

The Descent

An erotic novel by the Eternal Student

(MF, MFF, FF, oral, mast, group, swing, exhib, voy, rom, plot)

A young grad student takes a photography job for a mysterious club and quickly finds himself trapped in the gray areas between love, lust, fantasy, and reality.

This story contains descriptions of college aged (18+) people engaging in consensual sexual (and romantic) activities, so if that sort of thing offends you, you'd be best to stop reading and start again elsewhere. Also, if you're under 18 or if the reading of such stories is illegal in your area, you probably shouldn't be reading this story either.

All characters in this story are purely fictional, and are not intended to be based on any person living or dead.

If you enjoy this story, please e-mail me at anothereternalstudent@gmail.com with suggestions, comments, constructive criticism or just thank you's. The only pay I get for writing is feedback from readers, so anything is appreciated.

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Most of all, enjoy the story!

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“From timber so crooked as that from which man is carved, nothing entirely straight can be made.”

Immanuel Kant

1

The newspaper strewn out in front of me, I sat down with a bowl of cereal and a cup of orange juice. For the last few months, I sat down every Sunday and read through the classifieds in the town’s paper to try and find a job I’d enjoy to supplement my teaching at the university. Of course, there’s not much work for Philosophy Grad students in the town paper, so I usually search for something involving my hobby, photography.

Every week, there were the same four or five ads in the photography section, and I’ve tried them all. One wanted full time, one wanted a fine arts degree, one wanted me to photograph kids at a mall kiosk, and I’m pretty sure that one of them was an old lady trying to start a porn site. Either way, none of them were going to work for me, and because there’s not that much work to go around in a college town, other options were rare.

I looked down the list. The usual suspects were all there, although the old lady had upped the offered pay, inspiring a brief shudder as I imagined photographing her nude, bony figure. Then, I did a double-take. At the bottom of the photography section there was a new ad: “Hiring Photographer: No Drugs/STD’s, Open mind a must. 13th and Aurora, 12pm, Tuesday.”

With no name or number, the ad definitely stood out. “13th and Aurora”, I thought, walking the city in my head. “That’s just a bunch of offices, some industrial places and a Coffee shop. It’s probably a prank.”

I started to turn the page, then stopped myself.

’A job’s a job’, I mused, ’and it’s the first chance I’ve had in a little while. Maybe I’ll check it out.’

I tore off corner with the ad, put it in my wallet, tossed the newspaper in the recycling bin and moved over to my desk for a long day of grading.

2

A few days later, I showed the small classified ad to the middle-aged man in the light brown suit, sitting in front of the coffee shop at 13th and Aurora at noon. His crew-cut brown hair stood on end, squared off in true army style, looking every bit a relic from my grandfather's era. He stood to shake my hand, flashing a smile and exposing a single gold tooth, matching the gold chain around his neck wonderfully.

"You're right on time," he began in a low Texas drawl. "Tell me about yourself."

"Well," I began, hesitantly, "my name is Caleb Br..."

"Stop right there." He interjected tersely. "Your name is Rick, understand me?"

"Wait, what?"

"Look, I don't wanna know your real name, and you sure as shit don't need to know mine. That's how things are gonna go with this job, if I hire you. That gonna be trouble?"

I stared at him, confused and a bit concerned.

"We're not the mob, don't worry. There's nothing illegal here, but it's just the nature of what we do. It's best that names just don't get out, else it could be a bit embarrassing for everybody involved. Call me Herb."

"Hi Herb. Wait, what exactly do you do?", I asked.

"We'll get there. Now why should we pick you for this nicely paid little job?"

"I'm a good photographer," I replied, swallowing my confusion and trying to put on an air of confidence. "I'm also clean. No drugs, and I can keep a secret. Frankly, I doubt you'll be able to shock me, I'm a Philosophy grad student, I've done my share of strange studies."

Herb laughed. "Bet you've spent some long nights on the internet too getting unshocked, eh?" He awkwardly elbowed my side, forcing a tenuous and somewhat embarrassed chuckle out of me.

After a second too many of silence, he sighed, then mercifully piped up. "Got some samples of your photography?"

I handed him a photo album, and he leafed through it, nodding in approval from time to time.

"Very impressive," he said. "Can you shoot candid shots too? Like, of people at events?"

“Party photography? Sure, I worked with a Wedding photographer for a little while back when I was an undergrad.”

“Spectacular. You got another job?”

“Well, I teach a few intro classes for my department on campus. That’s just during the day, though.”

“No problem. You in a fraternity?”

I laughed. “Nope, that was never my scene.”

He looked me over for a second, as if gauging my response, but after a second, nodded and went back to his normal, friendly demeanor.

“How old are you?”

“24”

“You single?”

I stared at him for a second, shocked at the somewhat unusual question.

“Are you single?” He repeated tersely, “Simple question.”

“Well, yeah. At the moment.”

“Good. You gay?”

I laughed awkwardly at the bizarre turn the interview had taken. I thought of objecting for a second, then decided it’d just be easier to answer him than try and eke an explanation out of him, given his usual attitude. “I’m straight,” I replied curtly.

“No STD’s, you’re sure?”

That this interview just kept getting stranger, I thought, but at that point, my curiosity outweighed any caution. “Like I said, I’m clean. Even got tested a month ago.”

“Good. You religious?”

“Not really.”

Herb got more serious at my response. “Not really, or no?”

“Agnostic, I guess. Nothing organized.”

“Oh, OK” Herb said, smiling. “Just making sure. We’ve had problems. You a virgin?”

I sat back, abruptly. “What does it matter to you?”

“Look, this job’s gonna pay \$150 dollars an hour to start. These questions may be a bit strange, but I need to make sure you’re the right guy for the job. So, you a virgin?”

I laughed excitedly. “For \$150 an hour, I’ll tell you her name and how she liked it.”

Herb laughed. “I think I’m alright without the details. Now, this here’s the most important part. Are you willing to keep this secret? It’s just best that word of my group’s events don’t get out. You might see some things that shock you, but I need your word that you’re not going to say anything that we don’t authorize you to. Like I said, nothing illegal, just a bit unusual.”

I looked at his expressionless face, his calm demeanor giving me the impression he’d done this many times before. Intrigued, confident, and a bit desperate, thinking about how much I’ve wanted a job doing what I actually enjoy doing, I shrugged and nodded my head.

Herb stood up and patted me on the back. “Wonderful! I like you, and I’d like to offer you this job. Just gotta do a few quick tests. Let’s take a walk.”

3

I followed Herb deeper into the industrial park behind the coffee shop as we made small talk. Soon, we came to a small entrance on the side of the vast, gray office building, hidden away behind some trees and marked only with a small sign, “O.N.U Medical Testing”.

“Oh, Hi Herb,” said the blonde nurse behind the desk, “How’s it going? Here for a screening?”

“Howdy Michelle,” Herb replied, “I want you to meet Rick here. He’s looking to be our new photographer.”

“Hi there, I’m Michelle”, the nurse replied smiling, standing up and coming around to shake my hand. Her long blonde hair flowed over her generic blue scrub top, flowing around her petite-yet-perky breasts hidden just under the fabric.

Caught off guard by her beauty, I smiled dumbly and extended my hand. “I’m Caleb...”

Herb jabbed me in the side, coughing loudly and glaring.

“I mean, I’m Rick. It’s... uhh... Nice to meet you.”

She smiled, turning around to grab a clipboard, giving me a wonderful view of her toned body. She was thin, but not too thin, and had wonderfully proportioned legs. In a word, she was gorgeous.

As she was still turned around, Herb nudged me out of my reverie, flashing a toothy grin and looking Michelle over himself. Finally, he piped up.

“Alright Michelle, why don’t you give Rick here the full O-Nu admission screening?”

Michelle smiled and nodded, grabbing some papers behind the desk.

Herb patted me on the shoulder. “Go with Michelle here. She’s just gonna do some quick tests for drugs, STD’s, and other complicating health issues. Don’t worry, she’ll take real good care of you.”

Then, Herb reached into his suit pocket and handed me a cell phone and small charger. “I’ll call you tomorrow to let you know the results and talk more about the job. Also, you’d be smart to cross off Friday nights from 8pm to around 2am from your calendar for a while, assuming everything goes well here.”

I smiled, some questions still unanswered, but glad that I’d finally found a job. “Thanks Herb. I look forward to working with you.”

“The pleasure’s all mine, and hopefully I’ll be calling you tomorrow.”

I watched Herb walk out the door, then turned back towards the blonde. Michelle locked the front door, turned to grab my chart, and motioned me down the hallway.

4

“How many... more tests... do we have to... do?” I asked, running briskly on the treadmill nearly an hour later as Michelle watched a monitor connected to my wire vest.

“Don’t worry,” she said, “the next one is the last. And actually...” She paused, staring at the screen for a moment, “you can stop now, we’ve got enough data.”

I did my best to disguise how out of breath I was. “Wow,” I said. “That was intense...”

Michelle laughed as she was putting her hair back in a pony tail. “We just needed to make sure your heart is OK. Liability’s a bitch.”

Even though I'd been poked and prodded for the better part of an hour by her, I was still captivated by her beauty, and took the opportunity to enjoy a nice long look at her once more. I looked up and realized she was watching me stare at her. My cheeks flushed red, and I looked over at the cabinet in the corner.

"Alright Rick," Michelle began, suppressing a giggle, "Come on over here and take off your pants. Then, have a seat on the exam table".

"My pants?", I asked, a bit bashfully.

"Yes. I need to do a visual inspection for STD's and I'll need a semen sample."

Face red, I complied slowly, sliding my khaki pants and boxers down onto the floor. I sat up on the table, looking awkwardly at the ceiling.

"Don't worry," Michelle said, slowly manipulating and examining my member with her gloved hands, teasing him slowly to hardness.

"Sorry," I admitted bashfully. "It's.. uh.. been a while since he's gotten much attention."

Michelle laughed a little. "It's OK. I do this all the time, and lots of guys get hard, it's nothing to be embarrassed about."

Smiling awkwardly, still trying to will away my erection, I watched Michelle continue her examination, gently cupping and stroking me as she worked.

Finally, she looked up and smiled at me. "Well, based on the blood tests earlier and the visual inspections, looks like you're clean. I'd like to get a sperm sample, though, per regulation." She walked over to the cabinet on the other side of the room for a small cup, then came back over to me, and sat down next to the exam table.

"Uh.." I began, "Aren't you going to leave so I can get you the sample?"

She took my hardness into her hand again. "Just relax, OK?" I nodded silently.

Michelle stroked me gently, then winked at me and suddenly brought her lips down to my hardness and took me into her mouth.

I gasped, surprised, but did nothing to stop her. Massaging me with her tongue, she worked my hardness expertly, sucking and stroking me. I moaned. It'd been a long time since I'd gotten any, and I was relishing every moment of the beautiful nurse's sucking. She sped up slowly, bringing me ever closer to an explosive orgasm, and I just laid back, shaking at the strength of her stimulation, feeling my come start to boil up.

She just looked up at me, a naughty look in her eyes. Finally, I couldn't hold on any longer and started to tense up. Michelle brought the cup up to the tip of my member and stroked me through my orgasm, as I filled the cup with my seed, groaning at the strength of my orgasm.

As I lay back on the table gasping, Michelle put a lid on the cup, labeled it, and took her hair back down. I slid off the table, still shocked and exhausted, and put my pants back on.

She escorted me back to the waiting room. "Alright," she said, still smiling, "that's all the testing we need to do. Herb will call you tomorrow with the results."

"Uh, Thanks. For.. everything." I replied, still a bit bashful and a lot confused..

She shook my hand. "It's no problem. Oh, and by the way, welcome to Omicron Nu. I'm sure I'll be seeing you again."

She winked and smiled at me. Even despite my confusion, I managed to smile back, as she sat down behind the desk again. I sighed, and headed back out into the spring air.

5

The next evening, I sat in my chair, staring at a book on Kantian ethics, but just couldn't focus. It was almost 11pm, and I still hadn't heard anything back. Not to mention that whenever I started to read, memories of Michelle's wonderful (and unexpected) services kept flashing through my mind, alongside her cryptic comment about "Omicron Nu", whatever that was. I'd done some internet searches the night before to try and figure it out, but only found a few cryptic references on a California university's message board. Based on Michelle's rather scandalous welcome, I couldn't even imagine what it was I was about to become a part of.

And boy, what a welcome it was. My ex, as passionate as she was, had never sucked me like that. I mean, she would give head from time to time, but she was always a bit reluctant, a bit disgusted by the whole idea. Michelle, on the other hand, well, she seemed like she really enjoyed sucking me... like she even wanted it. Still, I can't imagine how a nurse could get away with that without getting fired...

Suddenly, a phone rang, breaking me out of my reverie. I grabbed for my cell phone at first, but then realized that the three-toned ring wasn't mine. Remembering the phone

Herb gave me, I ran across the room, frantically pushing aside books on my desk to find it. Finally, I picked up and brought it to my ear.

“Congratulations, Mr. Photographer.”

I recognized Herb’s voice on the other end of the line. “Oh, I got the job? Great!”

“And I trust that Michelle treated you nicely?”

I smiled. “Her bedside manner was very good. Very nice girl.”, I said, diplomatically.

Herb laughed. “Heh. Bedside manner? That’s an interesting term for a blow job, but then again, I don’t get you kids some days.”

“Wait, you knew about it?”

Herb laughed. “Well, I can tell her not to do it again next time...? I mean, they don’t actually need a sample or physical inspection”

No no!”, I exclaimed, catching my enthusiasm a moment to late. “It just caught me off guard, that’s all. Why did she...? And what’s Omicron Nu?”

“Look, Rick,” Herb began earnestly, “you’ve passed all the screenings we need. I need your assurances, at this point, that you’re going to keep this very, very quiet. I like you, and I want to hire you, but you’ll need to give me your word, above all else, that you’re gonna keep your trap shut about everything from here on out. Then, I’ll give you information.”

I sighed. “And you’re sure this is all legal?”

Herb laughed. “Look, I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again. We’re secretive to keep our people from some major embarrassment, not to keep our people hidden from the cops. Hell, I think one of our alums is in the Sheriff’s department of this city right now. This here town is pretty small, so we’ve got to keep it on the sly to keep people out of hot water.”

“So,” I asked, appeasing my inner doubts one last time, “it’s legit?”

Herb chuckled. “Well, don’t mind if we pay cash, but it ain’t the mafia.”

I took a deep breath. “Alright. Mum’s the word, count me in”

Herb’s tone changed, his excitement coloring his slow drawl.

“Wonderful! You busy?”

I looked at the huge tome splayed open on the chair and laughed.

“Nothing I don’t want to get out of doing anyways.”

“Good,” Herb replied, “I’m in the Government stacks at the library on campus. Meet me here as soon as you can.”

Then, the line went silent. I grabbed my keys, and set off for the library.

6

A few minutes later, I walked into the deserted Government Stacks, on the fifth floor of the library. Strolling between the dusty, neglected reports and files, I chuckled to myself. “If these people didn’t pay so well,” I thought, “there’s no way I’d put up with this cloak-and-dagger shit.”

I turned a corner and found Herb standing there, this time in Khakis and a polo shirt, idly leafing through some obscure government tome.

“Howdy Rick,” he began, putting the book back on the shelf, “that was awful quick.”

“I walked quickly. So, uh, why here?”

“You see anybody else?” He replied, still friendly.

I looked around. “Uh, no.”

“Well, there you go.” He started walking through the stacks idly. Herb took a deep breath, and started to explain.

“Rick, your new employer is Omicron Nu. We’re not really a fraternity in the normal sense, but rather a group that puts on, well, we call them “social gatherings”, for our members. We’ve got chapters nationwide, but you’ll just be working here at this school. Our members are all students here, undergraduate and graduate, and lots of them are involved in other fraternities and sororities too.”

I nodded, following him through the narrow bookcases.

“Many of our members are from prominent, wealthy or politically connected families, or are socially well known. Because of that, we ask for your discretion. If, in the outside world, you happen across an O-Nu member that you know from our gatherings, you don’t recognize them. You never ask for real names or for other information while you’re at the gatherings. Unless you’re both in private and both comfortable discussing things, neither of you know what O-Nu is. Understood?”

I nodded, starting to get the picture. “So, basically, it’s a secret society?”

Herb laughed. “Well, not in the conspiracy theory sense of the word. We don’t do politics, or power, or nothing like that. Don’t worry, you won’t have to off anybody.”

I smiled, uneasy. “So, what’s so embarrassing about it?”

“What we provide, and what our members pay for, is the opportunity to fulfill fantasies and get sexual release”

I cocked an eyebrow. “An escort service?”

Herb turned and looked at me firmly. “We do not employ prostitutes. Ever. That’s what makes us so unique.”

I rubbed the back of my head awkwardly. “... Sorry.”

“It’s OK, lots of people jump off down that road. It’s just very wrong. Here’s how it works: New people come to us, mostly men and usually after an invitation from another member. They get the same exam you just got, and they pay their membership dues. After the check clears and the test comes out fine, they’re in.”

“Wait,” I interjected, “Membership dues?”

“Yeah, all our regular members have to pay, generally ten to fifteen thousand dollars per year, depending on the circumstances and their ability to pay”

I coughed loudly, shocked by the figure, and Herb laughed.

“Just think, we’re paying you to attend. Good deal, huh?”

“I guess so,” I replied, still in disbelief. “Who all pays to get in?”

“Basically, anybody who wants to take advantage of our female members at our parties. Mostly guys, but there are one or two lesbian girls who find our services... useful.”

“So, how do you get girls to come to these and... well, fuck?”

Herb laughed. “Well, our people find attractive girls, often from sororities and the campus community, all amateur, and we talk to them, under any variety of guises. We let them know that we want them to become members and then make them an offer. There’s almost always some money exchanged, for tuition or whatever else, but sometimes, we offer other sorts of assistance. We’ve got a lot of alumni willing to make these girls’ lives a little easier with whatever connections they got, and for a lot of girls, that makes all the difference. Generally, there’s a certain point of compensation where any of these girls will not only do it, but will do it willingly and even enjoy it.” Herb laughed loudly, nudging me again

with his elbow. “Hell, I think some of them would do it for free, if we asked them nicely. I think they like us using them as much as we do.”

I laughed uneasily. At least it sounded like the girls were all consenting, if not a bit coerced.

“So,” Herb continued, “we host our little gatherings. Each time, all the guys and girls are invited. We’ve got a nice, big house near campus where people show up, give the password, and then everybody’s welcome to mingle as they please.”

“And if a guy asks, they have to...?”

“Well, the girls have a right to say no. That’s in the charter and whatnot, but the girls we pick never seem to. So, pretty much.” He nudged me with an elbow, grinning.

After letting everything sink in, I piped up again, still a little uneasy, “so basically, people pay you to round up young, consenting coeds?”

Herb laughed out loud. “Well, you do certainly have a way with words. Really, any guy can do that for himself, if he tries. What they’re paying for with us is the safety we provide.”

Herb handed me a white card, about the size of a driver’s license. It was made from a stiff and slightly textured plastic. It was completely blank except for a small “ON” written in black on the center. On the back, there was a series of dates ringing the outside. One date, the coming Friday, had a strangely shaped hole punched in next to it.

“What’s this?”, I asked, turning the card over in my hands.

“It’s your membership card. That’s what gets you into our parties.”

“and the little punches?”

Herb leaned back against the shelf. “Like I said, we provide safety for our members. Everybody in O-Nu is required to go in for a consult any time they have unprotected sex with a non-member, or whenever we randomly call them in to do so. Guys get STD and other major illness tests. The girls get those same tests, and we check and administer their birth control. Hell,” Herb chuckled, “they even started offering waxing.”

I nodded, impressed with comprehensiveness of their system.

“When you walk in to an O-Nu party, you know that everybody in there is clean. We’ll even do random tests at the door, just to keep people honest. You can do whatever you want to whoever you want, and you’re not going to get the clap, or even worse,” Herb laughed, “get a kid.”

“Your little consult with Michelle yesterday was both your admissions test and your first screening. You passed your screening, so your card is punched.”

“Do I just go back there when I need to get tested again?”

“Exactly. The girls there will run the tests and have you on your way within around ten minutes.” He turned around with a grin on his face, his gold tooth glinting in the dusty fluorescent light, and he leaned in towards me. “Oh, and by the way, they don’t really need a semen sample, but they’ll suck you off anyways, if you ask nicely. It’s one of the perks of membership. You know, gets people to get tested.”

I laughed and smiled a little, but after a moment’s reverie, the more practical side of me burst in. “So, Herb, where exactly do I come in?”

Herb smiled. “As you probably figured out, we want you to get pictures of the action. You see, our members can come to our actual parties until the age of twenty-eight. But, even once you’re kicked out due to age, you can still buy access to our intraweb. It’s a small, dedicated network people can access from home to keep in touch with members and view the other pictures. Basically, we photograph all the goings on, and then put them on the web. For a fee, our alumni can enjoy the scenery, even though they can’t come to the parties themselves.”

I got back a little confidence. This won’t be so tough, I thought to myself. “So, you want me to shoot digital and upload them?”

“That’s the plan. You show up to each party, shoot a couple hundred shots, upload them, and we give you \$150. Not to mention membership.”

I nodded.

Herb leaned back in. “Membership AND all that that entails. You’re welcome to hand the camera off to somebody and get in the action for a little while. All the hot young co-ed pussy you could ever want.” He elbowed me in the side, grinning, and despite the somewhat sleazy tone, I smiled unconsciously, imagining the fun I could have if the girls there were even a tenth as good as Michelle.

Herb snapped me out of my reverie. “You there, Rick?”

“Huh? Yeah. Sorry, just thinking.”

Herb laughed. “Yeah, I’ll bet you are. It’s a damned nice arrangement, ain’t it?”

I nodded.

“So, one last time. You in, or do I not know you?”

I took a deep breath, and nodded.

“Great. I’ll give you a call to let you know the location tomorrow. Any questions?”

