

The Miss-Adventures Of  
**ADRIENNE**



*Complimentary Copy*  
(Who would be crazy enough to pay for it?)

**A TWISTED TALE  
OF  
TRANNY TRIBULATIONS!**

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## Chapter One -Adrienne Exposed



This is Adrienne's first day at her new position as personal secretary to Ms. Veronica Deville, an executive in a successful publishing company. Curiously, there were very few applicants for the position and Adrienne quickly found herself packed up and put on a plane, heading for the company headquarters.

Adrienne is very nervous and wondering whatever she was thinking when she put in her application for this promotion. She didn't think there was any chance she would be selected. When she first started working for this company, all she wanted was a place where she could remain anonymous and build up her meager savings.

You see, our Adrienne has a very big secret. She's actually a transsexual! Yes, this sweet thing is a woman trapped in a man's body. She's not at all happy with this situation and hoping to start her transformation soon. She has been dressing full-time as a woman for a while now, quite successfully. By

using fake ID, she managed to get a job under the name of Adrienne Duhamel without revealing her secret.

Perhaps Adrienne is too confident and is getting careless. This is going to cause some big problems, and soon!

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While Adrienne is lost in her own thoughts, Ms. Veronica slips into the office and coldly regards her latest secretary.

"My God, where does Personnel find these girls?" she thinks. "This one looks like she just fell off the turnip truck! Oh well, I'll just have to make do with what they've sent me. Perhaps she has some potential. Hmm, she does have some fashion sense; the last one dressed like a bag lady!"

"Good morning, Ms. uh, Duhamel. I'm Veronica Deville, head editor here at Pendulous Publications. I hope you're ready to work quickly and efficiently. My last secretary left rather suddenly so there is quite a backlog of filing to be done, plus the office is a mess. You could start by straightening up things. Then I'll familiarize you with your other duties once that's done. So no more standing around daydreaming, there's work to be done!"

"Uh, oh yes, Ms. Deville! I'll get started immediately!" Adrienne stutters. To herself, "Wow, I'd better look sharp! I'm not in that sleepy branch office any more!"



Adrienne begins to pick up papers and files, wondering what her other duties will be. "I hope she won't be too rough on me at first and gives me a chance to prove myself. Hmm, I wonder why she has a such a problem with staff?"



Meanwhile from behind, Ms. Veronica gives Adrienne a long admiring look. "Such a sweet looking girl and she does dress smartly. Oooh, just look at those lovely cheeks tightly covered by that skirt! Perhaps just a little touch... No, not yet. I shouldn't be too hasty. Her predecessor ran like a frightened deer when I casually caressed her breast, the silly goose!"

Veronica suddenly remembers an appointment. "Oh drat, I've got to make arrangements with that 'special' maid for the party on Saturday!"

She tells Adrienne, "I must go out for a while so just keep sorting things out. I shouldn't be long, dear, Adrienne."

Veronica hurries out to make her rendezvous. Adrienne, relieved to have a little time alone, decides to take a break. "Whew, I'm glad she took off for a while! It's going to take some time to get used to that woman. She seems a little odd, so brusque and business-like. But I could have sworn she was going to call me 'dear' before she left! Perhaps she really is a warm person inside."

Oh girl, you couldn't be more wrong! Adrienne blithely continues on with her task, thinking about the small apartment she just rented. "I really must find some little things to pretty the place up. I can't afford much yet, I really spent too much on this outfit but I needed something to brighten up my wardrobe. I hope it's not too showy but that Ms. Deville seemed to be admiring it."

Adrienne starts to turn when she feels one of her garters slip loose. "Darn it, I should have pinned up that garter this morning but I thought I would be late for work!" she mutters. "That's what I get for buying my undies at that Dollar or So store! Hmm,



there doesn't seem to be many people around; maybe I'll just fix it here."

Disregarding her normal caution, Adrienne hikes up her skirt and begins to fix the loose garter. Because the skirt is so tight, she has to lift it right up to reach the tab.



Meanwhile, Veronica is in a terrible mood.

"That unreliable uncaring revolting man! He didn't show up! He'll be singing soprano when I'm finished with him!" she mutters. "Now where am I going to find a sissy maid for the party at this late date? I wanted two but now I have nobody because my sissy Sarah is visiting a sick relative. I must be going soft; I shouldn't have permitted her to go."

So she stomps back to her office and walks in on Adrienne with her skirt up. For a moment, she is stunned at the sight before her. "What does she think... Oh my, do my eyes deceive me? Is that a little bulge that I detect? I think we definitely have a rooster in hen's clothing! Oh, this is just too delicious! If I play this right, I'll possess a beautiful hopeless slave forever, unable to resist my commands. I love it!!"

"What in the world do you think you're doing, exposing yourself like that in my office?" she shouts angrily at Adrienne. "Get your skirt down over that disgusting display! I think you have a lot of explaining to do, 'MISS' Adrienne."

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## Chapter Two - Into The Pitcher Plant



Poor Adrienne is so shocked, she is unable to utter anything intelligible at first. After all the years of hiding her secret life, Adrienne has been suddenly exposed. "Uhhh..., I ah..., oh Lord!" Then the tears start to come as she realizes what this means to her career and personal life.

"Oh lovely, lots of tears and regret now," muses Veronica. "Now I'll push my little victim right into a inescapable corner, then offer the only possible escape, total obedience! Oh, I'm evil and I wouldn't have it any other way. Hehehe!"

"Crying isn't going to help you now, Adrienne, or whatever your real name is. I think we have a very good idea of what your true sex is now. I should call everyone in the office in here to have a good laugh!" Veronica chuckles.

Adrienne's mind is spinning. "Dear God, what am I going to do? How could I have been so careless and stupid? I'd better get

out of here now before she starts telling everyone."

Adrienne starts to move towards the door but Veronica steps in front of her. "And don't think for a moment you're just going to slip away unnoticed. I'm going to call Security and have you publicly marched out right through the main office and lobby, after I tell them what you really are, you little pervert!" Veronica snarls. "Or maybe I should just call the police. I'm sure you've used a false name to get employment, probably using phony I.D. I'm sure that's criminal impersonation. I think you'll be very popular down in the holding cells tonight!"

"Please, please, don't do that!" whimpers Adrienne. "I never meant to harm anyone, I just want to live my life as the woman I believe I really am."

"Enough of your silly excuses. I'm tired of this and I'm going to call the police," says Veronica as she reaches for the phone.





Adrienne becomes desperate and whines, "Oh, Ms. Deville, I beg you. I'll do anything for you. Just don't reveal my secret to everyone!"

"Right into my little web!" gloats Veronica.

Veronica pretends to reconsider. "Hmm, perhaps I've been a little hasty with my remarks. I can see that you're naturally very upset about what has happened and I shouldn't make you suffer like this. (at least not yet!) I won't pretend to understand your desire to be a woman but I think your feelings are genuine. I don't think you intended any harm by what you've done. Perhaps we can make a little arrangement, just between the two of us."

Adrienne jumps at her chance of a reprieve. "Oh yes, Ms. Deville! That would be wonderful. You're really too kind. I'll do anything to repay you."

"Yes, you will," murmurs Veronica. Aloud, she says, "Very well, I'll forget this unpleasant little incident and we'll continue on as before.

Amazing! You've fooled a lot of people with

your little impersonation, including me. I really thought you were a genetic girl!"

Veronica continues, "Now I have a little problem and I'm going to ask you to help me out, just a little favour, you understand. It's nothing to do with your job here."

"Well yes, if you think I can help you out," Adrienne says, a little puzzled but eager to please.

"That's very kind of you, Adrienne," purrs Veronica, with a little smile. "Let's relax and I'll explain what I would like you to do. I'm hosting a party for some very dear friends but unfortunately, I've been unable to locate anyone to help out with domestic duties and er, other little tasks. The party starts at nine o'clock on Saturday night so if you could come about an hour earlier, that would be fine."

"That doesn't sound too difficult," Adrienne thinks. "If I can keep her happy, maybe things will be alright after all." Aloud, she agrees to be there before the party.

Wonderful!" Veronica says. "But first there's another little item of business to take care of." She locks the office door and returns. "Now please remove your blouse and skirt."





"Wha, what?" stammers Adrienne, not sure she's heard Veronica correctly. "Now what have I got myself into?" she wonders. "Is this nightmare ever going to end?"

"Now just relax, dear, I'm not trying to seduce you!" chuckles Veronica, thinking, "Perish the thought! She's a lovely creature but I don't go for pretty boys in dresses, or anything male for that matter." Somewhat reassured, but still nervous, Adrienne begins to unfasten her blouse.

"I merely want to judge your size for the uniform you'll be wearing," Veronica smoothly lies. She already has a good idea of Adrienne's size, she just wants to see how good this CD looks in her underwear. She may not be sexually attracted to males but she's sure some of her party guests will be extremely interested!

"Uniform?" asks Adrienne as she removes her blouse and skirt and stands before Veronica in her underthings, a bit embarrassed. "I thought I would just be helping out in the kitchen or cleaning around your house."

"Oh nothing like that!" Veronica states. "The party is catered and everything else is taken care of. I'll need you to fill in for my maid who is away. It's mainly serving drinks and dainties. I'm sure you have the poise and manners to be able to handle this little task."

"Well, I suppose that I should be able to do what's required," Adrienne says a little reluctantly. Veronica's request seemed a bit odd, but after what had happened today, it would be better not to refuse.

"Of course you can!" says Veronica. "I am really very confident that you will do everything that is required. Well, I think you should get yourself dressed again. I'm sure I can find something that will fit you."

As Adrienne bends over to get her things, Veronica gives her another appraising look. "Yes, I think she'll do quite nicely. Perhaps a little chubby but after a few weeks of my personal attention, I'll have her slimmed right down! Heehee!"

"Since it's Friday afternoon, we won't get much more accomplished today. You may have the rest of the day off. See you on Saturday evening; here's my address."





"Oh, thank you, Ms. Deville! I'll see you Saturday promptly at eight. Good bye!" babbles Adrienne as she finishes dressing and gets her purse. She takes the business card Veronica hands her with the address written on the back and heads out the door.

Alone now, Veronica allows a sly grin to display itself on her features. "All in all, I think that went quite well. My little party will certainly be a success now, plus I'm about to add a beautiful new slave to my stable. Hmmm, stable... ponies... I'm getting another sweet idea. She certainly looks strong enough to perform the task! I must make some inquiries about the equipment and a couple of outfits. I certainly have the room and privacy at my summer place. The 'Ladies Club' will be so pleased. I love it when my delicious plans produce such pleasurable results. Hahaha!"

"Of course, if she doesn't work out as a sissy maid," she muses, "I can still profit from her... in other ways! I always come out on top, no matter what!"

Still chuckling to herself, Veronica lets herself out of the office to have a relaxing evening at home. "I must

be well rested for the special pleasures tomorrow night. Oh my, so much to do, so little time!"

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## Chapter Three - Adrienne Submits



It's Saturday night and almost time for the big party. Adrienne finally arrives on Veronica's doorstep promptly at eight o'clock, after a long bus ride and some walking.

"Ah, there you are! Do come in," says Veronica warmly. "Follow me up to the guest suite; I have the required things laid out for you. We should have enough time to get you ready before my guests begin arriving."

Following Veronica upstairs, Adrienne marvels at the elegant surroundings. "I know Ms. Deville must make a large salary but this place must have cost a small fortune! Maybe she inherited it."

As soon as Adrienne sees the short purple PVC uniform laid out for her, she gets a sinking feeling in her stomach. What's going on here?

Veronica's mood changes swiftly. "Come on, hurry up and get the uniform on!" She then produces some other items that Adrienne doesn't like at all.

"Oh no, I'm not wearing that stuff," Adrienne firmly states. "I don't know what your game is, lady, but I'm not playing along. You're really sick."

She starts heading for the door but Veronica's cold voice stops her. "You will wear this outfit and you will obey me from this moment on or some very nasty things will happen to you."

"I..., er, I don't believe you can do anything to me!" Adrienne stammers, not quite so confident now. "I'll just leave and never come back here or to the office."

Veronica explodes in peals of laughter, "You know nothing of my influence or the lengths I'll go to to get what I want. There is a video camera hidden in my office and everything that happened between us on Friday is recorded. I happen to know the Chief of Police. He's one of my 'special' friends. All I have to do is give him that tape and he will not only expose you and endlessly harass you, he knows people who will mess up that pretty face of yours and perhaps break a few bones. I'll give you one more chance - submit completely to my will and become my slave or walk out that door. It's your choice."



Adrienne feels her independence slipping away. She now knows she was a fool to believe any of Veronica's assurances the other day. Resigning herself to the will of this woman is her only real choice. "Yes, I will obey you, Veronica."

' A wise decision," states Veronica, flashing her wicked grin. "You will now address me as Mistress Veronica, when you are allowed to speak. Now get over here and put on this uniform. Then I will put on these other items."

"Yes, Mistress Veronica." Head down, Adrienne walks over to the maid outfit, removing her dress as she goes.



As soon as Adrienne puts the uniform on, Veronica swiftly locks a leather collar around her neck, then locks the attached handcuffs onto each of her wrists. A ball gag is then forced into her mouth and the attached harness is tightly strapped and locked around her head.

"There, all finished!" says Veronica, admiring her work. "Now stand right there like a good slave while I get ready."

Adrienne meekly stands where she is while Veronica changes in another room. She soon returns, dressed in a slick black vinyl dress and high lace-up boots. She's also carrying a nasty looking whip.

"Now I believe we're ready to go down and meet my special guests," says Veronica, smiling sweetly. "I'm sure you'll like them and I *know* that they're going to love seeing you! Hehehe! Oh by the way, you'd better get used to that gag. Because of your disrespectful remarks a few minutes ago, it will not be removed until I send you back to your miserable little apartment tomorrow night. I hope you like taking nourishment through a straw. Teehee!"

Adrienne follows Veronica back downstairs and into a lavish dining room.

"Alright now, listen carefully," Veronica says. "There are going to be several ladies here tonight who are members of a very private and exclusive club for, shall we say, dominant women. I'm hoping to receive an invitation to join by entertaining them tonight. You, my sweet little slave, are going to be part of that entertainment."

"Calm down now," Veronica soothes. "You look like you're going



to faint. Just obey my commands without hesitation and everything should go well tonight. Also obey any orders my guests might give you." Then she sternly adds, "But if you embarrass me in any way, you will be severely punished. Understand?"

Since speaking is impossible, Adrienne just vigorously nods her head. She manages to keep herself under control and slow her wildly beating heart. Then suddenly the doorbell rings and her heart seems to leap into her throat. The fun and games are about to begin!



Veronica directs Adrienne to wait in a large receiving room while she greets her guests. She soon returns, leading five of the most erotically dressed women Adrienne has ever seen. Three of them look Adrienne up and down with open interest but another regards her with a cruel smirk. It's hard to read the fifth one's expression; she's covered entirely in rubber and is wearing a full ponytail hood.

"Oh my God!" Adrienne wails to herself, her legs visibly quivering. "I feel like a prize heifer on the auction block! I think I'm going to pee myself!"

Veronica speaks up, "Ladies, please meet Adrienne, my latest acquisition. Unfortunately, my experienced sissy maid Sarah can't be with us tonight but I'm sure this creature is willing and able to serve your every need."

"Now, on your knees before your superiors, slave!" Veronica orders. Adrienne goes down quickly, not really trusting herself to remain standing under the regard of these imposing women. "I believe my guests would like some refreshments before dinner. After you have all their orders, you may rise and get the drinks from the kitchen. You should also bring out the canapés and offer them around."

