2 people in them) share office space and bounce off each other for ideas and assistance. Everybody pays a small share into the rent, power and internet, and everybody has a workspace that isn't their own home. There were a number of attempts to try and do this (before the pandemic anyway) with a company called WeWork being the biggest and most *spectacular* failure. Others have seemed to get it working okay, though.

I hadn't been to GameScramble in a couple of years, because there were a number of developers there that I just didn't care for. The last time I'd been there, one of the game devs there told me that by having a love of giant mechs, I was engaging in cultural appropriation of Asian culture, and that I should be ashamed of myself. Yeah, I wanted to punch the kid in the face too.

At some point, things just become genres unto themselves, as I'd tried to explain to the kid. Edgar Allan Poe had invented the modern mystery story, so did that mean that Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, or all the great Agatha Christie murder mysteries, were all those cultural appropriation?

The whole thing had devolved over the course of the evening, and battle lines were drawn. Some people accused me of trying to drive a wedge between two groups at GameScramble, but I'd pointed out to them that I'd just been defending myself and my portfolio.

They continued to invite me to events after that, but I felt it better for both them and me if I didn't take them up on it.

But enough time had passed that I felt like I should probably give them another go, so I'd schlepped my way into downtown San Francisco on a Thursday night for the autumn GameScramble event. I remember hoping like hell it wasn't going to bite me in the ass. And whatever I expected to come of that evening, what actually happened was way stranger.

The thing about all of these game incubators is that they're generally above or in back of something else, so you almost feel like you're going to a speakeasy to get to one of them, through some back alleyway and up a set of stairs that spirals into seemingly nowhere only to open up into this weird hidden loft area, half the time in the shadow of the freeway overpasses. You almost feel like someone's going to offer you a Sidecar on your way in and ask if you need any reefer or molly. It's such a weird vibe.

There were about a dozen indie developers working out of the GameScramble offices, and while it was nice to network and press the flesh, many of the games were the sorts of things that just held zero interest to me – precision side-scrollers with elaborate sequences, point-and-click adventures that often told a deeply personal story to the creator that they hadn't bothered to make accessible (or even comprehensible) to anyone else, some weird mish-mash of game genres that didn't seem to have any unifying theme, and always, always, *always* at least one creator who spent all night bitching to everyone trying his game that “you just don't *get* it,” and always saw that as a failure of the audience and not of himself as a creator.

Just after walking into the place, someone I'd never met handed me a drink and asked me to come try their “latest masterpiece” (spoiler alert: it wasn't) and we were off to the races.

About an hour into the night, I'd tried a handful of games that were still far too ripe to be getting any useful feedback and was just about to head out of the joint when a familiar face wandered up to me, and I let out a deep whistle of admiration.

“Well, goddamn, Rose Winslow!” I said as she strolled up towards me with a sly smile on her face. Rose was the older sister of a guy I'd worked with for a couple of years, and I'd always said that if she was ever single, he should try and set me up with her, which he never did or she was never single, I could never really figure out which.

She was a 6'6” brunette who worked as a venture capitalist investor for startups in the Valley. Rose had a striking beauty to her, something that just stood out in the center of the room, and lots of people joked that she could've been a model if she'd been a bit stupider. But she was far too smart for that kind of thing, and instead she used her beauty to put people at ease who really should've known better than to underestimate her. Thin and slender, as gorgeous as she was, I'd often joked around that she needed to eat more, but she'd always taken it as good-natured ribbing.

Tonight, she was dressed like she wanted everyone to look at her as soon as she entered, a short red dress that was low on top, short on bottom and dangerously tight all around, so much so that I was pretty certain she wasn't wearing a bra *or* panties beneath it. Of course, being as tall as she was, short on bottom meant it came down to almost her knees, simply so she wasn't flashing everyone everywhere she went.

Rose couldn't have been in the room long, because the entire vibe changed when she entered. Rose worked for IllumEyeNation, a local investment firm that had a great track record of knowing when to get in, when to get out, when to flip and how to pick the perfect things to be angel investors for. She'd gotten a reputation as something of a kingmaker in the indie games space, with their last major investment having gone to a games studio made up of complete first-timers that had gone on to win multiple Game of the Year awards with their first title. Every single person wanted to say hello to her, to get her attention on their project for just a few seconds in the hope that she would pluck them from obscurity and fund the living shit out of their pipe dreams.

But as it turned out, she wasn't there for them.

“Heya Raf,” she said to me with a big smile, bending down and wrapping her arms around me to give me a welcoming hug as well as a kiss on each of my cheeks. “I normally don't come to these things, but my girl Bonnie sent me a text message when she spotted you arriving, because lord knows, nobody's seen you in a good long while.”

“You came to see me?” I laughed. “I can't imagine why, Rose. I ain't got shit to sell.”

“C'mon, let's go outside and down to Crepes A-GoGo where we can hear each other talk,” she said, pulling me from the crowd and leading us towards the stairs, having to politely excuse herself at least half a dozen times before we even made it to the stairwell.

There was something kind and warm about her touch, as she held my hand in hers. We hadn't really ever known each other all that well, but there was a familiarity in the way that she was treating me that I have to admit I didn't hate.

We wove our way down the stairwell, past a number of people trying to hand her their business cards, and out onto the street, heading down the block towards a crepes truck that was open until 2:30 am any given night, offering food for people after the bars closed.

As we were walking down the street, I tried to remind myself Rose had *always* used her beauty as a weapon and a tool, and that if she'd come looking for me, I had to have my guard up, because it was entirely possible that she was going to leave me without my shirt or a prayer to my name.

“So what's it been? Three, four years?” I asked her.

“Something like that,” she agreed. “I don't think I've seen you since that last night of hard drinking the day Arcadia Games shut down.”

“How is Marc anyway?” I asked, not really wanting the answer to the question, because her brother and I hadn't often seen eye-to-eye on a number of things.

“He's actually the reason I came out to find you tonight,” she said to me with a smile, her long slender fingers wrapped around my forearm. “He's got a new project he's working on, and he needs an art director. I was thinking maybe that could be you.”

Two things you need to realize at this point. Number one, I'd never been a *director* before and the idea of being in charge of a team of artists made me more than a little bit nervous. Number two, her brother Marc could be a real pain-in-the-ass to work with for a lot of reasons, and though we'd been co-workers before, we'd always had a producer liaisoning between us, making sure we didn't kill each other, because Marc wasn't real respectful of deadlines.

To make a videogame, you really only need three things, and in the very indie studios, one person can often do two or three of these things. You need a programmer, you need a game designer and you need an artist. There's lots of other things around that are helpful (a producer, for one, who is often doing little more than arbitrating between bickering parties), but at the absolute base of making a game, that's all you need.

Marc was a game designer who'd never met an idea too late to integrate into whatever it was he was working on. Back at Arcadia, we used to jokingly call him CK, which was short for Creeper King. Feature Creep is when you're deep into a project and suddenly you have a great idea that you think you can add into the project. Because you're adding something (a feature) along the way, the amount of time it takes to do anything goes up and your expected done date gets pushed out. Feature Creep is the number one reason that games don't get finished, because some designer gets a wild hair up his ass and keeps trying to add feature after feature. Marc Winslow did this so much that at one point, the executive producer on our project just stuck up a Post-It Note on his office door that said 'Whatever it is, Marc, the answer is no.'

Now, don't get me wrong – Marc was also a *great* game designer. He had a knack for coming up with interesting game designs that straddled between things people already knew and things they'd never tried before, and he understood that fun was the most important thing to have. I'd sort of wondered where he'd ended up, because I figured someone somewhere would've scooped him up early.

“Me? An art director?” I laughed. “I mean, I haven't done that yet, and I'm not sure you want me

first timing it with your brother. How big is his team?"

"Right now? Just two. Him and his programmer," she said to me as we got in line at the crepes place, half a dozen drunk or stoned kids ahead of us. "They're at the point now where they can't do things with placeholder art anymore, and it's time for them to get serious."

"I dunno, Rose," I said. "Without a producer around, that means either Marc or the programmer is doing double duty as the producer. Marc needs a producer to keep guard rails up on him, otherwise you know him, he's going to keep having 'just *one more thing*' that he absolutely *has* to add that's going to keep his project forever away from shipping."