I stared at the dusty ledger of Iowa’s rainfall in 1962 on the shelf, trying to wrap my head around everything Herb had just explained. Finally, I just shrugged. “I guess I’ll ask Friday if anything comes up.”

Herb laughed. “This is usually a evening-long orientation, and you just got it in thirty minutes. It’s a lot to wrap your head around. Don’t worry, it’ll work out. I’ll get you the details tomorrow.”

With that, Herb set off between the shelves, and disappeared. I sat down on one of the many small staircases in the stacks and turned the small white card over between my fingers. I couldn’t quite decide how I felt about the whole situation. I had a job, and I’d be doing something I enjoyed, and getting paid well for it. Besides, I thought, I had been in a bit of a drought lately, and it sounds like this would certainly take the edge off and let me concentrate more on the rest of my life. And who could turn down a constant source of sex. At the same time, there was something a little strange about the whole idea, that guys would just pay to use these girls as sex toys... and that the girls would consent.

I sighed, stood up, and pocketed the card, walking out of the dusty stacks. I stared out the library’s window into the dark and stepped onto the staircase in the atrium. Slowly and calmly, I began my descent.

7

“Alright,” I said, standing at the front of the classroom. “Everybody needs to finish the Kant reading by Wednesday the fifth.”

“Uhh.. Professor Brown?”

I looked up. The girl with short, black hair in the front row had her hand up. I grasped for her name. Alex, Alexis, something. She was incredibly cute, and unlike most of the arrogant, aloof girls on the campus, she was usually smiling. Especially at me, it seemed.

Frankly, though, even if she hadn’t been pretty, she’d still have been a welcome addition to the class. She’d proven to be pretty smart throughout the semester, and although she

faltered with memorizing dates and the more obscure names, her grasp of the greater significance of the theories was almost unrivaled in the class.

Suddenly, I became aware of the silence in the room, and came crashing back to reality.

“Oh, uh. Yes?” Realizing my tone sounded overly harsh, I quickly amended my reply. “Oh, and you can call me Caleb, I’m no professor yet. But yeah, what’s up?”

“It’s... um... Thursday the sixth. The reading is due... yesterday?”

I laughed quietly at my absent-mindedness, looking down at my watch. “Point taken. Alright, finish the Kant reading for tomorrow afternoon, not yesterday, and given that class is pretty much over, I guess I’ll see you all then.”

I stared back down into the pile of books on the podium. The previous night’s events, my apparent membership in Omicron Nu, it was all weighing on me, and this was the third absent-minded mistake I’d made today. I knew I’d be getting a call with the final information tonight, so I wanted to run home and get my gear ready, and pick out something to wear, and...

“Uhh, Caleb?”

I looked up. The dark-haired girl was standing in front of me, smiling, her purse in one hand and a hoodie with a set of greek letters on the front in the other. Seeing her up close, I realized just how pretty she really was. She had a wonderful smile, and was full-figured, unlike many of the other near-anorexic girls in the class, and although her breasts weren’t huge, they were certainly enough to draw the eye. Aware that she was watching me, I quickly went back into professor mode.

“Oh, Hi...” I paused, trying once again to remember her name. “Err... Alex?”

“Alexa. Close, though.”

“That’s right! Alexa.” I laughed, trying to hide my frayed nerves with a joke. “Nice to meet you, I’m Caleb. I’ll be teaching your class this semester.”

She laughed. “Yeah, I thought I saw something on my schedule about you.”

I smiled. She returned my stupid jokes gracefully, I thought, so that was something right there. Not to mention that she seemed like a genuinely nice person, even in the few short weeks I’d had her in my introductory Ethics seminar.

“So, what can I do for you?” I said as I began gathering my books to leave.

“Well, it’s about the readings.”

“What’s the problem?”

She frowned, setting her purse down on the table. “Well, I don’t really get this stuff. They all sound like they’re saying pretty much the same thing.”

“I think you understand it better than you think, because, in a very real sense, they all are saying the same things. They’re all different ways of explaining the sorts of things we all feel about how we should act. Nobody’s going to argue with most of the right and wrong judgements we all agree on, but they all have different ways of explaining these ethical intuitions. It’s those little theoretical differences where there’s a debate.”

She nodded. “Well, I guess that makes sense. But then, why do some people still propose ethical theories that go against our basic instincts about what’s right and wrong?”

Smiling at her quick riposte, I opened my mouth to reply, but then noticed the bitter looking professor for the next class standing in the door.

“Tell you what, why don’t you come into my office hours next week to chat?”

She smiled at me. “When do you want me there?”

“How about Monday at three?”

She reached into her purse for a pen, unintentionally dragging the heavy bag off the table’s edge. The contents spilled out onto the floor. I kneeled down to help her pick them up. As I handed her back her expensive wallet, a small white card fell out of the top. She quickly picked it up off the floor and clutched it tightly in her hand, almost defensively.

She laughed awkwardly. “Thanks. I’m such a klutz, sometimes.”

I smiled. “No problem. Three on Monday?”

She smiled back. “I’ll be there.”

I gathered my books as she walked out of the room, and then, nodding at the impatient professor in the door, set off for home.

8

I had just finished packing up my camera gear when I got the call. Herb’s familiar three-tone ring jolted me to attention. I dashed across the room to my dresser, digging out the

non-descript phone from under the pile of clothing on top of it.

“Busy night?” came Herb’s now familiar voice as I hit talk.

“Huh? No, I was just trying to get some stuff ready.”

“Good to hear. Don’t worry too much about equipment. Tomorrow’s your first time, we’ll forgive you if you forget something.”

I sighed, relieved. “Thanks.”

“Any time. Speaking of tomorrow, got a pen?” I grabbed the closest piece of paper out on my desk and a pen.

“Ready.”

“Alright. The meeting is at 11th and Pine, 7:30 tomorrow. It’s in the old grey house on the large lot, behind Sigma Pi.”

I visualized the area in my head, and quickly realized which house he was talking about. It always seemed a bit out of place being right off frat row, an island of antique stone architecture in a trashy neighborhood. “The one that looks like it belongs in the 1890’s?”

Herb laughed. “Yep, that’s it. Now, this is important, write this down. There will be a man sitting on the porch swing. He’ll ask you who you’re looking for. Say “Varinia” and he’ll let you in. Bring whatever equipment you need, and bring your card.”

I jotted the name down on the page in front of me. “Alright, anything else I need to know?”

“Dress casually, like you normally do.” Herb said. He paused for a second, shifting his tone. “Besides, it’s not like it’ll be staying on long, anyways.” Herb laughed, and I forced a chuckle to subdue my nerves.

I nodded to myself. “Alright, sounds good.”

“Good luck.”

With a click, Herb hung up.

I looked down at the name, scribbled hastily on a sheet of scrap paper on my desk. I smiled uneasily, imagining the next night’s events, but just as I started to slip into fantasy, my eye fell upon the yet-ungraded pile of papers I had to give back the next day, glaring at me from my desk. I sighed, pushing aside the page with “varinia” scrawled in deep blue ink across the top, and started revising.

9

“Umm... Caleb?”

I jolted to a stop halfway through the door of the classroom, surprised to see the Alexa, the dark-haired girl, waiting for me. I unconsciously looked down at my watch, wanting to get home as soon as possible to prepare for the night’s party, then looked up at her and smiled.

“Hey Alexa. Uh... what’s up?”

Suddenly, a look of concern crossed her face. “Oh, sorry, you look busy. I’ll ask another time.”

“No no no,” I interjected, not wanting to seem unapproachable. “I’m just headed back home. I can stick around, if you’d like?”

Her eyes lit up. “Oh, cool, I’m heading home too. Where do you live?” I hesitated, not quite sure how much detail I was supposed to give to a student. “Uhh.. well, 8th and Marine, roughly...”

“Oh, I’m right near there. Do you mind if I walk with you?”

I looked to both sides cautiously, afraid that my classroom sexual harassment trainer would somehow pop out of the old building’s ugly yellow walls and explain why this was somehow illegal, but I quickly dismissed walking with a student as innocuous.

“I suppose we can walk up that way together,” I said, swallowing deeply, then starting for the building’s exit.

She smiled and jubilantly fell into step next to me. We walked together down the hall and through the building’s exit, the conspicuous silence slowly wearing on me while she just seemed to smile more broadly as time went on.

“So, uh, Alexa. What was it you wanted to ask me?”

She looked up at me, confused for a second, and then, with a flash of comprehension, spoke up. “Oh, well, uhh.. what was the reading for last monday? I missed it.”

I laughed quietly. “Wow, complex question. Check the syllabus, but I think it’s the essay on the ethics of pornography. I think it was one of the essays against it.”

“Ewww!” She exclaimed. “I don’t get that whole thing. A girl should be able to do whatever she wants with her body.”

I nodded. “Off the record, I’m tempted to agree with you. However, it’s worth reading the essay, they make some decent arguments against the objectification of women.”

“...but we have the right to let ourselves become objects,” she replied quickly, “you know, if we enjoy it.”

I stifled a cough, more than a little shocked by her unwitting admission. As if suddenly realizing what she’d just said, she went silent, her face turning red.

Diplomatically, I tried to redirect the conversation. “Well, that’s actually an argument against paternalism more than anything. We’ll probably get to that later in the semester.”

The conversation lapsed back into silence, and I decided to fish for some conversation to ease her embarrassment a bit. “So, where do you live up here?”

Slowly, she regained her former tone and composure. “I live in house up at Alpha Phi.”

“Oh,” I replied, “Is that the big house with the ship-style lamps out front?”

“Yeah”, she replied. “Have you been to one of our parties, or what?”

“No, when I came here, I was already a bit too old for that scene. I didn’t want to be the creepy old guy at the sorority house.”

She playfully pushed me away. “You’re not old. What are you, like, 21 or 22?”

I smiled. “24, but thanks for the vote of confidence.”

“Oh, you’re not old. Besides, I’m sure a lot of girls up at the house would love to meet you. You’re such a nice guy...”

We stopped at the intersection at the edge of campus. I looked down at the dark-haired girl, excitedly shifting her weight back and forth. I knew I should probably put a stop to her flirting, but then again, it had been a long while since I’d gotten this sort of attention from an attractive girl like her, and she sure was pretty...

“...but yeah,” she continued as the light changed, “you should come by the house some time. We have the best socials, oh my god.”

I laughed quietly, then finally shifted my weight a bit, making my tone more serious. “Well, I don’t think it’s looked nicely upon for an instructor to go and visit his students’ houses. I do appreciate the offer, though.”

Alexa’s face fell. “Oh, I guess you’re probably right,” she said, obviously crestfallen. The conversation lapsed into silence again.

I sighed. “Look, Alexa. It’s nothing personal or anything. I’m just... I just like my job, and getting too friendly with my students could cost me a lot.”

Still obviously saddened, she kept on walking beside me. After a while, she finally piped up. “Well, I don’t think anybody in my sorority would say anything if you just came by for one little party.”

I smiled at her. If she hadn’t been my student, I would have been all over her offer. Although she was a few years younger than me, she was a beautiful girl, with a great body, a good mind, and a truly wonderful smile. She seemed pretty open, based on her comments, and I had no trouble imagining asking her out. Then, just as the image of bringing her back home to my apartment began in my head, my inner worrier caught back up with me. “Students are off-limits”, I reminded myself.

I sighed, not wanting to shoot her down, but still obligated to decline. “We’ll see. Maybe when you’re out of my class, that way nobody would worry about it.”

She perked back up. “Really? I’m sure all the girls there would love you.”

I smiled at her compliment, then, snapping back to reality, I looked down the hill from the top the intersection. “Uhh, Alexa, isn’t this your street?”

She looked around, and, going red again, started laughing, her laugh carrying an unusually self-conscious tone. “Oh, yeah. I guess it is. Well, I’ll see you Monday in Office Hours.”

Chuckling to myself, I waved goodbye and proceeded down the street towards my apartment complex. I smiled. Even if it can’t go anywhere, I thought, it’s still nice to know that a pretty girl like Alexa is interested in me. If only she’d taken some other class...

10

“Uh, Hi.”

The blonde, college-aged guy on the porch of the stone house looked up from his book at me. “Looking for somebody?”

“Uhh.. yeah. Is Varinia inside?”

He set the book down on the porch swing and stood to meet me. “She’s feeling kinda down. Did you bring her a card?”

I stared at him for a moment, then, suddenly understanding, pulled the white card out from my pocket and handed it to him.

“Oh,” he said, smiling while he examined it. “This is a nice card. Recent too. I’m sure she’ll love it.”

With a wink, he took a small key from his pocket and turned it in the latch of the old wooden door, letting me in.

I walked through into a small wood paneled foyer, as the doorman closed the entrance behind me. Taking a cue from the neat rows of shoes along the wall, I took my shoes off and set them down at the end of the row, underneath the line of coat hooks. I adjusted my camera bag and walked into the next room, a wood paneled atrium, with a large staircase off of one side.

Suddenly, a familiar voice boomed from an office, through a door across the small atrium.

“Rick, my boy! Good to see you!”

Herb came into the room, this time in khakis and a sport coat, and clapped me on the back.

“Alright Rick,” Herb continued, “it’s showtime. Let me tell you a little bit about the procedures here. Anybody’s fair game for pictures, no need for consent forms or anything. The party’s downstairs.” He waved towards the staircase off to the right. I started off towards the stairs, but he grabbed my shoulder. “A few last things, you know, notes of etiquette. We’ve got a few girls down there who are paying members. They’ll be wearing blue. If they want to fuck, then great, but they’re there for their own fun, not yours. Any girl in red is all yours, though.”

I nodded, butterflies fluttering in my stomach. “I... I think I’ve got it. Any other rules?”

“We’ve only got two rules. One, no piss, shit or blood. You want to do that at home, whatever, but not here. Two, just be respectful. We’ve got lots of girls, but some of them are gonna be more... popular. Remember to share. That also means to respect the girls. If she doesn’t want to do something a bit more extreme, find somebody else who does. We’ve got girls that get off on damned near anything, and plenty to go around. On a normal night, why don’t you try for 200 pictures or so, of whatever you’d like. That’ll keep the boys online pretty happy, I think.”

I nodded in comprehension, and Herb slapped me on the back again.

“Thanks, Herb.” With a bit of trepidation, I began towards the ancient wooden staircase, and, taking a deep breath, descended into the basement.

11

I stepped onto the landing and was greeted by a tall woman with long blonde hair. She stood at the landing in a short, silky red robe and a pair of clear heels. Her perky breasts jutted out into the fabric, her deliciously long legs drawing my eyes up to where they disappeared under the robe. She seemed older than most of the girls on campus, maybe in her later 30's, but she still had a natural beauty rivaling any woman.

"Hi there," she said in a warm, pleasant voice, "You must be Rick, the photographer? I'm Sophie."

I smiled, doing my best to avoid staring obviously. "That's me." I patted my camera bag, as if to reinforce the point.

Without a word, she took my hand and led me off into a warm corridor to the right of the landing. As we walked past the various door-less rooms, I caught glimpses of all different types of girls, some alone, some with guys, some wearing lingerie, and some wearing nothing at all. I saw one girl on her knees sucking a very happy looking guy while wearing only a bright red thong, and across the hall, a girl on all fours on a mat on the floor, waiting for the guy who was undressing in the other corner. Finally, Sophie pulled me into one of the rooms.

"So," she began, standing in front of the four-posted bed on the side of the room, "I always like to give new members a very personal welcome. Do you want to take my picture?"

I nodded, and reached into my bag to get my camera and flash. She smiled at me and slowly began to untie the sash on her robe. I brought my camera to my eye just in time to capture her robe sliding open, revealing her flat stomach, her perky breasts, and her perfectly shaved pussy. She slowly let the robe fall to the floor, and laid back on the bed. She spread her legs for me, sliding a hand down to her bare lips, spreading them wide open for the camera. I kept snapping pictures, my mouth agape, enthralled by the show I was being given by a woman I'd never met before. She slowly rolled over, thrusting her perfect ass up in the air at me, looking back over her shoulder lustily. I felt my cock straining against my pants as I snapped picture after picture of her lewd display.

She slowly crawled over to me. "So, how many more pictures are you going to take before you let me suck that hard cock?"

Completely speechless, I just stared at her as she came up and placed a hand on my hardness.

She kept rubbing me through my pants as her other hand dropped between her legs and started rubbing.

“I’ll tell you what,” she began, “why don’t you let me suck your cock now. I think I want you to come all over me. Wouldn’t that be a nice picture?”

My mouth dry and still hanging open in shock, I stood there speechless. Finally, I set my camera down on the chair in the corner.

“Are... are you sure you want to?”

She laughed, then threw a pillow from the bed onto the floor in front of me and kneeled down. Hungrily unzipping me and pulling my cock from my pants, she took me in her hand and brought her red lips to my throbbing manhood. Then, slowly, she slid her lips down my cock, sliding down further and further down the shaft until all seven inches of my cock were deep inside her mouth and throat. She began to pull back away, gliding her tongue against the underside of my hardness, then brought be back deep into her mouth. I gasped at the sensation, feeling my orgasm already building. She kept fucking me slowly with her mouth, licking me and sucking me like no girl had ever done before. I placed my hands on her head and slowly began to fuck her mouth.

“Sophie,” I gasped, feeling my come boiling up inside me, “I’m gonna come”.

She took me deep one last time, then pulled back and took me in her hand. Stroking me still, she opened her mouth and rubbed the tip of my cock against her tongue. The intensity of her stroking increasing, she began to moan and opened her mouth wide. Unable to hold out any longer, my orgasm hit me hard, my cock spurting a jet of my hot come into her mouth. She pulled back, still stroking, and closed her mouth, the remainder of my seed splashing against her closed lips and chin.

I backed away, breathing heavily and still recovering from my own orgasm, as she stood up and smiled.

“Was it really that good?” she asked.

Still panting, I nodded vigorously.

She smiled and walked over to my camera. She picked it up and handed it to me. “Don’t you want an “after” picture?”

I took the camera from her and brought it up to my eye. She smiled, my come still dripping from her lips and chin down onto her breasts, and I took the picture. She walked over to the bed, put her robe back on, and came over and gave me a hug.

“Hope I didn’t come on too strong,” she said. “I just really like being the one to break in new members” She smiled and shrugged innocently.

I laughed, and, my speech finally returning, I thanked her. “Sophie, that was great. I’ll probably never forget that.”

She smiled and rolled her eyes. “Once you’ve been around here long enough, I’m sure you will. Still, I’m glad you liked it. Enjoy the rest of your evening. Come find me if you have any troubles.”

With that, she turned around and left the room. I tucked my still-sensitive member back into my pants, grabbed my camera and bag, and slowly walked out into the hallway. The hall was empty. Sophie was already gone. Nothing remained of what had just happened but the moans and cries of drifting from the other rooms and the distant clatter of heels on hardwood floor.

12

I wandered further down the hallway as my mind cleared. The basement was huge, and must’ve been created long after the house above. The huge lot that the house was on suddenly started to make more sense. Every room had a queen sized bed, a small chair, and sparse other furnishings. Only one of the rooms had an actual door on it. At the far end, the wood paneling and hardwood floor faded into navy blue tile, and three doors opened. To the left and right, the two doors were marked with generic “Men’s Room” and “Ladies’ Room” signs, a welcome bit of normalcy in the surreal building. The third door was simply marked “Showers”.

I cracked open the “Shower” door, and, hearing nobody else, went inside. A pleasant, humid warmth flowed over me as I entered the barren showers. The exposed shower heads protruded from the Navy tiled wall on all sides of the rectangular room, much like a locker room, with drains in the center. Aside from a simple metal bench in the corner of the room with towels stacked on it, a shelf with a small selection of shampoos and soaps, and a few garment hooks next to the door, the room was completely empty.

The door swung open behind me. Startled, I swung around to find a thin, college-aged brunette wearing only a pair of lacy red panties staring back at me. My cock jumped, still sensitive, and I instinctively jerked my head away. “Oh!”, I exclaimed, “I’m sorry! I didn’t realize this was the Women’s shower.”

She laughed dryly, an undercurrent of contempt showing through in her eyes. “You must be the new photographer.”

I nodded.

“I’m Brandi.”

I reached out awkwardly for a handshake, and, after a very long moment, she laughed uneasily and offered her hand as well.

Suddenly remembering exactly where I was, I adjusted my camera bag and headed for the door.

Brandi stopped me. “Uh, you know you’re not required to leave, right?”

I looked back at her, confused. “I’m leaving so you can take a shower.”

She gave me a look of disbelief. “These showers are for anybody to use, guys or girls. And, well, considering I’ve walked all the way over here wearing nothing but this,” she pointed down at the skin-tight red thong, “I’m not too concerned about anybody seeing me. Besides, you’re a member,” she sighed, “you all get to do whatever you want.”

“Oh. Well, alright then.”

Staring over at the door, then up at the ceiling, I shifted my weight awkwardly, unsure whether I should stay or not. She looked over at me and laughed.

“Wow,” she said, “You look really uncomfortable.”

I laughed self-consciously, to ease the awkwardness. “This is all very new to me, sorry.”

“I can tell. Here...”

Brandi quickly tucked her fingers under the waist band of her panties and lowered them down to her ankles, revealing a simple wedge of pubic hair above her thin slit, eliciting a small gasp from me. She

“That what you wanted? Most guys are too shy to ask the first time.” She handed the panties to me. She motioned to a few drops of dried come on her lower back. “Look, I’ve got to rinse off real quick.”

I walked over to the hooks on the wall and hung her tiny thong off the nearest one. Then, the bulk of my camera bag over my shoulder reminded me of my job.

“Uhh, Brandi?”

She looked over at me as she fiddled with the temperature control on one of the shower-heads along the wall. She sighed. "What would you like me to do?"

"Huh?"

She rolled her eyes. "Do you wanna fuck me? Want me to suck you? What?"

I laughed uneasily, feeling my still painfully sensitive cock straining against my pants at the mere thought. "...I was just going to ask if you'd be OK with my taking a few pictures. You know, while you shower." Noting her tone, I quickly amended my offer. "I can leave if you want, though."