Adrienne waits quietly on her knees while the women begin circulating and chatting to each other. Soon she receives all the drink orders and rises to leave.

The tall hooded woman moves up to Adrienne and lifts her chin with a riding crop. "I am Lady Demonika. I see Veronica has gagged you; you have broken some rule, ya?" she asks in a thick accent Adrienne can't place. Not being able to answer, Adrienne just hangs her head. "Dot is goot! Slaves must obey! Hahaha!" She then gives Adrienne a parting smack on her behind that makes her jump. "Lovely lady," muses Adrienne as she goes to the kitchen, "Spreading sweetness and light where ever she goes!" She manages a bit of a giggle through the gag that relieves some of her tension.

Finding the little bar in the kitchen, Adrienne quickly prepares the drinks. Her previous job as a bar maid serves her well here. As she prepares to return, Veronica comes in. "Hurry up with those drinks and don't forget the canapés. When that's done, start laying out the food that the caterers left. There's no time to be goofing off. Snap to it or you'll get a taste of my whip!"

"Oh, by the way, Lady Demonika has expressed an interest in you. After dinner we will retire to the basement where I have my dungeon set up. The Lady wants to try out some of my new equipment on you. Oh, this is just fantastic! If she's impressed, I'll have my membership with no problems!"



A startled look appears on Adrienne's face. "Yes, that's just wonderful. Now I'll likely be chained up like a dog and stretched into some new and interesting shapes by that vulcanized Valkyrie and you'll get everything you want. The fun just never stops at Mistress Veronica's place! I've got to put my brain to work and think of a way out of this nightmare! I just can't live like this!"

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## Chapter Four - Imprisonment



After a lengthy meal, Veronica leads the group of ladies to a securely locked wooden door at the rear of the mansion.

"Down the stairs, you good for nothing slave!" snarls Veronica in Adrienne's ear as she shoves her through the doorway. "How *dare* you spill a drop of soup on Lady Demonika's dress! Now you're really going to learn the meaning of discipline!" Adrienne nearly falls but manages to keep her balance on her seven inch heels.

Turning and smiling sweetly to the ladies following behind, "Watch your step, dears. It's a long way down and I don't want anyone to slip."

Everyone soon reaches the bottom of the stairs without further mishap. They find themselves in a gloomy stone walled room with several passages leading out of it.

"Welcome to my little dungeon," says Veronica. "Let me show you some of the amusing toys that I have on display down here."

Veronica leads the group through a short passage into a small room that contains an apparatus which nearly reaches the high ceiling.

"Oh, that *is* amazing, a guillotine!" shrieks one of the ladies excitedly. "Does it actually work? Lets put your sissy maid in it. I don't really think she'll miss that empty little head, do you? Heehee!"

Adrienne collapses on the bench, unable to control her legs anymore. "Oh my God, they don't really intend to put me in that thing, do they? They couldn't be that cruel!" She struggles to control her bladder.

Veronica chuckles merrily, "Oh yes, it's quite real, Lady Louise. I purchased it at an auction in France last year. It's incredible what you can find if you look hard enough. It cost a small fortune to have it shipped and assembled down here but it makes quite the conversation piece, don't you think?" Smirking at

Adrienne she states, "Much as I'd love to test this out on you, clumsy slave, you still have your uses. Now get up and quit wasting our valuable time with your foolishness!"



Adrienne manages to regain her feet and is led stumbling out of the little chamber of horrors. The group stops in front of another room with a barred gate.

"This is the quarters for my domestic help," says Veronica, gesturing at the bleak interior. "All the comforts of home. Haha!"



Two of the ladies, who were introduced to Adrienne as Madame Maryjane and Maitresse Marcie, examine the little room. "Oh, it's just like the Ritz," giggles Maryjane. "I'm sure you'll enjoy relaxing in here for many pleasant hours!"

"It's got to be better than spending the evening listening to these creatures," thinks Adrienne.

"Now I believe we're ready to visit the last room," says Veronica with a evil grin. "Lady Demonika has graciously agreed to display her knowledge of restraint techniques, using my 'volunteer' sissy maid! I'm sure Demonika has something

special in mind for her. Hehehe!" Aside to Adrienne, "I'm assuming even a screwup like you can manage to be immobilized in rope and chains without messing up!"

With Veronica leading and the group of ladies following behind, Adrienne nervously goes down a long passage to the large room at the end.

Adrienne gawks around the room, amazed at all the equipment and nasty looking weapons on display. A brazier burns in the center of the room, filled with glowing tongs and paraphernalia.

"Oh no, this is too much!", Adrienne tries to scream but almost chokes on her gag. She turns to run but her path is blocked by the group behind.

"Hold still, silly slave!" Demonika loudly demands. "Be goot and I vill not haf to use hot iron on toes. Haha!" Adrienne meekly obeys, figuring it would be best to submit to some lesser torment.

With amazing strength and dexterity, Lady Demonika binds Adrienne hand and foot in a variety of different poses. Then her arms are tied behind her and her legs bent up and secured behind in a hog-tie. With a little help from the audience, Adrienne soon finds herself suspended from the ceiling, unable to do much more than blink her eyes. Having no choice, she must put up with caresses and some groping from the giggling ladies gathered around.





Finally after what seems an age, Adrienne is let down and untied. "Is it finally over?" she wonders, but alas, no. Demonika leads her over to a frame that she refers to as a St. Andrews cross. Her tingling appendages are stretched apart and her wrists and ankles are padlocked to cuffs fastened to the crossed beams. "Be good girlie now and wait here quiet." Demonika then leaves her fastened there and joins the other ladies. They soon lose interest in Adrienne's plight and begin chatting amongst themselves.

After what seems hours to Adrienne, the party shows signs of coming to an end. Demonika seems to finally recall her helpless victim and releases the locks on the cuffs.

"Oh Lord!" Adrienne mumbles to herself, her arms legs like rubber from lack of circulation. Demonika holds her up and she is guided back down the hall. Before she realizes it, she is locked back in her original chains, pushed into the little cell and the gate slammed shut.

Veronica smiles at her through the bars. "I think we can manage without calling on your meager talents further tonight. Sleep well! You'll have a lot of cleaning up to do tomorrow!"

Adrienne watches as the group of ladies wanders up the stairs. "Finally I'm going to be left alone," thinks Adrienne as she tries to rub some feeling back into her aching limbs.

As Veronica reaches the top of the stairs behind her guests, she pauses for a moment and regards Adrienne with a sly grin. "Oh yes, we must do our part to conserve energy. Hehehe!" She snaps off the light switch, then slams and locks the door, leaving Adrienne in almost total darkness.

"Hmm, I didn't count on that!" After a few minutes of feeling her way around the cell, her eyes adjust to the dark and Adrienne can just make out the few bits of furniture. "Thank God, I can just see that blessed toilet!"

After much squirming and bending while still locked in her restraints, she manages to relieve herself without any mishaps. She also finds a plastic cup with a straw and takes care of her raging thirst without dribbling too much.

"No food but there's nothing I can do about that," Adrienne thinks. "I'd better stretch out and try to get some rest while I can. Sure is quiet down he.... wha, what was that little scrabbling noise? Oh no, it must be mice, or maybe rats!!" She quickly scrambles into a corner on the bed. "I hate rodents and it's ten times worse in the dark! I think I'm going to lose my mind!" It looks like a very long night with no rest for our unfortunate tranny!



Meanwhile upstairs, a couple of guests remain behind to partake of Veronica's hospitality even further.

"I wonder if your sissy maid will be alright down there by herself?" inquires one of the ladies.



"She really seemed terrified at times. You did have a signal arranged with her if she wanted to stop at any time?"

"Of course!" Veronica smoothly lies. "She's just a good actor and I'm sure she enjoyed every moment! She'll be fine down there. Forget about her now! Let's open the champagne and get more comfortable, dears. The night is still young!"

As Veronica stretches out on her bed like a cat, sipping her champagne, she suddenly remembers something she forgot about in her rush to prepare for the party. "Oh goodness, I forgot all

about the exterminator! Those rats have become quite a problem downstairs. Thank goodness none showed themselves during the party; they're really quite aggressive! Oh well, a problem for another day. Now where was I..." I'll leave the rest to your imagination.

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## Chapter Five - Night Of The Long Teeth



"My God, will this nightmare ever end?" mutters Adrienne as she crouches on the bed in a corner of the cell. All she recalls are seemingly endless hours of chittering noises and the quick brush of fur against her feet. Occasionally, she caught reflections from little beady eyes.

It's been abnormally quiet for a while now and she has been half dozing, propped up by the handle of a mop she chanced on in the darkness. The mop head flew off during one of her wild swings at the scampering rats.

Suddenly there is the sound of a door opening and light flares up, blinding Adrienne until her eyes begin to adjust. Then there is the rattle of keys and the barred gate swings open. Standing in the doorway is Veronica, with a sneering grin on her face.

"Good morning, slave! Sleep well?" she chuckles. Then she sees the handle in Adrienne's hands and scowls. "What's the meaning of this? You've broken the mop! That will cost you dearly!"

Then Veronica happens to look toward the toilet and lets out a little shriek. "My God, dead rats! You must have killed them with the mop, though how you located them in the dark I don't know!" Adrienne had no idea either so she shrugs her shoulders nonchalantly, still not being able to speak.

Veronica was actually impressed but didn't want to show it. "Well, since you did save me an exterminator bill, I'll remove your gag and restraints early. But get that mess cleaned up right now. It's disgusting!"

Veronica produces some small keys, unlocks the handcuffs and removes the collar from Adrienne's neck. Finally, she removes the terrible gag and Adrienne nearly retches on all the drool released. Her tongue flops out like a dead fish. "Thangoo, Mith Vronka," she finally manages to get out. Also, her eyes are tracking in different directions from peering around the gag straps for hours.





"Get yourself together, girl! You look ridiculous!" snarls Veronica, returning quickly to her usual demeanor. "There's lots for you to do today already and now you've added to the list by leaving dead rats all over your quarters! That lazy Sarah was supposed to be back early this morning to get my breakfast ready and help me dress. Where is she?"

"Well, we can't wait for that ungrateful wretch," mutters Veronica. "You'll just have to do everything yourself, frightening as that sounds to me!" Suddenly she shouts at Adrienne, "Why are you

standing there all googly eyed? Get moving!" Adrienne manages to finally focus her eyes and get her tongue tucked back in her head, then starts to look for something to dump the rats in.

As soon as Veronica stops yelling, they both hear the sound of someone on the stairs behind them. "Excuse me, Madame," comes a small voice. "I'm so sorry I'm late. The bus was delayed an hour this morning so I've just arrived. Please forgive me."

Adrienne turns to look at a tired and very meek looking girl standing at the bottom of the stairs. "Hmm, I assume this is the much maligned Sarah, surely here to rescue me from my troubles!" thinks Adrienne. "I think I'd better switch to Plan B, whatever that is!"



"I forgive you nothing at all!"

bellows Veronica. "I give you a whole two days off to visit a supposedly sick relative and you thank me by leaving me to cope with this worthless thing!" she continues, gesturing at Adrienne.

"I - I - I really am sorry, Mistress," stammers Sarah. "I would have returned last night but my grandmother took a turn for the worse. We thought that she was dying and we would have to make arrangements for a funeral."

"I've heard enough of your lies and excuses!" snarls Veronica. "You and your inbred clan were probably planning on dividing up her belongings before her body even cooled! But that old bird will certainly be knitting on her porch and drinking a pint of moonshine a day long after you're in the ground!"

Veronica's temper was working its way from a simmer to full boil and the two sissy maids looked nervously at each other. Adrienne didn't know what would follow but it couldn't be good, especially for Sarah.



In order to try and divert Veronica's rage from Sarah, Adrienne stepped forward. "Er, perhaps I could help you on with your corset, Mistress." Veronica shoves the garment at her. "An actual helpful idea from you? I'm amazed! Well, get on with it and we'll see how you do."

As Adrienne puts the corset around Veronica's waist and begins to tighten the laces, Sarah speaks up again, eager to please, "How may I assist you, Madame?"

"The only 'assistance' I want from you right now is to see your fat bum running up those stairs to get changed into a proper uniform!"

Veronica bellows. "Then pack up

that outfit and any other street clothes you have and throw them in the trash. From now on, you will only wear what I provide for you. You will never leave this house again unless it's on an errand. Any more foolishness from you and I might have to reconsider your future here. Remember Martha, slave?" she smirks at Sarah.

Fighting hard to hold back tears, Sarah turns and stumbles up the stairs. "So much for my wonderful diversion!" thinks Adrienne. "I've got enough problems of my own but I really have to help poor Sarah. She looks just about ready to take a swan dive off the roof! And without a friend here, I might as well get in line right behind her! Hmm, I wonder who Martha is? Another mystery to be solved."

Lost in her thoughts about Sarah, she roughly yanks on the corset laces, nearly pulling Veronica off her feet. "Yeouch!!" Veronica shrieks. "You incompetent moron! What are you trying to do, cut me in half?" "If only that were possible!" muses Adrienne.

"Tie off those laces then get in the guillotine room! I've had it with all the idiocy around here this morning! I've been down here for half an hour and nothing has been done!" bellows Veronica.

"Maybe she will cut off my head in that contraption and I won't have a worry in the world after that!" Adrienne thinks as she leads Veronica to the guillotine.



She spots a surviving rat peeking from behind the basket and silently wishes it luck in this house gone mad.

Veronica throws herself down on the platform and picks up a length of hardwood. "I'm just dying to punish someone this morning and you're elected. Now bend over my knees!" Adrienne does as she is told, then Veronica begins to spank her bottom as hard as she can. "Ah, there's nothing like administering some corporal punishment to work out my frustrations. It really gets the adrenaline flowing!"

Adrienne lies there, mostly bored by the process. Suppressing a yawn, she thinks she's been smacked harder on the bum in occasional unwanted office encounters. "Veronica should really work out more!" she muses. "Now if this was being carried out by someone more desirable, it might be kind of sexy!" She begins to moan and whimper, just to satisfy her tormentor.

Veronica soon quits, panting and very clearly exhausted by her meager effort. "Maybe we'll get lucky and she'll fall over dead!" Adrienne thinks, trying not to giggle. "Good Lord, you're heavy!" Veronica gasps. "Now get off me and get those rats out of my sight!"



Adrienne stands up, pretending to look chastised and sniveling a bit.

"Yes, immediately, my Mistress!"

"That's better," smiles Veronica, calmer now that she's worn herself out. "Get that done and join Sarah upstairs to clean up the dishes and other mess from the party. While you're doing that, I'll be making up a list. I need some groceries and that foolish Sarah can go with you to show you where the local store is." She climbs the stairs and soon Adrienne is left alone again.

Adrienne finds a dust pan and cleaning supplies under the stairs and soon has the cell straightened up and all signs of last night's battle

with the rats removed. "Oh good, a chance to get out of this house and get some fresh air! I'll also have a chance to be alone with Sarah and I can find out what her sad story is. Perhaps together, we can figure some way out of this mess. I just hope she hasn't completely given up and can be some help!"

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## Chapter Six - Let's Go Shopping!



Hoping to keep Veronica's fits of rage to a minimum, Adrienne rushes upstairs to continue her chores. She breathes a sigh of relief when she emerges from the gloom and stale air of the dungeon. The kitchen is the worst with stacks of dirty dishes but Adrienne soon has all of them washed and put away. The lack of sleep last night is beginning to have it's effects and she yawns widely.