"I get it, Raf, believe me I do," she said as she let go of my arm and moved to rub her hand against the back of my neck. "That's one of the reasons I want *you*. You know how to tell my brother no in such a way that he listens to you some of the time."

"*Some* being the key word there, Rose," I chuckled. "He's still going to try and ignore me a whole bunch."

"And I know that their lead programmer, GG, will back you up all times you're going to need it to stand up to Marc, so all you have to do is be willing to be you and have an argument with him every now and then," she said.

I thought it over while she placed her order and then I placed mine, then went to stand over in the waiting area. Eventually, I decided to ask the sorts of questions that would show I was taking the whole thing seriously – were they funded, would there be a salary, would I have stock in the company – all the business shit I literally *hate* thinking about more than anything else.

Rose was ready for me and had answers that made everything sound more and more appealing. They were funded for the next two years, the salary was reasonable without being comfortable, I would get 30% ownership of the company with Marc having 30%, GG having 30% and Rose herself owning the remaining 10%.

But I kept coming back in my head to idea of just how frustrating it would be to be constantly telling Marc no. That was complicated by the fact that Rose didn't really want to tell me what had happened to the previous artist on the project, because during my questioning, I'd been able to figure out that there *was* an art director before me, and that they had left the project.

"I dunno, Rose," I said with a sigh, as we picked up our crepes from the counter. "Marc's a fantastic designer and all, but I'm not kidding when I'm telling you that I don't know if he's ever said no to anything in his entire life. Even with the money, I'm pretty leery about this whole thing."

"Tell you what," she said to me as we walked away from the crepes place, heading more towards downtown San Francisco. "I'll even throw a sweetener into the deal, something that ought to make this whole thing impossible to pass up."

"What's that?" I laughed.

"Me."

"Excuse me?"

"I know what a pain in the ass my kid brother can be, okay? It's not like I'm oblivious to his inability to finish shit. Marc is always the guy who has too many ideas and not enough follow through, but I think he's got a pretty solid game design on his hands here, the monetization hook looks solid, and as long as he's first to market, I think there's a pretty compelling chance the game will do really well. But without someone to tell him no, he's gonna keep delaying. So if you come in, kick ass like you always do and also sort of double as producer, you guys can pull that off."

"Maybe," I said, "but this doesn't explain what you just said."

She laughed, and it was nice to hear a warm mature laugh for once, something worldly and learned. "Marc's only going to cede authority to you if there's some real consequences for him. Well, I'm in an open relationship with a very understanding partner, so every time Marc comes to you with a feature he wants to add that isn't in his initial design document, you get to fuck me."

"I—"

"I'm not finished," she said as we kept walking through the almost empty late-night streets of downtown San Francisco. "On top of that, the day *after* you fuck me, I'm going to call up Marc, invite him out for lunch, and then I'm going to tell him in graphic detail *how* you fucked me, and that it was because he couldn't keep his feature creep in check, and that if he *keeps* adding features, you're gonna keep fucking me and I'm gonna keep *telling* him all about it. That'll scare him shitless and should get him to keep it all in check."

"I mean, you're joking, right?"

"Raf," she said with a shy smile. "I've been walking you back to my apartment for the last fifteen minutes because I knew you wouldn't believe me without a demonstration. My partner's out of town for the week, so you can crash the night and we can fuck until dawn if you want. But believe me when I tell you, I'm tired of having to always protect Marc from himself, and I'm down to desperate measures. I really *have* to make this one work."

"What happened to his previous art director?" I finally said, stopping in my walk. "No way he got this far without someone doing some art."

She sighed, looking up towards the night sky before looking back down at me. "They broke up. They were dating, and she finally had it with his shit, both personally and professionally, and she just got up and left both him and the company. That was three months ago, and he's been dragging his fucking feet all over the place since then, and I can't fucking have that. I invested a good amount of my own capital into his studio, so I need him to pull his head out of his ass and get back to work."

"What if I don't like the art direction the project's currently going in?"

"You will have final say on *all* things art, Raf. What you say goes." She stepped in close to me and put her hand between my shoulderblades. "I'm down on my knees figuratively and can be literally, if that's what'll get you to give this a shot. I always thought you were kind of cute anyway. But Marc respects the shit out of you, even with how much you guys fought. I've been trying to track you down since Maria left him, but you aren't exactly an easy guy to find. C'mon. Why don't we go upstairs and I can convince you to give my brother one last shot, okay?"

I glanced up and noticed the building we were standing outside was Silverstone Tower. Silver indeed. I turned my head back down a few notches, still looking up at her face towering over me, seeing that utterly uncertain expression she wore. She was genuinely terrified that I might tell her no. "You don't have—"

I was going to say more, but Rose basically assaulted my mouth with her own, her hands clinging to me like she was trying to ensure I couldn't pull away while her tongue staked its claim over portions of the inside of my mouth. Not that I really wanted to withdraw, mind you. Rose was easily one of the most beautiful women I'd ever met, and the fact that she was so wantonly pressing herself against me was removing any other thoughts from my brain rather quickly.

"I always kinda wanted to fuck you *before*, Raf," she cooed at me. "So don't think of this as you taking advantage of me, but us each getting something we want out of the deal. You willing to accept my offer?"

"You really think it'll keep Marc in check?"

"Isn't it worth at least trying once so you can find out?" she said as her hand reached down and started fondling my cock through my jeans. "Although you feel hard enough that maybe it'll be three or four times before dawn..."

"Well, we certainly shouldn't do it in front of the building," I laughed. In the middle of the sentence, she pulled me into the lobby and over to the elevators, waving her keycard in front of them to let the elevator open. She shoved me into the elevator forcefully and jammed her lips back against mine as the elevator started to move. I was thankful the elevator moved as fast as it did, because if it taken much longer, I think Rose might've just fished my dick out somewhere along the way.

As it stood, we barely made it into her apartment and got the door closed behind us before Rose was yanking my shirt up and over my head. I reached down to unbutton my jeans and she just yanked

her dress up and over her head, casting it aside, revealing I'd been correct in my assessment that she didn't have a stitch on beneath it. She was elegantly slender, with small breasts that still managed to look remarkably generous on her tall frame. Rose looked like a glamour model, the kind of woman almost too pretty to be real. But as in control as she normally appeared, there was a sense of urgent eagerness to her that I don't think I'd ever seen before. Her skin was a lovely shade of dark marble with pink nipples the shade of her namesake. She also had a patch of fine black hair above her pussy, well trimmed and maintained. I didn't get much of a chance to look, though, as she pulled me through her apartment straight into the bedroom, my pants unzipped but not pushed down.

Once we were close to the bed, she practically frisbee tossed me onto the bed and then yanked off my jeans and boxers, my cock springing free. "Good fucking Christ," she muttered beneath her breath. "If I knew you had such a monster on you, I'd have given you a roll in the hay just to try it on for size."

I'd like to say I had a witty and charismatic response ready and at the snap of a wrist, but whatever words I might have been about to say vacated my head when she suddenly engorged herself on my cock, sliding her face all the way down until her lips were around the base of it and my balls were wedged up against her chin. It was clearly a strain on her because I could feel her groaning along the length of my shaft, her throat giving spasms as she was working to suppress her gag reflex.

"Jesus God," she said, gasping heavily for breath. "I so very much want to suck the shit outta your dick until you're cumming down my throat, but I just can't wait any fucking more. I need this beast tearing me open."

Without so much as a second to catch my breath, Rose had climbed atop me, gotten my cock lined up with her pussy and forced herself all the way down it. I hadn't really thought of myself as big, but considering how fucking *snug* Rose's snatch was around my dick, I felt like a goddamn porn star, especially as I felt her start clenching in rhythmic spasms around my cock once she had it lodged up inside of her.

"FuckfuckfuckfuckFUCK..." she started hissing out in quick, fierce blurts. "Oh you motherfucker, that feels so fucking goddamn *fat* in my tiny little cunt..." She had finely manicured nails a shade not unlike that of her nipples and dragged them over my chest like tiny claws. "I'm totally on the pill, so you better flood my fucking guts tonight, you hear me?"

"Yes ma'am," I said as my hands grazed along her hips.