"Oh," she said, a look of relief on her face. "Yeah, that's... that's actually just fine." She smiled, a bit more spring returning to her step, "Want me to pose?"

I pulled my camera from my bag, careful to avoid the spray from Brandi's shower. I shook my head. "Just shower naturally. Relax, enjoy yourself."

She shrugged and quickly seemed to forget I was even there. I hovered around her, just out of the spray, snapping pictures of the water flowing over her small breasts and between her legs. She continued her shower, only shooting me the occasional glance when I twisted myself into an especially awkward position. Finally, she turned off the water and walked over to her towel, wrapping herself in it and giving me a million-dollar smile. I snapped the picture, looking at the result on the small LCD and smiling.

"Get what you needed? Any good shots?", she asked, her voice growing a little warmer.

I nodded, smiling at her terrycloth-draped figure, some of the awkwardness fading away with her friendlier attitude. "You're.. you're really beautiful, so I'm sure all the shots turned out well."

She smiled and walked back over to the rack of hooks, taking her thong from the hook and sliding it back on. "You're much nicer than the last photographer."

I raised an eyebrow. "Oh? I've not heard anything about him."

She frowned. "You probably don't want to. He was an older guy, we called him Phil. He just treated us like shit, that's all. Really, lots of the guys do."

I frowned. "Oh. I'm sorry."

She shrugged. "At least he's gone. You seem a lot nicer." She looked over at the door, "Hey, look, I should probably head back to the lounge," she shook my hand, much more warmly than before, "Good to meet you."

“Good meeting you too,” I replied as she opened the door and headed back out into the hall.

13

Feeling the weight of my camera bag, my mind returned to the job at hand. I carefully removed the camera and started down the hallway, peering into open rooms. The first few were empty, but then, as I approached the next door, I began to hear moaning. Quietly sliding up to the door frame, I craned my neck and gazed into the room. On the bed, a lithe blonde girl was laying on her back, with her legs spread and a brown haired guy between them licking her, her whole body undulating as she moaned. I watched, transfixed, for a few moments, as she gasped and panted while he licked her, his hand flying back and forth on his already hard prick as he brought her closer to the edge.

Taking a deep breath and gaining some bravado, I moved forward and stood in the doorway, bringing my camera up to my eye. I clicked the shutter, and again, and again, capturing her pleasure-gripped face, his frenzied licking, and her dripping wet slit. I shifted my weight, causing the floor to creak, and the guy rotated his head to look over at me.

My heart jumped, worried that somehow he'd get angry and have me kicked out. However, much to my relief, he resumed his licking moments later, bringing his free hand up in a “thumbs up” sign, and then quickly forgot about me.

Before long, the blond started shaking, bringing her hands up to the back of his head and pressing him back up against her. She moaned more and more loudly with each passing moment, and finally, she convulsed with ecstasy, gyrating against his probing tongue until she finally fell limp onto the bed.

The brown haired guy stood up, nude, and smiled over at me. I smiled, still a bit self-conscious as I'd never watched other people having sex in real life, and bent down to check my camera's memory.

When I looked back up, the guy was laying next to the girl in bed, gently kissing her neck and whispering to her, although I couldn't hear what. She looked over at me and smiled, a hint of hesitation in her eyes, and then looked back at her companion. She spread her legs wide, allowing me a few wonderful shots of her still-slick pussy, and the guy climbed on top of her, slowly lowering himself onto her.

I watched through the viewfinder as they deftly moved into position, and then zoomed in

on her face, waiting to capture the moment he slid into her. With a gasp, her eyes closed and her lips parted, his body pushing down into hers. He slowly began to pump in and out of her, both of them moaning with each thrust, and I stepped a little further into the room to get a better view. He quickly began to speed up, gasping and moaning with every thrust, pressing his clean-shaven face into her shoulder as he pushed down into her. Soon, I noticed him beginning to shake, his partner egging him on with a subtle rotation in her hips. His moaning grew louder, and finally, he went silent, his whole body tensing up, then with one last powerful thrust, buried his hardness deep inside her and filled her with this come.

Still breathing heavily, her eyes nearly shut, she continued to grind back against him, pressing back against him and bringing her closer to another orgasm. She dug her fingers into his back, thrusting up against him with all her might, and cried out again, her second orgasm knocking her back into the bed. I brought the viewfinder back to their faces, capturing her orgasmic bliss and his contented kisses on her neck, and smiled as the shutter clicked away what I hoped to be wonderful pictures.

Finally, he lifted himself off of her, his softening member sliding out quickly, followed by a steady flow of her wetness mixed with his come. After capturing a few more photos of her, legs spread and pussy dripping, I put away the camera, then walked away from the door, leaving them to their own devices. Aroused and excited at what I had just witnessed, I walked slowly towards the staircase.

14

“How’s it going?”, Sophie said, waiting by the bottom of the staircase where I had first found her.

I smiled, nodding downwards towards my contented member. “Thanks to you, it’s going great.”

“Well,” she replied, smiling, “I’m glad to help. Hey, what did you do to Brandi? She was raving about you to all the girls.”

I laughed incredulously.

“No, I’m not kidding. She was seriously impressed.”

Shaking my head and taking a deep breath, I just smiled. “You know,” I said, laughing, “I never thought I’d get so much mileage out of not trying to get with a girl.”

Sophie smiled, then slowly, as if remembering a painful memory, her smile disappeared. After a few seconds pause, she looked down at my camera bag, shaking away her frown. “How many pictures so far?”

Extracting the camera from my bag, I checked the top display. “Looks like around 130.”

She whistled. “You’ve been busy, haven’t you?”

I nodded, motioning down towards my still-swollen prick pressing against my shorts. “Can’t you tell?”

She smiled sympathetically. “How many more pictures are you going to get?”

“Probably another 150.”

Sophie stepped back, looking up to the ceiling pensively. Finally, she brought her gaze back down to me. “Tell you what,” she began, “why don’t you come with me? I’d like to introduce you to some girls. I’m sure they’d love to have their pictures taken.”

“You sure it’s not a problem?”

She smiled. “Look, Steve just got here. He likes me, and, well, he’s usually drunk and kind of rough. I’d much rather help you than help him.”

I laughed, maybe louder than I should have, happy to see Sophie’s more human side come out. “By all means, then, lead on.”

She tightened her red silk robe and stepped down from the landing, her clear plastic heels clicking against the hardwood floor. Taking my hand in hers, she confidently led me down the yet-unexplored other corridor.

15

Sophie opened the thick wooden door and led me into a large, dimly lit room.

“This is the Lounge,” Sophie began, “it’s where the girls generally hang out when they’re not... busy.”

I nodded, gazing around the room. The floor was covered in plush, green carpet, and the walls were the same deep red hardwood found throughout the basement. Low, green-glassed lamps hung over couches and tables, each occupied by a variety of girls, most

wearing some sort of lingerie, robe, or evening-wear. The low murmur of conversation hung in the air, coupled with the occasional clanking glass.

As Sophie led me through the room, I was amazed at the variety of girls there. It seemed like every taste could be sated here, from rail-thin to rubebenesque girls, from large breasts to small, each girl attractive in her own way. As I gazed at the girls, I caught myself smiling broadly, imagining having them in front my camera, or, even better, in front of me.

I leaned over and asked Sophie if all the girls were members.

She looked around. “Yeah, these girls are mostly all members. They’ve all got something red on. Even Selena, the brunette over there, has a red garter on. See?” she said, gesturing subtly to the completely nude girl sitting at one of the tables, looking bored.

“Is this a bar?”, I asked, gesturing to the counter staffed a woman dressed in a red tee in the corner.

Sophie shook her head. “We can get soda, juice, and tea, but no booze.” She rolled her eyes. “We don’t want to deal with any more drunk frat boys than we already have to.”

Sophie and I approached a tall, bar table, occupied by two college girls. The brunette was athletically proportioned, her bust nearly perfect in proportion to her smooth, toned body. Her shoulder-length, smooth hair flowed nicely down onto her chest, offsetting the light blue bra and panty set she wore.

The other girl had a beautiful pale complexion, had a remarkably thin body, even for her barely five foot tall frame, and a head of long, flowing red hair. She wore a sheer red robe, with only a g-string underneath, her small breasts poking up against the robe’s fabric.

“Erica, Ann, this is Rick, the new photographer.”

The brunette spoke first, reaching across the table to shake my hand. “Erica, Nice to meet you.”

The redhead got off of her stool and walked around to meet me, giving me a better view of her short, petite figure. “I’m Ann,” she began with a hint of Irish lilt, “It’s a mighty pleasure.”

“Rick here needs some pictures. Do you think you two would be interested in giving him something to photograph?”

Erica laughed, her eyes smiling. “That could be arranged.” She looked over at Ann, waiting for approval.

Ann nodded.

“Wonderful”, Sophie said, her voice carrying a hint of the authority she seemed to have among the girls here. “You ladies show him a good time.” I smiled, a bit embarrassed by the attention.

“Thanks Sophie,” I began, awkwardly, “I’m not exactly the boldest sort of guy when it comes to asking for...”

Ann piped up, resting her hand on my shoulder. “Well, I do think we’ll have to work on that then.”

Sophie smiled at me. “Good luck.”

With that, she turned around and left, heading back out to the staircase.

Erica stood up and walked around the table as Ann wrapped an arm around me, and we started towards the door at the far end of the room.

16

“So,” Ann began in her charming accent, “you’re the new photographer that Brandi was just on about?”

“Well,” I replied bashfully, “I’m definitely the photographer.”

“Well then, whatdya say we show our new photographer friend an extra nice time, Erica love?”

Erica nodded, walking silently beside us down the short, carpeted hallway, obviously preferring to remain silent and let her talkative friend take care of things.

Ann dropped her arm and stepped forward to one of the doors, peering in through the cracked door. “Well, this one’s full,” she said, pulling back from the crack. She lowered her voice. “Looks like Liz is gonna have a rough time of it, though.”

“Who’s she with?”, Erica asked, quietly.

“Looked like... oh, what’s his name... The blonde, muscular one who likes it rough.”

Erica nodded, shaking her head in disgust.

Ann crossed the small hallway, ducking into the last room on the left. “This one’s empty,” she said, her voice drifting out from the doorway, “it’ll do quite nicely.”

I stepped inside, followed by Erica. These rooms were much bigger than those on the other hallway, with what had to be a full king sized bed, some pillows, and plush carpeting. Wonderfully lit and fully finished, the room was very nice, by any standards, and the dormant fireplace in the corner just added to the effect.

“So, Rick, you’d best to get your camera ready,” the redhead began, wrapping an arm around Erica. “I think I’m going to want to put my tongue to this sexy little thing here.” Erica’s smile widened.

I opened my camera bag, grabbed the heavy black camera, and slapped in a fresh battery, just to be safe.

“So,” I asked, making small talk as Erica tossed the pillows onto the floor, “Are you two lovers?”

Ann looked over at me uneasily. “We generally aren’t to speak about our lives here, but it’s OK, you’re new. Besides, we’re not exactly subtle about it,” she walked over and gave Erica a light tap on her ass, “are we love?”

Erica smiled, and I started to apologize for crossing the line by asking.

“It’s OK,” Ann cut me off, “like I said, I’m not too worried. But yeah, Erica’s my girl.”

I nodded, my camera finally adjusted. “Alright, well, then you two know what works best. Just forget I’m here, I’ll take whatever pictures I can.”

Ann smiled broadly and hopped into bed, discarding her robe quickly, shedding her red g-string shortly after, revealing only a small patch of bright red pubic hair above her slit. She started to kiss Erica as she slowly peeled off her bra. Kissing her nipples, Ann reached down and slid a hand into Erica’s panties, moving her fingers slowly over the brunette’s clit, causing a quiet moan to escape her mouth. Before long, Erica’s hand slid down to Ann’s pink pussy, teasing her with her fingers and eliciting a hearty moan from the redhead.

“Oh God,” Ann moaned, looking up at Erica, “I’ve been wanting to fuck you all night.”

The redhead slowly worked her way down Erica’s body, grabbing her light blue panties with her teeth and pulling them off, revealing a natural, although trimmed, brown bush.

The fiery redhead quickly threw her leg over Erica's torso, and, backing on to her, brought her red and obviously aroused slit down onto her partner's waiting tongue. I positioned myself so I could see Erica probing Ann's soft, wet folds with her extended tongue, and snapped as many pictures as my camera let me. One hand holding up her weight and the other frantically rubbing Erica, Ann ground back against her lover, writhing in pleasure with every lick and calling out her name.

Muffled by Ann's grinding, Erica moaned contentedly, her lips parted and her tongue deftly probing her lover's soaking pussy, each girl's pleasure feeding into the other's. After a few minutes of mutual stimulation, Ann dropped a finger down, parting Erica's lips and dipping it deep into her, and sending the brunette over the edge. Writhing beneath the thin girl, Erica pressed her lips and tongue back up deeper into Ann's slit. Ann's moans grew louder and louder until finally, she sat up and pressed herself onto her lover's lips, grabbing her small breasts and crying out, a powerful orgasm washing through her. I snapped a few pictures as Ann slowly fell down onto Erica's still-writhing body. Finally, Ann settled down between Erica's legs, her head resting on the Brunette's toned thigh, and she smiled contented. A click of the shutter, and the moment was documented forever.

17

I took a deep breath and lowered the camera, the reality of what I'd just watched. I sat down in a chair in the corner of the room as they slowly recovered, still kissing and embracing. Moving to set my camera bag down in my lap, I suddenly realized that I was still rock hard, and the scene replaying in my mind's eye only served to make me even more horny. Adjusting my pants, I set the bag down on the floor next to me.

Ann looked up at me. "Well," she said, still out of breath, "I can see from the bulge there that you enjoyed our little show. Did you get some nice photos?"

I nodded, looking down at my camera. Two hundred seventy pictures, total.

Slowly lifting herself up, Ann sat up on the edge of the bed. "Would you like any other pictures? I'll pose for you, if you'd like."

"Sure," I said, figuring that it couldn't hurt. Then, I looked at Erica, still smiling and laying back on the bed. "Assuming you don't mind?"

Taking a deep, contented breath, Erica rolled over slowly. "Go for it"

I brought the camera back up to my eye and pointed it at Ann. Smiling, she slowly began

posing, starting with simple, sexy positions, as I snapped picture after picture. Then, she laid back on the bed, and spread her legs wide, exposing her still-flushed vulva and her dripping lips.

I smiled as I took the pictures. “You’ve done this before?”, I asked, trying to keep my mind focused on the photography.

She laughed, spreading her wet lips and displaying her pink, entrance, coated in girl come. “Aye. I’m a bit of an exhibitionist, and Erica enjoys playing photographer from time to time.”

“Erica,” I replied slowly as I zoomed in on her lover’s wet pussy, “You’re a very lucky girl.”

Erica smiled and laughed. “Yes,” she replied quietly, “I am.”

When I looked back down at Ann, I noticed her staring directly at the bulge in my pants. Slowly, she brought her eyes back up. Turning over and getting on all fours, displaying her small-yet-shapely ass in all its glory, she looked back over her shoulder at me. “You’re looking like you need some relief there.”

I laughed, the aching of my cock against my pants jumping back into the forefront of my mind.

“Yeah,” I replied, “I’m a bit turned on.”

“Well,” Ann said, a naughty grin on her face, “I’m nice and wet. If you’d like, you’re welcome to come over here and fuck me good and hard.”

My cock jumped and I swallowed hard, staring at the thin redhead’s raised ass and parted lips. Gathering a bit of final will power, I looked over at Erica.

“I’d love to, but Erica, it’s your call. She’s your girl.”

She smiled at me, and nodded, gesturing to her partner’s upturned ass. “It’s not my thing,” she replied, “but I don’t mind if she gets fucked every so often.”

I took a deep breath, and set down the camera. 300 pictures. Enough for Herb, and more than enough for the guys online. I unbuckled my pants and pulled them down and off, then removing my shirt.

“Come over here,” Ann said, biting her lower lip gently, “and fuck my wet pussy.”

I came up behind her on the bed, my seven inch cock hard and ready. “Do I need a condom?”

“I’m tested, you’re tested, and I’ve got my tubes tied. Just fuck me already.”

That was all the encouragement I needed. I brought my hips forward, bringing my hardness up against her girlcum-covered lips and slowly sliding into her incredibly tight pussy, eliciting a deep moan from the slight girl. “Oh God, Ann,” I cried out, “You’re so tight.”

Slowly, I slid in and out of her, relishing the tight grip her pussy had on my hardness. Grabbing her hips, I pulled her thin frame back on to me, sliding deeper and deeper into her. She moaned loudly, beginning to grind back against me, bringing me closer to the edge still. Her tight, moist pussy seemed to grab onto my cock, pulling back as I pulled out of her. I thrust deep into her, and felt my orgasm starting to boil up.

“Ann...” I said, still thrusting in and out of her, “I think I’m going to come soon.”

She pushed back against me even harder, breathing heavily. “Pull out and come on my pussy,” she said, breathlessly.

My come welling up inside me, I pressed back into her again, enjoying her wetness for a moment longer, and then, with a shudder, pulled out of her, spraying her lips and ass with jet after jet of my hot come.

I pulled back, slumping onto the bed’s generic comforter, as I watched Ann rubbing her clit, her pussy dripping with my come. Erica smiled at me, bringing a finger up to Ann’s pussy and sliding it in, causing Ann to shudder all over as she fingered her. Her moans growing into near screams, Ann started to shake and buck, and finally cried out and spasmed, falling to the bed as she came. Erica ran a hand up and down the pale girl’s thighs, smiling compassionately. Still panting, I reached for my camera, capturing both of their beauty in all its glory.

18

I set my camera down on the floor and flopped back onto the bed, resting and relaxing as Erica cleaned Ann off with a moist towel.

A few minutes later, once we had all caught our breath, I tenuously stood up to find my pants and shirt. Slowly, I got dressed as the two of them put what passed for their clothing on.

Ann looked up at me, smiling bashfully. “Thanks,” she said, quietly, “I needed that.”

“No problem, I did too.” My face turned a bit red. “Sorry I didn’t last very long.”

Ann dismissed my concern with a motion of her hand. “I’m tight, I know. You actually did mighty well, most guys I let fuck me only last a minute or so, and weren’t watching us for the whole night, either.”

I laughed. “I’ll take your word for it.”

“Well,” Ann said, her speech slowed a bit from her normal, blistering pace, “that was fun. It’s very nice to meet you, Rick.” She leaned in and hugged me. “I can see why Brandi liked you. If you ever need any more pictures...”

I smiled. “I’ll know who to call, don’t worry.”

Erica laughed and put out her hand. “Pleasure to meet you.”

I shook Erica’s hand. “Sure you didn’t mind my stealing your girlfriend for a little while there?”

Erica shrugged, then laughed to herself and put an arm around Ann. The redhead and the brunette walked off and down the hall, Erica’s arm wrapped around Ann, and I smiled. After they had disappeared through a door, I grabbed my bag and started down the hall back towards the lounge, memories of the redhead’s tight pussy and her incredible enthusiasm still flitting through my head.

“I really need to thank Sophie,” I thought. “That was incredible.”

19

I walked back into the lounge, sitting down at an empty booth for a quick glass of water. I took out my camera and started reviewing the shots. As always, some were so-so, some were pretty good, and a few, like the shot of Ann laying on Erica’s thigh, were just incredible. I smiled, relieved, and couldn’t wait to show Herb what he’s paying for.

“Hey you,” came Sophie’s familiar voice, “How’d it go?”

I looked up from my camera, smiling from ear to ear.

She laughed and smiled, sitting down across the table from me. “I hear that Ann’s a real firecracker in bed. So cute, too.”

I blushed. “I’m not gonna kiss and tell, but... yeah. Thanks for introducing me.”

Sophie smiled. “Ann stopped by to talk to me, and she seemed pretty happy with the situation. Looks like you worked your magic again.”

“My magic?” I laughed incredulously. My thoughts returned to Erica’s coldness, and I frowned. “Uh, Sophie. Was Erica mad at me?”

Sophie looked to the side and sighed. “Don’t worry, Erica’s not mad. She’s always just a bit quiet and antisocial.”

“And she doesn’t mind that I... well, you know... with Ann?”

The older blonde leaned over across the table. “Look, I’m not telling you any of this..”

I brought a finger across my lips, and leaned back in.

“Erica and Ann are girlfriends in real life. They’re monogamous, and have been for a while. The problem is that although Erica’s a lesbian through and through, but Ann... well, she could never actually date a guy, and she’s with Erica, but she likes the cock from time to time.”

I nodded.

“Some girls are here for money or to gain an advantage. Some are here for fun. Ann joined up so she could sate that craving. She’s a participating member, and the only thing she asked for in return is that Erica get to come to the events without having to do anything she didn’t want to.”

“Ahh,” I exclaimed. “That’s why Erica was in blue, not red.”

“Exactly. So, don’t worry. Ann seems to have enjoyed it, and it sounds like you were nice to her, and really, I think that’s all that Erica cares about.”

I nodded. “Makes sense, I guess. Thanks for playing matchmaker.”

Sophie leaned back, adjusting her robe, and smiled. “No problem, it’s what I do.”

I took a sip of my drink, and leaned back. “Well, I’ve got around 315 pictures.”

“Impressive,” Sophie explained, “I think Herb is still upstairs in his office, just take a right at the top of the stairs. He’ll tell you what to do with them.”

I smiled at her from across the table. Sophie had gone from mysterious woman in red to seductress to confidant and advisor within the course of a single night. I couldn’t imagine what she was to the girls here with her all the time.

“Thanks, Sophie, for everything.”

She smiled at me, placing a hand on my shoulder. “No problem. You’re a nice guy, and I’m happy to help.”

With that, I stood up, grabbed my camera bag, and headed for the stairs.

20

“Hey, Rick, come on in!”, came Herb’s enthusiastic voice.

I stepped into his office, paneled in wood like the halls below and decorated with a country western flair.

“Hi Herb. Sophie said to come talk to you?”

“She did, did she? Well, I s’pose this is as good a time as any. Get all your pictures?”

