

Tony's Girl

by Bingo

Note: This story is for adults.

1.

The man sitting across from me called himself Lou. Or Lew. He didn't indicate how it was spelled. Mid-fifties, longish hair, thinning and gray. Glasses and a stubble beard a day or two old, also gray. Lou liked to hear his voice.

We were in a bar; nice place, small, quiet. Our table was away from the window onto the street. Behind us two men played a fooseball machine. The only woman in the room was oriental, behind the bar, maybe the owner's wife.

My girlfriend and I had been checking out the town, trying to find a house for her. There was a strip of bars along the water, a few shops, nice older houses supposedly not that expensive and close to where we worked. We weren't looking for anything large; an older two-bedroom bungalow or craftsman cottage would suit us perfectly. She was with some friends, was going to call sometime this evening and we'd go out.

Lou had latched onto me quickly. He had a scheme for working on cars at clients' homes; wanted to see what I thought. I thought it was an okay idea, as far as it went.

"Foreign cars," Lou said. "BMW, Porsche, I love Porsches, stuff like that."

I nodded. My beer was finished and I was thinking of leaving. Cars didn't interest me much.

"Maybe a Lexus but I hate that Jap shit."

I glanced at the woman behind the bar who couldn't hear us but had a sour face anyway. "I drive a Lexus."

"Like it?"

"It's a good car."

He broke into a grin. "I look at those silly little engines and I just have to laugh." He tapped my bottle with his. "Buy you another?"

"I'm okay."

"Come on. You've listened to my business plan. It's my turn to listen."

I saw her come in the door, tall, blonde, long hair, sandals and legs that went on forever. Short skirt, a white blouse.

Lou turned to see what I was looking at. "Hey, honey," he said loud enough for her to hear. "Buy yourself something to drink and us two beers. We're thirsty." He held up a ten.

She took it and walked to the bar.

"That's a sure thing, Jim," Lou said from the corner of his mouth. "She doesn't want us to know it. Shy type." He turned to face me.

"My name's MacDonald, Lou."

"You don't say." He grinned. "Well, Mack."

"MacDonald Oberon."

He burst out laughing. "Sit over there, honey." He passed me a beer. "Mack here has a lulu of a name. One to make you sit up and pay attention. Mine's Lou, what's yours?"

"Trish." After taking a drink she put down her glass. Her eyebrows met, they formed a dark V giving her an astonished look.

"Trish, honey. Next drink treat yourself to something with a kick in it."

She looked down.

"Mack was going to tell us what he does. Then it's your turn. It's okay to lie, though."

She raised her eyes to mine. Twenty or twenty-five. I'm thirty-eight. Dark eyes, maybe brown eyes in the light.

"I write," I said.

"Not Elmore Leonard in disguise?"

"Advertising copy, promotional literature and technical stuff. Freelance. Anything that pays." I took a sip of beer.

"Pays pretty well if you drive a Lexus." Lou laughed. "What do you drive, Trish, honey?"

She shrugged.

"Here's another ten, sweetheart. Buy yourself something real and you can keep the change from that one too." He winked at me as she left. "It's not too hard to undress them, in your mind, when they look like that. Just about perfect."

I never got past the face and clothes. Her blouse was starched, stiff, and its folds were jagged and harsh. The fabric didn't cling to her body.

She sat down again. "Meet your approval?" she asked.

"Perfect," Lou said. "Years ago, before you were born sweetheart, I used to hang out at this bar in the Midwest. My mind's going so I can't remember its name. We were a scuzzy lot and these teenage girls would hang out there, looking to get high and maybe have a good time in the bargain. One of the girls, eighteen or nineteen, would do anything for two dollars worth of high. Me, my friends, she didn't care. It's not like she hadn't already been fucked that day. She weren't a virgin. Honey. Trish, are you a virgin?"

"Sometimes." She put down her glass.

I expected her to leave; she didn't. Lou shoved another ten into her blouse pocket. "When you're ready for a refill."

Lou looked at me. "I should remember her name but I can't." He said to the girl, "My mind's shot but the rest of my equipment is still working, considering my age." He turned to me. "So a tab of acid, a hit of something, and she wanted to fuck. This was the sixties. Free love, or almost free. A tab of acid. A hit of pot. The little slut told me once she'd given a couple of guys blowjobs, she said it as: I sucked them off, on a school bus. Fourteen!"

Lou took a drink of beer.

I glanced at her in the silence which went on longer than I expected. She was drawing circles with her glass. Small circles on the table. She looked up at Lou.

Lou smiled at her. "Honey. I bet you've done the same. Blowjobs on a school bus way back when."

She finished her drink, stared at Lou for a moment. "Way back when. Middle school. A few times I gave handjobs to a guy I knew." She left us.

Lou sat back. "I wonder if she's already been fucked today."

"Is that your next question? Lou's parade of insulting questions. She's not coming back."

"She's coming back, Mr. Oberon. Mack, sir." He winked at me over the mouthpiece of his beer. Using the bottle he saluted me and took a drink.

She sat down, put her drink on the table, fished for a moment and put the loose bills beside it. "Don't give me any more money."

"Mack didn't expect you to come back. He thought I'd insulted you. Have I crossed the line yet?"