"God, I hope my fucking brother fucks this up at least once more, because you fill my aching pussy like no other dick before you, Raf," she purred at me.

"You don't need to lay it on so thick, Rose," I chuckled back at her.

She looked mildly offended and leaned down to connect our lips once more, her tongue pushing into my mouth with a bit more sensuality than before. "You can't feel how *tight* I am around you, Raf? I've never felt so fucking *full*... Fuck me, c'mon, fuck me... shove that killer dick right up into my fucking guts... poke my fucking lungs out..."

I would've loved to say I was driving things, but I think the only thing I was driving was the ghost out of Rose, as she continued to howl and sputter. Somewhere along the way, the words had turned into purely filthy sounds and whimpers, and more than a couple of times, I felt her clench down hard on top of my cock, as I think she started having chain orgasms somewhere in the middle of it. She had all the control of the tempo and force, and she knew exactly how to keep me from going off too fast while still getting her kicks off.

After what had to be her fifth or sixth orgasm, though, she almost looked a little embarrassed, like a kid caught with her hand inside the cookie jar, and yet, also completely unapologetic about it. She licked her lips, leaning her face down next to mine.

"God, I've been such a bitch, keeping you right on the edge for so damn long, haven't I? Maybe you can bend me over the bed and spank me to punish me next, but I need to feel you cumming inside of me... nobody's cum in my cunt for so fucking long... lemme feel it... lemme feel that hot load just

boiling over inside of me.... C'mon Raf... fill your girl up... Please? Pour it into my sweet, tight pussy and make me swell... drench my womb with it... cum in my hot little twat.... fucking cum in me, you bastard! Cum with meeeeeeeeeee!”

Now I gotta tell you, that was the hardest I'd ever cum in my fucking *life*. Like George Carlin once said, “I lost *ideas* in there, man...” Honestly, I felt like three pounds lighter after that orgasm, and I could feel my cum leaking out of her and back down onto me, as she burst into a contagious fit of giggles, the sexual release of it almost breaking some unspoken tension between us.

“Fuuuuuuuuuuuuuuck, I needed that,” she said, her body almost limp on top of mine. “But you better enjoy every chance you have tonight.”

Before morning, I'd come at least three more times, and I'd lost count of Rose's orgasms.

And I had myself a new gig.

Part Six – Gold

When I went to start at Ordinary Exotic Games, the name that Marc had given to the game company, I almost expected that one of the g's in GG would stand 'gold,' since that was on schedule for very soon, but as it turned out GG stood for Gilbert Guttierrez, and he was as cheerfully queer as the day is long. GG;s an openly gay Latino, with dyed blue hair in a haircut that can only be called a flophawk. On the day I first met him, he was wearing a shirt with a 1980s style airbrushed unicorn on it that said "I AM the magic, bitch!" in large swooping letters all around it. And glitter. So very much glitter.

Within just a couple of hours, I knew GG and I were going to get along great, and I also found out why Maria had left both Marc and the project. Marc had changed tactics and instead of asking people to make his late changes for him, he'd taken to trying to implement them himself, and let me tell you there is absolutely nothing worse than a designer who thinks he's also a programmer or an artist. Maria's last straw was when he attempted to do some "cosmetic" changes to a model for the game, and in doing so, had completely fucked up the rigging and the animation for the model. It had been like two days' worth of work that he'd blown away in about three minutes.

GG had also threatened to quit if Marc kept dicking around with things, and I found out early on that between Maria leaving and GG being at the boiling point, Rose felt like she was one small step away from watching her entire investment go up in a puff of smoke from her brother's ass. And I couldn't say I blamed her for getting nervous. GG and Marc mostly seemed to get along okay, but GG was more practical, and he was well aware that their seed money wasn't going to hold out forever, whereas Marc seemed to be under that designer's pipe dream that the money wouldn't ever disappear.

I spent my first day just reading Marc's game design document, and I had to admit, Rose's read on the game was spot on – it was somewhere between a small deck builder and an auto battler, designed for three-to-five minute games, with only a handful of decision gates to made over the course of any given match. Giant robots and kaiju, sorry, giant monsters, but the mecha design wasn't quite as unique as I thought it could be, and the user interface wasn't at all how I would've done it.

My second day was writing up my collection of notes and things I needed to, and then sorting them into a level of priorities, and what I could do on my own and what I needed GG to help me with. There was loads to do and I was well behind the eight ball for the moment.

I started work on the camera system first, which let me and GG and Marc all sort of work as a unit up front, and let us sort of establish how we were going to work moving forward. There was a bit of friction when I started in on breaking down why the visual flow wasn't how I thought it should be, but after about fifteen minutes of me walking through how I thought it should be done, both of the other two were completely on my side.

It wasn't as though any of the work Maria had done was bad – it just wasn't *me*, and if I was going to put in somewhere between six and twenty-four months on this project, I knew I needed to make it look how *I* wanted it to look. Less soft edges and more sharp corners, less large chunks and more elegant lines, less stagnant camera and more dynamic movement tracking once a turn had been input and it was just playing out.

And good lord, the monster design was a mess. Everything felt like it wanted to be as close to Godzilla as possible without bringing anything new to the table. I had to redefine all the creatures, and that was an immense amount of work on top of everything else that needed to get done. I found myself working 10–14-hour days, not because anyone *said* that I had to, but because I was eager to put my own stamp on things.

If we were going to do this, we needed to evoke the familiar, but we needed to bring our own style, our own flavor, and we couldn't be beholden to anyone or anything. We needed to shock the system, needed to bring some heat to what we were putting into the world.

There were hints of the universe that Marc wanted to build in the design document, but despite

for how much was in the damn thing, there was only a few hints of world building in it, and that bugged the crap out of me, so I started annotating and adding into it as I started building something Maria should've done on day one – a visual design guide, something we could adhere to and always go back and look at if we ever lost the flow.

To me, it was like they'd gotten so caught up in the excitement of doing something new that both Marc and GG had forgotten all the rules of what it takes to get a project done. One of the things the first producer I ever worked for had drilled into my head was the Two Out Of Three Rule. Basically, it's this: "Quality, Speed, Cost – Pick Any Two." If you want something done well and done quickly, it's not going to be cheap. If you want it done cheap and quickly, it's not going to be good. If you want it done good and cheap, it's not going to be fast. When you start any project, you have to realize that basically, in life like in making videogames, you're only going to ever get two out of those three things, and if you haven't decided which one you're sacrificing, you're cutting from all three and going to get none of them.

My first week was spent almost entirely with my headphones on, taking time only to go and get meals with Marc and GG, and to keep them abreast of what I was working on, and what I needed from each of them. Marc had seemed to learn from some of his past mistakes, and was actually taking the time to listen to what I had to say, which was good, because I had a *lot* to say. But I did everything I could to engage them in the process, showing them some of the preliminary sketch work I'd done to try and get some sort of good approach to what they... no, what *we* were going to be building.

By the second week, I was ready to move past theory. GG and Marc had spent the time I'd been building the style guide getting the camera system configured to how I saw it working, and Marc told me over and over again he was shocked at how much of a massive difference that little thing had affected how people were looking at the game. People in the colocation space were poking their over at GG's terminal a lot more, and a couple of them had even come over to introduce themselves to me, eager to see how I was working through problems that had apparently been with the project for months, but things that I could see a way past, with a fresh set of eyes.

At the halfway point of the first month, some of the other people in the colo space started asking me out to lunch, just to see if I could give them a one-hour revisit of their project, to see if I could see anything they were missing that they could get cheap mileage out of. I was happy enough to make friends with the people around us, and it turned out that the legwork would eventually pay off pretty well, because by October, one of the other studios in the colo space had run out of money, and their team broke up.

And I made a phone call.

There was more than enough work for two or three of me, so I called up Rose and asked what it would take to get enough seed money to hire the two artists from the folded studio full time. She asked me if I'd talked it over with Marc and GG, and I responded that I was the art director, we didn't have a producer, so until we did, we were all just doing what we could to get the best project out, and if we wanted to be ready for GDC in March of 2018 to make a good solid pitch to publishers, I needed a couple more pairs of hands. She said she'd get back to me, and the next day, I told the two artists who were packing up their shit that if they wanted to, they could stop packing.