“All three hundred twenty.”

“Damn, Rick,” Herb exclaimed, laughing. “You were busy. That’s my boy, just like me in college, busy as a beaver.”

I nodded, smiling at the evening’s activities.

Herb leaned in. “Is it true that you got to fuck the lezzie? Anna, or something?”

I took a deep breath, a bit put off by his phrasing. “I was introduced to her and Erica, yeah.”

Herb jabbed me playfully with his elbow, laughing. “Won’t even admit doing the deed. What a card.” He paused, leaning in again. “Doesn’t she have a killer little ass?”

I nodded as he handed me an envelope.

“Here’s this week’s pay, and your access information for the site.”

I cracked the envelope open, pushing aside the cash and extracting a small piece of paper. The first line was a web address, all numbers. The second line, probably the username, said “RICKPHOTO”, and the third line, labeled “Password”, was a long string of numbers and characters.

“Just go to that site, log in with that info, and upload the pictures. Also, do me a favor and delete them off of your computer when you’re done. Don’t need any more copies floating around than we’ve already got.”

I nodded.

Herb, in his typical style, clapped me on the back. “I hope your pictures are pretty good. I like you, and I think the girls do too. I’d love to have you stick around.”

Unsure what to say, I just smiled, bowed out of the room, and walked out towards the exit. I reached into my camera bag, and I noticed my lens-cap was missing. I turned around and headed back downstairs to find it.

21

“Here it is!” I said, minutes later, pulling the lens cap out from under the sheet in the very first room that Sophie brought me to. I smiled and walked back out into the hallway, ready to head home. I walked down the hall and up the staircase. Lifting my camera bag into my lap, I sat down at the second landing. As I capped the lens and wiped down the LCD, the door from the lounge opened and three girls and a tall, black haired man walked down the hallway past the staircase, not even noticing I was there. I recognized the first girl, an asian girl in a red bikini, from the lounge earlier. Next to her, a petite blonde in a red thong and bra.

The third girl looked strangely familiar. Although short, she had cute and curvaceous body, a beautiful contrast with the skinny blonde next to her. She was wearing a red g-string and heels, showing off her magnificent ass as she walked down towards the smaller rooms. Her hair was dark, and pulled back into a short pony tail. Then, she turned to talk to the man, and I saw her face.

“I’ll be goddamned,” I thought, drawing my breath in sharply. “That’s Alexa.”

I watched her slowly proceed down the hall, trying desperately to avoid staring at her magnificent body, my responsible teacher desperately dueling the lusty college student inside my head. Finally, they turned into a room, and out of my sight.

I shook my head, confused, conflicted and more than a bit shocked. I had joined a secret sex society, and one of my students was a member. “If that wouldn’t get me kicked out of the university”, I thought, “what would?” The reality of the whole evening slapped me in the face. I had just had sex with a complete stranger, photographed people during their most intimate moments, and would now have to tread the line in class too.

I sighed, but then, slowly, the memories of Sophie’s wonderful mouth, Ann’s incredibly tight pussy, and Alexa’s near-perfect ass floated back into my mind. “Risky or not, it does

have perks”, I thought, smiling. Finally, I stood up, walked up the stairs, and made my way to the front door.

I walked out into the cool midnight air. The tiniest crescent of the moon was rising above the monolithic frat house in front of me, and the air was quiet except for the humming of insects in the distance. I took a deep breath, nodded to myself, smiled, and set off home.

22

I stood up in front of the class, looking out into the sea of sleepy faces, and began to talk.

“Immanuel Kant is truly one of the most influential thinkers in modern philosophy.”

Looking down at the stack of papers on the lectern, I organized the day’s lecture in my head. The weekend had passed uneventfully, and the events of Friday night seemed like a distant dream to me. I spent much of the late night on Friday sorting and uploading the pictures, and by the time Saturday rolled around, my normal life had returned.

“He was born in 1724, in the city of Koënigsberg, now called Kaliningrad, Russia, and he died in 1804.”

The Monday afternoon class was in its usual post-lunch lull, everybody slumped in their chairs or leafing idly through the compilation of readings. I scanned the room, and was surprised at my own disappointment when Alexa was nowhere to be found. In a way, though, I had hoped she wouldn’t show up. Although the O Nu party’s events seemed far away, the image of her walking down the hallway nearly nude might still prove too distracting, and I didn’t want to spend the entire lecture standing awkwardly behind the podium to hide an erection. My stomach knotted itself a little bit as I remembered that I’d set up a meeting with her to talk after class in my office.

Even as my thoughts started to wander, I continued lecturing, the material so familiar to me that it came out nearly from muscle memory.

“Kant is really most famous for his grand ethical statement, The Categorical Imperative, “Act only by that maxim which you would will to be universal law.” Basically, that means that you shouldn’t do something unless you’d want everybody to act in the same way if they were in a similar situation.”

My thoughts wandered back to Friday's events. The photos turned out great, with only a few rejects. I was actually amazed at how well I'd done, given the circumstances and my near-constant distraction. Many of the photos ran the gambit from sexy to erotic to flat out pornographic, but some of the photos, like the one of Ann and Erica resting together, were almost too pretty to upload. To post the lovers cuddling almost seemed like a travesty, but then again, I really wanted to keep my job there.

Looking out idly onto the classroom, I suddenly realized that my lecturing had come to a halt. Awkwardly, I adjusted the papers on my desk and tried to think of an out. Suddenly, inspiration struck.

"So, everybody, break up into small groups and give me one example of something that would be forbidden by the Categorical Imperative, but permissible by another system that we've already studied."

The room filled with sighs and the grumblings of young students convinced that philosophy never impacted their lives, but eventually, everybody broke off into groups.

I sat back in the chair behind the lectern, flipping through the text to try and bring my mind back to the task at hand.

Then, the door opened, and in came Alexa, dressed in a pair of nicely fitting jeans and a green sweatshirt. Our eyes met as she sat down, her face lighting up. After a moment of intense eye contact, I forced myself to look away, watching her out of the corner of my eye until she blended in with a group and started chatting, only pausing occasionally to glance my way, through the sea of talking students.

I buried my face back in the textbook, trying to regain the composure to teach, but only coming up with the delicious mental image of her nearly naked form at the party. I sighed, took a drink of water and stood up, calling the class back to attention. "At this rate," I thought, "It's going to be a very long semester"

23

A few hours later, I sat in my office, reading quietly when a knock sounded on the frosted glass door to my small office.

"Come in," I said, swallowing deeply and clearing off my desk.

Alexa stepped in clutching her textbook. She greeted me warmly, smiling. "Hi Caleb!"

I tried to maintain some normalcy in my tone, even though all I could imagine was her nearly naked form in the warm hallway. I set my book down in my lap, just as insurance, and looked up at her. “How are you?”

She smiled. “I’m great. How are you?”

“Me? Oh, I’m good too.”

I motioned for her to shut the door and have a seat. She sat down across the wooden desk from me and took out her binder.

“So, what can I help you with?”

She leafed through her notes, asking a few superficial questions about terms and definitions. I knew that she knew most of the things she was asking, but really, I didn’t mind chatting with her. Not to mention that I was safely hidden below the waist by my desk and book, so I could fantasize to my heart’s content.

Slowly, though, the conversation turned to more serious and profound questions, pulling me out of my reverie and into the discussion, and before I knew it, I was so engrossed in the philosophy that my lust was almost forgotten. After what felt like only a short chat, I chanced to look at my watch, and realized that a full hour had passed.

“Whoa,” I said, “It’s already 4pm. Do you have a class?”

She smiled. “No, I’m just going to head home after this. Do you have to do anything now?”

I shook my head. “This was the last thing I had planned for the day.”

“Do you want to walk back home with me again?”

My inner demons jumped up in a chorus of applause at her words, while the sexual harassment instructor in my head sighed in disappointment. Little by little, Alexa was becoming an object of my fantasy. Completely unattainable because of school regulations, but still a wonderful thought. What’s the harm, I thought, of another walk home?

I smiled. “Sure, why not?”

She sat up, even happier than before, and started packing her books away. I gathered my notebooks and papers to grade, loaded them into my pack, and, as she was arranging things in her purse, untucked my shirt, just in case future conversation forced me to have to hide anything.

Alright,” I said, pulling on my pack, “Let’s go.”

24

“Hey Caleb, you remember what we were talking about the other day?”, Alexa asked as we left the English and Liberal Arts building.

“What, Kant?”

“No no, Paternity or something?”

“Paternalism, you mean?”

“Yeah, that.”

I nodded, trying to seem nonchalant even as I remembered her slip about girls becoming sex objects if they enjoy it.

“Well, I’ve been thinking about that. How can anybody think they have a right to tell people what they can’t do?”

“You mean that society can’t tell us not to kill people?”

She rolled her eyes. “No. Like, if we’re the only ones affected.”

“Like smoking?”

“Yeah... or like, you know, sex”

My eyebrows shot up, my mind’s eye filled with images of her in the throes of passion. Once again, I swallowed deeply and tried to feign nonchalance.

“Well, there are people who would argue that some kinds of sexual acts and situations are demeaning or objectifying to women, even if they consent to it.”

She shook her head strongly. “I don’t buy that one bit.”

Surprised at the strength of her opinion, I looked over at her with an eyebrow cocked. “Go on..?”

“Umm..” she said, slowing her pace a bit. “Well, doesn’t every person have the right to do what makes them... happy... as long as nobody else is hurt? And they actually want to do it”

I shrugged awkwardly, the connection to O Nu all too obvious. “Personally, I don’t see a problem with that.”

She released a deep breath, almost relieved. “Yeah, me either.”

The conversation fell silent for a few seconds.

“Really,” I continued to try and banish the silence, “most of the people arguing that are coming from a really extreme feminism. Some even argue that all penetrative sex is de-meaning to women.”

She laughed. “Sounds like they just needed to get laid.”

I started laughing, but my scholarly instincts kicked in, trapping the laughter after only a brief second. I waited a few seconds for the laughter to recede, trying to formulate a diplomatic response.

“Well,” I began, hesitantly, “everybody can have their opinions. I may not understand them, but luckily, I don’t have to.”

She sighed, “Yeah. I don’t get them either.”

I looked over at her, smiling as we walked down the street. I was really beginning to enjoy her company, even though she was my student. I found myself looking forward to the day when she finished with my class at the end of the semester and grades were in, so we might actually get to spend more time together. She was very attractive, she thought about the right things, and, I thought bashfully, she seemed like a pretty open minded girl, if she was a...

Thwack!

I didn’t even see the signpost in front of me until the side of my head had already found it, spilling my books and papers from the small pack over my shoulder and knocking the rest of me to the ground, dazing me momentarily.

“Caleb!”, she exclaimed, “Are you OK?”

I rubbed the side of my head and stretched my neck a bit, moaning quietly from the pain. “My pride’s been better, but I’ll be OK.”

She started laughing quietly, overlaid with a tone of concern. “Do you want to sit down?”

I nodded very slowly, making my way to the wrought iron table and chair set on the patio in front of a burrito place just off the sidewalk. Still shaking off the impact, I looked up to see Alexa picking up my papers and books. One by one, she piled my books and papers onto the iron mesh of the table, tucking loose pages under my splayed out hand to keep the slight breeze from carrying them off. I layed my head back down on the table, shutting my eyes to quell the pain.

“Who’s Varinia?”

Hearing elements of my secret life tossed out into my world, my eyes flew open, shaking me out of my stupor. “Wha.. What do you mean?”

I looked up at her, my vision still a bit shaky from my encounter with the signpost. She was holding the sheet of paper from the other night, the pass for the O-Nu party jotted in blue ink across the top.

“Varinia. It’s on this sheet of paper.”

“That?” I said, feigning nonchalance as I tried to think my way out of this. “Oh, she’s the wife of... Epictetus. The stoic.”

She nodded hesitantly. “Do we need to know about her?”

“Uhh.. what do you mean?”

“For class,” she added, a look of distant contemplation crossing her face, “Is she going to be on the quiz next week?”

“Oh, no no, not at all.” To emphasize the point, I shook my head firmly, bursting forth a torrent of pain from my still-throbbing skull.

Alexa cried out sympathetically, seeing my face contort. “Aww, no no. Stay still. Want me to go get some ice from inside?”

Careful to avoid moving my head, I moaned affirmatively. As she stood up, I drifted into thought. ‘She’s no fool, seeing the password like that’, I sighed. ‘She’s probably already figured out that I’m in O Nu.’ Resting my aching head on my palm, I saw her return with a large plastic bag of ice.

“Here you go,” she said, a bit distant. “Umm, look, I hate to do this, but I do have to get home. I’m meeting a friend soon.”

I sighed, the ice calming the burning ache. “Thanks for the ice. Yeah, it’s no problem, I’m sure I’ll be fine in a few minutes.”

She looked at me, skeptically at first, then as if secure in the fact that I’d survive my wounds, she nodded and stood up. “See you in class tomorrow?”

“Yeah,” I nodded gingerly. “See you then.”

My head pressing deeper into the ice-pack, I leaned down against the table. “Smooth, Caleb.” I muttered under my breath. “Real smooth.”

25

Even once my head calmed and my vision sharpened back up after my unfortunate encounter with the pole, the next few days seemed to pass in a blur. I was left with barely a spare moment to ponder the various intrigues of my life, and was instead stuck grading papers for a sick colleague and filling out the myriad paperwork for starting my dissertation. Even classes passed by quickly and uneventfully. Although Alexa hadn't come to talk to me again, she was still friendly enough in class. Some of the distance seemed to disappear, and by the time Thursday's class rolled around, she seemed nearly comfortable again, appeasing some of my worries.

Yet, even despite everything else happening in my life, the situation at Omicron Nu kept creeping into my head. Never had I had such mixed feelings on a subject.

In a lot of ways, it was a dream job for me. I got paid very, very nicely for photography, which was already a passion of mine, and, as my raging hormones never failed to remind me, I definitely do enjoy looking at the subjects of my pictures. Once I added in the more tangible benefit of the sexual satisfaction from the myriad of attractive girls, I realized that I really couldn't imagine getting more back from a job.

However, there was always the knot of tension in my stomach whenever it came to mind. I had always been a romantic sort, holding doors open and showing up with roses at doors, and the philosophy of Omicron Nu completely went against that. For me, the sort of meaningless sex and voyeurism was still more than a bit hollow. The fact is, I suppose, that I had always seen sex as a fringe benefit of love, and not the other way around. So, although I had enjoyed having sex with Ann, it was strange to just zip my pants back up and walk outside without another word, without a bit of emotional connection, and without any possibility of anything further coming of it.

Plus, there was always the nagging worry in the back of my mind that somehow, it wasn't quite right. Herb said that all the girls were being paid enough that they were quite happy to be there, but still, how could I be sure that nobody was being coerced? My thoughts wandered back to Brandi's air of frustration when she thought I wanted to take my turn with her. It sounded like for her, sex was no longer sex, it was just a job. I hoped that she had just been having a bad night, but nonetheless, I couldn't help but wonder whether five years from now, she would feel the same way about it, even in the arms of a man who loved her. Although it sounded like nobody was being out-and-out forced into being there, I had to wonder how happy they all were with the situation.

Finally, there was Alexa. Amidst all the ambiguity and ethical obscurity of the whole

situation, she was the one black-and-white line: I knew that I could not touch her. She's in my class, I graded her papers, and, well, there's no way that dating her could conceivably look like anything other than flagrant harassment. Considering that there's not much work for Philosophy Ph.D's outside of academia, it'd be best not to torpedo any chances I had at teaching by getting caught banging a student in my second year at the helm of a class. Although she seemed nice enough, every student teacher has heard the horror stories of the tryst with a love-struck student in the class who later turns into a full on, psychotic stalker, and always ends with a healthy dose of blackmail.

Yet even with every reason in the world to push the idea out of my mind, I was still attracted to her. Physically, she was just as beautiful as any of the girls I'd seen at O Nu, but more importantly, she had an air of happiness and humor that really set her apart from the rest. Don't get me wrong, I knew she wasn't perfectly happy, everybody's fighting a great battle, but at the same time, she just has an infectious smile and always seemed to cheer me up. All that, and there was the obvious fact that she seemed to like me back. Every time she came in to see me, or said "Hi" after class, it didn't feel like she was just sucking up for grades or attention, but that she actually enjoyed talking to me. She wasn't really an academic, but she definitely did seem to have a mind open to seeing some of the greater issues and thinking through them, even if in a casual context. And of course, I'd be lying if I said there wasn't an element of lust. More than a few times, in the lonely hours of the night, I'd thought back to her in the hallway, the dull light reflecting off the red wood onto her body, walking down the hallway, then imagined walking into one of the rooms after her to consummate my desires.

Knowing that she was in O Nu, well, that just made the temptation even stronger. The fact that no-strings-attached sex was only a few words away at the next party... well it made my fantasy so real that it scared me. I could have her, all I needed to do was ask, and the pleasure, alongside the pain and the problems it would inevitably cause, would all be mine. I sighed, looking down at my lesson plan for the next week. Dead German philosophers had a lot of say about what one should and shouldn't do, but they were pretty ambiguous about secret sex societies and teacher-student relationships.

Laughing quietly to myself, I shut down my laptop and glanced over at the clock. Friday morning, 1:30am. A few more classes, then back to O Nu. Back to the uncertain, back to the ambiguity. Then, thinking about the night to come, I felt myself slowly starting to harden, pressing against the bathroom counter. I laughed. Back to that, too.

26

I leaned back in my chair, staring idly at the remains of a half-eaten Italian sub on my desk, sitting in its torn aluminum foil wrapper. I still had another hour of drop-in office hours, but my mind just wasn't in it. Herb had called at lunch, passing on some compliments on my photography as well as the new password for the night, "Vasilisa". My mind was scattered in a million different directions, wondering simultaneously what sort of lens to bring, what sort of clothes to wear, and, perhaps above all, what sort of girls to "photograph". Although I'd convinced myself that Alexa was still off limits, the thought still jumped into my mind at inopportune moments, making me quite grateful that I only had one class left and was able to hide myself beneath my large wooden desk.

"Caleb, do you have a minute?"

I looked up in surprise, shaken out of my reverie to see one of my fellow instructors in the door. "Oh, hey Greg, what's up?"

"Are you busy?"

I laughed, motioning down at the sandwich on my desk and the paperweight I was idly tossing from hand to hand. "Well," I began, jokingly, "I think I can make time in my busy schedule. Have a seat."

The young grad student stiffly marched into the room, his short, blonde hair gelled to immobility, and his starched yellow dress shirt tucked precisely into his khakis, matching the argyle socks showing above his spit-shined brown loafers. I stifled a laugh at his uncomfortable posture, sitting straight up in the chairs I'd picked specifically to be relaxing, and rolled back away from my desk a bit.

"What's going on?" I asked.

"Well, Caleb, one of your students is transferring into my section of Ethics 1100, and I need you to pass along the relevant materials and grades."

A bit taken aback, I looked up at him inquisitively. "Transferring? Isn't it a bit late in the semester?"

He cleared his throat, nodding formally. "Well, she has filled out a special action form to petition the Dean for the transfer, and Dean Anders saw fit to sign off on it..."

Resisting the urge to roll my eyes at his relentless name-dropping and formality, I opened the cabinet with my class files and started flicking through the student folders, then turned my head back to look at him. "Who's transferring?"

He looked down into the brown leather pad-holder he always seemed to carry. “Her name is... Alexandra Kapersky.”

I reached down towards the K’s, but then stopped dead. “Wait, Alexandra Kapersky?”

“Yes, that’s her name”, the thin young grad student replied.

“Not too tall, dark hair, rosy cheeks?”

“Well, yes...”

My heart skipped a beat. That was Alexa. My Alexa. Immediately, my head began to swirl with possibilities. She must have figured out I was in O Nu. Had somebody seen us walking? Did she report me for something? I shook my head, trying to regain composure but only regaining a bit of my earlier headache, and then finally found her file and set it out on the desk for Greg.

“These are her grades, records, and past assignments?”

I nodded numbly, my nerves getting the best of me. “Any idea why she’s transferring?”

He flipped open his notebook again and pulled out a form. “Hmmm,” he mused, staring for a moment at the pink carbon copy, “all it says is “Schedule conflict”. Dean Anders signed it, though, so she must have a good reason.”

I breathed a sigh of forced relief, working to convince myself that it was really just a class transfer, and nothing more.

Greg piped back up in his typical matter-of-fact tone. “Is there a sample of her handwriting in here?”

Taking a second to process, I looked up at him. “Wait, what?”

He straightened himself up in the chair again. “Well, you know, to make sure that the student is doing her own work.”

I stared at him incredulously. “You’re serious?”

He nodded matter-of-factly. “In my classroom, I maintain a rigorous academic environment.”

The ridiculousness of his attitude overwhelmed my confusion and fear, and I once again had to stifle a laugh. “Well,” I said, desperately trying to maintain a straight face, “there should be a quiz or two in there.”

He nodded without a hint of expression, taking the folder and leafing through it. “This should be sufficient, then.” He slowly stood up, readjusting his shirt and collar, then started to leave.

Looking up at Greg, moving himself awkwardly towards the door, I got an idea and smiled. “Oh, and Greg, one thing.”

He glanced back up at me from the open notebook in his arms. “Yes, Caleb?”

“You really shouldn’t rely on handwriting to catch cheaters, it can be faked so easily. You’re using SAASW signatures to back it up, right?”

“No...”

“Oh, my bad,” I said, feigning mild embarrassment, going back to my filing cabinet, “it’s pretty high-level stuff, I guess you aren’t in the program. Besides, I’m sure nobody in your class can fake handwriting...”

He looked down at me nervously, then quickly jotted something into his notebook, strongly underlining it a few times. “Goodbye, Caleb.”

I waved as he left the office, dashing off into the hallway. Although the situation with Alexa just got more complicated and I had a long day ahead of me still, the thought of Greg running back to his office and frantically searching for a non-existent acronym brought a smile to my face, and made the rest of my office hours slide right by.

27

“Umm, Caleb?”