She shook her head, glanced at me, played with the money on the table.

"If I cross the line, you tell me or swat me a good one."

She nodded, looked straight ahead past us.

Lou continued. "One of her boyfriends. I guess you can call them that. Fuck her once, you're still a stranger. Fuck her twice, you're a boyfriend and she had lots of boyfriends. This fellow liked to do things with a beer bottle." He held up his bottle, twisted it in the light. "And she'd lie there and let him do it. Maybe his friends could watch too. There was a story about that." Lou put the bottle down. "Mack's a writer and I work on cars. Honey, what do you do?"

She said to me, "I'm a receptionist for a legal firm."

"Hard work?" Lou asked.

"It has its moments." She smiled, glanced at him and returned to me. "They're lawyers. What do you expect?"

Lou laughed. "Save us from lawyers. Any of them drive Porsches? That's my car of choice. I work on Porsches, BMWs, Mercedes. I like German."

"VW," I said.

"Crap," Lou said. "Honey," he said, touching her wrist. She turned to him. "What did you do about your friend's come? Paint the seat back with it?"

She turned to me. "Ever write a novel?"

"A few."

Lou laughed. "Oh Lordy. Publish any?"

I shook my head.

"That's okay. I don't think sweetie has either." He touched her wrist again. "Why don't you get us a couple more beers."

"I'll get them," I said, standing.

When I left the bar, two beers in hand, Lou was kissing her. I watched them. He held her chin, her eyes were shut and she sat stiffly limp. Not limp, her body was erect, leaning toward him, but everything was shut down except for the kiss. I don't think I'd ever seen anything like it. How present she was at that moment, totally available to that sensation.

I carried the beers to the table. She was sipping her drink, fingers touching the money. Lou smiled up at me and winked. I set his beer before him and sat down. He took a drink and smacked his lips afterwards.

"Nothing like a cold beer." He touched her wrist. "Go ahead and tell him. Mack here."

She turned to me. "He came in my mouth."

Lou laughed. "Doesn't that send shivers up your spine?" He lowered his voice. "He came in my mouth. He he." His beer bottle did a little dance. "He he he."

She was blushing, looked away from me, took several bills from the table and left us.

"Want to talk about cars?" Lou said.

I was trying to figure out how he got her to kiss him. I could see her playing along, egging him on in his fantasy. But she let him touch her like that.

"Ah, the mysteries of life, Mack. She reminds me of the little slut, what's her name. Or all of them. I'm fifty-eight, divorced twice, and they were all the best fucks ever and I piddled it all away. I think I'm going to cry in my beer, Mack. I feel a tear coming now." He grinned at me, gathered all the empty bottles into the center of the table. "Eenie, meenie, minie, moe. Which one perchance?"

She sat in her seat and laid the change on top of the bills.

2.

Lou hummed to himself as we sat quietly around the table. The empty beer bottles were clustered in the center; her glass almost touched the stack of bills and change. I watched Lou, only glancing occasionally in her direction. She looked down, her finger hooked on the edge of the table.

"What're you drinking?" Lou asked.

She looked up. "Tomato juice."

"So you know when to stop. That's good. Fifteen years ago, maybe a few years more, I'd gotten myself into trouble drinking too much. Wife number two left me; she had good reason. I can't fault her that." Lou raised his eyes, grinned at me. "So I ended up sharing a house with fellows of a similar persuasion. Four of us, plus drop ins. You would have been about fifteen then, I think, sweetie."

She smiled, glanced at me.

"The sorry lot of us." Lou shook his head, took a drink. "I can drink like this because I know when to stop. Which is soon. Sorry state of affairs but not as sorry as back then. The four of us losers and what do you think happens but this kid, she was seventeen, old enough to be legal and though her parents tried, there was nothing they could do about it. She starts coming by. Sweetie, what's your hair color, really?"

"Brunette."

"Good dye job. Professional. Hers was black. Midnight black, thick and straight down to her ass. Pretty too with lopsided tits, one bigger than the other. She got fucked. She got everything in every imaginable way by four smelly usually obnoxiously drunk bastards, myself the smelliest and most obnoxious, as you can guess. I can't see Mack like that, can you? He's a proper gent. This girl wasn't looking for proper gents. We even made videos of ourselves, shaky as shit, not professional, lots of belching and bouncing bellies. I still have some and if you want we can go to my place and I'll show you." He eyed both of us. "Not interested. That's okay. I understand completely. Enough of myself. Sweetie?"

"Trish," she said.

"Trish, Mack and I were wondering if you'd already been fucked today. Just curious."

"You don't," I started.

"You don't have to tell us the truth. Make up something interesting or a downright falsehood. How'd we ever know? Right, Mack?"

I nodded watching her. She finished her tomato juice, set the glass down and fiddled with the change by it.

"I," she said, then changed her mind. "I'm going to get another drink."

"Mack'll get it for you. He's a gentleman. After you tell us your story." Mack grinned at her. "Or tell us to just fuck off."

She said in a soft, faint voice, "With Tony, one of the partners, at lunch." She raised her eyes, looking at me. "Bent over his desk."

Lou gave a low whistle. "I bet you got it good too." He took her glass. "I'll get your drink."