From that point forward, it felt a little like I was also the de facto producer for the project, because since nobody else had done it, I drafted up a schedule of what it would take for us to have a good presentable demo ready for GDC in 6 months' time. Marc told me that he'd been hoping we could just publish the game ourselves and that the audience would simply find us. I pointed out, and rightfully so, that none of us knew a damn thing about user acquisition, advertising or public relations. We could make the best game anyone had ever seen, but if we didn't know how to get it in front of people, that wouldn't make any difference at all. He wasn't happy about it, but he agreed that my argument made a lot of sense, and the timeline of us being in feature lock by December, content lock by January, and then spending all of February and early March in a combination bug hunt/polish pass

was aggressive, but it was doable.

The two artists we brought on were named Astoria and Kris. Kris was an excellent 2D artist, so I got him to work building all our 2D UI and gameplay assets. He wasn't all that comfortable with his 3D work yet, and I told him that was absolutely fine, because we had a *shitload* of 2D art that needed doing, and even if he was just doing that for the next year, we'd have plenty to keep him busy. By contrast, Astoria was one of the best texture artists I'd ever seen, and she was also a pretty good animator, although her sense of modelling needed a bit more developing. But it was the perfect fit for what I needed. I made the model, sent it to her, she painted and textured it, sent it back to me, I rigged it up and animated it and then dumped it into the game. During the point when I had spare time, I tweaked the camera, added visual effects and generally polished our look.

Early December was when we had our first, well, *only* real disaster, as it turned out, but it was a fucking *doozy*, because I remember exactly how mad I was when it happened.

On the first Friday in December, we'd gone out drinking to celebrate three months of me being with the company, and it felt like a nice little party where everyone was talking about how far we'd come. Rose and her partner, a guy named Dylan, were there, and Rose told me how glad she was that I'd sort of taken on the role of producer, since Marc had a tendency to get a little lost in his spreadsheets, tweaking and balancing numbers in hopes of making sure the gameplay landed the way it needed to. I told her that everything Marc was doing was vitally important, and that I was happy to do whatever it took for the five of us to get the project to the point where we could sell it to a publisher. GG laughed and asked how he could get another programmer on the project, and I promised him that as soon as we were greenlit by a publisher, getting a second coder on the game would be my number one priority. Marc asked if he could get someone else to help him in design, and I sort of laughed and joked that he would never want to share the responsibility of game design with anybody.

I hadn't meant the comment to be mean, but Marc took it that way, although I didn't know that until we came into the office Monday morning. Because the distance was so great, we were basically working remote two days each week, and only came into the offices on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday. I was on CalTrain commuting in when my cellphone started buzzing in my pocket. I pulled it out, glancing at it, seeing GG's smiling face on the screen of my iPhone.

"Hey GG, what's up?"

"How far out are you?"

"We're at Milpitas right now, and I'm on a bullet, so I should be in the office within half an hour. Why? You sound angry."

"I'm fucking *pissed*, but there's no point in telling you about it now," he sighed. "I'll tell you about it when you get into the office. See you soon."

And then he hung up on me, leaving me to wonder what sort of nightmare I was heading in to find, but whatever I might have considered, I don't know that I would've thought of this one in a million years.

When I finally got in the office, I saw GG was the only person from our company in the colo space so far, although a couple of other studios had a handful of people in. They were all *very* intently focused on their own projects, headphones on, trying to be in a zone, or, more accurately, trying to avoid catching any of GG's excess wrath, because he was ready to burn the fucking building down. He wasn't just pissed; he was fuming with the anger of a thousand dying stars, in all his rainbow glory.

"That useless shitcunt!" he shouted, slamming his fist down onto the desk next to his keyboard, making his My Little Pony figures jump and fall over. "That's why he isn't here, you know! Because he knows if he walked through that fucking door right now, I'd take his nutsack and pull it up until I could wrap it around his neck and fucking *strangle* him with it!"

"Jesus, GG, what the fuck did Marc do, and how do we go about undoing it?" I said, placing a cup of coffee down in front of him, his exact order without him even asking, hoping it might placate the angered coder even for a moment.

“So you remember on Friday he was talking to us about implementing a rarity system for the mechs and monsters?”

“Yeah, he said we needed to have, like, five or six rarity tiers, and sell them in sealed packs, like collectible card games. I told him all that was monetization shit, and that it could wait until after we’d finished our vertical slice to show off at GDC,” I said before closing my eyes, my hands balling up into fists. “He tried to implement it on his own, didn’t he?”

“He did.”

“And he fucked something else up in doing it, didn’t he?”

“He very much did.”

I sighed, looking down at the ground. “How bad is it?”

“Oh, he implemented his fucking rarity into the asset database. He just assigned it to a slot that was already holding data.”

“And the old data?”

“Was erased.”

“And he forgot to branch his changes?”

“He overwrote the backups with his changes.”

My fists clenched even tighter. “What data did he erase?”

“The animation database.”

GG was lucky he was quick on the draw, because he scooped up his cup of coffee just a fraction of a second before I brought my fist down onto his desk, making the whole thing jolt.

“So, GG, we’re not *entirely* fucked, because I keep an offsite backup that’s completely removed from all the systems, so we can roll the assets back to that one, but because we went to the party last Friday, I didn’t back it up, so basically all the animation work I did last week just got lost, never to return, and I’ll have to do it all over again. Thankfully, I don’t have to go back down to San Jose to get it, because I was going to back it up this morning when I got in.”

“This is the kind of shit he used to pull on Maria, you know?” GG said, as I handed him the flash drive I was using to keep my back up on. “I thought you and Rose said you had a way to make sure this didn’t happen anymore.”

“I told Rose this was going to happen, but she assured me Marc had learned his lesson and that he wasn’t going to go about pulling this kind of shit now that I was around,” I grumbled. “Okay, look, this is going to cause some waves, but right now, I don’t fucking care. Remove his access to commit changes on his own. Everything he wants to check in or out of the dev environment goes through you from now on.”

“For how long?”

“At least until we’re past GDC,” I said, moving over to my desk. “I didn’t want to treat him like a fucking child, but if he can’t be trusted not to act like one, then we’re going to do what we have to in order to protect ourselves from his fucking incompetence. And I need to go and make a phone call to Rose, see if she’s really got a way to reign her brother in or if we’re wasting our fucking time. How long will it take you to get all the assets from my back up into our code?”

“An hour or two, tops. Thank God you made a backup.”

“Yeah, well, I made it clear that I didn’t trust Marc when I got here,” I said, turning on my PC. “Now you know why. You get us back up and running, get Marc’s access revoked and hopefully by the time all that’s done, I’ll be off the phone with Rose.”

I stepped into the meeting room that the colo space had and closed the door. Then I slammed my foot into the brick wall about as hard as I could. Once I’d cooled down a little, I called Rose, who picked up immediately.

“Tell me you can get him in check, Rose, or I am walking. God help me, I am walking off this project and leaving you holding the *fucking* bag!”

“Whoa! Easy, Raf! What happened?”

Over the next few minutes, I explained to her that her brother's carelessness had just cost me a week's worth of work, and if I hadn't been so overly cautious and paranoid, he would've probably borked the entire fucking project because he wanted to try and sneak in a feature even when I'd told him it could wait.

She was, understandably, just as mad as I was.

I told her that this was exactly the sort of disaster I didn't want to have happening, and was the reason why I'd been so apprehensive about working with her brother. She told me that she was coming into our office and that she, Marc, GG and I would have a meeting as soon as we were all in.

Just as she hung up on me, even through the thick walls of the conference room, I could hear GG shouting. "Don't fucking start with me, flapdick!" he yelled. "You're so fucking lucky that Raf's thinking ahead, otherwise you would've killed this whole fucking project!"

I stepped out of the conference room and shook my head, as Marc looked at me with an expression somewhere between embarrassment and frustration. "If we didn't put this in..."

"Then what Marc? We're completely unprepared to ship as it is! Monetization is a fine thing for us to implement... as a team! Later! When we've got a fully functional game we can show off, then maybe we can start worrying about how it'll make money. But you nearly prevented us from being ready for GDC! Even with me having a backup, we're still going to be losing a week's worth of my time that could've been spent implementing things or polishing things, just because you couldn't be patient and had to do the things now!"