I whipped around, surprised by the familiar voice as I walked out of the classroom building.

“Oh, Alexa, Hi”

“Hi,” she replied bashfully. “Hey, I just wanted to let you know...”

I nodded, “Greg just came by today and told me. It’s no problem, and he’s got all your information now.”

She smiled uncomfortably. “You’re not mad or anything?”

I looked over at her inquisitively. “Why would I be? It’s a schedule conflict, I don’t take it personally.”

She warmed up a bit. “Good. You walking home?”

I looked cautiously to both sides, as if checking the shrubs for hidden spies from HR, then nodded. “Are you?”

“Yeah,” she replied. “Can I walk with you?”

“Well, technically, you’re no longer my student, so, sure.”

She smiled, and we set off down the main campus path towards our places. For a few minutes, we just walked silently, nobody acknowledging the elephant in the room, until she finally piped up.

“Actually, it wasn’t really a scheduling conflict.”

I stopped and looked over at her. “What do you mean?”

She looked up at me, a bit nervous. “Well, I thought it might be good that you not be my teacher.”

“What?” I asked, the knot in my stomach tightening again. “Why?”

She laughed awkwardly, looking around us suspiciously. “I think you might know my friend.”

“Wait, who?”

She leaned in closer to me. “Vasilisa”.

I shot bolt upright. She knew. She knew I was in Omicron Nu, and knew that I was going to be there tonight. My mind filled with questions. Did she tell the Dean? Does anybody else know? Was she going to quit? Did she know I saw her?

“You OK?” she asked, quietly, her voice snapping me out of my reverie.

I swallowed hard. “Did you tell anybody else that I’m...?”

She shook her head firmly. “Oh, no no, not at all.”

I sighed in relief. “How did you know?”

She smiled. “Well, I did some research. They aren’t even sure if Epictetus had a wife, let alone her name. Plus, well, we just got a new photographer and you did mention liking photography at the start of the year.”

I laughed nervously. “Uh.. wow. Well done, I guess.”

She smiled, her eyes twinkling a bit. “Thanks.”

I took a deep breath and started walking again. “So, uh, you’re not allowed to be in classes with other members?”

She shook her head. “There’s no specific rule,” she continued, laughing nervously, “but it could get really awkward.”

I smiled. “So you transferred to Greg’s class?”

She nodded.

I walked silently for a second, lost in thought. She was no longer my student, so if anything came to light, it might seem a bit odd but it wouldn’t look too bad. Not to mention that she seemed to be OK with me being in O Nu too. Most of all, she was still talking to me. She could have blackmailed me, or told people, or done all sorts of nasty things, but she wasn’t doing any of that. She was just being herself. I smiled broadly, the knot in my stomach relenting a bit for the first time in a week.

“You sure you’re OK?” she asked, interrupting my reverie.

I laughed as we came to the main street crossing. “Actually, yeah. I think you did the best thing for everybody involved here.”

She looked up at me, smiling. “Really?”

I nodded. “Although I do wish you’d told me about this before you transferred. Friends don’t let friends enroll in classes with Greg.”

She laughed out loud at my comment as we crossed the street, her smile enchantingly sincere. “So he’s actually as strange as he seems?”

I nodded. “You don’t know the half of it.”

“OK, because he kept asking me for my SAA-something signature in class today, and I have no idea what he’s on about.”

Laughing aloud, my spirits raised once again at Greg’s expense, I went on to recount the little joke I’d played on him the prior day. Soon enough, we were both cackling with laughter at the plethora of fun we could have with Greg, as we walked down the street towards home. Finally, we stopped at the top of her street.

“Well,” she began, “I guess I won’t be seeing you in class Monday.”

I nodded. “Nope, you won’t.”

She smiled mischievously. “and I most certainly won’t be seeing you tonight?”

I laughed quietly, looking around to make sure nobody was within earshot. “Of course not. But if I happen to bump into your friend Vasilisa, I’ll be sure to say “Hi”. She laughed, then started down the street.

After a pause, I piped back up. “Oh, and Alexa... Thanks”.

She turned around and flashed a lovely smile, then started back down the street towards her house.

28

“Rick, my boy!”

I turned to see Herb’s broad-shouldered figure pushing down the wooden hallway into the O Nu house’s foyer, approaching as the heavy wooden door shut behind me.

“You took some mighty fine pictures last time. Even had some comments from the head of the region.”

I smiled, nodding. “Glad you appreciated them.”

He came up and clapped me on the back, a golden-toothed grin spreading across his face. “Appreciated? Damn, boy, did I ever. I don’t go downstairs very often, I’d forgotten what high-quality ass we’ve got running around the place.”

I laughed awkwardly, uncomfortable with his phrasing but not wanting to contradict the older man. “Yeah, they’re definitely pretty.”

Herb nodded. “Boy, what I’d give to be your age again...” Herb trailed off a bit, looking up at the paneled ceiling. Then, as if remembering that he had a job to do, his tone grew more serious. “Oh, yeah, but about the pictures...”

I raised an eyebrow at his change in tone.

“You seem to be pretty heavy into the more... artistic pictures. You know, thighs and faces and smiles and all that other touchy-feely stuff. Well, some of the alums were a bit disappointed with the quantity of.. well, the harder shots. Hell, I think you only had one money shot the whole time, with the old blonde, Sophie.”

I nodded slowly. “Uhh, yeah. You’re probably right.”

“Well, if we wanted to see that sort of touchy feely stuff, we’d go to an art gallery. It’s a shame to see all these pretty girls in these pictures without some cock to keep ’em occupied, you know what I mean.” Herb clapped me on the back.

“So, what do you want me to do?”, I asked tenuously.

“You can get your artsy playboy shots if you want, but I want you to think Hustler for our Alums. They want hardcore, you know, fucking, sucking, licking. Oh, and don’t forget money shots. Spreads, facials, the works.

I laughed awkwardly. “Yeah, I think I know what you’re looking for.”

“So, gonna be thinking dirty for us?”

I nodded, a bit uncomfortable. “Yeah. I’ll do my best.”

Herb clapped me on the back. “Good to hear. I like you, and I’d hate to have to fire you over something as silly as a few missing money shots.

I took a deep breath, hearing his thinly veiled threat. “Thanks for the warning.

No problem. Head on down, and just talk to Sophie if you’re out of girls, she knows ‘em all.”

I laughed. “She certainly does seem to be the alpha female around here.”

Herb’s gravelly voice erupted into a laughter. “Yeah, she’s something else alright. God, I remember when she was just a new recruit, however long ago that was. What a girl, that one...”

Trailing off again, Herb started back down the hall towards his office, a strangely wistful look across his face.

Although intrigued by the normally boisterous man’s quiet exit, I decided not to inquire further. I slowly started down the stairs into the darkened basement, camera bag in hand, and readied myself for a night of temptation and, ideally, release.

29

As beautiful as before, Sophie was once again waiting at the bottom of the staircase. Dressed in a see-through white negligee with a single red garter under her red robe, she

looked positively stunning, her breasts and toned body on fine display.

“Hey Sophie, how’s it going?”, I asked happily, setting down my bag.

Turning to see me, her eyes seemed to light up a bit. “Rick! How’s it going? I’m glad to see you’re still with us.”

I cocked my head off to the side. “Did you think I wouldn’t last?”

She cringed a bit, shaking her head. “No no. It’s just that, well, Herb can be a bit of a jackass if he doesn’t like your views.” She frowned a bit. “Well, actually, Herb’s a jackass pretty consistently.”

I laughed a bit, intrigued but trying to stay neutral. “Why do you say that? He’s nice enough to me. Maybe he just sees a bit of his younger self in me or something.”

Sophie shook her head with a look of disgust, adjusting her negligee as she began talking. “There’s nothing of his younger self in you, Rick, don’t you even say that. You must just be a damned good photographer.” She sighed harshly, shifting her weight back and forth. “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t be badmouthing him to you. It’s just that last week we had a situation with one of our members getting a bit rough, when I tried to kick him out, Herb stood up for him. To him, this is just one big fraternity, and the “brothers” are all that matter.”

Sophie trailed off, muttering under her breath, her fists subtly clenched.

Taken aback by her tone, I quickly changed the subject. “So, uhh, Sophie, is there anybody I should meet this time around?”

She took a deep breath, the last vestiges of her disgust leaving her beautiful face, she leaned back against the staircase and fell into thought. “Well,” she began slowly, “I think you should probably talk with Sadie. She’s really pretty, and I’m sure she’d be happy to take some pictures.”

I nodded. “Anybody else?”

Sophie smiled. “Well, Brandi’s been talking about you all night. She might be interested in a second shoot, maybe a bit more... intimate.”

I blushed a bit. “Like I said, if only I’d known that not hitting on a girl can get so many girls.”

Sophie laughed melodiously. “Brandi’s been around for a little while. She remembers the last photographer, so I think you’re just a breath of fresh air to her.”

I nodded. “Any idea where those two are?”

Sophie shook her head. “I think Brandi’s entertaining somebody at the moment, but I’ll tell you what. Why don’t you go off and grab one of the rooms and I’ll send Sadie your way.”

I nodded. “Thanks again, Sophie. I appreciate your help.”

She just nodded her head and gracefully walked off down the hallway. I picked up my heavy camera bag and headed off towards the private rooms.

30

“Excuse me..”

I looked up to see a young, sunny blonde poking her head into the small room I was in.

“Rick?”

I nodded, standing to introduce myself. “Are you Sadie?”

She nodded, coming around the corner, her curly blonde hair bouncing as she walked in.

Rising from the bed to shake her hand, I gasped a little, captivated by her beauty, her sheer yellow panties dotted with a red bow just below her belly button, I could just barely make out the silhouette of a thin strip of pubic hair above her otherwise bald lips. My eyes rising past her perky breasts, cupped in yellow fabric with red piping, I found her smile, eyeing my camera coyly, a look of eager anticipation crossing her deep blue eyes.

“Did you have anything in particular in mind”, I asked as I rooted through my camera bag.

Sadie shook her head and responded, her thin southern twang bringing a smile to my face. “No, I’m kinda new to this.

“To O-Nu?”

She shook her head again, her cheeks flushed. “No, I’ve been here for eight months now. I’ve just never had my picture taken.

Looking up from the camera body in my lap, I examined her face for signs of discomfort, but found only restrained eagerness. “But you’re OK with it?” She nodded, smiling.

“Now,” I began, hesitantly, “I’ve got an idea, but you don’t have to agree.”

“What is it?”

“Well, I’d like to do the shoot out in the hallway. Your hair would be a beautiful contrast with the wood there, and the lighting is pretty decent. Of course, that means anybody could see”

She clasped her hands in front of her waist, goosebumps visible on her beautifully contoured arms. Her smile nervous, but somehow naughtier than before, she nodded quietly and replied with a simple “OK”, her voice nearly a whisper.

As I picked up my heavy camera bag and one of the red fleece blankets from the foot of the bed, I watched her turn and gracefully walk off down the hallway, her conservatively cut sheer bikini panties a contrast to the ultra-revealing thongs that seemed standard issue here. The hall was unoccupied, just as I’d hoped. I sat my bag down under one of the archaic lights in the hallway, handed her the fleece, and took out my camera.

“So,” Sadie inquired quietly as I fiddled with my camera. “What do you want me to do?”

I looked up at her, then glanced around the hallway at the scene. The light wood paneling was almost immaculately clean, and the hardwood floor was polished to a mirror shine. Her yellow lingerie stood out against the bright red of the fleece throw she held, the red highlights on her panties tying the whole photo together with beautiful precision. Her brown eyes sparkled in the yellow light from the fixtures on the wall. Sizing up the angles down the hallway, I set up my tripod and then moved over to her.

“Basically, your job is to seduce the guy who’s looking at these pictures, at least, metaphorically. Act as sexy as possible, and really make him want it.” I spread out the fleece on the floor in a well-lit area. “You’re welcome to lay down if you’d like.”

She nodded quietly, breathing deeply as if to summon the courage to proceed. I stepped out from behind the camera, about to ask her once more if she wanted to continue, but then, as she lay back on the sheet, I noticed the patch of dampness showing through her panties between her legs. I smiled to myself. She may be shy, I thought, but it looks like she’s enjoying the process.

I arranged myself behind the camera. “Alright, maybe you could just pose a bit on the fleece there before you take anything off?”

She nodded, then rolled onto her stomach. She tossed back her hair, her confidence growing and all hints of her earlier hesitation disappearing, she smiled up at me, her shapely breasts pressed against her folded arms, highlighting the wonderful contour down to her picturesque ass. She slowly rolled up onto her side, her firm nipples pressing out into her bra, as she gently tugged one of the straps down off her shoulder.

Trapped in quiet amazement at the seductiveness of this previously shy girl, I snapped picture after picture. Slowly teasing, she dipped her hand into her panties, rubbing herself gently, biting her lower lip as the little trickle of pleasure coursed through her. Her hand clearly visible through the sheer fabric, circling over her neatly groomed pussy. She pulled down the cup of her bra, exposing her pink, perky nipple to the cool air in the hallway, then gently rolled it between her fingers.

I swallowed hard, feeling myself hardening as I watched her display, I readjusted my pants and tried to concentrate on taking pictures. I adjusted the camera slightly, squeezing the shutter release over and over as she slowly removed her bra, her smile slowly giving way to a look of profound lust. Her hands trailed slowly down her stomach to her hips, her fingers sliding under the waistband of her panties, then, kneeling, she slowly slid them down off her hips and over her ass, bending over just enough to give the camera a wonderful view.

I heard steps in the hall behind me, followed by a gasp. I glanced back over my shoulder. One of the male members, remarkable only in that he looked almost exactly like every other guy in O Nu, had just come down the stairs into the basement. Upon seeing Sadie's wanton display in the hallway, he was stopped, watching quietly.

Looking back at Sadie, sitting back against the wall fingering her pussy, seemingly completely lost to lust, Herb's suggestion came to mind. "Uh, Sadie?"

"Mmmhmmm?" She didn't even open her eyes, too enthralled with her rubbing, purring her response quietly.

"How would you like to well, be with somebody on camera?"

She paused at my suggestion, catching her breath. "I thought this was just going to be me..."

I nodded. "Well, it still can be. They just told me to get some harder photos as well, if I could. Like, girls fucking, getting facials, and things like that."

She thought for a second, weighing caution against torrent of lust. After a few moments of consideration, still breathing heavily, she nodded, and then pointed to the slack-jawed member behind me. "With him?"

I looked back at the man, his eyes fixed on her, the vacant, expectant look on his face a clear indication of his desires. I shrugged. "If he's OK with it."

The new member started nodding, his enthusiasm evident from the stupefied look on his face and the straining tent in his khakis.

She took a deep breath, then started regaining some of her composure and confidence. Her incredibly sexy smile returned, and she beckoned the member over.

He awkwardly introduced himself, putting out his hand to shake her hand, even as she was kneeling on the floor in front of him. "I'm... uh... Bill."

Sadie smiled up at him, ignoring his hand and placed hers over the bulge in his pants. "I'm Sadie. And I'm going to suck you off."

His eyes went wide with surprise at Sadie's sudden change of attitude, her unexpected sultry tone and confidence causing even my cock to twitch with arousal. Taking a deep, calming breath, I brought my eyes back to the viewfinder.

Slowly, Sadie kneaded his hard cock through his pants, using both hands to rub gently but vigorously as she kissed meticulously across his belt line. The member's face was a mask of amazement and pleasure as Sadie unzipped his pants and removed his cock. Quickly taking his hard, swollen member between her lips, Sadie began to bob her head up and down, moaning gently and idly caressing her breast with her hand.

Gasping and moaning almost in time with the snapping of the camera's shutter, the young member was obviously straining to keep his composure and to prolong his pleasure, but it wasn't long before he started tensing up, his moans growing louder as he neared the edge.

"Oh... Oh God," he gasped, words barely audible over his strained breath. "Oh, Sadie. You're gonna make me..."

Abruptly, before he could even finish his sentence, Sadie let him fall from her mouth and stood up. Putting her hands against the yellow wood paneling, she bent over in front of him, her shapely ass pressing out into the air, begging to be fucked, her hand flitting swiftly back and forth over her clit.

Without missing a beat, Sadie's impromptu partner put his hands on her hips and guided himself into her moist, waiting pussy. Moaning loudly, Sadie pressed back against him, her rubbing speeding up as she ground her hips into him. Sadie grew louder and louder, wantonly screaming for what seemed like the whole basement to hear as she neared orgasm.

Still frantically snapping pictures, moving around and hoping to capture Sadie's passion, I noticed her tensing, coming up on the balls of her feet as her orgasm neared. Bringing my camera down and shooting up at the beautiful young blonde, I just barely focused in on her when she finally cried out, shaking intensely as her orgasm coursed through her. Snapping picture after picture, I grinned broadly. I had found the perfect shot, her look of ultimate pleasure framed by a shock of her blonde hair and the light wood of the hallway, her eyes closed dreamily, biting her lower lip in ecstasy.

Then, without warning, the member cried out, jerking Sadie's hips back towards him. He thrust back up into her, gasping loudly as he came. Sadie's expression in the viewfinder changed from one of ecstasy to one of sudden surprise, and slowly, to unease.

The member stepped back, his manhood sliding out of her and falling limp. He bent over and started picking up his clothes as Sadie stood there, still bent over against the wall, pussy glistening with a mixture of their juices.

"Uhh, well, that was... like... really good," he began, all of his clothes in hand. He awkwardly reached out for Sadie's hand, and after pausing for a moment, awkwardly shook it. "Thanks."

Then, looking up at me as he prepared to leave, he just nodded, a look of minor embarrassment on his face. "Sorry I couldn't last long enough for the facial."

I waved off his concern, and he turned down the hall towards the shower. When I turned back around, Sadie was kneeling on the floor on the red fleece blanket, now moistened with his and her come, her earlier wanton lust replaced by a sort of self-conscious nervousness.

"Are you OK?", I asked, lowering my camera.

"Huh?" She shook a bit, then smiled up at me. "Oh... Yeah, I'm fine."

I raised an eyebrow at her, confused by her change in demeanor.

"I guess I just got really worked up. That's all." She laughed awkwardly. "I didn't even realize how into it I'd gotten."

I nodded, unsure what to say to help her out of her awkwardness. "Well, I did get some incredible pictures, for what it's worth."

She smiled. "Good." Then, she scooted towards me on the blanket and reached a hand out, placing her hand over my still engorged member, rubbing it through my pants.

Shuddering with pleasure at the contact, the weight of the camera in my hands quickly snapped me back to reality, and I took a step back.

She looked up at me in surprise, her eyes still subdued, her expression confused. “Didn’t you say you needed a facial shot? I can help.”

I swallowed awkwardly. “No, no. I didn’t need one. Herb said they’re good, but, you know, another time.”

Are you sure? I’d do it, if you need it.”

Although my straining hardness screamed for me to take her up on her offer and Herb’s deep drawl repeated in my head, I just couldn’t bring myself to accept, not after her sudden change of attitude. “No, it’s OK. I think I’ve got what I need.” She smiled meekly. “Thanks.”

I took her outstretched hand in mine, lifting her to her feet. “Thank you for the wonderful pictures. You’re very beautiful.”

She laughed quietly, smiling. She stretched, then started slipping on her panties and bra. I packed up my camera gear, and as I was about to turn and leave, she stopped me.

“Uh, Rick?”

I nodded. “What’s up?”

“These pictures... They’re not just going to be on the internet for everybody to see, right?”

I shook my head. “I think it’s just old members, and they’d probably get sued into oblivion for spreading them around.”

She smiled, some minor trepidation still visible on her face. “OK, as long as you say so. I just don’t want my Dad seeing these or anything. He’d never speak to me again if he knew how I was putting myself through college. He thinks I’m a lab assistant.”

I laughed awkwardly, once again trying to make light. “My mom would be none-too-proud to know that I’m a pornographer, I understand. Don’t worry, I’ll make sure none of your pictures end up anywhere public.”

The sunny young blonde wrapped her arms around me for a quick hug. “Thanks.”

I nodded, smiling, and watched as she turned around and headed down the exquisitely manicured wood hallway, back towards the shower.

31

For around an hour after Sadie left, I just wandered the halls, absentmindedly ducking into rooms and snapping the occasional picture, or asking passing groups of beautiful girls to stop and pose for a few minutes. Although I was still surrounded by beautiful, under-clothed college girls, my mind was elsewhere, and even while my hardness pulsed with every passing girl, Sadie's words echoed in my head, dulling my arousal.

Sadie's final comment about her Dad cutting her out of his life if he ever knew affected me more than I expected. These girls were all there for a reason. Some of the reasons made sense and actually seemed pretty normal, like Erica and Ann, just wanting to swing safely. Sadie's membership in exchange for college seemed somehow different. For her, it was a job. Naturally, my mind wandered to Alexa's reasons for being a member. I wondered what had brought her here, whether it was money, power, or even simple sex. The thought of her, naked, in bed underneath some anonymous frat boy brought a grimace to my face, even though I knew it was par for the course here.

After uneventfully photographing a few more groups of wandering girls, I flipped on my camera and looked at the display. Between the fifty shots of Sadie alone, the hundred or so of her and the member, and the fifty more I'd taken just wandering through halls, I had nearly enough to sate Herb, at least for another night. At the same time, though, Herb's insistence that I concentrate more on the hardcore shots brought a feeling of discomfort. I hadn't really pushed the issue with Sadie, and although I'd gotten a few pictures of other girls sucking and fucking, I hadn't really gotten any of the "money shots" that Herb was looking for.

I sighed, tucking my camera back into its bag and sitting back on one of the plentiful benches in the wooden corridor. Although I was quickly getting used to taking pictures of pretty girls, I still couldn't bring myself to just flat-out proposition a girl I'd never met, especially when I had to ask her to abandon even her most intimate inhibitions for a photoshoot which would be seen by hundreds, maybe thousands of guys. I knew I'd have to find a way to ask if I wanted to keep my job.