"You don't need to say anything," I said to her.

"I know that. It's just . . . no one knows. It's nice to be able to say it. One of my bosses uses me. I call him Tony but not to his face. He pushes a button. I go to his office and I don't know why but he motions to me and I do whatever he wants. When he's done, I leave." She shrugged. "Afterwards, back at my desk I get this feeling of overwhelming completion. Like I just won a prize. I want to giggle and blush because when he."

"Don't let me interrupt you two but I think we'd have more privacy over there." Lou pointed to a booth in the corner.

"Oh," she said, leaning back in her seat.

"Well," Lou said. "Joining me?"

"Up to you," I said to her.

"Okay. Yes." She stood, bent to gather the money on the table.

"Mack'll take care of that. What you need to do is pick out your special friend from this collection of upstanding fellows here."

She glanced at me.

"Grab an empty, Trish," Lou said. "Don't think too hard on it."

She took a beer bottle from the center of the table and Lou directed her to the booth, his hand on the small of her back. I took up the money with her glass and carried it with my beer.

"No, you sit next to her. Trish. That's right." He grinned at us. "Palms sweaty yet? Somehow I can't imagine Mack here ever drunk or dirty or godawful. Not like I've been. You were saying, Trish sweetie."

"It's not important."

"It looked important. It sounded important otherwise I wouldn't have butted in like I did. It's quieter over here, isn't it?"

I couldn't see her unless I turned and that felt too obvious. I was close enough to smell her perfume, just a faint watery flower smell. Blue smelling, not green. She was shorter than me. Glancing at me she said, "It's not important. Really."

"If you say so. Fucked more than once today?" Lou said to me, "I had to ask, Mack. You'll forgive me, won't you? Isn't this more fun than taking about cars, even if they are Porsches?"

She took a drink. "I'm making this up. Just for you, Lou. Three partners in the men's room. Blowjob. I swallowed." She grinned at me, playing with a button on her blouse.

I felt like if I stood on the table, angled myself just right, I could look straight down her blouse and see her. The thought was unsettling. I wanted her to move her hand, redirect my attention.

Lou was thoughtful. "I can't tell if you're fibbing or not. That's a good one, I admit. But you didn't tell us whether you'd been fucked."

"No," she said. "I didn't, did I?"

"I'm going to the men's, sweetie, and if you decide to follow, you'll give these old bones a thrill." He left us.

She touched my hand. "I can't explain how I feel. Elated. I'm on a rush for the rest of the day, wired. Like I'm fully alive. Some days he doesn't call me, doesn't even act like he notices me at all. Then he'll push the button, I stand there, and I'm his puppet for the next fifteen minutes, however long he takes. He doesn't use condoms so I'm wet afterwards or my face is a mess. I go to the ladies then back to my seat and I burn. I want to tell him what I feel but he doesn't really care. I mean he's nice to me, but he doesn't care. I haven't told anyone before." She withdrew her hand, touched the button. "Just you. And now I worry that you think I'm sick or something." Her hand dropped. "The other stuff was true too. The blowjobs in the bathroom after work. That happened for the first time today. Never before. Do you think Tony told them?"

Somehow, maybe because she was talking in a whisper, our faces were close.

"Go ahead," Lou said. "Kiss her."

She stared at me as I straightened and backed a bit.

"Kiss her. She wants you to kiss her."

I turned to Lou; he waved me away. "Kiss her, dammit."

I turned to Trish. Her lips were relaxed, finger back on the button. She looked like she was trying to say something. I leaned toward her, held her chin as we kissed.

It was as if she exhaled and everything, the man in the office, the blowjobs, what she'd been drinking, left her and she was empty, waiting for me to fill her. I could do whatever I wanted. I'd never kissed anyone who felt like that, empty and waiting. That I could do whatever I wanted at all.

She tasted a little sour; she'd smoked a cigarette not too long ago. I backed from her, saw her hands palm up, fingers slightly curled in her lap, saw her eyes which didn't want me to leave. I was slightly dizzy.

"The little slut, years ago, kissed like you, sweetie."

I turned to Lou.

"1968 or 1969. The one who came to the bar looking to get high. She was the first one I ever fucked in the ass. We all fucked her in the ass. She liked it. I think his name was Tony. The fellow who fucked her with beer bottles. For fun or because he couldn't get it up any more, he never said. Tony told us about this time she was at his place, naked, on the floor on her back, limp, she didn't do shit when you fucked her except yell her head off. Are you a yeller, Trish?"

"Sometimes. Not usually." She glanced at me and smiled. "I'm pretty quiet."

"The little slut, I wish I could remember her name, was a screamer. So she's on the floor and he's fucking her with a beer bottle, this one here," Lou held up the empty she'd brought to the booth. "And some of his friends drop in. She'd been making so much racket he couldn't hear them or maybe he didn't care or maybe even it was all pre-arranged. Five of his friends standing around watching him fuck the slut with a beer bottle and she's too busy to notice a thing. Ever fuck your girl with a beer bottle, Mack?"

I shook my head.