Twenty minutes later, Rose was in the office and the four of us went to sit in the conference room, while Astoria was getting started on reimplementing some of the things she'd seen me do last week, knowing that since our workflow was temporarily broken, helping out wherever she could would be better than twiddling her fingers waiting for directions.

It turned out that Marc hadn't realized quite how badly he'd screwed up, not understanding that his sloppy work could've easily undone the entire project until it was explained to him. GG did it, because I was still fuming mad, and Rose looked like she wanted to beat him about the head with her umbrella. He'd thought he'd just implemented the feature without realizing that he'd overwritten *existing* data, because he didn't understand GG's filetree properly. Once he did, he was mortified, but still somehow adamant that if we would simply implement more of his feature requests, things would go along better.

That was the point where Rose laid into him, telling him that since he hadn't been able to stick to a schedule, she'd heard from GG that *I* had laid one out, and that we were sticking to it, and *that* meant I was also the goddamn producer on the game, and my decisions on the project were final, and that if he didn't like it, he could be removed from the project. As it turned out, Marc hadn't read the founding papers for the studio closely, and didn't realize that everything he'd done in terms of game design was owned by the studio, and since GG and I each controlled 30% and Rose controlled 10%, if both GG and I agreed he couldn't get his shit together, we could simply terminate his employment by the studio and get another designer. I think *that* scared the crap out of him.

(It's also important to understand that the same was true for the work that both GG and I had done. If GG and Marc decided they both wanted me out, they could make it happen. The same was true for Marc and I about GG. In either case, all the work that had been done on the project so far was owned by the studio, not by us. It's sort of standard in these things, but I don't want you thinking we'd singled Marc out for this treatment. Them's the breaks of the biz.)

Now it was all starting to set in on Marc, and while his head was reeling, Rose asked GG to step out of the room for just a few minutes, which GG was all too happy to do, because he was still more than a little pissed off over everything, even with Marc's immediate concession that he done fucked up. Once it was the three of us alone in the room, Rose shook her head and looked over at her little brother.

"You know what this means, don't you, Marc?"

"You don't have to do it, sis."

“Oh, I know that I don’t *have* to do it, Marc, but I *offered* to do it, so that Raf would come and trust you one more time, because all you’ve ever done is fuck up whenever he’s around. He’s given you chance after chance after chance, and how do you repay his trust? *You keep fucking up!* So now I’m going to be a woman of my word. And I’m going to make it even worse for you this time, so that maybe it’ll sink through your fucking skull.”

“Rose, I—”

“Shut the *fuck* up, Marc,” she growled. “I am going to invite Raf over to my house tonight, and I am going to invite your ex-girlfriend Maria over, and the three of us are going to get shitfaced drunk and fuck each other stupid until one of the three of us, likely Raf, no offense Raf, is completely unable to go another round. And I’m going to tell her when I invite her over that I’m going to film it so I can show it to you exactly once, then delete it, because you deserve to see how badly you hurt her, so badly that she’s willing to fuck your coworker to get you to stop being such a fucking asshole to the rest of the people in your life. And then she’s going to leave California. And I’m going to go back to work. And you are going to let Raf run this fucking project until the GDC presentation, after which you boys are going to get a real producer to take over, once we’ve got a publisher who’s going to invest the capital you need to finish it. Because sooner or later it’s going to sink in, Marc, and I’m just praying to *God* right now that this is it.”

Now normally I’d go into the details about what it was like and all the things we did, but I have to admit, there was something sad and tragic about this one that makes me feel like you wouldn’t want to hear about it. Like we were all going through the motions to sell it, but our hearts weren’t really into it at that point. Maria wanted to get in her last dig at Marc, Rose wanted to make sure Marc understood how deep of shit he was in, and I just wanted a job environment where one of the other founders wasn’t trying to fucking undermine me all the time. The sex was fine, but that’s all it was, just sex, no emotional attachment, and maybe even a little bit of sorrow as an undercurrent to it. Maybe even a lot of sorrow, truthfully.

But Maria’s last name was Orfebre, which I would find out later was Spanish for ‘goldsmith.’

And the day after, true to both of their words, Maria left California and Rose showed Marc the video before deleting the file forever. Marc apologized to me one more time, and we never really spoke of it ever again.

Thankfully, whatever mental roadblocks Marc had in place that were keeping him from learning from his mistakes got shook loose from that experience, and since then, he’s gotten his shit together and learned to respect the process but the work that the rest of us on the team have been putting in. He still has phases when he’s a pain in the ass to deal with, but for the most part, he’s learned not to be a dick about it, and to never try and go around anyone to get what he wants. Sure, we’ve had a handful of very loud arguments where he’s been advocating for something he feels like *desperately* needs to go in, and a couple of times, he’s even been right, and we’ve adjusted the schedule, but all of that happened after GDC.

In late January, I was taking a very late CalTrain back down to San Jose from the city and it occurred to me just how much I’d learned about myself over the course of the gifts from Mrs. Choi, and how each one had done a number into shaping me into a better person.

From my first gift, I’d learned not to hold onto anger too long, because otherwise it would eat you up inside, like it had Madi. I hadn’t needed to learn not to be the kind of person Alistair was. From the second, I’d learned that even things that were highly unlikely were still possible, and that I had somehow fathered a child out there in the world. From the third and fourth, I’d learned that how we perceive things isn’t always how *other* people perceive them, and sometimes people just get so caught up in their own shit that they forget to take into account how it’s going to affect anyone else. (I’d also sort of learned that I’m a one-on-one kinda guy, and while it’s been nice having a couple of two-girl experiences in my life, I wouldn’t ever want that to be the norm. Nor would I ever want to have another dude around regularly, heh.) From five and six, I learned that some lessons needed to be learned the

hard way, but that even people who were incredibly thick headed could eventually learn and adapt, and that sometimes you just needed to make sure you were giving people enough of a chance. Because once Marc started to change, he got a *lot* better, and The Price Of Rage, the game we built together, would eventually go on to change the course of both of our lives quite a bit, which it wouldn't have done if I'd just quit and walked away from it, instead of teaching Marc how to work better with a team.

You ever heard that expression? "There's only two lessons in your life you're ever going to remember: your first one and your last one." Well, I'd argue that you can remember a lot more than that, because the last of the seven secrets was a bit of a doozy, but yeah, I'm always going to remember it. And in February of 2018, I'd get my last brush with magic...

Part Seven – A Secret Never To Be Told (finale)

I could open the last chapter of my story in a lot of different ways, but I chose this one. I'm so glad that Mrs. Magpie chose for my story to end with only *seven* secrets. There's a longer version of the rhyme that goes on like this: "Eight for a wish, / Nine for a kiss, / Ten a surprise you should be careful not to miss. / Eleven for health, / Twelve for wealth, / Thirteen beware it's the devil himself." The last thing I wanted to do was be dancing with the devil.

The nursery rhyme goes back several hundred years and is tied to the fact that magpies were considered an omen of bad luck. And for much of my life, I'd felt like all that bad luck was concentrated in one place – my own daily existence.

Things had gone wrong for me all over the place, but I'd tried never to just give up. Every day I'd get back up, pull on my pants and try to find a way to get through the next day, because there was always the chance of things getting better on the next one.

You ever hear people say that? "Never take a permanent solution for a temporary problem." It's meant to be truism that inspires people to avoid suicide and self-harm. And they're absolutely right. As long as you are still breathing, things can get better. They can also get worse, that's true also, and that's something you shouldn't forget either. Don't ever believe in the concept of 'rock bottom.' Bottoming out is just a lack of imagination on your part. You can *always* go lower.

You're wondering where I'm going with all of this. I get that. Be patient just a little bit longer; it'll all make sense in the end, I promise you.

See, back when I was scraping vomit out of the backseat of my car at the beginning of all of this, I'd thought that particular moment was *my* bottoming out. I'd lost my job, I'd lost my dignity, I was even starting to lose my sense of self-identity. The very notion of who Rafael Corvis is, that was beginning to come into question, because I was on the border of feeling like I had nothing to give to the world. What, I kept asking myself each and every morning, was the point of it all?