Standing up, I shook my head, laughing quietly to myself. No doubt there are guys who would kill to get this job, and here I am, surrounded by all these beautiful, available girls, wallowing in self pity. Determined to cheer up and make the most of the still largely unbelievable situation, I put on a smile and headed back down the hallway towards the main stairs.

32

Sophie was standing by the stairs, as usual, talking with one of the girls. Next to the stunning Sophie was a cute, petite chubby blonde in a short red nightgown. Sophie shot me a smile as I walked up and set down my gear, then motioned to the blonde.

“Rick, this is Sara. Sara, Rick. Rick’s our new photographer.”

I smiled, shaking her hand and murmuring an introduction, really just relishing her soft smile.

Sara curtsied, and I couldn’t help but notice her gown slipping up and revealing her small, hairless slit as she did. “You should let me pose for you sometime. It sounds fun.”

I thanked her for the offer, smiling pleasantly at the thought of her naked in front of my camera, then quickly worked to regain my composure. Sophie gestured down towards my camera bag. “How’s it going tonight, Rick?”

“It’s been going fine. Still getting used to the whole experience, but everybody’s been pleasant.” I laughed quietly. “I think I’m just overwhelmed by the girls here. I still feel like I’ve stumbled into somebody’s naughty fantasy.”

Her face lit up by her laughter, Sara gently brushed her hand across my chest. “Well, I hope it’s your naughty fantasy as well.”

“Frankly,” I replied, “I’m not sure I’m quite creative enough to come up with something this... elaborate.”

Sara and Sophie both laughed, taking a bit more of the edge from my mood. Sophie’s ever-present smile and warm demeanor reminded me that not everybody’s there for the wrong reasons. With a caring woman like Sophie around, I could be sure that at least the girls were well taken care of. I took a deep breath, a genuine smile returning to my face, and my mind starting to remember my earlier arousal.

I piped back up, my mood raised. “I’m almost through my picture quota for the evening.”

Sophie nodded. “How’d it go with Sadie?” She’s very pretty, and seemed to enjoy herself. The guy she was with sure seemed to enjoy it too.”

Sara cut in incredulously. “What, you didn’t do the job yourself?”

Although momentarily taken aback by her forwardness, her giggling restored my good humor. “Well, it’s pretty tough to focus a camera when you’ve got a beautiful girl on top of you. Or in front of you, or under you, or... well, you get the picture.”

Once their laughter subsided, Sophie spoke “Do you have anything else planned?”

I shook my head, pulling my mind back from its eager dreaming, imagining Alexa grinding down on me. “No. I just need to get a few more pictures, then I think I’m going to head out.”

Sara looked down at my slowly rising erection, gently biting her lower lip. “You’re not really going to let yourself leave with... that?”, Sara asked, gesturing to the obvious tent in my pants.

“*He* certainly does seem to have plans” I replied, laughing self consciously.

With that, Sara took my hand and stepped down off the staircase next to me, picking up my camera bag. “Well, I think we need to do something about that, and maybe see about getting you those last pictures you needed.”

Sophie looked at the eager girl, then at my look of surprise, then shook her head, smiling. “Rick, don’t let her tire you out. I’ve heard stories.”

I smiled, and waved to Sophie as Sara quickly hooked her arm in mine and spirited me off down the hallway.

33

Practically dragging me into one of the small rooms at the end of the hallway, Sara wasted no time. As soon as she had set my camera bag down on the chair and flipped on the light, she pressed herself up against me. Her hand massaging my hardness through my pants, she stood on her tip toes, bringing her mouth up, pressing her lips against mine with a near desperate passion.

Her insistent massaging drew a gasp from my lips, opening my mouth and allowing her tongue to slip in, her breathing growing heavier with every passing moment. My initial surprise and lowly yielding to her rubbing and probing tongue, I lowered myself a little, letting her come down off of her tip-toes and continue her passionate kiss, my own breathing growing heavier as I slowly fell under her spell.

After what could’ve been a minute or an hour, she broke our kiss and stepped back. Smoothing her nightgown, she beckoned me over in front of the bed.

“Give me your hand,” she said, her voice having grown breathy with her arousal.

I offered my hand, which she took and slowly brought under her nightgown, slowly dragging it along her inner thigh. Then, guiding my hand, she brought my fingertips up against her completely bare lips, gently parting them. I gasped, amazed at how wet she was already, my fingers already coated with her juices having barely even touched her.

My God,” I gasped quietly, “you’re so wet”

She nodded. “Mmmhmm and I’ll bet you want to fuck my wet little cunt, don’t you?”

My breath caught in my throat, her wanton phrasing catching me off guard. “I uhh”

She let go of my hand and started rubbing my cock again through my pants. She smiled, seeming to relish my speechlessness. “You uhh what? You want to take naughty pictures of me then fuck me hard? You want to cum all over me?” She stopped again, biting her lower lip and smiling. “Is that it?”

My breathing coming heavier from her expert rubbing, I nodded my reply.

She backed away, giving my hardness one final squeeze before moving back to the bed. “Well, you’d better get your camera out, then.”

Shaking my head to try and clear my thoughts, I stepped back, quickly extracting my camera from the bag. I turned around, bringing it to my eye, but all I saw through the viewfinder was a rectangle of solid black. Flustered, I started flipping switches on the back of the camera, looking up at Sara periodically with a look of minor embarrassment. “The uh, well, the camera’s having trouble. Sorry.”

She smiled up at me from the bed, giggling. “Uh, Rick.”

I looked up, flustered.

“It’d probably work better if you took off the lens cap.”

I exhaled sharply, then quietly slipped it off, dropping the cap into my pocket. “Thanks”, I replied, bright red from embarrassment.

Then, taking a deep breath, I focused the camera on the bed. Sara was laying down on her stomach in the middle of the nondescript queen mattress, one leg up in the air. I took another deep breath, trying to calm my arousal enough to do my job. As she came into sharp focus, I studied her appearance through the viewfinder. Although she was a short girl, no taller than five and a half feet, she carried what extra weight she had well. Her hips flared in the best ways, her breasts were deliciously large, and the curve of her ass was wonderfully apparent through the nightgown. Her face seemed very innocent, but her eyes

were filled with lust as she looked back up at me, her hand gently massaging her breast. I swallowed, trying one last time to steel myself enough to get my work done.

She smiled as I finally finished adjusting the camera. “What should I do?”

“Well, whatever you want to. ” Then, Herb’s voice echoing in my head, I added “but uhh it’d be good if your poses were uhh graphic.”

She slowly climbed off the bed, coming towards me. “So you want me to be your little slut on camera?”

I swallowed hard and nodded.

“Sounds like it could be fun,” she said, slipping the straps of her nightgown over her shoulders. “Just as long as you promise to give me some of that hard cock afterwards.”

Nodding once more, I brought the camera back up to my eye and started snapping pictures. Her nightgown fell away, revealing her soft, ample breasts and her neatly waxed mons. First rubbing her breasts, then slowly sliding a hand downwards, she leaned back against the bed, then eventually lay back on it completely, spreading her legs wide for me.

I kneeled down in front of her with my camera, zooming in on her glistening sex, capturing the motion of her fingers as she gently rubbed her clit. She dipped a finger into her tight, wet pussy, soaking it completely, and then, slowly and deliberately, brought it up to her mouth where she licked it clean, her lips glistening with her cum in the viewfinder. She then brought her other hand back down, spreading her lips wide, her moist pink entrance perfectly visible. I snapped picture after picture of her wanton display, my breathing growing faster and faster as her show progressed.

Then, she closed her legs, slowly turning over on the bed and getting up on her hands and knees, her shapely ass up in the air. I moved in closer, capturing image after image of her beautiful pale thighs parting to reveal her dripping wet sex. Finally, I set the camera down on the chair next to the door.

“Are you going to fuck me now?”, she asked, still on all fours.

I nodded, swallowing hard as I took off my pants and boxers, exposing my hard cock, dripping already with pre-cum.

She licked her lips looking over at me. “Oh God Rick, I want you to push that deep inside my wet little cunt and cum all over me. Now!”

I came up behind her, pressing the head of my cock against her lips, and then, in one smooth motion, pressed deep into her. She cried out in pleasure as I entered her, her wet

pussy gripping my cock as I slid in and out of her. My hands firmly grabbing her hips, I began to fuck her, slowly at first, but quickly speeding up. She started to tense up within seconds, her orgasm growing closer with every thrust.

“God Rick. Oh god.. Oh god.. Rick, I’m gonna. Cuuum!” She cried out, her pussy desperately pulling me into her as she writhed back against me. Feeling my own orgasm approaching, I grabbed on tighter as she slowly got back into the rhythm, her hand sliding between her legs to rub her clit.

“Oh, Rick,” she moaned, “Oh, that was so good.”

I thrust harder and faster still into her warm sex, her wetness flowing around me bringing me closer and closer.

“I want you to cum for me” she gasped.

I started to shake, her dirty talk making my cum boil up inside me.

“Oh Oh god. Rick, cum all over my ass. Cover me with cum, Rick.”

Her wanton begging pushing me over the edge, I thrust into her one last time, then pulled out, stroking myself.

“Oh Sara” I gasped. “I’m cumming”

She looked back over her shoulder at me, still rubbing her clit, smiling as I finally came. Shaking and gasping, I sprayed rope after rope of my thick cum onto her shapely ass and pussy, then, sliding back into her for a few more thrusts, finally took a step back.

Sara looked back at me from between her legs, her wonderful ass still in the air, dripping with my cum. She kept rubbing, her gasping slowly speeding up. Wanting to capture her moment of pleasure, I grabbed for my camera, taking a step back. As she brought herself closer, I snapped picture after picture, capturing her face, her dripping, cum covered sex, and her picturesque ass. She began to tense up, her orgasm imminent, and as I looked at the camera’s screen, double checking the settings, I saw the reflection of a figure in the door behind me.

Instinctively lowering the camera to cover my exposed, softening manhood, I turned around and found myself staring at a girl in a bright red bra and panty set. Her chest and face flushed with arousal, her eyes locked on mine. It was Alexa.

34

I heard Sara cry out behind me as she came, but my eyes never left Alexa. I tried desperately to muster a reassuring smile to somehow offset the fact that I had just been caught, in flagrante, by the one girl there that I actually wanted to be with. My face turning red, I looked down at the floor and slowly backed away, setting my camera down on the chair and grabbing for my boxers.

After practically jumping into my boxers, I looked back up at her in the door. Her eyes shifting up to meet mine, Alexa flashed an awkward smile, and then stepped away from the door and back into the hallway. Placing my head on my hand, I sighed, sitting down on the bed next to Sara, now laying on her side, looking up at me.

“Is everything OK?” she asked, her earlier breathiness replaced with a warm, caring tone.

I ran a hand down her side. “I’m sorry, Sara, I didn’t mean to get distracted”

She smiled back up at me. “It’s OK. Not used to people watching you?”

I quickly shook my head. “No, not usu...” I stopped in mid sentence. “Wait. Watching me? How long was she there?”

Sara laughed, her warm voice taking some of the edge off of my embarrassment. “I’m not exactly sure, I was kind of distracted, you know.” She smiled up at me. “...but I’m pretty sure she showed up somewhere in the middle of your photo shoot.”

My eyebrows shot up. She’d been watching us. She didn’t just walk away when she recognized me. She stayed and watched. My mind struggling to wrap itself around the new development, Sara sat up, taking a towel from the bedstand and cleaning herself up. After a moment, she wrapped her arms around me from behind. “Sure you’re OK?”

I nodded, answering with a convenient halftruth. “I’m just not used to this whole experience yet, it’s nothing personal.”

She nodded, giving me a peck on the cheek. “Give it time. Soon enough, you’ll be able to fuck anybody, anywhere, without even batting an eye. Everybody feels like this for the first few times.”

I smiled awkwardly, put off by her unique reassurance, and handed her her nightgown. We both dressed in relative silence, and finally, found ourselves at the door to the small room.

Sara hugged me. “That was great, Rick.” I nodded. “You’re a very pretty girl, I enjoyed myself too. Sorry about the last part, though.” She smiled up at me. “It’s OK,” she said, pausing for a moment, a mischievous smile crossing her face.

“Besides, Lexi’s a cutie. I can see why you’d like her.”

I looked down at her nervously. She stood up on her tip toes and gave me another kiss on the cheek. “Don’t worry. I won’t tell anybody.”

I rubbed the back of my head awkwardly. “Thanks.”

We walked out into the hallway, holding hands, until finally we parted ways. She headed down the hall, striking up a conversation with Sophie by the stairwell. I stood in the hallway shaking my head. Alexa’s voyeurism had shocked me, and although I felt ashamed that she had seen me with a girl that was basically a stranger, part of me realized that it was all par for the course for O Nu. Besides, it’s not like I had forced Sara into anything, or like Alexa and I had started a full-on relationship. It just was. Just like all the other sex here. It just happened.

I was broken out of my reverie by a drip of sweat rolling down my face. I smiled as I snapped out of it, my body still feeling the pleasant warmth of a recent orgasm. At the very least, I thought, I got some magnificent pictures, and, my thoughts drifting back to the flushed Alexa watching from the door, a new possibility.

Grinning, I turned and headed for the showers to clean up and go home for the night.

35

“Alright,” I began, standing at the makeshift lectern in the front of the room. “I know exactly what you’re all thinking: Didn’t we just do the Categorical Imperative?”

I looked out across the room at the sea of bored looking nods.

“Well, you’re right. Except really, there are several different ways of looking at it. So, just as I promised on Friday, today, we’re going to talk about the second formulation of the categorical imperative.”

The room was silent.

“The first formulation said that you shouldn’t do something unless you’d want everybody to do it. The second formulation looks at the issue in a different way and says, basically,

that you should always treat people as ends, and not as a means.”

The few note takers in the back stopped, staring up at me blankly. I’d lost them already. Then, an example popped into my mind.

“Who here thinks that it’s wrong to buy your girlfriend or boyfriend a fancy dinner?”

Gradually, people looked up at me, picking their heads up off of their desks in curiosity, and aside from the one militant Women’s Studies major in the back of the room, all hands were down.

“Alright. Who thinks it’s wrong to have sex with your boyfriend or girlfriend?”

The hands of the two religious zealots in the back of the room shot up, but the majority of the class stared up at me, hands still down, trying to figure out where I was going with the lesson.

“Alright. Now, who thinks it’s wrong to buy a girl or guy a fancy dinner simply so they’ll have sex with you?”

Hands went up all over the room. After a few seconds, everybody but the two frat boys in the back of the room had their hands up, and, upon noticing, they shared a quick high-five. I laughed inwardly at the death stare they were getting from the angry feminist.

“Somebody want to tell me why this third option seems so wrong?”

A hand came up in the back of the room. “Well, you’re basically using them for sex, at that point.”

I nodded. “This is precisely what Kant is talking about with the second formulation. When you take your boyfriend or girlfriend out, or make love to them, it benefits them. Sure, you enjoy it, but in the end, they’re benefitted by it too, and often, you’re doing it specifically so they’ll benefit from it. Thus, in the first two situations, Kant would say you’re treating them as an end.”

A few people nodded in the back, and some of the note takers tentatively began scribbling.

“But, if you do something simply so that they’ll have sex with you, you’re using them. You’re using them as a means to... well, getting some. Kant’s second formulation forbids this.”

By this point, most of the people in the classroom seemed to have the basic concept down. A hand came up, belonging to one of the frat boys in back, wearing a flipped visor. “So, wait, does that mean that Kant forbids porn too?”

I nodded. “Porn’s definitely out, Kant would likely argue that the producers, and eventually, the consumers, are just using the women in the films for sexual gratification.”

The feminist in the back row nodded furiously, a standoffish look on her face. Then, another hand went up. What about prostitution? Doesn’t the money directly benefit them, meaning that they’re still benefitting as an end?”

I nodded. “Good point. Except that your chief concern when visiting a prostitute isn’t charity. Well, at least, I don’t think it is for most people. Although it confuses the matter, the money is just a means to the end of sex, even though the money may benefit the prostitute, you’re still using them for sexual gratifi...”

My words caught in my throat, their link to O Nu altogether too obvious for me to ignore. Even though the girls were getting paid, handsomely, that was just a front. Sadie’s tuition was just a cover-up, designed to gloss over the fact that Herb and the rest of the members didn’t actually care what the girls did or how they lived. All they really cared about was a steady supply of coed pussy.

Then, hit with harsh reality, I realized that when it came down to it, I was no better. Although Sara did seem to enjoy herself, and was no doubt handsomely paid, I was just using her for sex, and for photos to keep my job. I’ll never see her outside of O Nu, and frankly, I’m not sure I’d ever want to. To me, she was just a means to an orgasm and a paycheck. But then again, she probably thinks the same about me.

My thoughts finally drifted back to Alexa. I knew her well enough to consider her as an end in her own right, and to hope that our relationship would evolve. And somehow, just randomly fucking her at an O Nu party had never seemed right, even though a big part of me wanted to. I sighed, strengthening my resolve. I can’t treat Alexa like that. If our relationship was going to progress, I knew it needed to happen in the real world, with dates, and hand holding, and cuddling, and all those sorts of things that actual couples do, and not just random fucking under the auspices of O Nu. I wanted Alexa to be an end for me.

Breaking the silence in the classroom, the frat boy piped back up. “So, wait, the first formulation forbids lying, cheating, stealing and violence, and the second formulation cuts out hookers, dealing and porn?”

I looked up at him, slipping out of my reverie. “That’s one way to put it, I guess.”

The frat boy sighed and leaned back in his chair. “Shit, man, this Kant guy sounds like a real party”

The whole class burst into laughter, even the feminist cracking a smile despite herself. A

smile returning to my face, I laughed along with them, flipping the page of the open book in front of me to continue my lecture. There, in the middle of the page, was a portrait of Immanuel Kant, his judgmental, condescending stare burning back up at me.

You're right, Kant wasn't too much fun," I began, somehow starting to feel better about the whole situation already. "In fact, he died having never married, and his last word was simply "Enough." However, even with that being the case, it's still important to listen to what he said and make up our own minds. Perhaps nobody can completely live up to the laws he laid out..."

I paused, smiling and remembering the enjoyable time I'd shared with Sara the night before.

"... and nobody's saying you need to. I'm not trying to teach you all to blindly follow any one person, but to explore a variety of opinions and see what works best, for you and for the people around you."

The two frat boys in the back high fived, eliciting another chuckle from the class. I looked down at Kant's portrait. "Killjoy".

36

Whizzz-ping!

The empty can flew from the back of the chair as I smiled smugly, loading another rubber band onto my finger. I took aim again at next can, arranged carefully in a line atop the unused chair in my small office. Holding my breath, stilling my heartbeat, I slowly drew back the band, visualizing the dented Sprite can, and released, only to watch the band curve upwards, instead bouncing off a shelf of dusty textbooks.

I shook my head, leaning back in the chair. Finally, I took a deep breath, and opened the folder of quizzes to be graded for the Wednesday's class. I glanced at the first answer and cringed, then slowly made my way through the test.

After crossing out "Emilio Kant", "Eric Tetis", and the "category empire", I shook my head, gave the student a very generous "C", and fell back into the chair again.

A knock sounded on my door.

"Come on in"

Alexa poked her head in. "Is this a good time?"

Seeing her face, my spirits lifted, but within moments, my memories of her watching Sara and I, along with the embarrassment of the situation, came flooding back. "Uh, sure," I replied, sheepishly.

Taking a step in, she turned to the open hall, seemingly embarrassed. "Can I close the door?"

Seeing my nod, she quickly closed the door, smoothing her black skirt and cute floral blouse, and sitting down across the desk from me. I couldn't help but return her smile, although we both seemed a bit apprehensive, both unwilling to bring up what was really on each of our minds.

"So," I began, stodgily, "What can I do for you?"

She smiled, a bit uncomfortable. "Well, I just wanted to talk a bit about you know"

I nodded, swallowing hard. "Last Friday night?"

She shook her head, almost too eagerly. "Yeah. Friday."

I... well, I'm sorry."

"It's OK. I didn't really mind. At all." She smiled, sheepishly.

I breathed a little sigh of relief, a hint of a smile flashing across my face as her subtle flirting sunk in. "I'm glad, but still. I would've preferred we run into each other in slightly more mundane circumstances..." She laughed a little bit, but I quickly continued. "Sara's a nice girl, but I don't think there's... well, much possibility there."

Alexa looked over at me, intrigued. "What do you mean?"

Well, she's cute and all, but I don't think I'd ever... you know, date her."

Alexa seemed to grow a bit confused. "I mean, that was work, right? Besides, it's..." She looked back behind her to see that the door was closed. "It's O Nu. It's just sex, I know that."

I nodded quickly. "I know, but I didn't want you to think that I was... you know... with her."

She smiled, seemingly amused. "Geez, you *are* new to this. I never assume anything there. Unless people are dating outside of the house too, I just assume there's nothing there."

I nodded. "Great." She nodded back, the conversation lulling again.

So," Alexa said, "Are you dating anybody outside the house?"

I shook my head, perhaps too emphatically. "No. My radar is depressingly clear."

She nodded. "I know what you mean. All the guys I meet seem to be complete pricks."

I slowly nodded. "We're not exactly shining advertisements for the Y chromosome, are we?"

"You're different, though"

"Even after Friday?"

She nodded silently. "You're different than all of those guys. I'd never date one of them."

I leaned back into the chair, unsure what to say until suddenly, I realized what she was hinting at. I took a deep breath, realizing that if I wanted to make this anything more than a tease, than a simple awkward O Nu friendship, I'd need to take a step. She was out of my class, she seemed to be relatively sane, and, well, she seemed to like me. Crossing my fingers under the desk, I spoke up.

"Well... are you doing anything this evening?" She smiled, seeming a bit relieved herself. "No, but I'd love to make some plans."

"How about we meet at the Tapas place on 14th and get some dinner? I've never been there, I'd like to try it."

She took out her phone, looking through her schedule. "Let's see today's Tuesday I'm done with my study session at 6:30. How about 7pm?"

I nodded. "7pm it is."

She smiled broadly, lifting my spirits. "Well, then I'd better let you get back to grad-ing."