"The neck goes in easy, so easy, even if the cunt is tight. That's if they're wet. The bottle slips in and then there's the oddest resistance as the shoulder hits. Part flesh, part bone, felt through the bottle. Nothing else in the world feels like it." Lou set the bottle down. "Anyone ever do that to you?"

She shrugged. "I don't think so. I can't remember."

Lou laughed. "We have an old timer here, Mack. She can't remember worse than me. I think she's kidding us. She knows and she knows sometime tonight I'm going to ask her. Or tell her. Maybe she'd

like that. But not right now. No. Right now I want something else. Can you guess, sweetie?"

She glanced at me, a worried look on her face, and shook her head.

"Leave her alone, Lou."

"Come on and guess, sweetheart. What do I want you to do?"

"Maybe it's time to leave."

"Shut up, Mack. She's going to do it. She just has to tell me first."

A faint, almost hoarse voice came from her. "You want my underwear."

"Bingo!" Lou laughed. "How'd you guess? So? Let's have them."

The faint voice said to me. "Don't look."

"Look all you want, Mack. Let's have them." Lou laid his hand on the table, palm up, and wriggled his fingers.

I watched Lou as I heard her move about next to me. She was against the wall and I didn't think anyone could see her as she quietly struggled. She set her panties in his hand.

He held them up, stretched them between both hands. "Victoria's Secret. Quite nice. Want to sniff them, Mack?" He handed them toward me.

"No." I watched him fold the black sheer panties and leave them in the center of the table.

"Anyone ready for another round?" Lou asked. "I'm buying, though the next round's your turn, Mack."

3.

While Lou was gone I turned to her. "Did you want to leave?"

She shook her head not looking at me, her finger on the top button of her blouse.

I wanted to ask her why she stayed and let Lou treat her like this but I was afraid of being too personal. I wanted her to be happy but not at the expense of my pleasure sitting here with her next to me. Which was screwed up because I was married. I was excited and anxious; interested to see what Lou would do next and afraid of how far this all may go. Both of them pretended they knew when to stop.

She touched my leg. "Do you have a pen? A piece of paper?"

I patted my pockets. "No pen. Sorry."

"It's okay. Maybe Lou does." Her eyes blinked and she pushed away a strand of hair. "I'm not a terrible person."

I was at a loss for words. I wanted to tell her I thought she was nice. Then I thought nice wasn't the right word. Perhaps nice was precisely the wrong word she didn't want to hear. "No," I said. "I don't think you are." I couldn't ask her why she might think she was.

At the same time I was thinking, She's touching you because she likes you. She's easy. If you ask her, she'll say yes. Look at her lips.

"Do you like being a receptionist?" I asked. I was kicking myself.

"Not really. It pays well. They're nice and appreciate me." She looked down. "They."

Lou put two bottles and a glass on the table. "Have a quickie while I was gone? Felt her up at least. I bet she's wet."

"No," I said. "There's been no."

"We've just been talking," she said. "Waiting for you."

"Do you want to leave?" I asked her.

She shook her head. "I have a question, Lou. For you." She waited until he put his beer down. She pulled the glass to her, pushed the money on the table toward him.

"No, sweetie. That's for you."

"I don't want it."

"Then leave it on the table as a tip for whoever clears it." Lou winked at me. "I have plenty of money. Won the lottery." He pushed the money back at her. "For services rendered, your company. Or just leave it. There's a question?"

"What happens afterwards? You spin your stories but they don't go anywhere. Did you fall in love? Did they drop you? What?"

"Good question, sweetie. In 1969, maybe 68, the little slut got pregnant. She was in the area for several years, raising a son. Sometimes living at her parents', sometimes with some guy. The guys weren't always nice to her. I heard she moved to California and that was that. Married, lived happily ever after, probably a grandmother now. I also heard a group of guys pulled into her parents' drive and asked her if she wanted to go on a trip somewhere. She said sure, left her kid and hooked for them in Chicago, started to do heroin, and you can imagine the rest. Two stories, same girl, and maybe both are true. Maybe she did go to Chicago, but came back, got her kid and went to LA and settled down. I could see her doing anything. She wasn't dumb, but had an itch, if you know what I mean. Maybe one man could satisfy her. You think so? You ever try to settle down? Not come to bars like this and do what strange men tell you what to do?"

She was intent on him.

"If you can't keep your hands off those damn buttons I'll give Mack there my knife and he'll cut them off. One by one. The buttons, not your fingers, sweetie. Pop. Pop. Pop. And then what'll you have to play with? Huh?"

She didn't move her hand. "I asked you a question."

"The second girl? That lasted about six months. I don't know what happened to her. She stopped coming around. I don't think any of us missed her right away; we were too busy with our own misery. No one said, 'Hey, where's the girl? I want my cock sucked.' No. No one said a word. A couple of years later I'd run into her and she was embarrassed or something. Didn't want to look at me. I was on my own again, had a steady girlfriend, didn't drink myself stupid every night. I was living a pretty normal life. But the girl would see me and she had a frightened look on her face and I couldn't be sure why. Our history? The movies we had and pictures of her? The person who I knew she was? At least one of them. I know I'm more than one person. I bet you are too. And Mack over there is pretty secretive, hasn't disclosed a hell of a lot about himself."

"Do you have a pen?"