I want to stress how pretty much *everyone* goes through this phase at some point in their lives. We all think we don't matter. We all think as soon as we die that we'll be forgotten and no one will speak our name ever again. We question why we can't change the world, why we can't do something that will live for centuries past our endpoint.

"Shakespeare's name still lives on," we think to ourselves, "so why can't mine?"

From there, it's just a short step to "I'm a failure because I *can't* change the world."

And that's where I want you to look a little further, to expand your horizons just a little wider.

Because it's not that you *can't* change the world – it's that you already *have* and you just didn't realize it yet. You may *never* realize just how much impact you've had on the world around you. Most of us don't get that chance, because the scope of it all is hard to understand.

Every day, you're affecting all the people around you. You're changing the lives of everyone around you simply by existing. You bring a perspective that none of them would ever have without you there, because your perspective isn't anything like theirs. That's important to remember.

The other thing I want to tell you about is that words don't just have one meaning, which is something that's very easy to forget in our modern day-to-day living. When Mrs. Choi told me she was

giving me seven secrets, I thought I knew what that meant, but at this point, I'm suspecting I made the same mistake you've probably made.

Commonly, we think of "secret" to mean "kept from knowledge or view," i.e. hidden. But it's a word full of potential and has other interpretations. It can be taken as a method or process divulged only to one's own company or craft. But it can also be taken as a specific needed that's key to reaching a desired end, i.e. the secret of my success.

That's where I made my biggest mistake.

That, and in my conversation with the ghost.

Oh right! I totally didn't even tell you about the ghost!

In January of 2018, on a cold Sunday morning, I met one of the ghosts of the neighborhood, who'd come to file a complaint with me on behalf of all the other ghosts. It was about five in the morning, and I really should've been asleep, but there had been this constant tapping at the window just next to my bed, and it felt like it had been going on for an eternity, so I woke up just enough to peer out the window to see if it was a loose branch or a bird or something, and found myself staring directly into a semi-translucent face scowling at me.

I, naturally, fell out of bed, and that woke me up sharply. So I stood up in my boxers and my nightshirt, because I fully expected that I had been mostly still dreaming, and looked out my bedroom window into my back yard, seeing that same ethereal form floating there, looking annoyed at me.

The ghost was a rotund man dressed in a very expensive looking suit, a flurry of disheveled hair hanging around his face, a cigar resting on his lips. He had a thick scruffy black beard and eyebrows that were thicker than some walrus mustaches I'd seen in my time. "You gonna invite me in or what, kid?" the ghost said to me from his hovering perch.

"You're... are you a ghost?"

The ghost scowled at me. "Are you an idiot?"

"I hope not."

"Then stop asking idiotic questions and invite me in."

I shrugged a little, stepping back as I waved a hand towards my room. "You wanna come in?"

The scowl disappeared and was replaced by a kind smile as he drifted through the wall and moved to levitate in the center of my bedroom. "Aaaahhhh. Much better. It's cold out there, y'know?"

"Do... can ghosts *get* cold?"

"No, but yes," the spirit said to me. "We don't *actually* get cold, but if it's cold out, and we think it *looks* cold, then we *feel* cold, even if we *aren't*. It's a whole thing. Anyways. You don't remember me, do ya, kid?"

"You... you look vaguely familiar, but no, I can't say I place you."

"I was a friend of your grandfather's. He introduced us once. Pizzacato. Alberto Pizzacato, at your service."

"Oh! I do remember you. Sorry, you don't smell like peppermint anymore, and the scent of it would've immediately connected the memory," I told him. We'd been introduced when I'd first moved out to the area, but he'd died within a couple of months of my arrival. He'd always smelled heavily of peppermint, and my grandfather had told me Mister Pizzacato absolutely loved to suck on peppermint hard candies constantly.

"Probably for the best ghosts don't smell of anything," Alberto said to me. "Otherwise I doubt I'd smell much of peppermint. Mio Dio, how I miss my peppermints. But enough about me. How've you been, kid?"

"The last few years have been a fucking mess," I said, sitting on the edge of the bed. "Every time I feel like I'm getting my shit together, something else comes along and messes it all up."

The ghost pulled the cigar from his lips and stabbed it my direction. "See, that right there is a *bad reading* of your actual situation, kid." He gestured around the room while he talked. "Why do you think it's a mess now?"

“This job I’ve got could fall apart at any moment.”

“Who’s your boss?”

“The big sister of my coworker. The coworker who’s a goddamn time bomb I’m just waiting to blow up all over again.”

“No. Wrong.”

“Wrong?”

“She’s not your boss, and we both know it. Try again. Who’s your boss?”

I had to stop and think at that point. “I... I don’t have one?”

“You do,” the ghost insisted. “And it’s *you*. You are your own boss. You set the schedule. You decide what people are working on. You may have joined the project as the artist, but you’ve also somehow become the producer, and that means you’ve got control of your fate. You can do whatever you want to keep the time bomb in check, and nobody’s going to tell you otherwise. In fact, I’m pretty sure your team *wants* you to do what you can to keep everything running smoothly.”

“Yeah, but...”

“No! No ‘but,’ kid! You are where the buck stops. So if you’ve got a problem with your boss, you’ve got a problem with *you*. So is your boss the problem?”

“Well, when you put it like that...” I said to him.

“How else could you put it?”

“Ok. Fair. But it could still go tits up at any moment.”

“That’s all of life for you. If you want stability, you’re eternally going to be disappointed.”

I had to consider those words for a long moment before I spoke again. He was right – there was no guarantee for anything in life, but, for now, I was in probably the best professional place I’d been in for over a decade. We had a good project. We had a good team. I just had to keep it all together until we were ready for the next stage.

“Work’s not a complete disaster, okay, I’ll grant you that, but look at the rest of my life.”

“What about it?” the ghost asked, a smug look on his rotund face.

“It’s still so... empty,” I told him, gesturing to the house around me. “My grandfather had this big, giant, extensive house, and it’s... it’s still just me here. Mrs. Choi gave me this gift, and it’s had women come and go from my life, but...”

“But nobody ever stays,” the ghost finished for me.

“Exactly.”

“You ever think of why?”

“What do you mean?”

“What do you think the point of her gifts to you were?”

“The point?”

The ghost laughed, shaking his head. “You think she did something so powerful with nothing planned? No greater concept beyond making your life a little bit lighter here and there?”

“I mean... I hadn’t even considered that she might have had some sort of greater plan with what she did,” I admitted. “I thought she was just trying to cheer me up.”

“Kid, you’re adorable,” the ghost said, almost patting my cheek but not quite touching me. “All the ghosts of the neighborhood have always thought you were a good egg. You didn’t get mad at the Sandersons when their sewage pipe busted and spewed all over your back yard. You didn’t yell at anyone when old man McGillicutty backed into that power line and had the neighborhood without power for a few days. You’ve always been friendly and helpful, and the ghosts of the hills, we appreciate it.”

“How many—”

“Let’s stay on topic, kid,” the ghost interrupted. “If you’d wanted to go through a phase where you were being sort of a bit of an asshole after your company laid you all off for doing *too* good a job documenting how you’d made a great game, none of the ghosts up here would’ve blamed you. But you

didn't do that. Sure, you stayed up way too late more than a couple of times, and yeah, maybe once or twice you fell asleep in your clothes, maybe even with your t-shirt on backwards, but in terms of letting your anger out? Not even close. And that worried us all a little bit. We all thought, Mr. Choi especially, that you were something of a time bomb, just waiting to blow up on someone or something. And we wouldn't have been happy about it, but it would've at least gotten it out of your system," he sighed. "But you didn't. You kept it all inside, and we got worried about you."

"So, you'd have felt better if I'd gone through a week or so of just getting shitfaced drunk, watching *Farscape* reruns in my boxers or something?"

"Yes!" the ghost said, taking the cigar from his lips to stab in my direction once more. "It would've been a release! A catharsis! And you needed that! But you just kept putting up wall after wall after wall! You didn't even really vent when that guy threw up all over the back of your car! You just sucked it up and dealt with it. But sometimes, and this thing, this is the thing Mrs. Choi's first lesson was for you to learn, you have to have a release valve, to give way to that pressure, so you do not buckle down forever and just implode."