"Don't you dare nod off now, you lazy creature!" Veronica snaps behind her. Startled, Adrienne swings around to see Veronica poking at the microwave with a cup of water in her hand and looking

very puzzled. "Uh, you're doing nothing. Get over here and make me a cup of instant coffee!"

"Yes, Mistress," says Adrienne, wondering how anyone these days couldn't figure out a microwave. She puts it out of her mind and soon gives Veronica her coffee.

"Forget the dusting and get upstairs and find that worthless Sarah," mutters Veronica. "She's cleaning upstairs but tell her you're both going to the grocery store. I'm hungry and there's nothing to eat here. There's another outfit for you to wear up there."

"Right away, Madame!" says Adrienne, happily thinking that some fresh clothing would be lovely. Also, she didn't want to appear in public dressed like she was. She rushes upstairs, searching around for Sarah. Hearing some low noises coming from the guest room, she heads in that direction.

Entering the room, Adrienne finds Sarah crying uncontrollably. "How could that woman be so cruel?" she sobs. "I follow every order she gives to the letter and she still demands more! Now she's taken my last bit of freedom by forbidding me to ever leave this house, except under her orders. I'm afraid I'll never see my family again! I might as well be dead!"

"OK, amateur TS psychiatrist, what do you do now?" wonders Adrienne. "Well, I could stop talking to myself and try to get control of the situation!" She hugs Sarah and speaks gently to her, "Please try to get hold of yourself, dear. I know you're in a bad situation and it looks hopeless. But I'm in it with you and I'm determined to get both of us out of this dilemma. I still have a certain amount of freedom since I still have to show up for my job. But I don't think that will last long. Veronica will get me fired or make me quit and I'll be stuck here too. So I'll need your help right now. You must know a lot more about this woman and her dealings than I do. Together we're going to find something that we can use against her. So I need you to hang in there just a little longer. Can you do that for me? Please say yes!"

"I - I'll try," Sarah says, still sniffing a bit. "You're a lot like my sister, so strong and self-assured. I believe you can do something, if anyone can."

Adrienne ponders this. "Well, it sounds like I've got a partner! Now all I have to do is back up all that fancy talk with some action. Easier said than done!"

She says to Sarah, "Well, we'd better get to the store before that crazy harpy comes looking for us! She said there's some other clothes for me to wear. It will be nice to finally get out of this uniform!"



Um, I don't know about that," Sarah says uncertainly. "I think you should see your new outfit first." She takes the lid off a nearby box and steps aside to let Adrienne see. "Ohmigod," Adrienne finally blurts out, "This has got to be a joke. I can't possibly go out in public wearing this!" She lifts a red velvet dress out of the box, along with some accessories. "I know Halloween is coming but this is too much!"

Sarah looks a bit embarrassed. "I'm afraid you must. Mistress is quite adamant about what her 'girls' wear. It was actually meant for me but... well, you're the new one so

you get to try out different looks. Lucky you!" She starts to giggle. "If it helps any, I'll have to go out like this; I have nothing else to wear now." She starts to look sad again.

"Lord, please strike me dead before I go out the door!" Adrienne mutters and begins to undress. Soon she's done up in the outfit, cape, bonnet and all. Sarah takes a long look, tries to control herself then bursts out laughing. "Well, I'm glad to hear that coming from you," Adrienne says dryly, "Even if it's at my expense!"

"Get your worthless butts down here!" Veronica bellows up the stairs. "I want to see that outfit before the end of the decade!"

"OK, let's go," whispers Adrienne. "But remember to act normally until we're outside and alone. I want to find out what you know about our charming hostess." They rush out and down the stairs to the front entrance.

"Well, finally!" mutters Veronica. "Oh, lovely, so pretty and girlish! I enjoy seeing my sissy maids dressed up like that." She turns and regards Sarah. "Hmm, not bad. But I'll have to get you something dressier and shorter for my upcoming Halloween party. Much shorter. Hehe!" Then she has another violent mood swing. "Now get out of here and get my groceries! And straighten that bonnet, you look ridiculous like that!" Adrienne manages to keep a straight face. "If I looked any more ridiculous, I could be a clown in the



circus!" Sarah grabs her coat and they both speed out the front door.



As they reach the street, Adrienne sneaks a look back at the mansion and spots Veronica glaring after them. "Just keep moving, Sarah," she mutters. "I'm surprised she isn't tracking us by satellite!" Sarah looks nervous and whispers, "Please don't say that. She's told me that I'm being watched all the time!"

"Somehow I doubt that!" chuckles Adrienne, thinking about the microwave incident. "I'm really beginning to wonder about all this talk of hidden cameras and surveillance. Unless someone is helping her, I don't think our dear Mistress is capable of anything like that. I can't be sure but we could be the victims of a big deception!"

"Wow, I never thought of that!" Sarah says, looking startled. "I've been so preoccupied with my situation and pleasing the bitch, I've thought of little else!"

"Well, I hope you've noticed something odd about her," Adrienne says as they continue down the street. "No, make that something really weird, we've already got odd! Let's get this shopping done quickly. Then you can tell me your story on the way back. That sounds like a good place to start. We've

got to make a plan but first we need some solid information!"

They continue on, Adrienne trying to ignore the stares from people they pass along the way. To pass the time and get her mind off her nervousness, Adrienne tells Sarah about how she was trapped and ended up on Veronica's doorstep. She skims over the events of the party and her subsequent night down in the dungeon, but Sarah smiles wryly. Adrienne gets the feeling that her story might be very similar to Sarah's.

As soon as they turn a corner and come in view of the grocery store, Adrienne stops dead in her tracks. "Oh God, I just can't go in there! It's huge! I thought Veronica meant a small corner store!"

For the first time today, Sarah really takes charge of the situation and takes Adrienne by the hand and pulls her along. "Don't be silly, dear. We already passed thirty people on the street and got nothing more than a few strange stares. So what's a few dozen more? Besides, it's almost Halloween. So if anyone gets nosy, just tell them you're showing off costumes for Dinky's Duds downtown and you'll be fine! I've done this dozens of times by myself!"

"I - i - if you say so," mumbles



Adrienne, and follows Sarah through the doors.

The interior of the store is huge and full of people, but most are rushing about and don't give the girls more than a half curious glance. One little boy starts pestering them but Sarah tells him to get lost in a deep growl. His eyes turn to saucers and he runs off, not to return.



Using Sarah's knowledge of the store layout, they soon are moving efficiently along the aisles, filling a basket with the few items that Veronica has on her list.

The gum chewing cutey at the cash register stands open mouthed, staring at them as they approach with their basket of goods. After a moment of this, Adrienne gets brave and says, "You're going to have a mouthful of flies if you stand there

like that much longer!"

The girl realizes what she's doing and her mouth snaps shut. "I, uh, sorry!" she mutters and quickly rings up their purchases. Within a couple of minutes, they are out on the street again, making their way back to Veronica's.

"Well, that wasn't as bad as I thought!" Adrienne grins. "Thank you for the little kick in the bloomers to get me moving!" Sarah smiles back. "See? Most people are too involved with their own business to be bothered with yours. Now, I suppose you'll want to hear how I managed to be trapped by Veronica." Adrienne nods, "Yes, this will probably be our only chance to have a good talk by ourselves. Oh, and I'd like to know who this Martha is."

Sarah sighs. "Alright, that's not the start of my tale but maybe you'll understand why I fear Veronica so much."

"Martha had already been here a while before I arrived last spring. She hated Veronica with a passion and she began talking back to her. They had a couple of wild shouting matches near the end."

"Finally one evening, Martha said she was leaving the next day and to hell with the consequences. When I got up the next morning, she had completely vanished! She never would have gone without saying goodbye and her few personal things were left behind. I fear something terrible happened to her!"





"You can't really know that!" Adrienne shakily states. "Maybe she just was in too much of a hurry to leave!"

Sarah continues, "Later that morning, I was cleaning out her room on Veronica's orders and I found some spots of blood leading out the door. Later on, I saw Veronica in the back yard with a couple of rough looking guys. She gave them what looked like a wad of cash and the bag with Martha's things. Then they left by the back gate." She half sobs, "I don't know if Martha is alive or dead but I do know that evil woman is behind it!"

"Wow," Adrienne murmurs, "This is worse than I thought!" But she pushes on, "OK, maybe you should go back and tell me how you managed to end up in the 'Little House of Horrors' too."

Sarah chuckles, "It's not really so much different than your story! Veronica must like that method of entrapment!"

"I worked at the publishing place too, down in the shipping department. During the week, I was cheerful Sam, truck dispatcher. But on the weekend, I became Sarah the party girl and hung out in all the gay clubs downtown."

"I thought no one could possibly know about my secret life but somehow Veronica got wind of it and confronted me at work one day. I don't know how she found out but I was totally stunned!"

"The rest is almost identical to your tale. Tapes of me at clubs and with other men! She was going to expose me at work and tell my family too! It was more than I could bear. She had me then!"



"I think she trapped Martha much the same way but she was hot-tempered and so rebellious," says Sarah. "That's what got her in such big trouble!" Sarah stops and looks thoughtful. "That reminds me of something. She used to sneak out at night sometimes and make her way downtown to hang around the clubs. She told me about some TG social club and she said there was a connection to Veronica there. But she never got a chance to tell me what it was! I still have the card she gave me with the address. It's

stashed under a loose board in my closet. My secret little hidey hole. Hehe!"

Adrienne looks excited. "Hey, that's interesting. It might prove to be nothing but I'm sure going to check it out when I get a chance. It's a place to start anyway!" She does a little jig, lifting her skirt and scaring a couple of old ladies. Then she looks more somber. "I just hope it's still operating or we're back to square one!"

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## Chapter Seven - A Piece of the Puzzle



Adrienne and Sarah are soon back in sight of Veronica's mansion. "I think this is where our little chat will have to end," murmurs Adrienne. "I just hope I'll find something quickly to help us out."

Sarah whispers in her ear, "Don't forget the card Martha gave me. It's under that board I told you about, just in case I can't get it for you."

"OK, I'll remember," Adrienne whispers back. "I don't know what I'll do if I find out nothing," she thinks to herself. "That social club thing really doesn't sound very helpful!"

As soon as they enter, Veronica starts yelling at them and slashing

the air with her whip. "Where have you two been?" she screeches at them. "I'm starving and you've probably been wasting time and babbling nonsense to each other all the way to and from the store! Now I can't even have a cold drink because the fridge isn't working. I'm upset now and someone is going to pay!"

"If this is her 'upset' mood, I hate to see 'really pissed off'," Adrienne thinks. She glances toward the kitchen and sees two men poking halfheartedly at the fridge. "Must be repairmen... hmm, they don't look like they know much about appliances. Oh God, I wonder if those are the guys Sarah was talking about?" She tries to get Sarah's attention but she's too busy carefully examining a bug on the floor and avoiding Veronica's glare.

"What's the matter with you, idiot?" Veronica snarls at Adrienne. "Quit making those weird faces! If you're being impudent toward me, I'll whip your behind raw!"

Adrienne hastily improvises, "Oh no, Madame! It's just this pretty new outfit, it itches a bit!"

Veronica seems to accept this. "Alright, get changed back into that cheap dress you came in and be careful with that beautiful costume; it's definitely worth more than you are and you'll need it on Wednesday night for my annual Halloween party. Then get in the kitchen and make me some coffee and an omelette. When that's done, get out of here. I'd love to tie you up and teach you some respect for me but unfortunately, you have to be back at the office tomorrow. Now get moving; Sarah and I are going to have a little meeting in private, aren't we dear?" She grins wickedly at Sarah, who turns white and lets a tear slide down her cheek.

Adrienne hurries upstairs to change, her feelings switching between joy at finally getting away from Veronica and worry about Sarah. "I hope Sarah will be alright. If Veronica suspects that we're planning anything, I'm afraid our secrets won't last long!"

She wiggles back into her black dress, then quickly searches around until she finds Sarah's little room. She soon locates the business card and hurries back down to the kitchen. Trying to ignore the leers from the incompetent repairmen, she quickly gets a meal put together. After setting out the food in the dining room, she meets Veronica by the front door.



"I've just had an interesting discussion with Sarah," Veronica says, smiling sweetly. Adrienne must have shown worry because Veronica chuckles and continues. "She admitted to delaying her return here from her so-called visit and being slow on your shopping trip. I was thinking that you surely would be responsible for that but she took all the blame."

Veronica moves to the door and opens it. "So Sarah is going to spend the rest of the day and night in solitude, contemplating her mistakes. I've gagged and bound her to the chair in my lovely guest

suite downstairs!" She slyly grins, "Oh, and I've also blindfolded her so she will be in total darkness. I do hope you cleaned up the rat problem or she could have an interesting night! Hahaha!"

Adrienne, who knew of at least one surviving rodent, felt she could strangle Veronica on the spot. Only the thought of those suspected goons in the back and Sarah's sacrifice stopped her. She hoped she wasn't being a coward by leaving Sarah behind but she desperately needed to follow up on their single slim bit of information.

Veronica carries on, clearly enjoying the moment. "You should have been down there with her but unfortunately you have responsibilities elsewhere. For how long I haven't decided yet. Now get out and don't you dare show up at work tomorrow in a sexy outfit! I can't have you looking better than me!"

Adrienne steps out and the door slams behind her. She decides to walk since she has a lot to think about. "I'm convinced that poor dear Sarah took all the supposed blame to make sure I got away without trouble. She's a lot braver than I first thought. Now I've just got to find out something useful, and in a hurry!"

Adrienne finally reaches her apartment just as it's getting dark. "I can't believe I've only been gone twenty four hours! It seems like a lifetime! I think I'll just rest on the couch and watch TV for a few minutes. I'm definitely going to bed early tonight!" She turns on her little TV and sits down.

"OK, I've got to come up with a plan," she muses. "Veronica must want me to keep working for a day or so at least. That office is still a mess and she certainly won't do any cleaning up herself!"

She takes the card from the TG



club and tries the number but there's no answer. "At least the phone is still hooked up so that's something. I'll just have to try again tomorrow."

"Lord, I'm tired," she mutters. "But now I find out that bitch wants me back on Wednesday night for yet another party, plus work my regular job. I don't know when I'll get... some... ressss...." Adrienne slowly topples over on the couch and soon all we hear is some very unladylike snoring.



Adrienne is awakened by the sound of car horns and crashing noises from garbage trucks. "Ugh, did I sleep on the couch all night? I sure don't need an alarm clock in this fine neighbourhood!"

She grabs a stale doughnut and some instant coffee and gets ready for work. "I must remember to wear something dowdy looking to please the she devil. Fortunately, that's not a problem with my wardrobe!" Selecting an anonymous grey frock, she's soon on her way to the publishing house.

She arrives at the office on time and begins to sort out papers and files while waiting for Veronica to show up.

She soon comes stomping in, appearing to be in a half distracted mood. "Hmm, there you are," she mumbles. "Alright, I have to attend a board meeting about some big project so get this office back in order. That should keep you busy until I come back. I don't care what you do with most of that junk but get those files back where they belong in the records room, they're important."

"Yes Mistr... er, Ms. Deville," Adrienne says. She desperately wants to know about Sarah but doesn't dare bring up the subject. It might enrage Veronica and Adrienne certainly doesn't want to deal with that right now.

As soon as Veronica sweeps out of the room, Adrienne continues to sort out the stacks of paperwork, setting the files aside and dumping anything else in a pile for later.