"Why the fuck do you want a pen? And I meant it about the buttons, sweetie. Don't make me angry." Lou tossed her a pen.

"Thank you." She turned to me. "Paper?"

I gave her a receipt out of my wallet. She wrote quickly, passed the paper back to me, tossed the pen to Lou. There was a telephone

number and an address on the paper. "Thanks," I said, putting it in my wallet.

"I love secrets," Lou said. The pen went back in his pocket, on second thought he took it out again. "Give me a piece of paper, Mack. Please."

I gave him a business card, not mine. He wrote on the back and slid it across the table to me. She took it, read it and handed it to me.

On the back of the card Lou had written: "Do you want her on the table or on the bench seat?"

Lou continued. "Five years ago there was a story in the paper about her. She'd been murdered, tortured first, and her body left tied to a tree on the edge of town. Chained to the tree. She'd been raped, that's all it said. Everyone was pretty sure they knew who did it, which didn't mean anything since people were angry and it was convenient to blame a kid a little older than her who'd had a history.

"I was in shock. There'd been no reason to do that to her. She'd never held back, which I guess says a lot about why I'd think anyone would kill a woman. Because she wouldn't put out. I'm not like that, but that's the way I think when I sit down and analyze it. Which is scary. I've never hit a woman, never threatened to hit a woman. I can be rough."

"Did you get her drunk?" she asked.

"She liked to drink and no one would tell her she couldn't. Not us. We had a good time. We had fun. It wasn't like we fed her a bottle of something and took advantage of her. We had a good time, fucked, and talked, and drank. But she came to us and if there was nothing to drink she didn't go elsewhere. We all knew what we were doing. Or thought we did."

"I don't believe you, Lou. You like to take advantage of people."

"Of situations, yes. People, no. She could have left any time she wanted. She didn't need to come back repeatedly."

"Maybe she did. Maybe she left until she couldn't stay away any longer. Maybe she hated herself. Maybe she couldn't stop doing it, going to your house."

"Maybe. So I'm supposed to say, run along kid. You don't really want this. You want to go to college and become a doctor and be respectable. Like there is a clear line between right and wrong and if it's wrong, you just don't do it. Am I right? Do you hate yourself?"

She was quiet for a minute.

"Both of your fucking hands on the table. Right now." Lou pointed his beer bottle at her. "You know what you're doing and why you're doing it and you know that right and wrong don't mean shit. Don't you?"

"Sometimes." She glanced to me. "Let me out."

I slid off the bench and stood. She came out of the booth, took my hand. "Come here." She said to Lou, "You wait there."

She took me to the window facing the street and the water, not letting my hand go. "What do you want me to do?"

She was so earnest. I said, "I don't understand. You can leave, go home or somewhere."

She shook her head. "No. Right now. Do you want me to be a good girl or do you want me to do what Lou's going to ask?"

I opened my mouth. "Do you want to stay?" came out which surprised me.

She watched me for a moment; her face had several expressions flit across it like a cat's. Minute changes that told a lot.

"It's okay with you if I stay?" She bit her lip, let go of my hand. Before I could answer she turned and went back to the booth.

I watched her sit across from Lou, say something to him. My mouth was dry and although I was in a room with other people, all I could see was Lou and her. All I wanted to hear was what they were saying to each other. I was aroused in anticipation if not in fact.

Sitting next to her I reached for my beer. I was turned to her, didn't look at Lou.

She gave me a timid smile. "Lou agreed to not cut off my buttons. I like this blouse too much. You'll need to undo the buttons for me."

"Go ahead," Lou said. "I told her if she touched another fucking button I'd rip the shirt off her and parade her up and down the street in front of the bars. She'd have to hold her skirt up and we'd finally get to see what's she's so carefully hiding." Lou finished his beer. "Don't take all day, Mack. She's not going to bite you. Are you, sweetie?"

She shook her head, twisted her body toward me, pulling her shoulders back. "You can touch me." Her eyes didn't blink as she moistened her lips. She raised her hands, palms out, fingers spread.

I undid the button on her sleeve. It took a bit of force. The sleeve fell open and I undid the other wrist. She raised her hands further, above her shoulders, drawing them back by her head.

"Did you want another beer?" Lou asked.

I shook my head.

"I want another beer. You, sweetie?"

"Bloody Mary." She watched me.

"Mack, you're buying."

"I'm buying," she said. She lowered a hand to push several bills to him.

"Next round is definitely Mack's, sweetheart."

"I know." She motioned with her hand. "Do it."

"Yes, do it," Lou said getting up.

The buttons down her front were easier to undo.

4.

Her blouse's stiff fabric parted a bit further with each button I unclasped, until the last when it opened, but didn't expose her. I felt awkward, as if what I was seeing was too personal and private. I also felt awkward because I wanted to touch her skin, here in the bar, the light tan on her upper chest and the whiter areas that had been covered by a bikini top. Her belly was shrouded in shadow.

I looked away, turned from her and Lou and faced the room. Everyone was intent on their own mysteries. I couldn't help but listen to the sound of their voices as they talked next to me, almost a whisper.

The bar had no music. Either the jukebox was broken or no one cared. I wondered what the other bars on the strip were like, if they were as lifeless as this one.