"That was years ago, though," I told the ghost.

"Well, it *was* just the *first* lesson. You had lots of things to learn to get you into a mindset where you'd be ready for a real relationship. You needed to learn how to compromise, how to stand up for yourself, how to listen and how to speak up. You needed to learn that despite the setbacks of being laid off, it wasn't the end of you. You'd sort of laid down to die, and that's not the state that anybody wants you in. You weren't... well, for lack of a better expression, you weren't *you* anymore. And until you'd incorporated the loss, Mrs. Choi's magic was trying to get you back to being you again."

"Did she?"

"Did she what?"

"Did she get me back to *me*?"

"Well, how do you feel?"

I sighed. "Still mostly alone. Isolated and frustrated. I mean, I get that I have control over the work life now, and you're right, I should take some comfort in that, but I still feel like I'm spending my nights trapped working all the time. I come home, crawl into bed and then sleep, a little, then sleep... a little. And then I get up and do it all over again. It's comforting in some ways, but frustrating in a lot of others. I want someone in my bed with me, y'know? So it was good having all sorts of cheap, easy, meaningless sex, but at the end of the day, it was unfulfilling."

"Sure, because that was all to get you ready. You'll be at the end of the line soon."

"End of the line?" I asked nervously. "You mean I'm dying?"

"You kids are so ridiculously dramatic," the ghost sighed. "No, you're not dying. But in just a little bit, you're going to get Mrs. Choi's last gift, and then your life's going to back to some kind of normal again. And you're going to have to learn to live with that."

"How do you mean?" I asked the ghost.

"After you've had a touch of what the life of magic can be, going back to a normal world might be difficult to take. You might find it all... rather dull."

I remember being quite taken aback. "You mean... it's all just... just going to *stop*? Like, after all of this, once it runs its course, it's just back to complete normality?"

The apparition of my departed neighbor shrugged and nodded in one muddled gesture. "You'll figure it out. At the end of the day, m'boy, we don't all get to have the wonder forever. Anyway, I just wanted you to know that we, the ghosts of the high hills of San Jose, we're all quite proud of you. Before it all wraps up, we felt we should tell you that we're rooting for you to win. And maybe... maybe at some point we'll peek in on you again, see how you're doing." The ghost drifted over towards the wall of my bedroom and started to phase through it. "Take care, kid."

He disappeared through the wall and I never saw him again.

Not yet, anyway.

I'm still alive.

Heh.

Anyway, I realized the arrival day of the last secret was Feb. 14th, 2018. Valentine's Day. *And* it was a goddamn Wednesday.

I spent the day at work, and thankfully things had gotten back to some kind of normalcy. Marc was finally taking his cues from me, and seeing as we had the Game Developers Conference in a little more than a month, he was mostly just heads down with the rest of us, making sure everything we had in our playable demo was going to be in tip-top shape to show off to possible publishers. He knew the stakes now, and just wanted to put together the best possible product. That said, I was doing everything I could to ensure that nobody was working *too* much crunch time, and sending people home at a reasonable time on Valentine's Day was part of that. Marc had started dating someone, GG had a boyfriend and Astoria was going to be celebrating her first Valentine's Day with her husband. That meant I forbade anyone from being in the office past six. And despite the fact that I didn't have anywhere in particular to go, I included myself in that list.

I didn't want to go home, so I decided to head into downtown San Jose. Valentine's Day is usually the kind of night when single folk get crazy and connect with anyone anywhere. I didn't intend to get utterly drunk, but I figured being out with people might make whatever magic Mrs. Choi had cause less disruption in the world around me. So I headed for a bar.

There's a nice little neighborhood Irish tavern in downtown San Jose called Trials Pub. The place has got friendly bartenders, it's not too big and you always feel like you can have a spot of space that's your own. Dave, the bartender I know best, smiled at me as I came in. "You want your usual, Raf?"

"Yeah, but lemme get a plate of those excellent sausage rolls you guys make."

"You got it, brother."

And I settled in for what I thought would be a long night doing not a whole lot.

Jesus, I get a *lot* of shit wrong, don't I?

I figured since it was a Wednesday, there wouldn't be a lot of people swarming the bar, but apparently I underestimated the draw of people looking to find someone to fill their bed. And there were men and women by the droves trying to find someone to squish against. And I planned to just sit at the bar for the majority of the night. Sooner or later, either things would go right, or things would go wrong. I wasn't particularly invested in either option.

So imagine *my* surprise when I heard a familiar voice coming up behind me. "Rafael Corvis, why the *fuck* are you never home when I swing by your house?" I turned on my barstool to see Cori Choi, Mrs. Choi's oft-referenced granddaughter.

Cori was in her early 20s now, but the last time I'd seen her, she'd been a bubbly little high school senior, cute, but certainly not the gorgeous woman she had grown into. She was half-Korean and half-white, and she'd been into sports and athletics when she was in high school, but there had always been a very nervous energy around her, like she was terrified of getting too close to me, of spending time with me. I'd kind of always thought she didn't like me. She was dressed in a snug pair of jeans, a giant American Football t-shirt and a denim jacket that looked like it was so far out of fashion that it had come back into fashion again. She was short, peppy, curvy but also fit as all get out. Fuck, she was beautiful right from the start.

"Well, I'm always working my ass off these days, so that's why. Didn't your grandmother tell you that you should call and schedule something with me before you showed up?"

Cori's face fell just a little bit. "Oh. You haven't heard. Grandma passed away a couple of months ago."

"Oh god, no, I hadn't heard," I said, immediately moving to give her a hug. "I'm so sorry to hear that. She was an amazing woman."

"She really was, Raf," Cori said, a bittersweet smile spreading on her lips. "And she really liked

you, you know. You were always her favorite neighbor. But now she's in heaven with Grandpa, and I'm sure they're having a blast causing trouble with every person they run into up there."

"You come up here to try and sell her old house?" I asked her as she moved to sit down on a barstool next to me. "I know it's been on the market for quite a while, but your grandmother set the asking price so damn high, you may have to lower it."

"Well, that's only one of the reasons I'm up here. I'm probably going to take it off the market for a little while at least while we try and get settled in."

"We?" I asked. "You get married while you were away at college?"

She laughed and blushed a little bit, slapping me on the shoulder. "No no. Picked up a girlfriend though. Here she comes now," Cori said to me as a scorching hot blonde walked down the bar towards us, holding two pints of Guinness, holding out one for Cori to take. "Raz, this is Rafael Corvis, the guy I was telling you about who lived next to my grandmother."

Raz was like the other side of the coin in almost every aspect from Cori. Cori was 5'2" if she was lucky; Raz had to be at least a foot taller than that. Cori's English was flawless and Raz's had a subtle tinge of Israeli to it. Cori was an open book; Raz felt like she was keeping just about everything behind closed doors.

"He is a bit stronger than I expected. You said he was a computer artist, spent most of his time making videogames," Raz said as she moved to sit down on the only other empty barstool, the one on the other side of me. She wore jeans so skin tight I imagined she'd have to peel them to take them off, a spaghetti strap blue top and a leather jacket over it. I could tell she didn't have a bra on beneath it and that she had a barbell through one of her nipples, the fabric was that tight over her generous breasts. "I expected something more... geekish."

"I can swap seats with you, so you two can sit together if you want."

"No no," Raz said, placing her beer on the bar before taking her hand and smoothing it along my back. "It's much better like this if we have you pinned in-between us. More fun for us."

For the next couple of hours, I tried to keep up with the conversation, as Cori sort of filled me in on what the last few years of her life had been like, finishing up college, hooking up with Raz, which was short for Raziah and was, in fact, a Hebrew name, and both of them trying to figure out what they wanted to do with their lives. As it turned out, they'd both gotten jobs up in the Valley, Raz as a product manager for Nvidia, and Cori as a registered nurse at the Regional Medical Center. And until they got a place of their own, they were staying at Cori's late grandmother's house.

Now, I like to consider myself relatively quick on the uptake, but over the course of a couple of drinks, I got the distinct impression that both women were flirting with me. Raz liked to keep her fingers on my back, and repeatedly Cori would take my hand into hers and squeeze it. And they kept moving in a little closer each time. Cori's leg was eventually pressed up against mine, and Raz's hand had drifted from the back of my shoulders to the small of my back, just above my belt.