She locates a cart and takes off with her load of files, in search of the elusive records room. With a little help from the other staff, she soon finds it. "My God," she murmurs in awe as she looks at the rows of huge cabinets. "This is a bit bigger than the three filing cabinets in the branch office! I hope they use the same system here, just on a grander scale!"

After some confusion and a bit of



wasted time, she gets the stack of files properly back in their place, at least she hopes so.



Arriving back at the office, she realizes a couple of hours have passed and still no sign of Veronica. "Well, it's not like I really miss her," she giggles and turns to her next task, the pile of loose papers and assorted trash.

Most of it is junk as Veronica stated and it's quickly disposed of in a couple of large waste baskets Adrienne found.

Suddenly she comes across something that catches her eye. "Now what's this?" she wonders. "It looks like a city tax notice for a place called Dominion Taxi. Hmm, never heard of th... wow! The owner is listed as V. Deville! It would seem

our lovely Mistress has other hobbies besides tormenting a few naive trannies!"

She hears some approaching foot steps in the hall and on intuition, quickly sticks the paper into the middle of the little pile she has been saving. "I don't know if it really means anything but it seems like a strange business for a woman like Veronica to be involved in. I'd better not mention that I know about it!"

At that moment, Veronica storms back into the office, clearly upset. "Of all the idiotic things I have to do around this place, this has got to be the worst, and just before my party! The company is releasing another childrens book series and they need illustrations immediately. Those fools in the design department are short staffed and say they can't handle another project. So they have dumped the whole problem in my lap and I have to find a solution right now!"

"Oh, that *is* terrible," Adrienne states, not really caring about Veronica's problem. "Is there anything I can do to help?" she automatically asks without thinking.

"Hey!" Veronica blurts out, "Maybe you can do something!"

"Oh oh," Adrienne thinks, "What have I done now, shooting my mouth off before my brains are loaded!"

"Didn't I read in your application that you graduated from a computer design course?" Veronica inquires. "You better not have been lying about that, along with certain other things!"

"Oh no," Adrienne quickly gets out, "The part about the course is true! I thought it would help me with employment so I took it. I did quite well in it but it wasn't required at the branch office and I ended u..."

"Yeah, yeah, enough babble," Veronica interrupts, "All I want to know is, can you run the designing thingy on the office computer? I would do it myself but I, er, hurt my finger and can't type."

"Oh sure," Adrienne thinks, "She can't use the 'thingy' because of her 'wittle boo-boo'! And I suppose her strange fetishes have nothing to do with the staff shortage around here either!" She starts up the computer and quickly locates a whole range of design software she's familiar with. "Yes, I can use these programs. What do you need for these books, Madame?"

Looking very relieved, Veronica hands her a wad of notes and design proposals. "Good, you're now on the design staff, unofficially of course! Everything is in here. I need something put together by Thursday for the next meeting. It doesn't have to be finished product but if it's good, I'll take all the credit!" Veronica slyly grins, "Of course if it's bad, I'll blame it all on you and have a good excuse to get you canned! Either way I win! Heehee!" Veronica then snarls back over her shoulder as she leaves again, "Don't just stand there, get to work!"

Adrienne does stand there stunned for a minute. "Wow, did that really happen? I think I just bought myself a reprieve! I really thought that she would fire me quickly but now she can't possibly do that, at least for a few days! Of course, I still have to produce some decent work or it's game over! I'd better find out what I have to come up with."

She looks through the sheets of notes and some rough pencil sketches. "Hmm, not a lot of detail but I think I can see what they want here. No great works of art needed, thank goodness. After all, it's just for young kids. Still a lot to be done by Thursday morning! I'd better get moving!"

Adrienne works out a hasty list of what has to be done and decides on the book covers first. She's soon busy on the computer, searching the program libraries and the Internet for artwork she can use or modify.

Veronica returns late in the afternoon to find Adrienne still busy at the computer, surrounded by sketches and printouts. "I hope you've produced something to justify this mess," she grumbles. She picks up some of Adrienne's work and glances through it. "Hmm, most of this looks really good," she muses. "Of course it won't do to let her know that! I'll just have to make sure she finishes it all before she conveniently 'disappears' and I can bask in the glory of a job well done. I might even get a bonus!"



She says to Adrienne, "Is this the best you can do? Well, it's passable and I suppose I have no choice but to use it. There will have to be a change of plan because of this project. I was going to fi... er, send you to my home on Wednesday afternoon to help Sarah get the place ready for the Halloween party. But now I'll have to keep you here to complete this project by Thursday morning. You might even have to work late to get it done."

Adrienne now figures she could easily have it done by Wednesday afternoon but decides to stretch the facts a bit. It wouldn't hurt to have some spare time to herself just in case. "I'll try to do it as quick as I can but it's still going to take a lot of time," she lies.

Veronica accepts this. "Alright, enough time wasted already. Keep cranking that stuff out. You have a busy couple of days ahead of you!"

"Don't I know it," Adrienne thinks. "Now I have this to do plus try to save my buns and Sarah's too! I wonder if that information about Veronica owning a cab company is going to be of any use?"

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## Chapter Eight - Party Favours



Veronica disappears again in the middle of the afternoon and doesn't return so Adrienne just works an extra half hour. "Enough of this for one day," she thinks. "It's so enjoyable doing something I love but I don't want to get ahead of my little schedule or I'll find myself back at Veronica's working that party. It will be hard on Sarah but I hope she understands I must have all the time I can get to help us both."

She hurries home to fix herself a quick meal and relax for a few minutes. Then she decides to try

the number for the club again since she can think of nowhere else to start. To her surprise, the phone is answered on the second ring.

"Good evening," purrs a cultured feminine voice, "This is Vicki's Social Club. How may I help you?"

"I... um, I'm Adrienne. I got your number from a dear friend who thought I might enjoy visiting your club," stammers Adrienne, not sure how to start her inquiries.

"Well," the voice continues, "We are a public facility but I hope you understand that we cater only to a certain select clientele. Are you perhaps... gender challenged?"

"Wow, am I ever!" Adrienne laughs nervously.

"Then why don't you drop by tonight and we can continue our little chat?" the person says. "Things usually start happening around eight o'clock so you could drop by then. The address is 4819 Bruce Street. Just ask for Vicki when you arrive. Dress as you please, we're quite informal here. Bye for now!" The line goes dead.

Adrienne puts the phone down and lets out a sigh. "Let the games begin! I don't know how I'm going to pursue this link to Veronica once I get there; I'll just have to play it by ear. I suppose I should change into something a little dressier. I might as well try to have some fun even if this leads nowhere."

Adrienne quickly showers and slips into her one and only party dress. After a few minutes to freshen her makeup and apply a dab of perfume she's ready to go. Since the club is within walking distance and she has no spare money for a cab, she takes off walking again. "If I keep up with all this walking, I'm going to end up with a great set of legs!"

She reaches the address shortly before eight and is pleasantly surprised to find the club is located in a quiet clean area of downtown. "Hmm, I expected this place to be located farther down by the docks and the Strip. I think there's a bit of money behind this operation." There's no sign on the brick building, just the number over an oak door which is locked. Adrienne looks around and finds a buzzer which she presses.

She must have been expected since the door automatically unlocks and she passes through a small vestibule into a elegantly furnished room, filled with perhaps a dozen people, standing around and chatting. They all appear to be women but Adrienne knows this to be a place of

illusion and pursued dreams. She's been in them before.

An oddly familiar looking lady in a flashy polkadot dress separates herself from the small crowd and approaches Adrienne. "Hello," she says, "I assume you're Adrienne, the person that I was talking with earlier. Let me introduce myself. I'm Victoria Deville. Just call me Vicki."

Adrienne just stands there unbelieving for a few moments, totally stunned by what she's just heard. Then she buries her face in her hands. "*De... Deville?* This can't be happening! I must be trapped in a nightmare!" she stammers.



"Are you all right, Adrienne?" asks Vicki, looking very concerned.

"Please sit down, you look like you're going to faint!" She asks one of the others to bring a glass of water.

"I'll be OK in a minute," Adrienne murmurs. "Forgive me, it's just that I've had some very bad experiences with a person with the name of Deville lately. I didn't mean to cause you any problems, I'll just leave."

"Wait a minute, don't run off," Vicki says, taking Adrienne's hand. "Have you by chance, had any dealings with a woman named Veronica Deville?" Adrienne looks up, startled. "Ah, I think you have!" Vicki

says with a wry smile. "Well, welcome to the club. Unfortunately, she's related to me. In fact, Veronica is my twin sister!"

If Adrienne was stunned before, she thinks she's going to have a stroke now. Luckily, there's a chair behind her and she flops in it. "I never knew she had any family in this city and now I run into her twin sister. What luck! Martha said there was a connection!" She wonders if she's getting herself deeper in trouble by coming to a sibling of Veronica, then she recalls something Vicki said. "Uh, you said 'unfortunately'. Don't you get along with her?"

Vicki chuckles bitterly, "I believe you're mixed up in one of my sister's rotten schemes since you mentioned Martha; she was here a few months ago so I know about her troubles. Are you in a similar fix?"

Adrienne realizes she has nowhere else to turn so she might as well tell all. She gives Vicki a quick review of all that has happened to her since meeting Veronica, including what she found out about the cab company.

"I thought it would be something like that," Vicki says, shaking her head. "Dominion Taxi? I didn't know she still had that little outfit. Well, I'll tell you the sad story of my life with Veronica, although I did manage to come out of it a bit better than others!"

"I haven't had anything to do with my sister in years, except in a court of law. I was born as a boy named Victor, Veronica's twin as I mentioned. We got along well enough as kids until we were teenagers, then things started to change. I started to realize that I wasn't like other boys, I was more interested in feminine things. Meanwhile, unknown to me, Veronica became really interested in things feminine, other girls! We sure were a mixed up couple of kids sexually."

"I started borrowing Veronica's clothes to wear and of course she caught me one day. She



really changed after that. She would force me to dress up however she wanted, threatening to tell my parents and my friends at school if I refused. It was like men were objects of contempt to her, to be used as she pleased."

"Shortly after we turned twenty, I got up my courage and told my parents about my life as Victoria and that I was going to transition. They weren't happy about it but seemed to accept my decision. Veronica was furious because she was losing her control over me. A few months later, our parents were killed in a car accident. I was terribly upset by this and trusted Veronica to take care of settling the estate, which was fairly extensive. Big mistake! All of a sudden another will appeared, giving nearly everything to her! So we ended up in a big court battle over which will was valid. I won back some properties but Veronica still ended up with most of it. There are some lingering issues still dragging on in the courts. So now you see why I have very little to do with her any more."

After Vicki finishes her tale, Adrienne sits for a minute, thinking about all she's found out. "I was wondering where Veronica got the money to buy that massive old mansion she lives in. I assume now that it's part of the estate."

"Yes," Vicki answers, "That's the old family place where we lived. She's sold off most of her share of the assets, no doubt to pay for her lavish lifestyle. Which makes me wonder why she would hang on to that little taxi company. It couldn't be producing much income these days. My dad hung onto it only because it was his first investment."

"Unlike her, I hung onto my smaller share of properties and I like to think I've done quite well, probably better than Veronica in the long run. I've made enough to complete my transition, including SRS. I can now live quietly as a woman and afford to keep this place open as a meeting place for my fellow sisters."

"Hmm, that cab company still strikes me as being odd," Adrienne mutters. "I just can't see Veronica running a business like that. I think I'd like to have a look at that location; it just seems so out of place in this whole scenario."

"I'd like to know what she's doing with that old building too," Vicki wonders. "However I don't want to be seen down there while there are still court issues between us." She thinks a minute then grins. "I'll ask one of the girls; I know one who's always ready for a little adventure!"

Vicki soon returns with one of the ladies Adrienne saw earlier. "OK, this is Gloria and she's agreed to go with you," Vicki states. "I'll leave you two alone to make your arrangements. I'd like to hear about anything you find."

Adrienne thanks Vicki as she leaves then turns to Gloria. "Thank you for offering to help me out. This could be risky though so if you want to change your mind I'll understand"

"Oh, don't worry about me backing out," Gloria says, smiling. "I've hung out in that area for a while and I know nearly everybody around there. Besides, if we do run into trouble, I know we can get out of there in a hurry!"

"OK," Adrienne says, "I'll take your



word on that! Now when would you like to go? I could meet you here tomor..."

Gloria interrupts, "Why wait? Let's go right now! I'm going to a Halloween party tonight near that area so we have a cover story if we need one. I left a couple of costumes in my locker here that would be perfect for a little cloak and dagger work. Come on, let's do it. It might be fun!"



Adrienne wasn't too sure about Gloria's idea of fun but she couldn't fault her enthusiasm. Maybe it would be better to get it over with before she started having second thoughts. "Alright, let's do it. What kind of costume do I get to wear now?"

Gloria leads the way into a locker room at the back of the building. "We can change in here," she says, opening one of the lockers and pulling out a couple of bags. "Here, I think this one will fit you."

"Oh Lord, what in the world is this thing?" Adrienne asks, unfolding something made of black PVC.

"It's a catsuit, silly!" Gloria says, laughing. "Haven't you ever worn one before? It's almost guaranteed to make you look ultra sultry! Now here's a great pair of boots to go with it... oh yes, gloves and a cute little cat mask! All set to go prowling, dark kitty! Teehee!"

"Oh my goodness, it's so tight!" Adrienne says as she wiggles into the stretchy suit. "I see what you mean now!" As she laces up the boots, she sees Gloria squirming into a suit that's absolutely skin

tight. After fastening up the waist cinchers that Gloria has stashed in the locker and donning their masks, they regard themselves in a long mirror.

"Wow," Adrienne sighs, quite amazed. "Is that really me? I look like a completely different person!"

"Tonight you can be anyone you want," Gloria giggles. "Come on, Catwoman, lets blow this popcorn stand!" She turns and leads the way out the back door.

Parked by the door is a powerful looking motorcycle with a purple fairing which Gloria hops on and then pushes the start button. It roars to life then idles with a low rumble. "All ready to go," yells Gloria, "Hop on!"

Adrienne nervously crawls onto the seat behind Gloria, wondering if she should have made a will before she agreed to this adventure.



"A... are y... you sure this is really safe?" stammers Adrienne, as she wildly looks for something to hang onto.

"Of course!" Gloria says, laughing. "Don't worry, Feline Girl, you've got nine lives tonight! Hang on, away we go!"



They blast out of the parking lot, nearly flipping Adrienne off backwards. But soon Gloria is cruising at a smooth pace west toward the harbour area and Adrienne gets a good grip on the seat strap. As they get into heavier traffic, Gloria quickly weaves through the vehicles, returning horn blasts with a cheery wave. By the time they get near their destination, Adrienne figures she's down to three lives and might come up short on the return trip.

Suddenly Gloria guides the big bike into an alley and slows to a crawl. "We'll leave the machine in this alley," she says quietly.

"According to Vicki's directions, we should be able to see the taxi stand around the corner."

Gloria guides the bike to a stop behind some garbage cans and sets it on its stand. Together they peek around the corner and spot their intended target immediately.

They see a cab and another smaller car parked near the office and two people talking out in the street. Seeing a dumpster between them and the scene down the street they maneuver a little closer, keeping to the shadows.

"Oh my Lord, that's Veronica and the man is one of those repairmen I saw at Veronica's!" mutters Adrienne. "She keeps showing up like a bad debt. I'd give my new Victoria's Secret Catalog to know what they're talking about!"

"Shhh! Keep it down," Gloria whispers. "Let's just wait a few minutes and see what they do. I don't think they will notice us here if we stay here quiet."