"Done already?" Lou asked her.

"I was thirsty."

"I bet you were, sweetie. The heat you give off has me absolutely parched."

I turned back to them. Lou's beer was half empty; her glass was entirely empty, except for the red scum on the sides and bottom. She pushed her glass over to the center of the table, by the empty beer bottles and glasses. She took a beer bottle and examined the label, picking at the corner of the paper to tear it off.

From here I could see into her blouse, a breast with an erect nipple, the breast softly rounded. If I'd wanted, I could have covered it with one hand. She turned to me and caught me looking. She gave me a smile, put the bottle on the table and touched my leg.

Her hand remained there as she turned to Lou. "Are you happy with who you are? Have you ever wanted to change?"

"Next question to Mack, please. He's been entirely too silent." Lou finished his beer, shoved the bottle to the other empties. "I'm happy. That doesn't mean I'm good. I'm old enough to know change isn't easy and dammit, why should I try to fit some asshole's expectations. My friends, few as they are, think I'm good enough. The only thing I wonder is if I'll look back twenty years from now and be as happy with what happened to me as I am now with my past. What interests me about my past isn't what I've managed to accomplish since then. It's the opportunities and missed opportunities sluts like you have

given me. The rest is stale and unmemorable." He grinned at both of us. "I mean slut in a kindly way."

"I wish I were better," she said.

"I wish sometimes I'd gone to college like you two."

"How do you know I went to college?"

"It's a guess. Mack has college written all over him."

"I have a BA," I said.

"BA as in bah bah, good sheep." Lou was about to say more, stopped. "It's time for you to confess your sins, college boy, be they real or made up. But first it's your turn to buy drinks. Another beer for me. Sweetie?"

"Bloody Mary." She pushed the money on the table to me. "Use this."

I left them and waited at the bar. The Asian woman took my order without a smile, returned with the bottles and the girl's drink, took the money and brought back my change. All without a smile. "Thanks," I said.

They weren't talking when I brought the drinks. I put the change on the table by her glass.

"Your turn, Mack," she said, laying her hand on my leg. I wasn't sure if it meant anything. I still wasn't sure.

"I've lived a sheltered life," I said.

"Cock in one hand, Playboy in the other." Lou laughed.

"A little of that." I hadn't meant to actually drink the beer I'd gotten myself. I put the bottle down after a sip. "There was one girl I knew. She enjoyed taking her clothes off."

"Like sweetie here. You know what's next, don't you?"

She shook her head too slowly. Her hair fanned out around her head.

"Yes, you do, sweetheart."

"She modeled for art classes and got a kick making money for taking her clothes off in front of strangers. She thought of it as advertising."

"Do you think of it as advertising, sweetie?"

"No." Her hand squeezed my thigh.

"Inevitably at parties she shed her clothes. She was pretty outrageous. She was insatiable, devoured freshmen virgins. She prayed on them."

"Ah, your first." Lou grinned at me and waved his fingers. "Go on, go on."

"That's just about it. We never lived together. We fucked casually."

"Casually. Oh, I like that. Chaucer in one hand, slut in the other."

"She hung out with bikers for a while. A trick she learned was how to squat over a beer can and pee in the hole, not missing. She couldn't touch the can."

"Can you do that, sweetie?"

Again the too slow shake of the head. She took my hand, held it in her lap.

"Maybe later tonight we'll have you practice. A bottle's as good as a can. In the alley at midnight. Maybe we can get you an audience. Like that?"

She didn't move, her hand pressing my hand into her crotch. "No. I don't think I'd like that."

"So your little show is just for us. Private. Intimate. What if I want others here to share? Hunh?"

She shook her head slowly. She looked like she enjoyed the feel of her hair on her shoulders.

"So that's it, Mack? The sum total of your youth, young manhood wasted. Never have a woman crawl to you, naked on all fours, moaning, as she's getting fucked, because she wants your cock? Never held a woman's head as you pumped your stuff down her throat? Never fucked a cunt that's ripe and swollen from the others before you? Never buried a cock in a woman's ass, have it slip in easily because she's so open? Never had a woman moan into a pillow, her ass waving in the air because she loves doggy style so much? Sweetie, you'd better give him a mercy fuck." Lou stood. "I'm headed to the gents. What'll it be? Mercy fuck for poor Mack, or join me and whoever else is waiting?"

"I'll stay here, Lou."

"Good girl."

"You don't need to do anything," I said after he left.

"I know that." She squeezed my hand. "You ever want to do something? Even though it is wrong or crazy? Something comes over me. I can't help myself sometimes. You know? Like when I'm in Tony's office. I can't wait for his call. I close the door after myself, wait for him to say something or make a motion. Sometimes he's on the

phone talking about something important. I'll stand by the desk and he buries his fingers in me while he talks. There's always a moment of reluctance, however brief. Then I do it because I can't help myself. You know what I mean?"

"That girl I was talking about. She could do that to me. Make me do stuff. I didn't always like it, though. She wasn't pretty, was sort of heavy, but she could get people to do stuff. There was a party and she was fooling around with this guy. She was naked and he had an astonished look on his face and his girlfriend sitting next to him looked worried. Like she had to decide if she wanted to let him fuck the naked girl or if she had to join in so she'd keep him."