"We took a cab here," Raz said to me. "Maybe we can take your car back to the house?"

"Uh, sure," I said, motioning for Dave to close out our tabs and bring our credit cards back over. The drive from downtown to my place is about 13 minutes, give or take, but I think I did it in under ten, just pushing every even close to yellow light I could before we arrived back at my house, and sure enough, there were a couple of cars parked in front of Mrs. Choi's old house, a grey Rav4 and very beat up old black Honda Civic.

I pulled my car into my garage and as soon as the garage door shut, Cori leaned over from her place in the passenger seat into mine, wrapping her arms around my neck and locking lips with me like she'd been aching to swallow me whole her entire life, a kiss that could melt the polar ice cap. "You're gonna take us both inside and fuck the shit out of us, right?" she whispered to me with a sly grin, giggling as she wiggled her ass onto my lap.

"I, uh... are you sure?"

"Raf," Raz said to me, reaching from the back seat to smooth her fingertips down the front of

my shirt, teasing them through the dark thick thatch of hair there. “She’s been in love with you since she was just a girl. You were always the strong, smart, cute neighbor she wanted but couldn’t have, because she was too young.”

“But on my 18th birthday, my grandmother said I could have one wish, a wish for anything I wanted, no questions asked, nothing outside of the realm of possibility,” Cori said to me. “So, I wished for the perfect triad between you and me. I wanted you to be my husband so bad that I told my grandmother I would do anything to make it happen. And she told me all it would take would be a bit of time, during which I could change my mind. But I was greedy, and I wanted the perfect wife too, not just for me but for you as well. I love men and women, so I wanted one of each, but I wanted you to be the man. I was afraid it was too much to ask, but grandma told me it would all work out fine in the end, once you and I were ready for each other. Patience and time, she told me. And she said on my 22nd birthday, it would be.” She sighed a little bit, running her hand along my face. “I didn’t think she was going to go, but I think she felt like her time was up and she wanted to be with grandpa again.”

We slowly moved out of the car and headed into the house. “And you, Raz? You believe in all of this?”

“I would’ve said no before Cori and I met, but the amount of insane coincidences it took for her and I to end up sharing a taxi cab together...” Raz laughed a little, shaking her head. “I’ll tell you the story later, but after that, I believe now. And I got to meet and talk to Grandma. She was the kindest and most generous woman ever.”

“She really was,” I said with a sigh. “But why me, Cori?”

The three of us walked through my house, and I was a little surprised, but Cori was leading us straight to the bedroom. “When we first met, Raf, I was just sixteen and I’d just been dumped a couple of days earlier by my first real boyfriend because he wanted for us to have sex, and I wasn’t ready yet. And you’d come over with your grandfather for dinner, and I tried telling my parents and my grandparents that I just wasn’t in the mood for company, but they said I needed to. And during dinner I was I was pretty quiet, even when you tried to cheer me up. And after dinner I went out to sit on the back porch and you came out to talk to me. Told me that if my boyfriend couldn’t be patient, he wasn’t worth the time anyway. And you told me that I could do better, and that I would, because even if I was pouting, I seemed super smart. And then you went back inside, because you didn’t want to bother me if I needed my space. That night, I decided that you were exactly what I wanted, and for the next two years, I measured everybody against you. You were kind but not smothering; you were smart but not stuck up about it; you were what I wanted, *who* I wanted.” She pushed me backwards to sit on the side of my bed before reaching down to pull the American Football tour t-shirt up and over her head, revealing a very ornate red bra. “And now I’m going to do everything I can to convince you that we’re perfect for you. And so’s she.” Cori hooked one of her fingers in a belt loop of Raz’s jeans, pulling her close so they could merge together in a kiss while Cori pushed the jacket off of Raz, casting it to the floor.

It was clear they’d been a couple for a while now, because there was a familiarity and comfortableness they had with each other, as Cori reached down and pulled Raz’s top off, exposing those teardrop shaped tits of hers, the right nipple having the barbel of silver I’d seen through the cloth when we’d first been introduced at the bar. They worked on each other’s jeans next, having kicked off their shoes when we’d first come out of the garage. And before I knew it, they were both standing completely naked in front of me. Cori had a small V of black hair above her pussy, in contrast to the rectangular block of blonde above Raz’s. Both of the girls had pierced their navel.

The two of them approached me in unison, reaching together to pull my shirt up and over my head, kissing at my cheek and neck before I could feel hands on my waist. They pushed me down onto my back and before I knew it, they’d shoved my pants and boxers off and I was just as naked as they were, each of them having one hand somewhere on my cock, Cori’s fingers more towards the tip, Raz’s down near the base.

They were taking their time, and it was immediately far more intimate and emotional than anything I'd ever been a part of. They helped ease me back onto the bed, and before I knew it hands had shifted into lips and tongues, the two of them kissing along the length of my cock, meshing their mouths together over the tip, kissing each other while their tongues paid no small amount of attention to my tip. To call it a blowjob would be to do a disservice to the treatment they paid to my dick – it was a hymnal, a ceremony, a celebration.

But they didn't stop there and before I knew it, Cori was moving to straddle her hips over mine, both of her hands on my chest to make her tits press together as she smiled down at me. "I told Raz that I wanted to go first, and she said that was fine," Cori said as she slowly pushed her snatch down onto my cock. She was snug, but whatever patience she'd been holding onto wasn't going to last forever. "God, you feel exactly how I wanted you to feel. Raz, you won't *believe*—"

"Shhh," Raz said, leaning over to press her fingertip to Cori's lips. "Just enjoy him. I'll know soon enough."

Cori started thrusting her hips onto my cock like she'd been waiting for this moment her entire life, a wide and thirsty smile across her lips as she just bucked that clenched cunt up and down on my cock over and over again. The pace wasn't intense or rushed, but just the perfect amount of pressure and tempo, as she leaned down and pressed her lips against mine just in time for my orgasm to match hers, her body seizing up like a defective engine to lock around my cock, trembling to force my orgasm to get her to relax slightly and unwind as my cum greased the wheels of her insides.

If Cori was a waltz, Raz was break dancing.

Our first time, I had her on her hands and knees, pounding into her doggy style while she made out with Cori, who was laying dazed lazily beneath her. Raz snapped her hips back into me, making her ass jiggle, and I teased her asshole with one of my fingertips just a little before she groaned and nodded in encouragement. I came inside of her with my finger pressed against my own shaft through the fleshy walls of her body.

In the morning, I half expected them to be gone, but instead I found them cuddled up on either side of me, each with a leg and an arm draped over me. I eventually slipped out from between the two of them and made them breakfast, because I figured, if I was being given this chance, I'd better make it work, and that meant treating them right.

That was three years ago.

The game launched in January of 2020 to great acclaim and found an audience almost immediately. We met up with the right producer at GDC 2018, and they helped us get the rest of the way there without growing the company too much. We're only about twenty people now, and in addition to art director, I have co-founder on my business card.

The timing of launching the game was perfect, because just a few months later, everyone would be stuck at home, trying to avoid Covid, and it meant everyone had plenty of free time. People were discovering our game and telling their friends. We became one of the biggest hits of the year for mobile, and we did everything we could to make our game good first and earn money second, not the other way around.

Being home all the time also let me spend more time with my two girlfriends. Cori and Raz moved in with me, and we're *sort of perfect together*. Cori was right, though. We wouldn't have worked if she'd tried to hook up with me right out of high school – I wasn't in the right headspace and neither was she. And I can't overstate how important Raz is to balancing us out, calling both of us on our shit when we need it. We really are our best selves as a trio.

That's my story. I'd love to tell you I learned something from all of it, but I think I sort of knew the lesson at the start – nothing is ever what you think it's going to be, and you never, ever, *ever* know what's just around the corner waiting for you. Cori, Raz and I are trying to figure out some way to make it legal, but at this point, they both call me their husband and the other one their wife, so I guess we really are this weird unit now.

So I guess what I'm trying to say is, life's going to come at you pretty fast. Wherever you're at, no matter how mad at the world you are, things'll change. You never know what tomorrow's going to hold, or where even just a few years will take you.

That's the best secret of all.