After a few more minutes of animated conversation, Veronica turns and hops into her gunmetal grey Porsche and tears off, tires squealing.

The man she was talking with checks the office door, then sits in the cab and motors off at a more leisurely pace.

"Well, that was disappointing!" states Adrienne, stretching and standing up behind the dumpster. "We sure didn't find out much here!"

"Don't be so hasty, girl," Gloria says with a little smirk. "We might find out a few things yet! Let's take a peek at that office. Come on!" She jumps up and quickly runs out into the glow of street lights in front of the cab stand.

Nervously, Adrienne follows behind Gloria as she boldly walks up to the office door. While Gloria appears to be examining the door knob, she peers through the front window. "Yuck! This window is so greasy, I could fry a pork chop on it! I can't see much of anything through it!"

"Uh-huh," murmurs Gloria as she appears to wiggle the knob. "Presto!" she yelps, "Would you care to examine the interior, Mi'Lady?" She swings the door open and gestures Adrienne inside



with a sweep of her arm.

"Oh God," Adrienne moans, "What have you done? We're going to be arrested for break and enter now! What if there's somebody inside?"

"Jeez, relax girl!" Gloria states, looking a bit disgusted. "That door frame was so old and shrunk anybody could walk into this place any time they wanted to. Does this place look open for business off the street? If there was anybody inside, I think we'd know by now. No burglar alarm or any security notices either. Listen. If there was a bored dispatcher inside, there would be a radio or TV blaring away. Trust me, we're alone here."

"O - O - OK, " Adrienne mutters as she slips through the doorway. Once she's inside, she realizes that there is some flickering illumination. A couple of tired florescent lights display a dismal scene before them.

"Wow," she mumbles, "If these wrecks are running a trip soon, I'm the Queen of Sheba! I worked a few months as a cabbie before I decided to go femme full time. No top lights, no antennas and I bet no radios, and I see no inspection stickers. There's something really fishy going on here!"

"Yeah, you got that right sis," Gloria breathes, "Um, there's a light coming from under that doorway over there.. Let's check it out!"

"Well, OK," Adrienne murmurs, picking up a dirty wrench off a work bench. "Just in case!" she says nervously, holding her improvised bludgeon in both hands. "You just never know!!"

Gloria carefully opens the door a crack, then swings it wide. "All clear, nobody home. Just as I suspected!" She strides into the room and looks around. Well, look at this, a real classy setup!"

What they see before them is a room completely at odds with the area behind them. A neat little carpeted area that could have been an entertainment room in an average suburban dwelling is revealed to them.

"Wow, nothing but the best for the chump drivers in this elite outfit!" Gloria chuckles. "Maybe I should apply for a job here!"

"Yeah, Adrienne says, "It's just a little too classy for anybody trying to make a buck in the hack business. Most cabbies wouldn't be sitting here, they would be out cruising the streets, looking





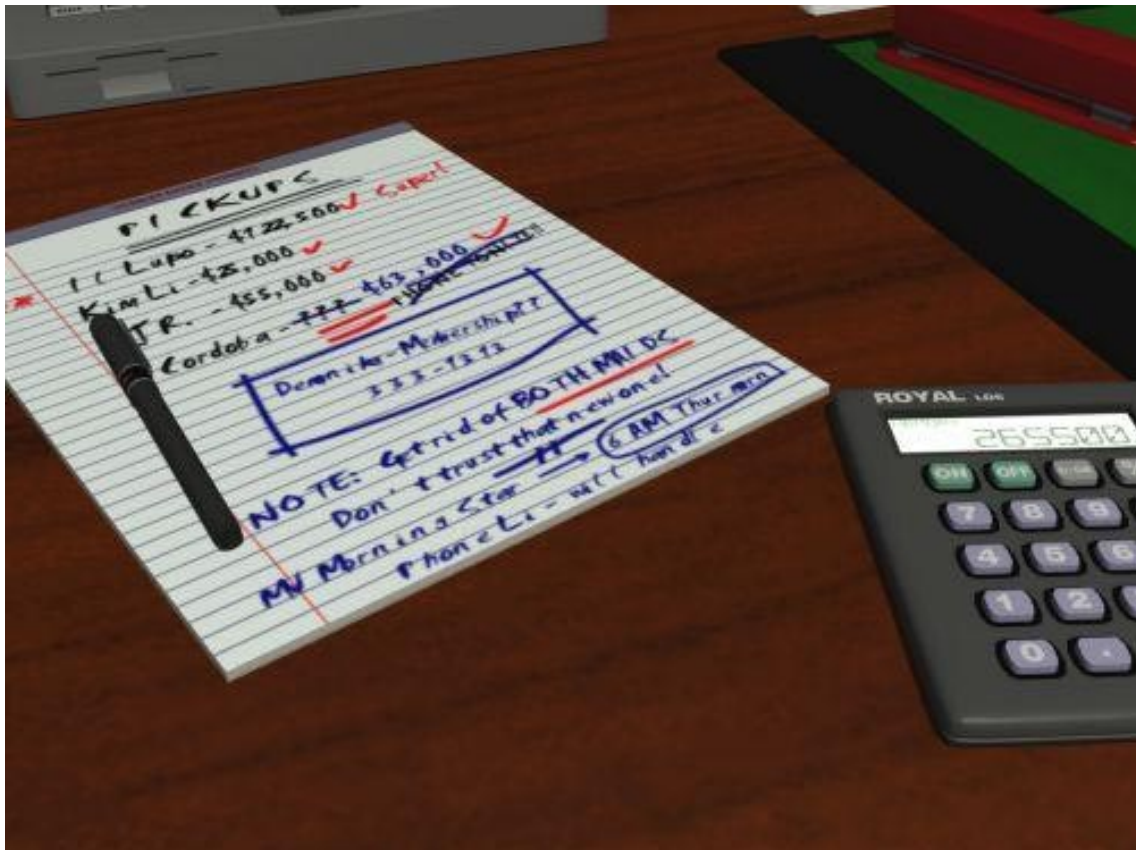
for a fare!"

"And look at this desk!" Gloria says excitedly, "Just like an accountant's setup!"

"You're right, girl," Adrienne states. She quickly scans the desk setup, then focuses in on a large notepad to one side. "Um, Gloria dear, just what do you make of all this stuff? There's some very large numbers here and I don't think these are your average cab fares! And I don't think I have much of a future as a domestic by the looks of this! MV Morning Star... What in the world could that be?"

"MV could stand for 'Merchant Vessel' if I'm not mistaken," Gloria mutters as she carefully peels off the next sheet on the notepad. "Have you got your bags packed? I think your Mistress is about to surprise you and Sarah with a free one-way vacation!"

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## Chapter Nine - Through the Gauntlet

Adrienne and Gloria quickly go through the desk drawers, trying not to disturb the contents too much. But they find nothing else of any interest. Gloria tries to log on to the laptop computer, but has no luck trying to guess the password.

"This is really frustrating," grumbles Adrienne. "We know Veronica is up to something here besides running a cab company, but what? We just can't find any proof!" She kicks the desk in a rare show of temper.

"Hmm, maybe, maybe not," mutters Gloria. "But I do think we should get out of here. We've pushed our luck coming in here so let's go now."

They quickly leave the office, pulling the door shut behind them. Gloria peeks out the front door, then signals for Adrienne to follow her out. She manages to get the latch to engage again,



then quickly runs after Adrienne back the way they came. They just manage to disappear in the shadows when the cab comes roaring back down the street and squeals to a stop in front of the taxi stand.

"Wow, that was close!" utters Gloria, as they slip into the alley toward the bike. "Lots of fun tonight! Haha! OK, let's get out of here!" Adrienne, who has had enough 'fun' to last the rest of her life, quickly agrees. The drive back to Vicki's club is fairly uneventful, but Adrienne figures that she only has one life left by the time they pull into the parking lot.

They meet Vicki back inside the club and Adrienne carefully describes the details of their little adventure to her. While she's doing that, Gloria searches around for a pencil, which she uses to carefully rub on the paper she took off the pad in the cab office.

"There," she states, "Now we have a copy of what was written on that top sheet. The person who wrote that should really take a course in anger management; the pen must have made grooves halfway through the pad!"

She hands the paper to Vicki, who looks it over for a couple of minutes before handing it back quickly, like it was soiled.

"All those large amounts of money listed there with those names," Vicki mutters. "I only recognize one of them, Il Lupo. I've heard rumors that he's a very nasty character and has some Mafia connections. My God, just what has Veronica gotten herself into, associating with people like that?"

"I don't know any of the names on that list," Gloria muses, "But all those junk cabs sitting in that garage make me very suspicious. I would have loved to have a peek into that computer and look at the books if they're kept there. I bet you'd find those cabs still listed as generating income to cover some massive cash input! Can you spell 'money laundering'? Also a long list of expenses for those cabs, bills from shell companies owned by her associates. That's how they

would get their nice squeaky clean money back, minus Veronica's cut of course."

"Oh my Lord," states Adrienne, "Do you really think so? I suppose that would make sense! What a thing to be able to use against Veronica!" Turning to Vicki she says, "Oh, I'm so sorry that you had to find this out about your sister, if any of this is true."

Vicki waves it off. "Don't feel sorry for me. I wrote her off long ago. It's shocking to hear this speculation, but not really surprising, considering the way she throws money around and the way she behaves. Now I know it's late and Gloria wants to get to her party, so let's leave this for now. I'm going to do some checking around on my own."

She takes the paper back from Gloria and hands it to Adrienne. "You better keep this, it might be useful though it's not hard evidence. Now I'm going to send you to an acquaintance of mine who I think will find all this very interesting. I'll call ahead and set up a meeting for you tomorrow evening. Wear something dark and mysterious, she'll love that!" She hands Adrienne a card with only an address on it and then gets Adrienne's phone number.

Adrienne changes quickly and joins Gloria again. As they leave, Adrienne says to her, "Thank you for your help tonight. What we've found has given me something to work with, though I'm not exactly sure what happens after this! I dread going to work with that woman tomorrow, knowing what I do now!"

"Hey, no problem!" says Gloria, hugging Adrienne. "I wish you luck. Who knows, maybe we'll meet up again sometime." She hops on her bike and soon vanishes into the night, leaving Adrienne to walk home alone with her troubled thoughts.

Tuesday morning finds Adrienne back at work on the art work for the children's books. She didn't sleep very well, kept awake by thoughts of her trip to the taxi stand and what they found there.

By eleven, she's beginning to think that Veronica isn't going to show at all when she comes sailing in, ready for another shortened day at work.

"Well, I hope you're not wasting any time getting those illustrations done," she mutters, her thoughts clearly not anywhere near the workplace.

Adrienne manages to remain outwardly calm in spite of her desire to blurt out all she now suspects about this woman.

"Everything is still on schedule," she manages to get out. "I still figure I'll be done by tomorrow evening." She didn't bother mentioning that she had been spending half her time answering Veronica's calls. Some callers even thought she was Veronica so Adrienne just went ahead and answered their questions, based on what she knew of the business. She thought that with a bit more experience, she could probably take over completely, considering how little work Veronica actually did.

"Alright, just keep cranking that stuff out," Veronica says over her shoulder, already heading for the door. "I was going to punish you for dressing too smartly against my orders, but those



silly glasses make you look like a nerd, so all is well. Haha! I'll be gone for the rest of the day. Lots of, er, client meetings to take care of. Get to work!"

Adrienne collapses against the desk after Veronica breezes out, relieved that she has the rest of the day to herself. She doesn't have to sit on her secret knowledge all day while having Veronica make all those consistently nasty remarks at her expense. The ringing phone gets her attention. As she goes to answer it, she wryly thinks, "An executive's work is never done!"

Much later near the end of the day, a refined looking elderly man pokes his head in the door. "Is Ms. Deville somewhere around the building?" he asks.

"Er, no," Adrienne answers, wondering who this fellow is. "She told me that she would be gone all day, visiting clients."

"Is that so?" he states, looking irritated, then sees what she's doing. "Oh! I see you're doing the preliminary illustrations for the Simpson account, the children's books! I'm impressed, this is very good work! I didn't know we had another graphic designer stashed away back here. By the way, I should introduce myself. I'm J.W. Hardin, CEO of Pendulous Publications."

"Oh, er, pleased to meet you, sir!" stammers Adrienne. "I'm sorry, I didn't recognize you!"

"Yes, well, if you see Ms. Deville before the end of the day, tell her I want to see her immediately." As Mr. Hardin turns to leave, he says, "By the way, Ms., er, Duhamel, since you're new here, do you know about our policy concerning tomorrow? We encourage all employees to wear a costume to work on Halloween. It's good for staff moral I suppose! Must be off, see you again soon!"

"OK, I'll see what I can come up with for a costume!" Adrienne calls after him. To herself she thinks, "Funny, Veronica never mentioned that! I suppose she wanted me to look bad in front of all the other employees. Well, to heck with her!"

Veronica never returned to the office that day, which didn't bother Adrienne a bit. "I hope she gets in trouble with the big boss, if she isn't already!" she muses. "Mr. Hardin didn't seem pleased that she wasn't around the office."

She leaves right at five o'clock, wanting to leave enough work undone to stick to her plan, uncertain as it was. She gets home and is making herself a quick meal, when the phone rings.

"Hi Adrienne, it's Vicki. Are you ready for your meeting tonight? I've found out a thing or two that might prove to be useful to you. My contact will fill you in when you get there. Don't forget to wear what I suggested!"

"Uh, OK. I'll be leaving soon," Adrienne says, wondering about unknown contacts and mysterious meetings at all hours of the day or night. "All this 'cloak and dagger' stuff and now Halloween on top of it is really stretching my wardrobe to the limit!"

She rushes through her meal, then drags out an old suitcase with a few dark items in it. "Good thing I kept this stuff from my Goth period. Who knew it would come in handy again some day!" She quickly covers herself in black velvet and is soon out the door, on her way to another rendezvous.

After an hour walk and some help from her well used map, Adrienne finds herself in an area of





upscale homes. "A strange area for a secret meeting," she thinks, "But everything about my life has been strange since arriving in this city! Hmm, here's the address on the card that Vicki gave me. It's a classy looking place; now I'm really getting curious!"

Adrienne climbs the step to the front door and knocks. Soon she hears someone approaching. The door opens a crack and a single eye peers out at her. "Ya? Vat do you want? You have appointment with Mistress?" a rather androgenous voice demands.

Feeling a bit disconcerted by the cold greeting, Adrienne stammers, "Uh, I was supposed to come to this address for a private discussion with the, ah, Mistress. I hope she knows that I was coming."

"Hmph! Vell, come in and I vill enquire about this with Mistress." The door is opened just enough for Adrienne to slip inside and confront her questioner.

"Wow!" she wonders. "Does everybody I meet in this weird city have some kind of secret fetish or lifestyle?" Standing before her is a person about 6 feet tall, dressed all in female rubber clothing and nicely made up, but obviously a crossdresser, according to Adrienne's practiced eye.

"You vait right here. Do not move!" He/she minces off in five inch heels toward a doorway to one side of the elaborate room Adrienne finds herself in.

"Well, sister or not, that is one rude bitch!" she thinks, getting annoyed by her treatment so far.

She hears some murmured conversation, then footsteps approach. "Hans say I haf customer. I haf no appointment booked tonight!" an oddly familiar voice rings out. A woman in a long latex gown sweeps through the doorway. "Who bother me on private evening... huh? *Bloody Blimey!!* It's Veronica Deville's sissy maid!"