She picked up her purse, preparing to leave as I glared down at the sheets of paper.

"Wait, Alexa. Have you ever heard of Eric Tetus?"

She pointed to a bust of the famous stoic glaring out at us from across the room. "You mean Epictetus?"

"Alright, you passed the test. We can go out."

She laughed. "I'm glad to hear that. Oh, and that reminds me..." Then, she stopped, quickly reaching into her purse. She took out a piece of paper with a large barcode, made up of squares and lines. I stared at it, confused.

"Remember you told me about what you told Greg the other day? About catching cheaters using something called SAA-something signatures?"

I nodded.

"Well, this is the barcode from a package I got last week. I attached a copy to the paper I just turned and told him it's my SAASW signature."

I broke out laughing. "Oh, you're evil. Really, really evil."

She shot me a mischevious grin. "Ball's in your court now. Have fun."

I smiled, shaking my head. "See you tonight."

I'm looking forward to it". With that, she left, and I put Alexa's paper on the chair next to me and returned to grading papers. I smiled idly, thinking about the pending date and the possibilities that the relationship entailed. As I looked up at the open textbook in the chair across the room, I could almost swear that the portrait of Kant was smiling back at me.

37

"Alexa?"

I gingerly tapped her bare shoulder, left exposed to the evening sky by her classy black and white dress. She glanced over her shoulder with a smile, then quickly said her good-byes to the girl she'd been chatting with. Standing up, I was struck by the near seamless class of her dress, hair, and even accessories, polished leather shoes matching polished leather purse matching the piping on her dress. She certainly knew what made her look good.

"You look beautiful", I complimented, talking over the spanish music always playing at the small tapas bar.

She blushed a little, looking me up and down. "You're not looking bad yourself." I smiled, gesturing away the compliment and quietly thanking fate that men only had to don a pair

of slacks and a dress shirt to be considered well dressed. Taking a breath to summon my confidence, I put my arm in hers and walked up to the host.

Two this evening?”

We both nodded simultaneously, and after a brief strange look from the host, we were brought to a quieter table towards the fringe of the patio, to enjoy the spring evening. I gave a silent thanks to the propane heater keeping us from the occasional frigid gust, and stretched my legs out under the table, finding Alexa’s legs doing the same thing.

I pointed a finger in mock accusation at Alexa. “We’ve only been sitting down for thirty seconds and you’re playing footsie already? You’re incorrigible!”

“I may be,” she began, keeping a straight face, “but I’m pretty sure you’re the one who asked me, your former student, out on a date.”

I laughed and jokingly hung my head in shame. “Point taken. I think we’re both pretty incorrigible at this point. Perhaps we should just consider this a tie and order?”

Alexa nodded, and I spent the next few minutes paging through their extensive menu of expensive Mediterranean foods. Finally, I looked up, seeing her smiling right back at me. “You sure do take your time with a menu”

“Well, yes, but see... uh... I have a good reason.”

She called my bluff. “Oh?”

Thinking quickly, I looked down at the menu. “Well, uh see, if the item has a tilde over any of the letters in its name, it’s automatically at least one dollar more than it should be. If it has an accent, then it’s two dollars more. If it’s got a c with the little cedilla mark hanging off of it, it looks like that adds three dollars to a reasonable price.”

“Actually,” came a voice from over my shoulder, “the cedilla adds around five bucks, if you ask me.”

Alexa started laughing, and I spun around to find the waiter standing right behind me, dressed in solid black. “Hi, I’m your waiter, Col...”

When our eyes met, he stopped in mid sentence. I recognized his face instantly, and he must’ve recognized mine. It was the guy who had fucked Sadie in the hallway the prior Friday. He looked at me uncomfortably for a second, took a deep breath, and seemed to restart his introduction.

“Uh hi, I’m Colin, I’ll be your waiter tonight.”

I nodded, acting conspicuously casual, noticing Alexa shifting her weight back and forth in the chair opposite us. “Uh, Hi Colin. Nice to... meet you.”

He examined his ordering pad awkwardly in the silence. “Well, have you two been to Neó before?”

Alexa put her hand on mine, as if to say “follow my lead”. “A few times” she said, slowly and deliberately. “I knew you looked familiar, you must’ve waited on us before.”

Catching the drift, he nodded eagerly. “For sure. Well, good to see you two again.”

We all smiled, a suitable cover established, and exchanged the requisite pleasantries of distant acquaintances. The moment of awkwardness seeming to pass, Alexa and I put in our orders, careful to avoid anything with a cedilla in the name, and soon enough, Colin went away.

She rubbed her head, grimacing. “That was kind of awkward.”

“Just a bit. I don’t know how you all can well meet people around without the awkwardness.”

She shook her head. “Most of us are used to it, so we don’t even think twice. You two are just new,” she continued, starting to laugh, “you don’t quite have the requisite social graces yet.”

I rolled my eyes. “Sorry, I must’ve missed the cotillion.”

We quickly fell into pleasant conversation, ranging from school to the madness of her sorority house to formulating new and exciting ways to confuse Greg. We fell so deeply into the conversation that before we even realized it, three rounds of tapas had come and gone and were sitting on the nearly deserted patio, kept company only by the subtle hiss of the propane heater and the distant hum of a vacuum inside the restaurant. I looked down at my watch, which had jumped nearly three hours in conversation, and gave Alexa’s foot a little tap under the table.

“Shall we settle up and head out?”

Alexa nodded, her smile matching my own. Soon enough, Colin arrived with the bill and set it down in front of me. I took one look at the total and stopped him. “Hold up a second. There must be a mistake, we ordered a lot more than this.” He shook his head. “No, it’s all there. You two ordered three rounds of tapas, and the first was on the house”

Alexa piped up. “You didn’t have to do that, Colin”

He adjusted his tie, a hint of the earlier awkwardness returning. “Well, you two are return customers. No sense in overcharging friends.”

I shook his hand, smiling, and handing him enough cash to cover the check, along with a generous tip.

As we let ourselves out through the wrought iron patio gate, Alexa put an arm around me, walking beside me. “Why don’t we walk home together? It’s a nice night.”

I put my arm around her, and started walking, as if to answer her question. We set off quietly down the main street, arm in arm, into the cool spring air.

38

“That was pretty awesome at dinner,” I said, “I figured he’d be too weirded out to talk to us, let alone to comp us.”

Alexa laughed. “It happens pretty often” she began, “Most guys are really nice to us outside of the events”

Throughout the course of the dinner, we touched on nearly everything we had in common, except for the big white elephant in the room, our Friday night plans. I’d had questions since the day I first realized she was involved, but never had a good opening to discuss them. I figured that this was as good a time as any.

“So,” I began, a bit nervously, looking around to make sure we were alone on the sidewalk, “Why’d you join... there... in the first place?”

She slowed, her arm pulling back towards her, a bit defensively. “The money”, she said, matter-of-factly.

I was a bit taken aback by her sudden change in personality, and looked over at her, an eyebrow cocked.

She took a deep breath. “Well, I guess it’s mostly the money.”

I nodded, not really wanting to pry.

She sighed. “My Mom walked out on my Dad and I a long time ago. He sells carpet back in San Francisco, but there’s no way he could afford four years of out-of-state tuition for me here while still putting my brother through high school. Not to mention car payments, and sorority dues”

I nodded sympathetically. “So O Nu pays for your college?”

She smiled wryly. “No, the “Omicron Mu Women’s Honor Society” does. It just seems like the only women it honors are wearing red on Friday nights.” I laughed, but then caught myself, giving her a look of apology. She waved it off. “Don’t worry, the irony of a women’s honor society for us isn’t lost on me.”

“So, you’re just in it for the money?”

She slowed a bit further, and I thought I saw her face flushing in the yellowed light of the overhead streetlamp. Eventually, she came to a stop altogether. “Well, to be honest...” she said, pausing, then looking up at me nervously, “I kind of enjoy it. ”

I smiled, nodding my head in deference, as if begging her to go on.

“I’ve got a sex drive that’s kind of... well, it’s pretty intense. So, I figured this was a safe way to get it out of my system. And it cuts *way* down on the cost of dating.” She looked into my eyes, looking a bit scared and seeking approval.

I smiled. “Makes sense to me.”

“You don’t think I’m a whore or anything?”

I shook my head, as reassuringly as I could. “My sex drive’s pretty intense too. I understand that as a motivation.”

She nodded. “I mean, it’s fine most of the time. The guys are usually nice. I figure if I can pay for college, get some spending money, and maybe even enjoy myself a bit, then I’m doing OK. Is that so wrong?”

I stopped and looked at her, doing my best to keep a straight face. “You realize you just asked an ethics teacher whether something is right or wrong. Doesn’t even matter what you’re talking about, just asking is dangerous enough.”

She laughed, putting the arm back around me. “Alright, alright. Can we just stick this in a gray area someplace?”

I put my arm around her. “Alexa, since I got involved with this, my entire life has become a gray area.”

She pulled herself a bit closer, and we started walking again. “What do you do about it?”

I took a deep breath. “I try not to pay too much attention to what dead German philosophers have to say.”

She laughed, pulling me closer, and we walked on into the night.

39

I didn't dare look at my watch. We had arrived at the door of her sorority house after walking up and down nearly every street in the neighborhood, passing by her house what seemed like dozens of times, but both unwilling to end the conversation just yet. We jumped from topic to topic, from her Dad's carpet business in San Francisco, to her sorority, to my photography. Each moment was pleasant, feeling the warmth of her body next to mine, and the chemistry seemed almost perfect. Her optimism seemed to overpower my jaded view of my own problems and offer new views of long-time issues, and my detached logic let me show her different perspectives on the people who were causing trouble in her life.

In short, the more we talked, the more we wanted to talk, but, as the Buddha was so fond of pointing out, all things are impermanent, and since it was a Tuesday, we both had to be up the next day. So, eventually, we found ourselves on the doorstep of her sorority house, arms still around one another, and neither willing to leave just yet.

"This was lots of fun, Caleb"

"Yes," I smiled, "it definitely was."

She looked up at me, and smiled a wonderful smile. She moved in closer to hug me, her breasts pressing against me, her perfume drifting up to my nose. Before I could even think twice, I felt a very familiar arousal beginning, and before I could break the hug, I was already at half mast, still firmly pressed against her stomach. She looked down, a bit confused for a moment, and then started giggling.

"Well," she said, giggling, "I'm glad to see that we're in agreement about that sort of thought too."

I shook my head, turning a bit red. "Sorry. I'm going to have to go have a talk with the little bastard about his timing."

She backed off slowly, leaning back against the door, crossing her arms. "So," she began, a bit more hesitantly, "I guess that means you want to come in?"

The mere mention sent the furnace inside me into overdrive, and I knew that unless I acted quickly, he'd take over and it'd turn into a far later night, and perhaps, a far more awkward

morning. I took a deep breath, imagining Kant's haughty stare coming from my textbook at home, and took a step back.

"You know, it's late. I should probably head back. Besides, no need to rush."

She smiled, bringing her arms down and taking my hand again. "Yeah, I'm kinda tired anyways."

"What are you up to Thursday errr tomorrow night?"

"Seeing you?" She asked, smiling.

I smiled. "That would be wonderful. Why don't you give me a call tomorrow err today, and we'll work something out?"

She nodded her assent. "Who knows," she said, a coquettish glint in her eye, "you might even get to see my room."

My softening manhood pulsed back to life with her teasing, but I quickly took steps to tame it, desperately thinking of a recent article I had to read for a seminar. When all thoughts of arousal had been banished by Peter Singer's insufferable smugness. All control went to pieces when she leaned in for another hug.

"You know," I said, "I'm never going to leave if we keep standing here and hugging. And if memory serves, I've got at least 25 papers to grade in the next 14 hours, so I should probably go."

"Probably. I'd hate to keep you from your duties. That would be positively unethical?"

I laughed, then stepped down off the front step. I brought her hand to my mouth, kissing the back of it. "Goodnight, Alexa."

"Goodnight, Caleb."

I walked off, smiling as I turned the corner, and watched the light go on in what must've been her room as I walked away. My heart was fluttering, and, well, I was pretty turned on, too. I took a deep breath of the cool night air, and set off down the street.

40

“Calm down, Greg” I pleaded, desperately fighting to keep a straight face while “comforting” the anxious TA in office hours. “I’m sure your students aren’t sophisticated enough to get past your eye for catching plagiarism”

“But Caleb,” Greg wheedled, once again sitting bolt upright on the edge of the soft leather recliner, clutching Alexa’s barcode, “unless I’m using every means I can, my students could be cheating at this very moment, and I won’t know a thing about it.”

Taking a deep breath, trying even harder to keep from laughing, I leaned back in my chair. “I mean, the SAASW system is still in a private beta. Frankly, I shouldn’t even be talking about it with you if you weren’t invited, I think I signed an NDA.”

He shook his head, frustrated, then placed a stack of Alexa’s papers on the desk. “Well, could you at least check these signatures for me to make sure they’re legitimate?”

I nodded, feigning nonchalance. “I’ll take those home and check them with the well, I probably shouldn’t tell you how I’m checking them.”

Greg nodded in his typically businesslike manner. “Good. I don’t trust this girl one bit. She came from your class, and, well, there’s no way she could be doing this well on MY assignments without some sort of funny business.”

I shook my head disdainfully, patting the stack of papers and their attached “signatures”. “Well, at least now we have a way to check these things.”

Greg nodded, adjusting his tie and straightening the exactly starched collar of his shirt as he stood. “Thanks Caleb. See if you can’t get me into that program, will you?”

I put on my best look of concern and nodded. “I’ll do my best.” With that, Greg stiffly turned and marched out of my office, leaving me finally free to burst into silent laughter.

I fell back into my chair smiling. It was Friday morning, and everything seemed to be going my way. I’d just deposited my O Nu earnings and found myself suddenly able to pay rent for the next few months, with enough left over for a new telephoto lens and a couple of fancy dinners. Even more importantly, I finally had somebody who I actually wanted to take to dinner.

Alexa and I went out again last night and had a wonderful time (even despite our choosing a pretty lackluster restaurant). Once again, we’d ended up spending a few hours just sitting and talking, and that was followed by another leisurely walk home in the cool night

air. Although the evening had ended with little more than a chaste kiss due to the hour, I was clearly hooked, and I'd already invited her to come with me to see a new movie tomorrow.

But that was tomorrow, and as Herb's earlier call reminded me, I still had tonight's O Nu gathering to photograph. Each week, the call was getting shorter and shorter. Today, he'd simply reminded me to go "check on my friend Dulcinea" and to talk to him afterwards.

The strange thing, though, is that for the first time, I wasn't really looking forward to the gathering. I mean, sure, I'd be surrounded by nubile and available young women, and the occasional twitch between my legs served to remind me of just how much fun I could have. But really, all I could think about was Alexa, and I didn't really want to do anything with her there. I wanted to keep doing things the old-fashioned way, rather than taking her where I knew she wouldn't refuse. I sighed to myself, laughing. "The moment I fall into a story straight out of every man's fantasy, I have to get all romantic."

I looked at Alexa's papers on the desk, each paper sporting a barcode fastened to the top with care. "Well," I smiled, "She's worth it."

41

I stepped through the heavy doors at the front of the O Nu house, and almost as soon as the door had shut behind me, I heard the yelling. "Herb, you are NOT going to let him come back tonight!"

Recognizing Sophie's angry voice coming from the main staircase the moment I walked in, I set down my camera gear and slid aside, listening carefully from behind a door frame.

"He's still a member," Herb's deep, accented voice began, raised just a bit louder than hers, "he paid his dues just like every other man here. There's no way in hell I'm going to turn away a brother just because he's not popular with the girls and likes to tip the bottle a bit."

"Not popular? Herb, Meg just told me that he held her down and forced her last week, you know that's against the charter."

Herb scoffed. I snuck a glance around the corner, to find Herb shaking his head, standing at the top of the stairs, Sophie glaring up at him from a few steps below, her red robe

tightened snugly around her.

“Listen here babydoll,” Herb began condescendingly in his characteristic drawl, “first off, he just got tested last week and he came back clean on all fronts, so we know he’s going to keep your precious little girls clean. Second, there’s nothing saying that brothers can’t get a bit rough if that’s how they like...”

Sophie exploded. “A bit rough?! She’s still got a bruise on her neck where he held her down. He raped her, and I don’t care who his Daddy is, he needs to be kicked out.”

“Oh come on. She wasn’t raped. She consented the moment she picked up the first check, like each and every one of those girls. We’re paying her tuition, buying her books, and even gave her enough on the side for that little yellow sportscar she loves so much. The little slut should be grateful that she’s got the opportunity to make that kind of cash without having to fuck some 60 year old billionaire.” He stopped, leaning back against the post and adjusting his jacket. “I should also remind you that I have the final say here, not you, and if you or any of your little whores down there say or do anything untowards to any of our brothers, you’ll be out of a job on the streets faster than you can say “prostitution”.”

Sophie shook her head, angry and disgusted. “You’re a pig, Herb,” She paused. “That’s why I didn’t want you then, and why I sure as hell don’t want you now.”

A look of pained discomfort crossed his face after her comment, but, catching himself, Herb conspicuously rolled his eyes and smiled. “Anything else, sweetcheeks?”

Sophie spat towards the top step where Herb stood, then turned and headed down the stairs. Herb calmly took a cigar from his shirt pocket and walked back towards his office.

42

I waited for a few seconds behind the doorframe, letting the tension clear a bit, and then picked my gear back up and headed towards the stairs. As always, Sophie was standing at the bottom landing, beautiful as ever, but her clenched fist and red face showed just how livid she still was. She straightened up as she heard my footfalls on the landing, seeming relieved as soon as she recognized me. “Hey Rick,” she said, breathing deeply, “glad to see the asshole upstairs is still willing to let in a decent man with a conscience.”

“Trouble from upstairs?” I set my bag down, taking out my camera and attaching the new, bulky heavy-duty zoom lens, leaving it hanging heavily on the strap around my neck. “I heard you two arguing. I can’t believe he’s standing up for that.”

Neither can I. Some days I just want to kick him in the nuts and walk out of here.”

I laughed awkwardly. “So uh why don’t you?”

She sighed. “I want to, but I can’t bring myself to leave the girls to him. At least here I can try and fight for them. Normally he at least listens to what I have to say, but he’s way out of line with this guy.”

“So, you put up with him just to help the girls?”

“Yeah”, she smiled a bit, taking a deep breath and shooting me the sexiest grin she could muster, “Although there are other perks to the job too.”

Another set of footfalls echoed down the staircase, causing both Sophie and I to look up. A young, muscular blonde guy slowly staggered down the stairs, dressed in a pair of black slacks, a blue dress shirt, and a wrinkled red tie. His eyes were red, and I could smell the tequila on him from feet away. He passed between us, stumbling, without even making eye contact, and made his way into the lounge. As soon as the door to the lounge shut behind him, Sophie spoke up angrily, her fists balled tight. “That’s him. The asshole that raped Meg.”

“Think he’s going to cause more trouble?”

She sighed. “Herb wouldn’t even give him a slap on the wrist because of who his daddy is.”

I gave her a concerned look. “If you need a hand, just find me.”

Sophie hugged me, smiling. “Thank you. I hope I won’t have to.”

I smiled cautiously, and headed down the hall towards the lounge.

“Oh, and Rick...” Sophie called back, a bit of the sparkle returning to her eyes, “Just a warning, I think Brandi’s still after you. Enter the lounge at your own risk, she’s probably just waiting to pounce.”

I laughed. “Thanks for the warning.” Sophie smiled, as I turned back towards the lounge, camera bag in hand, ready for another long night in the gray area that is Omicron Nu.

43

The moment the lounge door shut behind me, I started counting under my breath, curious how long it would take her to find me, but before I'd even hit the double digits, I felt a lithe arm slip through mine. Brandi, the beautiful, thin brunette, was now walking alongside me. I grinned, partly at the barely-clothed brunette who was walking with me, and partly at the complete accuracy of Sophie's prediction, and let Brandi lead my way.

Hiya," she said, with a warmth nothing like when we had first met. "I was starting to worry that you weren't coming, and I missed you last week..."

My eyes slowly adjusted to the dark room as I looked around, seeing a few familiar faces, but no sign of Alexa. Feeling the pull on my arm, I realized that Brandi wasn't simply leading me to a chair, but instead, was pulling me back towards the rooms behind the lounge.

I smiled at her. "You know, I'm starting to think you have a plan for me."

She nodded matter-of-factly as we moved into the hallway. "Well, you've been so nice to me and all the other girls, and I wanted to repay the favor, so you're going to come and take my picture."

I nodded. "Wonderful. I'm always happy to have a willing, beautiful model."

"No no," she said, stopping in the hallway, grinning seductively. "You don't understand. First, you're going to come, and then you're going to take my picture"

My breath caught in my throat as she clarified, my cock immediately springing to life, throbbing against the front of my pants. She led me down the hallway quickly, pulling me into the first private room, leaving the door ajar.

Before I could even set down my camera bag, Brandi was sliding her hands along my thighs and crotch, pushing me back against the wall next to the door. I pushed my camera, still hanging from the neck strap, off to my side, and simply surrendered, letting her hands go where they pleased.

"I've been wanting to do this to you ever since that first day" she began, quickly unbuckling my belt, "You were so nice, so gentlemanly" she continued, pulling my pants down, "and I really appreciated that."

I attempted to craft an answer, but before I could even open my mouth, her hand had surrounded my hardness, and she was falling to her knees in front of me. I took a deep breath as I felt Brandi's lips wrap around the head of my cock, sliding slowly down the

shaft as she took me into her throat. I looked down, breathing heavily, as she hungrily sucked and slid her lips up and down my pulsing shaft, a moan escaping my lips.

I shut my eyes, leaning back against the wall, concentrating on her constantly moving tongue, on the feeling of sliding deep into her throat, feeling my come starting to boil up. I ran my hand through her hair, gently pushing back and forth along with her sucking, my breathing quickening.

“God...” I started moaning. “Oh Brandi you’re going to make me”

“I SAID NO!”