"Do you want to go somewhere?" Both of her hands held mine.

"I'm waiting for a call. When it comes I'll have to leave."

"If I stay here Lou will want me to do stuff. You know that?"

"Why don't you leave?"

"Part of the reason I came here is because I wanted something to happen maybe. I wasn't planning on running into someone like Lou. We could have a quiet time. Even five minutes would be okay. You sure?"

"I'd better stay." I almost said sweetie. "Trish. If you don't want to, you should leave."

"I do want to, I just don't want to be the type of person who wants to. You know? Who'll let someone have me in the booth here. You know? I'm crazy sometimes."

Lou spoke. I had no idea how long he'd been sitting there. "Made our big decision, have we? Staying? Lou's not that scary I hope, sweetie. Mack would want you two to be friends afterwards. I want you to be so hot and bothered that you come here looking for me tomorrow night. Which means." He paused, raising his eyebrows.

"Oh, Lou. Let's wait a bit. Not right now. Please? Just a few minutes. Okay?" She rubbed my hand.

"Your choice, sweetie. You know what I'm looking for, and you know I'm an impatient sort of man. Hasty." He snapped his fingers. "Jump to it." He imitated her. "You know?"

"I don't want to do it right now, Lou. Okay? After Mack leaves anything you want. Just a few minutes." She turned to me, "You agree?"

"Leave her alone, Lou."

Lou laughed. "On the count of three, sweetheart."

"I have to do it here?"

"Here, sweetie. One."

"Can't we go somewhere?"

"Two."

"You fucking bastard," she said as she pushed my hand away. "You fucking bastard." She grabbed an empty beer bottle from the center of the table, glanced at me as she pulled up her skirt.

I looked away.

"You bastard," she said. "You happy now?"

"Keep the skirt up, sweetie. That's right. So Mack can watch you. You know what I want you to do."

She was crying when I turned to her, wiped her face. "Don't look at me like that."

"How else should he look at you, sweetie? With undying affection? You want cock so bad, look at you."

"Fuck you," she said.

I just watched her face, not what she was doing. There'd been a glimpse but it was too much.

"You want cock so bad and all you get is a fucking beer bottle. If you want cock, sweetie, you're going to have to beg for it. Tell her how pretty she looks, Mack. Fallen in love yet?"

"Let's go," I said.

"Fuck you too," she said. "You had your chance."

The way she looked at me, my eyes fell to her crotch. Her pubis was bare. A small tattoo in black said, "Tony's."

5.

"Till you come, sweetie. We want a real show."

She ignored him, wiped her eyes with the back of her hand and looked at me. "Do you still like me, Mack?"

I nodded as I watched the beer bottle's quick short movements. I thought I could hear her body's reaction to the object but couldn't be sure.

She shut her eyes and leaned back against the seat, lowering herself a little. She wiped her face again and dropped her hand to her crotch. I saw her tongue flit quickly across her lip.

"Kiss her," Lou said.

I knew other people were in the bar but was aware of only two, her and me. Lou was in the haze somewhere. Bright haze, all the shadows were gone.

"Kiss her," Lou said, "if you like her so much."

She was lost somewhere. Her face tilted from left to right ever so slightly. Her head tipped back. I wanted to touch her, open her blouse and cup her breast.

"Okay, stop," Lou said.

"I'm not finished," she said.

"Do what you're told. Leave the bottle, but both hands on the table. Keep your eyes shut. Now."

She put her hands on the table.

"Is the bottle in her?"

I nodded; my lips were dry.

"Lower her dress."

"Skirt, asshole," she said.

"Do what I said."

I pulled the skirt down over her, patting it over her legs.

"Button her blouse."

I looked at Lou. His face was deadly serious. I fastened a button.

"Do you want him to touch your tit, sweetie?"

She spread her hands, turned to me, eyes still shut. "Yes."

"Cop a feel but don't go to town, Mack. You had a chance to play with them to your heart's content and you muffed it, didn't you? Go on, squeeze her nipple. What's it like?"

Her breast was cool. I fastened the rest of the buttons on the front, realized I'd mismatched them.

"Leave it," Lou said. "Sweetie, we're going to talk. There's a secret word. What is it?"

"Dog," she said.

"When one of us says it, you'll come. Afterwards, you'll thank that person by offering to suck his dick. All ready?"

She nodded slowly, her hair swishing on her blouse. Her quick closed-eye glance was unreadable. She concentrated, fingers holding the table edge.

"Let's draw this out, Mack. Give our pet slut here a good time. You know what happens afterwards, don't you?"

I shook my head.

"You'll undress her, blouse then skirt. You'll give them to me. I'll fold them carefully and we'll toss for the first fuck. Thinking about it, I want to do her on the tabletop here. And after us whoever else who wants to join in. They might kick us out but there are parking lots or alleys we can use, or maybe another bar. Look at her face. She's going crazy. Sweetie, you're going to have to beg for cock first. Beg each one of us. And thank us afterwards. One of the things we liked to do with the young slut who came over was fill her mouth with come and she couldn't swallow. Mouth full she'd have to crawl to each of us and thank us.