Adrienne, shocked by the sudden shift in accent, as well as the realization of the woman's identity, reels against the wall. "*Oh my God!* It's Lady Demonika! I've really screwed the pooch now!"

Adrienne can't think of a thing to say to cover her presence here at the home of her nemesis. She turns to bolt for the door but Hans the CD is in her way.

"Wait a moment, luv!" calls Demonika. "Don't be in such a 'urry to run off. Are you the person Vicki Deville sent to see me? If you are, you're the last person I expected to see on my doorstep! Took me by surprise, you did!"

Adrienne slowly turns back to look at Demonika. Without the mask and the bulky black rubber dress, she seems smaller, not at all like the evil woman who had treated her so callously at Veronica's party. How could this lady have tossed her around so easily and tied her up like a neat little parcel? And what was with that weird Eastern European accent that disappeared so quickly? This woman was obviously English. "Lady Demonika? Is it really you?" she asks,



totally puzzled by all this.

"Oh yes, dear, it really is!" Demonika says, chuckling a bit. "Now why don't you come in and have a nice cup of tea? I think you and I have some interesting things to chat about. And by the way, you can call me Penelope. The 'Lady Demonika' persona is only used for my private 'guests'... and for other reasons that I will explain."

"Hans dear, since you appear to have taken some liberties with my wardrobe again without permission, you may go and prepare tea for us. There's a good fellow!" As Hans slips away, Penelope continues, "He's really a sweet person, but doesn't like to be seen dressed by strangers! Now come and sit down and we'll discuss your recent adventures. I know about the parts involving Vicki, but I think there's a lot more to your story than that!"

Adrienne gingerly perches herself on the edge of a chair, ready to run like a deer at any reappearance of the Lady Demonika she knows and fears. She starts her tale, haltingly at first, but Penelope helps her along with a few well placed questions and soon she is smoothly babbling along, likely helped by the brandy Hans brought after the tea. When she gets to the evening in Veronica's dungeon, she almost breaks down, but Penelope urges her to continue until it's all out.

"Well well, that's quite a fantastic story," says Penelope, looking distracted. As Adrienne opens her mouth to insist that it's all true, Penelope continues, "Don't worry, Adrienne! I believe all of what you have said, not just because I happened to be part of it. I'm involved in this a tad more than you might think. Now I'm going to trust you and hope you'll keep what I tell you secret, because it could cost me my life if certain people found out about my inquiries."

"You see, I'm actually a private investigator based in London and I was originally hired by a very wealthy British couple to try and locate a missing daughter. What I first thought was a simple runaway case has turned out to be much more than that. The young lady disappeared while touring North America with friends. Right in this fair city, as a matter of fact, which is the reason I ended up here."

After a sip of brandy, Penelope continues, "After doing some preliminary investigation, I thought it prudent to get undercover quickly. You see, I soon found out this girl was hardly the first to vanish here. There have been many disappearances in this area, and not all, er, strictly female! Many transsexuals and a few CD's have vanished too. I have found out there are several dangerous characters running a thriving drug trade locally, and are also involved in white slavery. There are indications many of these girls are kidnapped and smuggled off to private brothels in South America and also the Far East."

"I met your friend Vicki one day while checking clubs in the area and we hit it off immediately. She told me the story of Martha, which led me to believe the lovely Veronica is somehow involved in all this. It's not likely she's one of the top people, just a social climber seduced by the easy money that's obtained by laundering drug money. I also believe she scouts for people like Sarah and yourself as potential fodder for the sex trade. You see, there are many varied tastes in this sad old world!"

"Oh my God!" Adrienne blurts out. "So that's what all this is about! You think we're going to end up in some sleazy crib on the far side of the world? That's just horrible! How could anyone do such a thing to another person?"

Penelope continues, "I have been trying to find out more about these people by attempting to work my way into Veronica's little circle of friends. I think my cover as a professional domme is working well, since I really am a lifestyle dominatrix, as you have discovered, my dear! Hehe, it also generates some extra income, which pays the rent on this lovely house. But my clients are becoming impatient and are pushing for some sort of results. They don't realize how dangerous

this could be for me, but I must come up with some sort of lead soon."

"When Vicki called, she told me some interesting things about growing up with Veronica. It seems she always loved having secrets and was totally fascinated by an old wall safe located in the former servants quarters on the third floor, where she stashed all her private things. Vicki also told me that Veronica was an avid diarist and wrote down every little detail of her life. Since she had a poor memory for numbers, she had the original combination changed to something easy for her to remember, her birth month and day, plus the house number, 11-21-33. The silly girl wrote it down and Vicki found it one day and easily remembered it, since it's her birthday too. So we're hoping she hasn't changed it since."

"Now this is where you come in, luv," Penelope says with a little grin. "I would like you to find that safe and try to get into it, because there's a good chance you're going to find a diary with all sorts of details written in it that could help me, and also yourself and Sarah. It's a gamble but we must act immediately, especially since I think you two are about to vanish! I would prefer to do this myself since I'm invited to the big party tomorrow night but I have other pressing, er, engagements tomorrow that can't be put off. Plus I don't know the layout of the mansion and you do. I think this will have to be done quickly and efficiently, and there won't be time for me to wander around the place aimlessly."

"I don't want you to show up as Adrienne the sissy maid tomorrow night! Veronica will keep you too busy running around until the guests leave, then I fear you will be bundled off and never seen again. You are going to go alright, but you're going show up as Lady Demonika! I have an appropriate outfit ready for you and you'll use my invitation to gain entrance. There should be no problem! What do you think of that?"

Adrienne sits there stunned, her mouth hanging open. "I can't possibly do that! I don't look anything like you and I sure can't talk with your accent! It just won't work!"



Penelope answers soothingly, "Relax, my dear. You must realize that Veronica has no idea what I look like. I've always been masked and you will be too. And speaking in my assumed accent won't be very hard with a bit of practice. I chose it deliberately because it's so rough and hard to place. Just tell her that you caught a cold!"

At that moment, Hans returns with a large bag, which Penelope hands over to Adrienne, whose mind is still whirling over the outrageous plan that's just been laid out for her.

Adrienne pokes through the contents for a minute then wonderingly holds up a long stocking made of latex rubber. "Oh Lord," she whines, "I have no idea how to get dressed in this stuff! It must be like trying to crawl into a balloon!"

"Oh, it's not really too hard, just use lots of that talcum powder in the bag. But be careful, it can tear. Who knows, you could learn to love it! Then perhaps you could join Hans and I for a bit of fun, hmm? Would you like to try it on now?" Penelope inquires sweetly, starting to peel off

the gown to reveal rubber undergarments.

"Uh, ah, perhaps another time," Adrienne stammers, edging toward the door, not really knowing what to think of Penelope's invitation. "If I'm going to actually do this, I'd better get some rest. It will be a long day tomorrow."

"Well, think about it, my dear. The invitation stands!" purrs Penelope, taking Adrienne by the hand and pulling her close as they move to the door. "Well, run along if you must! Good luck darling, please be careful tomorrow night!" She gives Adrienne a parting kiss on the cheek as she leaves.

"My God," Adrienne thinks on the way home, "What an incredible day! I start the day working on a kiddy book and nearly end it in a sweaty threesome with a couple of rubber fetishists, one an English private eye and domme who just sweet talked me into an impossible task! If my life gets any weirder, I'll have to write a book about it! That's if I have a chance after tomorrow night!"



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## Chapter Ten - Revelation

Amazingly, Adrienne does manage to get a good night's sleep and starts the day by finding a Halloween costume to wear to work.

"This old thing will have to do," she thinks, looking in the mirror. "I don't have any time to find



anything better. At least it's comfortable. I wonder what Veronica will think of it, if she happens to show up today!"

She finds out soon after arriving at the publishing house. Amazingly, Veronica is almost on time for once. She comes storming into the office and immediately sticks her finger in Adrienne's face.

"Just what did you say to that old Hardin yesterday? I nearly got fired just now and I know you're behind it!" she yells.

Adrienne, finally reaching her breaking point, roughly shoves Veronica's hand away. "Don't ever do that again," she says coldly. "I

told Mr. Hardin nothing more than the truth, that I didn't know where you were yesterday.

Whatever happened between you and him is your own fault!"

Veronica steps back, looking shocked, then attacks again, turning red and nearly dancing in fury. "You insolent fraud of a woman! You're going to regret your behavior for the rest of your miserable life! I'll see to that!" She grins wickedly, crazy little lights dancing in her eyes. "Now get out! Go find an empty workstation to finish that stupid project! I don't want to see your face again until tonight! You'd better show up or I'll send some 'gentlemen' to find you! I'll tell them to leave you in that moth-eaten coffin lining dress you're wearing! How very appropriate! They can bury you in it, dead or alive, I don't care!"

"Never fear, I'll be there," Adrienne states, gathering up her papers and heading for the door. "Just not like you think," she murmurs, having suddenly and firmly decided to go through with Penelope's plan. She returns one parting comment over her shoulder, "By the way, I'm more of a lady than you could ever hope to be, regardless of the fact I was born male!" She cruises out past a couple of totally shocked fellow employees, in search of an empty desk to finish her work.

Adrienne never bumps into Veronica again for the rest of the day, which was probably good for the both of them. She isn't sure she can control her temper any more and would end up physically attacking Veronica. She wonders how much danger she's in already without doing something like that. She continues her work, occasionally getting a few strange looks from passing workers, but no one says anything to her.

"I guess my comments have made their way around the whole building by now! I think I'm working on my first and last project here, no matter what happens tonight!" she sadly thinks, a tear rolling down her cheek. "What a mess I've gotten myself into! Oh well, no use worrying about things beyond my control; I'll still do my best while I can!"

By six o'clock, she has everything done and printed out. She debates signing her name to the package, but in the end she writes it in the appropriate place.

"There, it's done! At least they'll have something to remember me by!" she says to herself as she leaves her work in a basket of other projects destined for the meeting tomorrow.

She gathers up her purse and heads for the exit. There's a Halloween party in progress in the conference room and she'd like to stop by, but she feels that she can't face anybody now. Anyway, she has another appointment she fully intends to keep.

"I made a promise to Sarah but I still have no idea how I'm going to fulfill it!"

Adrienne soon arrives home and immediately goes to her bedroom to pull out the things given to her by Penelope. "I'm way too nervous to eat anything now!" she thinks. "I'd better get ready right now before I lose my nerve and hide under the bed until Veronica's goons come to dispose of me!"

Before stripping down and wiggling into the first piece, a pair of briefs, she starts up a tape of Penelope speaking in her pseudo accent that was thoughtfully included with the pack of garments. "Gut eefning, Vat a lufly party!" she manages to spit out after some practice. "Oh dear, I'd better tell Veronica I have bronchitis or something. I'll never get this right!"

After a couple of tries and spraying talcum powder around the room, Adrienne gets the hang of sliding on the rubber clothing. First a corselette with garters for the latex stockings, filling up the cups with some extra padding behind her modest breastforms to hopefully match Penelope's proportions. After donning and hooking up the stockings and pulling on a pair of long gloves, she takes a look in the mirror before continuing.

"Wow!" she exclaims. "Is it legal to look this sexy? Hmm, I wonder what I'd look like with real breasts... Oh, stop it girl, stick to the job at hand! Penelope was right, I could get to love this stuff!" she says with a giggle.

She has an easier time getting the blouse and skirt on, then zips up the ankle boots. She slips the mask over her head and finally stretches on the wig, regarding the amazing result in the mirror for a minute. "Wow, Rubber Girl strikes again! Oooh, I'm getting warm already. Good thing it's a cool night! Now next question, how am I going to get to Veronica's dressed like this?"

She finally decides to wear a long cape that matches the dress she had on earlier. With the hood up, it covers most of the outfit underneath. She takes one final look around her little apartment, hoping she'll get to see it again. Then she slips out into the evening.

Adrienne decides that she'd better find herself a cab since she's already behind schedule. After several tries, she manages to get one to stop for her. Thankfully, it wasn't one of Veronica's taxis.

The driver looks her up and down, then finally decides he's not going to get mugged by the





apparition before him.

"Going trick or treating, lady?" he asks with a grin.

"Ha ha, funny guy!" she says as she settles in the back. "Just going to a fancy house party." She tells him a location about a block from Veronica's and then tries to get her nerves under control. She tries not to think of the myriad things that could go wrong tonight. She's still worried about getting that crazy accent right but realizes that it's too late to do anything about it now.

Sooner than she likes, they arrive at the destination she gave the driver. She pays him off with a little tip since he turned out to be an alright guy, then slowly makes her way towards the lights shining through the trees surrounding Veronica's mansion.

She stops once to stash the old cloak in some bushes then crouches down for a couple of minutes, fighting a sudden urge to vomit. She wants to start running and just never stop but she soon settles down.

Adrienne rounds the corner into the driveway and is confronted by the sight of the old mansion, glowing eerily in the strange red afterglow of the sunset.

"Good Lord," she mutters. "Welcome to Dracula's lair! All it needs is a cloud of bats circling around the tower! Well, there's one bat inside that I hope to pull some tricks on tonight! I just hope she hasn't got any in store for me!"

Adrienne slowly walks up the driveway and approaches the large porch at the front. A few cars are letting off passengers and some of the guests are milling around and chatting; none pay any special attention to her for which she is grateful.

She proceeds up the steps toward the front door, oddly relaxed at this point, like a prisoner who has accepted his fate and is being marched to the firing squad.

She pauses for a few moments, making sure she still has the invitation and remembers the combination of the old safe upstairs. *If Vicki is right and there is a diary there, and if there are some incriminating tidbits in it...* Damn, there are just too many if's and maybe's to suit me!"

As she's standing there thinking, she notices a



couple of ladies snuggled up to each other at the far end of the porch, apparently enjoying the sunset together.

"Hmm, they look like a couple of Veronica's lesbian friends, no doubt having a good time at the party. At least they have each other for company. I'm all alone for this interesting evening. Well, no sense groaning about that now! God hates a coward... off I go!"

She opens the door and enters, not hesitating at all, to be greeted by the sound of soft music and conversation.

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## Chapter Eleven - Confrontation

As Adrienne steps into the familiar front entrance, she is greeted by a large muscular man in a tuxedo who she has never seen before. "Good evening, madam. May I see your invitation please?" he inquires in an accent that sounds Mexican or Spanish to her.

She smiles at the fellow while pulling out Penelope's invitation, then belatedly realizes her features are hidden by the mask. "Ah, ya! Here iss invitation!" she gruffly gets out, hoping she doesn't sound nervous. "Who in the world is this guy?" she wonders. "He certainly doesn't look like one of Veronica's goons!" She puts it out of her mind as he directs her to the stairway leading up to the second floor ballroom.



She slowly ascends the stairs, noticing that other guests are still arriving so she figures she's timed her arrival quite well. "Perhaps Veronica won't notice me and I can slip away unnoticed to do my little job!"

Hopes of that happening are quickly dispelled as she strolls into the large room, trying to act casual. Veronica is standing right by the doorway, greeting all her guests as they arrive.

Before she even has a chance to think about it, she finds herself staring into Veronica's grinning face. "Good evening," she warmly says, a slightly puzzled look crossing her

face. "Welcome to my little party! I'm sorry, you are, ah... "

Adrienne surprises herself by smoothly slipping into her false identity. "Veronica dahlink! I am surprised you not recognize me, I am Lady Demonika! Disguise too good, perhaps! Hahaha!"