Although it took my pleasure-scattered mind a few seconds to snap back to reality after hearing the scream. I quickly pulled up my pants, pushing my camera out of the way to fasten my pants. Brandi pulled back, looking up at me, her face full of concern.

“OW! NO! GET OFF OF ME!”

When I heard the second scream, I stopped dead in my tracks, recognizing the voice with crystal clarity. It was Alexa.

“I’ll get Sophie,” Brandi said, ditching her heels without missing a beat and sprinting off down the hallway.

I ran out of the small room, towards the source of the screams, pulling my camera down off my neck. I burst into the room, kicking open the door. There, I saw Alexa laid out on the bed, holding a hand over her right eye as the blonde man from the stairway straddled her, holding her neck down against the mattress, his other hand trying to cover her mouth. Her nightgown was already torn, her panties ripped and tossed aside on the floor.

She looked over at me, her eyes filled with fear. Rotating her head to get out from under his hand, she shouted. “Caleb! Help!”

Seeming to notice me for the first time, the man looked up at me angrily, slurring his words. “I paid, I’m a member, she’s mine.”

I moved closer, not even thinking to drop my camera as I shoved him with my other hand, trying to push him off of her. He pulled his hands off of her mouth and throat and began to stand, pulling his hand back clenching it into a fist. He staggered back a bit, then started forward, fist cocked back to take a swipe at me. Alexa kicked him in the side from on the bed, distracting him, and before he could regain a steady footing to punch, I swung my camera at him forward with every bit of force I could muster, the long, heavy lens swinging up against the side of his head. The moment the lens hit, he crumpled, falling straight back against the bedpost and landing limp and unconscious on the floor.

I looked down at him, and seeing him unlikely to wake up anytime soon, I ran to Alexa on the bed. “Are you OK?”

She slowly sat up, sobbing, and pulled her hand back, revealing an already swelling black eye. I sat on the bed next to her, taking her into my arms. We both looked up, hearing a torrent of approaching footfalls in the hall. Brandi and Sophie burst into the room as the other girls crowded in the hallway.

Sophie looked down at the unconscious man, then over at Alexa crying in my arms. She came over and took Alexa’s hand. “Oh my God, are you OK? Did he...?”

She shook her head. “No... I said no and I tried to get up... he hit me and held me down... but then Caleb showed up...”

Sophie looked up at me. “Caleb?”

I nodded.

She gave a look of understanding, then glanced over at Brandi, who was kneeling on top of the unconscious man, fingers on his neck. She looked up. “Out like a light.”

Suddenly, I heard Herb’s voice coming down the hall, his heavy footfalls growing closer. “Get out of my way, damnit. What’s the commotion?” He turned the corner into the room, looked at the three of us, then over at the unconscious man, his face distorting with anger.

“What the fuck did you all do to him?”

Sophie stood up, marching directly towards him. “What did we do to him?” she shouted angrily. “*To him?!* ” Seeing the fury in her eyes, Herb started to back away, slowly moving back out the door and into the hallway as Sophie advanced on him. “HE tried to rape Lexi. Rick protected her. WE didn’t do anything to him that he didn’t deserve a thousand times over.”

Herb started to stammer a response, but Sophie kept talking right over him.

“Rick protected her and gave him a nice heavy whack on the head, which is only about half of what I want to do to him right now. But really, you’re the one who’s in for the worst of it, because *you* let this asshole back in here.”

In his retreat, Herb backed into the wall in the hallway, his head hitting first, disorienting him a bit as Sophie’s accusing finger kept advancing right up to his throat. Sophie continued, her voice growing louder and more authoritative still, all the girls in the hallway backing away.

“You’re going to go upstairs, you’re going to call this asshole’s Senator daddy, explain what just happened, and have him pick up his unconscious son and get him to a hospital before I turn him into a dead son. Then, you and I going to have a little chat with the O Nu leadership about your giving him a second chance after he broke the rules, risking the girls and your little club’s precious reputation.”

Herb tried one last time to muster some authority, pushing back from the wall. “Now hold on a second baby...”

Sophie shook her head, pushing him back against the wall with her manicured finger at his throat. “No, you listen to me. If you don’t go right upstairs this instant, I’ve got 8 witnesses right here that saw him try to rape her as she walked into this house. And they’re pretty sure they saw you with him.” She motioned to all the girls standing around, nodding defiantly. “I’m sure the O Nu leadership would love that sort of publicity. Got that, “Baby”?”

Herb swallowed hard and nodded as Sophie pulled back her finger. He shook his head, took a deep breath, and set off down the hallway. Muttering “Bitch” quietly under his breath.

I looked back down at Alexa, who was starting to regain her composure, still leaning against my chest, and then up at Sophie, talking with all the girls in the hallway. One of the girls ran off and quickly returned with tape, taping the still unconscious man’s hands and feet together. Sophie motioned Alexa and I over to her, at the door of the room, dismissing all the other girls.

“Are you sure you two are alright?”

Alexa nodded quietly. “Yeah.”

Sophie looked over at me.

“I’m fine,” I then held up my camera, the lens bent unnaturally and the glass inside cracked. “I think my lens is a bit worse for the wear, though.”

Sophie smiled. “Well, at least the lens died for a good cause. Look, everybody’s going home, and there’s no reason for you two to stick around for the shitstorm that’s about to blow into Herb’s life.”

I nodded. “Will there be police reports to fill out?”

She shook her head. “He’s a Senator’s son. There’s no way he’ll be charged.”

Alexa looked up angrily. “He won’t?!”

“But hold on,” Sophie said, “That’s not right, I know. But the fact is, he’s crossed a bright red line in the membership agreement, and his injury means nobody’s going to be able to look the other way. He just risked exposing the entire organization to law enforcement, so he’s just pissed off a lot of alumni. That means that although he may never see a jail cell, he’ll probably never see law school or even a decent corporate job where any O Nu people are involved. Not to mention the embarrassment that it’s going to cause his O Nu alumnus Daddy.”

Alexa nodded. “It’s something, I guess.” Then, she sighed angrily and suddenly turned around, got a few steps worth of momentum and gave the unconscious man a swift kick in the side, eliciting a painful groan from his still unconscious body.

“There,” she said, “do-it-yourself justice.”

Sophie looked over at me. “We didn’t see anything, right Rick?”

I nodded, “Must’ve hit the bed on his way down.” I paused for a second, suddenly uncomfortable to wear the name Herb had given me. “But my name’s Caleb.”

Sophie nodded, and gave us both a hug. “Get out of here, I’ll take it from here.” As we headed down the hallway, I turned back just in time to see Sophie put a foot up on the unconscious man’s back, her heel pressing into his side as she stood waiting.

44

We came up the staircase quietly, one arm still wrapped around Alexa, my camera gear in my other, and a familiar voice came out from Herb’s office.

“Is that you, Rick?”

I sighed angrily and started down the hall towards his office, the two of us stopping in his doorway. I looked up at him. “What do you want?”

Herb adjusted his tie, still pale and flustered but trying to keep his cool. “We’ve got to have a little talk.”

I shook my head. “I quit. What’s there to talk about?”

Herb sighed. “You’re both not coming back here. Not after the shitstorm you’ve caused.”

Alexa gritted her teeth and spoke quietly. “I wasn’t planning on it. Besides, it sounds like you’re the one in the middle of this all.”

He sighed with resignation. “I just got off the phone with... well, you don’t need to know who with.” He gritted his teeth, his face distorted with the bitter taste of resignation.

He turned to face Alexa. “Lucy... errr. Lexus? Err, well, whoever you are, they want me to formally apologize for... all this. As a token of apology, they’re going to drop a few years worth of tuition into your account, along with a something extra for your pain. They also want to let you know that...” He grimaced again. “They’ll take care of this situation and make sure that any responsible parties are... dealt with.”

He took a deep breath, some of his prior poise returning. “You both know that once you leave this room, you’ve never heard of O Nu. I never met you, you never met me. Trash your O Nu phone and your cards, and make no further inquiries. We wouldn’t want you two to have to see any sorts of complications.”

As for you,” he began, glaring at me angrily and coming forward to hand me a piece of paper with a book call number on it. “they just want you to shut the fuck up. Look in that book tomorrow for your back salary, plus some extra to keep that big mouth shut.”

I nodded.

He looked over at his phone, a small red light flashing in a silent ring. “Now, get the fuck out of here, both of you.”

45

We turned and walked out, passing by the stairway. Alexa grabbed her overcoat from the coat rack, putting it on over her torn lingerie as I threw my camera bag over my shoulder, bent lens and all. I wrapped my arm around her, opening the heavy wooden door, letting in a burst of cool air. The moon was full, just beginning to peek over the house before us. We slowly descended the stone steps onto the gravel path, and walked down the street, into the moon’s silvery light, filtered by the trees and accented with the pale orange light of the lamps overhead.

Alexa looked up at me, one hand over her injured eye and the other wrapped around my hand. “Do you think I could come over to your place and put some ice on this?”

“Of course you can,” I said, “you’re always welcome.”

We walked the few blocks to my apartment in silence, then went up the stairs into my apartment. As I fumbled for my keys in my pocket, Alexa took my other hand and

squeezed.

“Thanks.” She paused. “You know for everything.”

I pulled her close, into a hug. “You’re more than welcome.”

We went inside and she sat down on the worn green leather couch in my living room, hand still on her already swollen eye. I quickly grabbed an unopened bag of frozen strawberries and handed it to her while I went back into the kitchen to make up an actual icepack. She smiled, gasping slightly as she brought it to her face, then slowly leaned back into the couch.

“Hey Caleb” she began, hesitantly.

I poked my head around the corner from the kitchen to look at her. “Everything OK?”

She looked over at me, turning so she could see me with her uninjured eye. “I’m sorry about all this.”

“What are you apologizing for? You didn’t do anything.”

She shook her head. “If you hadn’t helped me, you’d still have a job and well, all those girls.”

I cracked the cubes in the baggie against the kitchen counter and wrapped them in a paper towel, then came and sat down next to her, putting an arm around her.

“You have nothing to apologize for,”

I said. “If I hadn’t helped you, it’s doubtful I’d have been able to sleep at night for a long time, \$150 an hour or not. Besides,” I gently squeezed her thigh. “I don’t really want any of those other girls.”

She looked up at me, incredulous. “Really?”

“Sex is sex. It feels good, but then it’s gone. Just talking with you makes me feel happy, and the feeling sticks around far longer than those girls ever would.”

She smiled. “So you’re not going to miss O Nu?”

I shook my head. “I’ll miss some of the girls, especially Sophie, but it’s not like I’d really have gotten to know them anyways.”

She smiled. “Yeah, that’s kind of how I feel.” She shrugged. “Plus, I mean, with the money Herb mentioned, it’s not like I need it anymore.”

I nodded. "I wish you didn't have to go through all this to get it, but I guess it did kind of work out in the end."

She smiled, looking distractedly across the room at the faded print on the far wall, her free hand gently squeezing mine. She leaned into me, resting her head and her good eye against my chest, still holding the icepack with her other hand.

I pulled her tight against my chest, content. "They don't need us,"

I quietly mused, "and we don't need them."

She nodded gently. "In fact," she began, "you're probably much better off now."

I looked down at her. "Oh?"

She gently nodded again. "As soon as this headache goes away and I get some rest, you're going to be getting some a lot more often than one night a week."

My breath caught in my throat and I smiled broadly, running my hand through her hair and gently planting a kiss on the top of her head. I smiled to myself. "I suppose fantasies really do come true."

46

I gasped as I saw Alexa walk up to the host at our restaurant. Dressed in a classy black dress with a necklace of clear stones, a pair of high heeled sandals and a subtle pair of pantyhose, she looks as beautiful as I'd ever seen her. The host quickly pointed her towards my table, and, as I couldn't help but notice, looked her up and down as she worked her way towards me through the Friday night crowd.

How could I blame him, though. Her curves were beautifully accented by the dress, her breasts just exposed enough to tantalize, her shapely ass and thighs undulating with her graceful steps towards me. She finally came and sat down opposite me at the table for two. She smiled across the table, her makeup immaculate and her eye showing no remaining sign of the last Friday's injury.

I took a deep breath, composing myself. "You look... stunning. That's about the only word for it."

Looking me up and down, she smiled. "You're not half bad yourself."

The waiter came and dropped off the menu, and, after a cursory glance at the menu, we ordered.

After a few seconds of silence, she sighed and looked over at me. “So,” she began, “You’re the ethics teacher. Maybe you can help.”

I nodded. “What’s up? Greg’s class giving you trouble?”

She shook her head, then looked around furtively, making sure nobody was listening too closely, then leaned across the table. “Actually, it’s about last Friday.”

I leaned in a bit closer.

“Well, remember the kick I gave that guy after you knocked him out?”

I nodded. “What about it?”

She leaned back. “That wasn’t terribly ethical, was it? I mean, Kant would definitely be against it.”

“Well,” I began, leaning back in the chair. “Technically, Kant would have been against my knocking him out in the first place, because, if choosing a course of action for everybody to take, we’d probably want to handle things more peacefully.”

She shook her head. “What? That’s ridiculous! You saved me from...” She trailed off.

I nodded strongly. “I know, and that’s precisely the point I wanted to make. I love studying ethics, but the fact is, some of the claims people make, especially the ones Kant makes, aren’t realistic at all.”

She nodded enthusiastically.

“That’s OK, though,” I continued, “In my mind, the goal isn’t to drive yourself crazy trying to adhere to one particular theory or to beat yourself up if you break some sort of divine rule. Instead, we just need to think long and hard about the ideas behind “right” and “wrong”...”

Alexa cut in. “... and then do our best to do the right thing where we can?”

I smiled, nodding my head sagely. “Exactly.”

Alexa leaned back, kneading her hands for a second, then grinned wryly. “Well, frankly,” she said, “I still think giving that son-of-a-bitch a swift kick in the ribs was probably the right thing to do.”

I laughed, taking her hand across the table. “I think you’re probably fine... in fact,” I said, pausing to look her up and down, “I think you’re definitely fine. In any number of ways.”

She smiled at me flirtatiously as the waiter arrived, carrying our drinks. We both thanked him, and as he departed, Alexa fell silent, looking around at the buzz of activity in the small restaurant and lounge.

“You know,” she began, still taking in the scene, “I didn’t think I’d see another Friday night on the town until I graduated.”

I nodded. “It is rather nice to have my weekend schedule wide open again. Especially when I get to fill it with classy dinners with beautiful girls. There’s no place I’d rather be tonight.”

She flashed a coquettish smile. “Actually,” she said, her feet sliding to meet mine under the table. “There’s one other place I’d like to be right now.”

“Where’s that?”

She gently bit her lower lip, then, smiling, she stood up and walked around to my side of the table. Leaning in close to my ear, her perfume overwhelming my senses, she whispered. “Your bed”

She winked and stood back up, excusing herself for a moment, leaving me sitting dumbly in the corner of the restaurant, happy, hard, and feeling like the luckiest man in the world.

47

I led her into my apartment, leading her towards the same green couch on which we’d shared a night’s sleep only a week ago. I planted a gentle kiss on her lips, then motioned her to have a seat. She did, looking around the freshly cleaned apartment as I stole off into the bedroom.

Quickly arranging everything, I emerged with a black silk handkerchief in hand and walked over to her. Helping her up from the couch, admiring her beautiful form once more, I folded the fabric into a makeshift blindfold, bringing it up to her eyes, a finger across her lips keeping her questions at bay.

She smiled, letting me slip the blindfold onto her, and then took my arm as I led her into my darkened bedroom. Closing the door behind us, I looked around, my eyes adjusting to the light of the candles placed about the room. I looked her up and down one last time in her beautiful black dress, then pulled her in for a kiss, at first a gentle kiss on the lips, but quickly growing more passionate. Soon, we had moved down onto the bed, kissing passionately, our hands wandering as we embraced. I reached up and slipped off her blindfold, a pleased gasp escaping her lips.

I started to slide my hands up and down her curvaceous figure, each time, moving closer and closer to her most sensitive areas, as she started to run a hand up my thigh, moving quickly towards my hardness. I stood, helping her up as well, and then began to undress her, first peeling off her skin-tight dress, revealing her creamy skin inch by inch. Then, slowly, I removed her bra, letting her gorgeous breasts fall free. Then, letting her remove her pantyhose, I quickly removed my tie and began to unbutton my own shirt. Finally, she stood in front of me, wearing nothing but a form-fitting pair of black thong panties, then unbuttoned and slid my pants down and off of me.

I took her in my arms again, slowly lowering her to the bed, then sliding between her legs, kissing and nibbling her lip, then her neck, her breasts, her stomach, all the way down to the black fabric of her panties. I brought my mouth to the already damp fabric, breathing deeply, the teasing of my breath bringing a moan from her gorgeous lips. She spread her legs, her hips gently pushing up into the air, and I pulled aside the fabric of her panties, revealing her hairless lips and the neatly trimmed patch of dark hair above them. I brought my tongue down, slowly sliding it from her already swollen clit down to her moist entrance and back, her moans growing louder with every delicious second. Gently probing, I tasted her delicious arousal, teasing her entrance with the tip of my tongue as my other hand tightly grasped her hand.

She moaned aloud, writhing back and forth on the bed, pushing her sex up to meet my mouth, her breathing growing deeper with every passing moment. She started to quiver, looking down and moaning more loudly, as I felt her approaching the edge. I looked up at her, a visage of ecstasy, as I slid my tongue back and forth, in circles around her delicate clit. Soon, her legs and thighs began to quiver, grinding against my probing tongue, and her hand pressed gently into the back of my head. Her breathing grew deeper still as I kept licking and licking, my tongue tracing every contour of her beautiful folds, until her whole body tensed, her moaning stopping for just a moment as she pressed up against me, her orgasm coursing through her, then falling back against the bed with a moan of release.

I slowly kissed back up to her lips as she smiled, still breathing heavily, her hand slowly

reaching down to take hold of my already hardened member. I felt her guide my hardness up against her soaking wet sex, and then, as she brought her head up to kiss me, she pushed down onto me, my hardness sliding deep into her. We both gasped, never quite breaking the kiss as I pushed further into her, letting my manhood slide deeper and deeper into her tight pussy, pressing her down into the bed as I made love to her, our bodies quivering with pleasure, our kisses interspersed with moans.

Thrusting more and more forcefully, I lost track of time and space, and lost myself completely in the pleasure, fucking her deeply, our bodies shaking with each thrust, a moan escaping her lips with every long, deep stroke. Soon, we were both on the edge, holding each other tightly as we joined, our moans growing stronger, coming more quickly. Finally, I pushed deep into her and she cried out, her muscles tightening down, her orgasm sending me over the edge, making me thrust deeper into her, shaking, as I filled her still-tightened pussy with jet after jet of my seed.

As we both caught our breath, moaning and kissing contentedly, I slowly pulled back out of her, falling on the bed next to her. I rolled onto my side, and she did the same, and we shared another lingering kiss.

I put my arm around her, pulling her close to me, and she quietly nestled against my body, smiling. I kissed her cheek, and she kissed my hand, and, without even saying a word, we drifted off to sleep together, happier than we had both been in a long, long time.

Epilogue

Alexa laughed, sitting across from me in the grand atrium of the mall food court. “Wait, it’s been almost a year and he’s still going on about it?!”

I shook my head, laughing, and reached across the table to Alexa’s tray, stealing a french fry. “I almost feel bad, too, because Greg’s a brilliant guy if you need to talk metaphysics, but ask for some common sense and he’s up a creek. He still wants me to get him into the beta program. I think your fake signatures really sealed the deal.”

Suddenly, a familiar voice came entered the conversation from the next table over. “It’s the strangest thing,” said the voice. “You two remind me of a couple I used to work with.”

We looked over at the next table, both shocked to see Sophie smiling over at us, as beautiful as ever, wearing a classy pair of glasses and dressed in a nice business suit. She dabbed her

face with a napkin, setting it down on her tray next to a picked-through bowl of salad.

Seeing her and hearing her voice again brought back a torrent of memories. My mind drifted back to the very first night, almost a full year ago, at Omicron Nu. I remembered her enthusiastic welcome, her “initiation”, and how helpful she’d been, from finding girls, to keeping Herb in line, to her taking control on that final night. All of it seemed so distant now, and only my hushed conversations with Alexa served to convince me it was anything more than a bizarre dream.

I started to speak, but then caught myself, remembering Herb’s stern warning, still uneasy about exactly what sort of “complications” he was threatening. I glanced over at Alexa, also obviously surprised, but seemingly similarly unsure what to say.

As if reading our minds, Sophie spoke up again. “They were great people, and we all missed them dearly after they quit one day.”

We both smiled, still tongue-tied.

Sophie stood up, taking her tray. “Now that I think about it, it was probably for the best, that they left when they did. They fired the old boss that very night, but nothing really changed, so most of us just quit a few weeks after. Without any workers, they just shut the place down.”

Both of us stared over at her, surprised and fascinated to hear the ending of a story we never thought we would. Finally, Alexa spoke up. “Sounds like a pretty interesting story,” she began, hesitantly, “ and I’m glad to hear you got out of it OK.”

Sophie smiled warmly. “I’m glad we all did.” She paused for a second, looking at Alexa’s hand holding mine from across the table, then feigned embarrassment. “I’m sorry, though, I didn’t mean to interrupt your date with my silly little story.”

I waved off her concern, finally finding words. “It’s no problem,” I began, “Some days, you don’t know what was real and what was just a fantasy. It’s nice to hear other people’s stories.”

Sophie walked over to the trash can, emptying her tray and stacking it nonchalantly on top of all the others. She came back and grabbed her purse. “Maybe you’re right,” she said, looking over at us. “Maybe it was just a fantasy after all.”

She winked at us, then threw her purse over her shoulder, walking away, quickly disappearing into the bustling crowds.

I looked over at Alexa, still lost in thought. “All that does feel like a distant dream sometimes.” She nodded slowly. “But the nice thing about dreams,” she began, cupping her

hands around mine, “is that they make you all the more able to appreciate what you have when you finally wake up.”

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