"You ever spank or slap a girl, Mack? Some girls just about come on the spot when you treat them a little rough. Slowly pull the wide leather belt through the pant's loops and they're ready to just about die and go to heaven. They'll do shit so you'll whack them. Your turn, have any pets?"

"Three cats."

"No bow wows?"

She was tensing, mouth shut.

"Cats are a lot of fun, aren't they?"

My wife was the cat person; I tolerated them. "They play a lot."

"I bet they play games our slut here would like. Lick the pussy. Chase and catch and play. Touch her face. Go on."

I touched her cheek; she rubbed against my finger.

"Nice, isn't it? You should have kissed her. She would have exploded on the spot. Not have had to go through all this rigamarole. You ever fuck a girl's cunt while someone was in her ass or vice

versa?" I shook my head, removed my hand. Her head slumped forward.

"We're putting her to sleep. Not done much, have you?"

"Enough."

"Do your memories give you solace? Do you think back twenty years later and say to yourself that was fun? Like sweetie here. Dying for it, always ready, waiting for someone willing to bridge the gap, ask her for a fuck. The little slut always said sure. She looked for it, drove around in her beat up VW trying to find someone who'd give it to her. Five minutes was okay, what she wanted was someone willing to devote, wholeheartedly, hours to her and her needs.

"Ever go to a whipped cream party?"

I shook my head.

"Before your time, poor kid. You buy or better yet rip off a couple of cans of cool whip, strip and go to town. More than five minutes; the little slut just loved it. She was always up for a party. Is she moving her legs?"

I shook my head. "Still."

"Calm waters, deep. If we get to fucking are you going to join in or stand on the sideline? Like you've done tonight all night long. What you were offered, could have had?" Lou shook his head. "Tomorrow you'll be kicking yourself. Twenty years from now you'll spend nights playing what if. What if she'd said was really true, about blowing three guys at work? What if she'd really gone off with you like she wanted? Tonight will dog."

She spasmed, flung her head back, biting her lip hard.

"You forever." He grinned at me as the bottle clattered on the floor. "There's still time. Take her. Shut off your fucking cellphone, and take her somewhere and fuck her all night long. That's what you want, isn't it, sweetie? Mack's cock. Say it."

She licked her lips, eyes still closed, head still thrown back. "I want it," said lazily, almost like she were half asleep.

"Not it, sweetie. Be a good little whore and tell him."

She shook her head. "He doesn't like me."

"Going to turn off the cellphone, Mack?"

"I can't. I'm waiting for a call."

"You're stood up, babe. It's just you and me. What do you want?"

"You know what I want, Lou."

"You have to say it." Lou turned to me. "Maybe you should leave if this is making you nervous."

"I want." She paused, licked her lips, and faced Lou. "I want your cock in me."

"That wasn't that hard, was it, sweetie?" Lou said to me. "Undress her."

"Here?"

"Why not? You want it, don't you, sweetie?"

"Not here." She shook her head, held my hand tight. "Not here, Lou."

"In the parking lot? On the pier?"

"Private."

"Here, sweetie." Lou began tapping the table. "You two are pissing me off. Undress her."

It was crazy but I wanted to see her naked. I pulled my hand free and unbuttoned her blouse. She didn't resist; both hands lay limp in her lap. I spread the blouse open, searched for the fastening to her skirt.

"What do you want, sweetie?"

"I want Mack, Lou. Mack first."

"First what."

"I want his cock in me." She turned to me. "You still like me, don't you? Even if Lou."

"Lou and everyone else, sweetie. Everyone else."

"I want to go somewhere else, Lou." She said this as she unfastened her skirt, unzipped the side and pushed it down so I could see the tattoo again.

"I'm disappointed in you, sweetie."

She shook her head. "My name is Trish, not sweetie. That's my name." She pressed my hand on her bare skin.

"Trish," I said.

"On the table, sweetie. Bare assed and eager." Lou began setting the empties on the seat next to the wall. "Hurry up."

"I want to go somewhere else, Lou. Then you can give me your cock. Anywhere you want it. Just not here."

"One," Lou said.

"I'll do a bottle again instead. That okay?"

"We aren't bargaining, sweetie. Two."

"Trish," I said, "I want to see you naked."

She glared at me. "You're just like him, aren't you?"

"Three," Lou said.

"Just a minute," she said, opening a pocket on her blouse. She took out a telephone and made a call.

I was standing by the booth when my telephone rang. "Yes?" I said.

"Tony, I want to go home."

"Okay. Let's go home." I watched Lou's face.

"Well, I'll be." Lou broke out into a grin. "I'll be."

"Sorry, Lou," I said.

"I underestimated you, Mack."

"Thanks for the very pleasant evening, Lou." I waited for her as she redid her clothes. When she was done she pushed the leftover money on the table back to Lou.

"I can't come along, can I?"

"Sorry, Lou. Maybe next time."

I waited by the door as they kissed. They spoke for a moment and she walked toward me, gracefully, her blouse only partially buttoned.

"I like it here, Tony," she said. "My car's parked next to yours. We'll come back won't we?"

I was non-committal. Her hand in mine we left, me still wondering if the three after work were true or not.

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