"Oh! Er, of course!" Veronica blurts out. "How silly of me not to recognize you! Well, enjoy yourself tonight. If you require anything, my maid will bring it." She gestures toward the dark silent woman who is standing at her elbow. "Lady Demonika, let me introduce you to another friend of mine, Senora Consuella Cordoba, who is visiting our fair city this week."

"Cordoba?" Adrienne silently wonders as she takes the woman's limp hand. "Isn't that one of the names on Veronica's list?" She shudders involuntarily under the woman's silent appraisal and thin smile. "My God, I've seen warmer faces on frozen fish! This lady gives me the creeps!" She quickly reclaims her hand and nods to the still silent woman. "Ah, I am pleased to meet you, Senora."

As Adrienne/Demonika moves off to make way for the guests coming behind, the woman murmurs to Veronica, "What strange friends you have, Senorita Veronica. But it is not necessary for you to spread my name around like that. And I am not your friend, I am merely a business acquaintance. You would do well to remember that."

"Uh, yes, yes, of course!" stammers Veronica, silently wishing Consuella would wander off for a while. She loves the money she makes from dealing with this woman, but frankly, she gets very nervous in her presence. She again wonders if the rumors are true, that Consuella had slit

her own husband's throat to gain control of his cocaine empire. "Better off not knowing anything about that, I think!"

Adrienne wanders off into the crowd of guests, trying to stay as far away from Veronica as she can. "Good Lord, I thought I was going to pee myself there! Meeting Veronica was bad enough, but that other one was even worse somehow!" She wanders around a little, trying to bring her heartbeat back down to ready herself for the next part of the meager little plan. "At least I'm not burdened by a lot of complicated details!" she silently thinks to herself.

She soon spies Sarah, busily rushing around taking drink orders, but sees no way of getting her aside at the moment. She had seen Sarah earlier while talking to Veronica and her strange friend, chatting earnestly with some guest in a long dark dress and veils. "Another of Veronica's weird friends no doubt! Well, I'll have to get Sarah out of here later somehow. If I don't find anything to expose Veronica, I'll have to convince her to take off with me. I'm afraid we'll be running for a very long time!"

She turns to start working her way back toward the set of stairs that lead to the third floor and nearly runs into Veronica standing right behind her.

"Ah, Lady Demonika, I just thought I'd ask if you enjoyed my little soiree last weekend. I'm sure the other ladies who attended were quite impressed by your bondage demonstration. Perhaps later, you could repeat some of it, if you're willing. Some other guests expressed an interest in seeing your techniques. We'll use the same sissy as before, and don't hold back anything! Give her the full treatment this time. I know she'll just love it!"

Adrienne, who doesn't know a slip knot from the Gordian knot, replies, "Ya, dot would be fine vit me. But later on, OK? I want to enjoy party first!"

To herself, she angrily thinks, "So you're thinking of using 'Demonika' to get your revenge are you? You vicious sadist, I'd love to 'demonstrate' on you. I'd leave you dangling by your toes all night and see how you like that!"

Veronica, looking a bit nervous, continues, "Um, I was also wondering if you and the others have made a decision on my membership in the Ladies Club yet?" She expectantly awaits Demonika's reply.

Adrienne doesn't have a clue about that. Penelope never mentioned anything about that club or the other women who were present that night. Oh well, what's one more deception now? "Committee has not made official decision but..." she lowers her voice and leans closer, "You are in, I guarantee! I put in lofly report on party, I make sure you get what you deserving! Don't tell though, big secret for few more days!"

"Oh, that's wonderful news!" Veronica gushes. "I promise I won't tell a soul! I'll talk to you later!" She soon vanishes, nearly floating on air.

"Thank God she's gone!" Adrienne sighs in relief. "Now back to the job at hand." As casually



as possible, she makes her way to the stairs. She knows that there is a washroom upstairs and has seen several people going up to use it. This is her excuse for getting to the third floor and she now heads in that direction.



As soon as she's out of sight of the throng below, she takes a turn away from the bathroom and quickly runs down a poorly lit corridor to the back of the mansion. As far as she knows, this part of the place is rarely used. She was up here only once when she took a wrong turn while looking for Sarah's cramped room.

After trying several doors and finding nothing but dusty little rooms obviously neglected for years, she begins to panic. "Calm down, girl," she says to herself. "You know that the room with the safe has to be here somewhere!"

She finally comes across a room that shows recent use. It was once used by staff as a common area and contains a pool table and some old upholstery. There's also a more modern touch, a computer and desk against one wall. In a corner, there's a cot that looks recently slept in.

"Who in the world would be staying up here?" Adrienne wonders. "I've never seen anyone else

here except those two guys in the kitchen the other day."

Adrienne soon puts it out of her mind and begins scanning the walls of the room. She spots two dusty old portraits hanging one on each side of the computer desk. One appears to have been moved by someone recently, as there are what appear to be finger marks trailing across the surface dirt. "*Ahah!* That looks interesting!" she murmurs, and upon examination finds that the painting swings out on hinges, revealing the old safe she's been searching for.

Unaware of the activity upstairs, Veronica is standing quietly in a small lounge next to the ballroom, pondering the night's events. "The party seems to be running fairly smoothly, even without that insolent Adrienne. Where is she anyway? She should be here by now! I'd better send the boys over to her apartment now and grab her."

"Damn, if she's already run off, that will really mess up my plans! I really should have had her staying here under my control like Sarah. But that stupid book project at work couldn't be foreseen, so what else could I do?"



Her thoughts then turn to Demonika and her news about the club membership. "Oh, how wonderful to know that I will soon have the respect of my so-called peers in our little community! I'll quickly have the dead wood cleaned out of that pompous committee and they'll be doing my bidding!"

She begins to look a little puzzled. "Hmm, speaking of Demonika, there seemed to be something a bit different about her tonight, but I can't quite figure out what it is! She insists on running around with some sort of silly mask on all the time, so I can't read her expressions at all. I wonder why she does that? Hehe, maybe she's ugly or scarred and doesn't want to show her face! Or maybe there's another reason... Oh well, who cares! Soon I won't need to bother with her at all; everything will be under my control as it should be! Heehee!!"

Meanwhile, Adrienne breathes a sigh of relief as she sees the safe before her. "Finally!" I was beginning to think that I wasn't going to find it, but here it is just like Vicki said. Now to get it open!"

She recalls the numbers and quickly dials them in. She then tries to turn the handle, but nothing happens. "Oh no! Did she change the combination?" Beginning to panic, she tries again, entering them in reverse order but that doesn't work either.



She takes a deep breath to try and calm herself then tries to think about the numbers. "Hmm, Vicki said it was her birth date, 11, 21 and house #33. Hey, this is #39... I remember that from the card Veronica gave me that first day! The city must have renumbered the street at some time! I wonder..."

She dials in the revised numbers, but the handle still doesn't budge. "Oh Lord, this is hopeless! I'll have to give up soon and try to convince Sarah to take off with me, without anything to help us!" She decides to try once more before leaving and reverses the first 2 numbers and adds the 39. There is a dull clunk

and for a moment she can't bring herself to believe that she actually figured it out. She finally tries the handle with her shaky hand and the door swings open on it's squeaky old hinges, revealing the contents.

At that moment, Veronica decides to rejoin her party and starts to move to the door of the lounge. "Damn, still no Adrienne! Well, that does it! I'll have to call the guys and tell them to find her quick! If she's not at her apartment or still at work, she's probably running as fast as her chubby legs can go! Maybe the bus depot... God, I've been really careless lately! I need a stiff belt to calm myself..."

She suddenly stops, a stunned look forming on her face. "*Belt!* That belt Demonika was wearing! Adrienne was wearing a belt just like that the first day I saw her! Could it be... I thought Demonika's voice sounded a bit different! But why the disguise and what could she want here? This would be the last place she'd come, unless she wanted something very badly."

Veronica continues talking to herself, "Hey, I wonder if this has anything to do with the cab

stand last night! Bill said the door frame was cracked and he thought someone had tried to break in. But there's nothing much there of value and everything was untouched. I don't even leave either set of books there anymore; they're locked in the safe upstairs, along with my diary."

"Talking to yourself is a very bad habit, Senorita," a cold voice murmurs directly in her ear. "You never know who could be listening."

Veronica lets out a little shriek and whirls around to find Consuella standing right behind her. "I agree that you have been very careless, Veronica. In my type of business, that can be fatal. I do hope you are not becoming a liability. If I discover that you have mentioned any of our, ah, dealings in this diary of yours, that would be very bad for you, I am afraid. My pet jaguars are very hungry and they will quickly devour any tidbits... perhaps your ears and nose, after I have my men remove them. Of course, you will be... *invited* to watch!"

"Now I strongly advise you to locate this Adrienne person immediately and deal with this matter firmly or I shall call my bodyguard at the front door and he will firmly deal with all concerned! *Comprende?*" she grins savagely.

Veronica feels stark terror for the first time in her life and feels a dribble of pee escape down her leg. "Ah, yeah, er yes, I understand... immediately!" she babbles, then dashes through the salon to the back stairs and bellows down to the kitchen, "Ralph! Ralph! Where are you, Godammit! Get your head out of the fridge and get up here! *Now!!*"

Adrienne stands gazing into the safe, amazed that she actually got it open. "That sly bitch! She nearly stumped me with that simple combination. And that house number switch, if I hadn't remembered that I'd be standing here until the next millenium! Now let's see what's here..."

She pokes around in the safe, pushing aside a few bundles of cash and a bit of jewellery. She finds several passports from different countries with various names, but all with Veronica's picture staring back at her. "Ewww! One photo of her is too much! This must be her insurance policy!" she mumbles.

At the bottom Adrienne finds two bundles of computer printouts and a small leatherbound book. "*Ahah!*" she exclaims, "This looks very promising!" Putting the papers under her arm, she opens the book. The pages are filled with cramped handwriting, but she has no trouble making it out.

She immediately discovers that this is Veronica's diary, but only for the current year. "Who knows where the rest are. If she's been keeping diaries since she was a kid, there must be a stack of them stashed somewhere!"

She hears some distant shouting but it's too far away to make out. "The party is getting wild!" she thinks, and flips back through the pages, looking for a certain date.

"That rotten bitch!" Adrienne spits out, focusing in on a page from five days ago. "She was lying about having a secret recording of me the whole time! And that threat concerning the police chief is just something she made up on the spur of the moment. She's even gloating





about it in here! This is what I suspected but couldn't prove! I bet she has nothing on Sarah either. There must be a lot more good stuff in here. This is *definitely* coming with me!"

"Hmm, this looks like two sets of printouts from an accounting progr... Wow, the taxi books! Look at the difference in the figures. Wouldn't the government tax boys love to have a look at this!" She gathers up the papers and the diary. "Time to move," she realizes. "I can look this over later, I still have to find Sarah and get away from here!"

Adrienne peeks out into the hallway, then moves quickly toward the back stairs. "I'll find somewhere to hide this stuff outside, then come back for Sarah." As she turns to descend the stairs, she spots some movement in a doorway beside her. Before she can react, something large and wooly clamps over her mouth and she is nearly pulled of her feet. Then she feels a sharp pain behind one ear and everything fades to darkness.

After an indeterminate length of time, a familiar voice begins to intrude into the silence as Adrienne slowly regains consciousness. "Wakey,

wakey, rise and shine, my sweet little sissy!" After a few moments, pain explodes on the side of her face. "Wake up, you rotten thief! I'd love to slap you all night but I just don't want to hurt my hand!"

"Haw haw! Dat's funny, boss lady!" rings out a gruff voice from behind her. "Whachoo want me to do wif her? Can Ralphy keep her? She's real purty!"

"Oh, my aching head! What happened? Where am I?" Adrienne wonders, not able to focus her mind or her eyes. All she can make out is a large dark red shape in front of her. She realizes that she is on her knees and is being held upright by her hair. She can't move her arms and there is something stuffed in her mouth.

"No, Ralph my pet. I'm afraid there are other plans for dear Adrienne.

Hmm, we do have a couple of hours to dispose of before we have to meet Li's men down at the docks. I'll let you play with her until then. She's not really a girl, but then you aren't too fussy, are you, Ralph?"

The shape comes closer, then Adrienne receives a blow on the other side of her face. "There,



that will even out the swelling on your face! Well, Adrienne, you nearly pulled off your little plan! I didn't realize what you were really after until Ralph showed me the books you stole, and also my diary. That would have caused me no end of troubles if you had managed to get away with those items! I really don't know how you found out the combination for my safe. I've underestimated you, but it's not going to happen again! I do hope you like rice and enclosed spaces, my clever little queen... it's a long voyage to the Orient in a shipping container! Hahaha!!"

"She's all yours, Ralph. Just don't mess her up too badly. I want her in usable condition by the time she gets to her destination. I don't want to get a discount price for her from Mr. Li because of broken bones. Just put my things back in the safe after you're done and I'll move them to some place safer later on." The blurry shape starts moving away. "I must return to the party now. Oh, collect the other one when you've had your fun. I'm not taking any more chances with these two. The caterers can clean up the mess."

"Oh Lord, no!" Adrienne thinks as her scrambled brain starts to function once more. "I've been caught red-handed and it was all for nothing! I'll never get out of this mess now and I can't do a thing to help Sarah either!"

Then a big rough looking fellow comes into view and Adrienne cringes away from him. She doesn't like the look of him, or the unpleasant odor coming from his direction.

"Oh, goody goody! Boss lady is real nice to Ralphy! I do what she want and she let me have fun with the rubbery girly!" he says, wiping his runny nose on his sleeve. "I tie her up tight so she not run away and put gag in her mouth so she not make all those screamy noises! Hurt Ralphy's ears, they do!"



"Wow, this guy is clearly no Harvard graduate!" Adrienne thinks, as she tries to squirm away from him. He chuckles and grabs her by the hair again, and starts to move toward an old door leading into a garage, clearly looking for some privacy to begin his 'fun'. Although not being particularly religious, she suddenly decides praying for some kind of salvation might not be such

a bad idea at this moment. Somebody just might be listening after all!

Her sight is still fuzzy and at first Adrienne doesn't believe what she's seeing behind Ralph. She spies something moving and then a dark figure silently comes into view. Arms come up, holding a... *golf club*? "This can't be real," she thinks, shaking her head.

It *is* real. Suddenly, the club comes down, and makes a sharp hollow sounding noise. She hears a low exclamation, "Fore!", followed by a giggle. Ralph stands for a moment with his mouth hanging open and his gruesome teeth showing, then his eyes roll up in his head, and he goes over backward like a falling tree. He's still hanging on to her hair and she gets pulled over to lay helpless on the ground, knocking her head again in the process.

Adrienne is only semiconscious as she senses some movement around her, then she feels some hands grabbing her behind the shoulders and knees. Amid some mumbled curses, she is lifted off the ground. "Jeez, you're heavy! Maybe we should have left you to sample Veronica's rice diet!" a familiar voice whispers.

After a few moments, she's set down in some soft grass. The gag is unfastened and she forces the evil thing out with her tongue, retching a bit. Then the ropes binding her arms and hands tight are removed. Someone bends down in front of her to remove the binding on her ankles. "Huh? Penelope?" she mutters, trying to sit up. "You're not supposed to be here in my nightmare! When did you grow long hair?"

"Snap out of it, silly girl!" Penelope smiles down at her. "We're all here, and quite real! My, you must have received a really nasty crack on the head! We shouldn't be moving you, but I feel we should vacate the area immediately before dear Ralphy wakes up or some other undesirable comes along."

Adrienne is helped to her feet and stands there unsteadily, staring at the people around her. Besides Penelope who is holding a long wig, there is Gloria, who is just tossing away the golf club and removing her own shoulder length wig. Vicki is also there, dressed in an elaborate long dress, standing next to a masked girl. "Wha...? You and Gloria were at the front door! I thought you were some of Veronica's lesbian friends!"

"Very funny! I suppose we did appear that way though!" Penelope chuckles. "It was Vicki here who planned this little get together. She felt so guilty after she learned that you were going into Veronica's lair alone so she called and convinced me to come and keep an eye on proceedings. Gloria wanted to come along too for the excitement, I suppose! I had one extra invitation that was supposed to be for Hans and she wanted to use it to go inside, but Vicki insisted that it was her job since she knew the layout better than any of us."

Penelope continues, "I told Gloria to go watch around the back and it turned out to be a good move. I guess she got her bit of excitement after all, teeing off on Mr. Ralph's head! Oh, she also recovered some papers and what I hope is Veronica's diary."

"It sure is," Adrienne says, spying the diary and printouts in Penelope's hand. "All that stuff will make for some very interesting reading, I think!" She suddenly looks shocked. "Sarah! I have to go back and get her!" She nearly falls over turning to go back to the mansion.

A hand reaches out and steadies her. "Easy, easy! It's alright!" says the strange girl, removing her mask to reveal Sarah's smiling face. "I'm right here! Vicki took me aside while I was serving and told me what was happening. I was to be ready to leave at any time. She smuggled in this outfit under her long dress and stashed it with all the guests' coats. Then there was some sort of disturbance and we could hear Veronica yelling. That was our chance and Vicki got me into the disguise; we just walked out the front door together and I was free!"





Suddenly, the sounds of a very loud argument come from the house. Then there is a piercing scream, followed by two loud bangs. Soon, there are guests running out of every exit, screaming and crying.

"It's about time to leave, girls!" cries Penelope. "Those were gunshots and I fear that something terrible has just occurred! Vicki, Gloria, help Adrienne back to the car. You go too,



Sarah! I'll hang back to make sure we're not followed. I'll meet you later at Vicki's. Get going now!" She turns and ducks into some bushes. "My God, I wonder what just happened!" Vicki inquires, as she and Gloria grab the still disoriented Adrienne by the arms and start to lead her away.

"I have no idea," says Sarah, following behind. "But you can always count on one thing from Veronica. Her parties always end with a bang!"

"Well, Penelope will find out what happened," Vicki replies. "But right now we'd better get Adrienne to a doctor. She doesn't look good. We'll

take her to the clinic that I set up for my TS sisters' use. They're very understanding there and will look after her, no questions asked."

Gloria speaks up, "Well, I think you two sissy maids can hang up your aprons now. If that diary is as full of juicy tidbits as I think it is, she won't bother you for fear of you making it known to any interested parties! And those cab books are just the icing on the cake!" She picks up the pace. "But right now, let's boogie! I think even I have had enough excitement for a long while!"

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## Epilogue

### "May you live in interesting times"

Fast forward to two weeks later:

Adrienne is busy, packing up the last of her few personal items when a familiar face appears in the doorway.

"Hi there, girl! What are you doing back in here?" Adrienne looks up and sees that it's Sarah, all done up in a pretty dress that she hasn't seen before.



"Oh, just clearing out anything I left here," Adrienne replies. "The new editor and secretary will be moving in tomorrow, so I have to be gone by then. How did you enjoy your trip back home to see your family?"

"Hmm, well, it had it's highs and lows," Sarah says, looking a little unsettled. "I finally came out to my family, so it was tense for a while. But I think most of them will be able to deal with it, given some time. It was a thing that had to be done though."

"Yes, it is," Adrienne replies, looking a bit sad. "I went through

that before I came here, but it didn't go very well at all. I was shunned by everyone until just a few days ago. I finally received a letter from my sister, saying that she would like to visit and talk things over again. So maybe there's hope yet!"

"Enough of that stuff," she continues. "So what are you going to do with yourself, now that you're back in town? Are you having any luck finding a job?"

"Oh yes!" Sarah says excitedly. "I got a job as a model, of all things! Well, a combination sales clerk and model anyway! A local designer has opened her own shop downtown. She's attempting to market her own designs and does custom work too. She's trying to attract some business from the TG/TS community, since there's so many of us in this city! That's where I come in. I'll be looking after the front end, plus I get to model all the new designs. She's also going to arrange a photo shoot for me and I'll be in her little spring catalog! Isn't that amazing?"

"Wow, that's wonderful!" Adrienne says, smiling. "I hope it all works out well for you! Hey, do you want to grab that other little box and bring it down the hall to my new digs? We can talk on the way."

"You're still working here?" Sarah asks, looking puzzled. "I thought you were finished and picking up your things!"

Adrienne chuckles, "So did I, but it seems I was a bit hasty! Mr. Hardin called while I was at home, recovering from our little 'adventure'. Vicki had called him and told him a toned down version of what happened at the mansion, that I had been hurt in the confusion after the shooting."

"Anyway, he told me that everyone on the board was quite impressed with my design work on the book project," she continues. "He wanted me to transfer over to the design department right

away. There's been quite a shakeup in the staff in the aftermath of Veronica's disappearance. They had to promote someone new to take over as head editor and he wanted to keep his current secretary. I would have been left without a position and probably let go, so he thought the design job would be the perfect solution for my dilemma."

"I thought I'd better explain my situation to him, before things went any further. So I came in this morning, prepared to be tossed out the door, but he told me that he already knew about my 'situation'! Gossip spreads at the speed of idiocy around here! He said they've had to update their employment policies in recent years to keep up with the times; anyone is welcome to work here, as long as they do a good job. Harassment is not to be tolerated either. It sounds a bit idyllic to me though; there will still be bigots around, no matter what."

"He was a bit concerned when I told him about the assumed name business, but Vicki has been a great help there, along with a few other details. I could tell him that I was going through the legal process of having my name changed, so that put him at ease. But I'll have to use my birth name until that's all settled, which should make for some fun at the bank on payday! Heehee!"

"That's amazing!" Sarah asserts. "I'm sure you're now in a position that you're definitely more suited to, anyway." They reach Adrienne's new cubicle and put down the boxes. "Well, I must run. I have to find a place to stay and I'm not having much luck finding anything. Do you know of any cheap hotels?"

"I sure do!", Adrienne says, grinning. "Why don't you stay with me for now? I could sure use some company and we could save a lot of money, sharing the rent and food bills. You can have the spare room, but we'll have to clean out all my junk first. I'm a real packrat!"

"Oh, that would be great! Sarah squeals. "We can be 'roomies'! Much better than a fleabag hotel... or a shipping container that we were going to share, for that matter!"

"Don't be too sure about that," Adrienne quips, "But at least my 'container' has a view!"

Later on that night, the two girls are settled on Adrienne's couch, squinting at her fuzzy little TV.

"I wonder how the other girls who were at the mansion that night are doing?" Sarah wonders.

"Oh, I've been in touch with Vicki quite a bit lately," Adrienne says, smiling. "You know that I spent a few days at her clinic and I think I'll be spending a lot more time with her from now on. But I'll get back to that in a minute."

"Apparently, Penelope has moved on, with her Hans in tow! She found a lot of information in Veronica's little diary and is off on her quest again, following up on some very interesting leads, God only knows where!"

"She gave the diary back to me, after copying all the entries she was interested in," Adrienne continues. "Vicki and I made arrangements with a lawyer; it's stored in a safety deposit box and



it goes to her if anything... *suspicious* happens to me. Vicki also got those printouts and the notepad sheet to the authorities. I doubt if they can be used as evidence, since we didn't exactly obtain them legally, but it might be enough to start an investigation into Veronica's activities!"

"And... oh, what was her name? Damn that Ralph! That bash on the head he administered still bothers me! I keep forgetting her name and other details of those last couple of days. Everything keeps trying to slip away, like a dream!" She looks thoughtful for a minute. "Gertrude? Glorfindel? No, that's an elf... Gloria! The motorcycle ride! Yes, she's left town too. Probably looking for some more excitement elsewhere, since she's worn this city out!"

"Have you seen the latest in the paper? 'No Further Leads On Whereabouts Of Missing Socialite'. Apparently, there's still no trace of Veronica at all. It's like she dropped off the face of the earth! Dear Ralph was found floating in the harbour on the weekend with a bullet hole in his forehead," Adrienne quietly says with a shudder. "No loss there, as far as I'm concerned, but he really must have pissed somebody off! Also, Veronica's so-called cab drivers have vanished and the taxi stand was gutted by fire. The police figure it was arson."

"That whole party night is still mostly a mystery. None of the guests can shed much light on what happened after we got away. Apparently there was some yelling and screaming from the back of the house, then a big guy ran through the ballroom with a gun in his hand. More yelling, then a couple of gunshots. By that time, everyone was fighting to get out of the place." Adrienne looks thoughtful again. "I'm still wondering about that creepy Cordoba woman that was with Veronica that night. I'm sure she is involved in this, but she vanished too, along with the big fellow, who I think was playing the doorman earlier on."

"I wonder if we'll ever know what really happened to Veronica," Sarah replies, "But I have a feeling she'll wash up somewhere too, just like Ralph. I saw that woman and the big fellow also. A real cold looking pair! I don't think I'd want to cross them in any way!"

"Oh, I was going to tell you more about my stay at Vicki's clinic," Adrienne relates, a happy little smile forming on her face. "I had some nice long chats with a counsellor and a couple of doctors while I was there. I visited them again this afternoon and I've been given a clean bill of

health. So I've just taken my first hormones! It will be a long journey to fully becoming the woman I was destined to be, but I now have friends to help me along the way!"

"That's so wonderful, dear!" exclaims Sarah. "Some day soon I hope to follow in your footsteps. I'm sure it's what I want, I just have to think it over some more. I should make an appointment to visit that counsellor too!"

Suddenly, Adrienne recalls something else. "Oh, I have something for you! This came in the mail yesterday, but it has your name on it. Kind of strange!"

Sarah takes the large envelope and examines it. "Bangkok, Thailand?" she wonders. "I don't think I've forgotten anything



there!" She tears open the envelope and dumps out a letter and a large photo.

As she slowly reads through the letter, a look of wonder forms on her face, then tears start running down her cheeks. "*Oh my God!* This is from Penelope! She's found Martha! She's alive and well, living in Bangkok, of all places! Some of this is actually from her. What a story she has to tell here!"

Sarah starts to relate Martha's tale to Adrienne, "Apparently Martha was grabbed by someone that last night who sounds suspiciously like your pal Ralph. Then she was injected with something and didn't wake up until she was on a ship, locked up in what turned out to be a shipping container with a couple of young women. I guess they had a terrible time, seasick half of the long voyage and living on rice when they could keep it down."

"Eventually, They were dragged out, half dead, and taken ashore. To make a long nasty story short, she ended up in a private brothel, locked in a little room when she wasn't being used and abused by the clientele. The gangsters who ran the place got her hooked on opium, so she was a real mess for a while."

"Luckily, she was spotted by a wealthy business man one day and he became infatuated with her! He paid some exorbitant sum, ransom or purchase price I suppose, and got her out of there and then into a hospital to get her straightened out. That's when she found out she had been in Thailand the whole time."

"What a wonderful guy! He arranged and paid for her SRS, then set her up in a little business there. So now my Martha is a citizen of Thailand, a business woman who owns a classy little lounge in downtown Bangkok! She has no desire to return to this country now; can't say I blame her. The picture is of her and some of her employees!"

"That's incredible!" Adrienne blurts out while studying the photo. "That makes me think of how close we were to taking a little pleasure cruise to the Orient too! I think there was Somebody looking after us, putting some good people in our path at just the right time! I'm so glad it's all over, I've had enough excitement for one lifetime!"

Later that night, as Adrienne is having a peaceful night's sleep, a battered old tug silently slips from its mooring and heads out into the darkened harbour.

"What are you waiting for, Chinese New Year?" hisses the flamboyantly dressed person who has just boarded. "Come on, idiots, get this tub moving! What's the matter? No speakee the Engleesh?"

"Oh yes, nice lady!" one of the darkly dressed crewmen responds, trying to placate this rude passenger. If it was up to him, she would soon be fish bait. "I speak very good English, yes? This very old tug boat, motor is in need of much repair. But we build up speed soon. Not to worry, we be out at sea very quickly!"

Aside to his fellow crewman, he mutters in Manderin, "This daughter of a river toad has the manners of a goat! If we weren't being paid handsomely for this side trip, I would tie a rope



around those incredible boots and use her to troll for sharks! Or perhaps we should ransom her to those who seek her head. I also have heard that the police and the tax collectors of this strange country wish to speak earnestly with her!"

"Cut out that jibber jabber and get to work!" she yelps, "I want to be in international waters before dawn! Your boss is supposed to have a freighter waiting." She stomps off onto the fore deck of the tug and leaves them alone for a while.

Veronica stands at the bow, watching the brightly lit city slowly slip away. Inwardly, she is seething. "All my plans for respect and a lavish lifestyle in this city have turned to dust! On top of that, I now have a price on my head! That evil Cordoba bitch wants to serve me up to her beloved jungle fur balls, just because I happened to put some details of our dealings in my diary. Now it's gone, and the copies of the taxi books too, because of that poor foolish Ralph, and a moment of carelessness on my part!"

"I'm lucky to be alive!" Veronica mutters, still shaken by her narrow escape. "That's more than I can say for Ralph! When the lovely Ms. Cordoba found out about the loss, she sure didn't waste any time laying the blame on my doorstep. Gods, she went ballistic and screamed for that monster of a bodyguard and ordered him to shoot me, witnesses or not! If Ralph hadn't tackled him at that moment, I would have been floating around in the harbour too! Thank goodness I can still run fast when I have to; I was out the door by the time I heard those shots. Ralph may have been dumb, but he was loyal! Not like those other two bums; I know now that

they looted the cab stand and then set it on fire!"

"I still wonder who jumped the bodyguard?"

Veronica asks herself. "Whoever it was, that person saved my life, since he nearly caught me in spite of Ralph's sacrifice! It must have been a woman, I caught a glimpse of a long dress. But what moves! She had that guy down and disarmed before he knew what hit him! Then she was gone, just like she was never there. What a stroke of luck!"

"Now I have to seek the protection of Mr. Li. It's going to cost me plenty, but he'll protect me from Cordoba," she whispers to herself, grinning. "They dislike each other intensely and he'll do it, just to spite her! Heehee!"

Then she thinks of Adrienne, and her temper boils up again. "*That fat ass transvestite dipshit drag queen bimbo!*" she screeches. She's behind all of this, it's all her fault! I know it! I curse the day I met her!" Veronica raises her fists and shakes them at the sky. She lets loose such a terrible shriek that the crewmen cover their ears, then dash into the wheelhouse.

"Yieeee! I believe that evil woman is possessed by demons!" one of the men says in a trembling voice, as he peers out at the deck. "No cousin," the other blurts out. "I believe that she actually *is* a demon! May Buddha protect us!"

Meanwhile, Veronica starts dancing up and down, giggling and muttering to herself, "That bad bad girl Adrienne! She's evil, I know it! Evil! But she'll get what she deserves, oh yes she will!"



I'll see to that! Heeheehee!" Before going inside to collapse in one of the small cabins, she bellows once more into the night,

**"I'll get you, my pretty Adrienne, and your little dog Sarah too!"**

***MWAHAHAHAHA!!!***

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**The End (or is it?)**  
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