

Good Company

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Sometimes people come into your life and you know right away that they are meant to be there; they serve some sort of purpose, teach you a lesson, or help you figure out who you are.

- found on the Internet; author unknown

Going to a convention is a lot like taking a cruise. You're in a large but confined space with a fixed group of people, everyone is there at least partly to enjoy themselves, and there's a tendency to let your hair down a bit more than you would at home. And if you're a certain type, as I am, it's way too easy to succumb to that alone-in-the-crowd feeling. That's why I always bring Anna with me to these things. In a mob of strangers, it's good to have a familiar face to sit across from at meals.

Which is how I found myself on a rainy Friday morning sitting across a hotel restaurant breakfast table with Anna. This convention, a gathering of hypnotists organized by a friend of hers, was smaller than some but there were still enough unfamiliar people milling around to make me feel a little out of my element. It didn't help that Anna's attention kept returning to a couple at a table across the room.

"Will you stop that please?" I asked. "I may not be the most brilliant conversationalist you know, but I'm trying."

She had the good grace to look guilty. "Sorry, hon. I just have this feeling that I know that guy. And the woman with him looks yummy!"

Something in Anna's voice grabbed my attention, so I took a look at the couple myself while trying not to be too obvious about it. They were attractive enough, but there was something more. Something compelling. But before I could decide what, the man looked over toward our table and I had to do that lame just-sweeping-the-room thing that people do when they've been caught staring. Fortunately he wasn't looking at me, though.

Anna put her napkin on the table and stood up. "One minute, Tyler. I have to know."

I watched her approach the other table in full view of its occupants. A few words passed between Anna and the man, then with a big smile he stood up and hugged her. He gestured toward the woman and she hugged Anna too. This wasn't the most surprising thing I'd ever seen – Anna is a hugger, and friendly to a fault. No, the really surprising thing was that all three of them then turned to me and

waved me over.

One of my personal goals for this convention, at Anna's urging, was to put myself out there more. She was there, so I figured it couldn't be too dangerous. I got up, picked up Anna's juice glass and my tea, and joined them at the other table. Anna squirmed in her seat as I approached.

"I knew we knew each other!" she beamed when I got there.

The guy chuckled and held out his hand. "I'm Rob. Online I go by Sapien."

"Great to meet you," I replied. "I'm the Magus." Another of my goals was to keep my real identity quiet. I'm supposed to be a respectable hypnotherapist, and this particular convention had a large element that my professional association frowns upon. That element was my primary motivation for coming, but why take chances?

The woman, I found out, was Rob's wife Karen. I shook her hand too and was struck right away. She had a lovely voice, jet black hair, and remarkably bright, sparkling eyes. I found myself looking into them just a hair longer than necessary and then realized Anna was talking.

"Rob and I know each other from online. He's the one who saved my butt when I was having all those problems with my website. Can you believe that?"

"It's the funniest thing," he concurred. "We've never met in real space before, but something told me that was Anna. I was getting ready to come over and find out but she beat me to it."

"Fate laughs at probabilities," I said. It's one of my favorite quotations.

"So you're a hypnotist too?" Karen asked me. "Like Anna?"

"Not like Anna. I do all my hypnotizing in person, or occasionally on the phone. And it's almost always less colorful than what Anna does with her online clients."

"Oh, so you don't do erotic hypnosis?"

"Not really," I started, but Karen's steady, interested look made me feel safe enough to continue. "Not formally, that is. Sure, I've dabbled in it here and there."

Karen nodded. "Rob is a hypnotist, too."

"I'm still learning," Rob hastened to add. "Which is the reason for being here."

So we talked hypnosis a little while we finished our breakfast. I have to say I liked Rob immediately. He had a very friendly, open manner and was quick with a smile. Karen was equally warm; I found my gaze returning to her time after time and started feeling a little guilty about it because her husband was right there.

I figured I'd better escape before I made an ass of myself. "I need to walk a little before I go sit in a 2-hour seminar," I told everyone. "But it was great meeting you both."

"Same here," Rob said. "I'm sure we'll be seeing each other."

I went to the rest room to splash some water on my face and then headed for the seminar room. Anna and I were planning on taking the Intensive Skills Review, the more advanced of the two morning workshops. When I got to the room, though, I saw that it was arranged in tables of three and Anna was already seated at one with two guys. My first impulse was to feel a little hung out to dry but we'd talked about this. "I'm going to make an effort to circulate," she'd told me, "and I want you to do the same. Don't worry – I'll touch base from time to time."

I could do this. There was another table nearby with just one occupant, a kindly-looking older lady who didn't show any evidence of claws or fangs. She even held out a hand and introduced herself. "Hi. I'm Mistress Serena."

As soon as I heard that my mind conjured up an image of this sweet, grandmotherly-looking lady in a black leather domme outfit. I think my penis shrunk an inch in response. Mercifully before we had time to get into small talk the instructor stood up and started the workshop.

The Intensive Skills Review started out as exactly that – a review of things that, at least to my mind, any properly trained hypnotist should already know. I recognized the instructor's name and even his face and he was a very well-known and respected hypnotist, but the material was not new and I found my attention flagging. My eyes wandered over the room and I spied Rob and Karen at a back table.

As the instructor explained the Dave Elman induction I kept stealing glances back at them. They sat together, looking comfortable and relaxed, their attention mostly on the speaker. But every so often they'd look into each other's eyes, or squeeze their hands together, or Karen would briefly lay her head on Rob's shoulder for a moment. Their smiles when they looked at each other were captivating to me.

Eventually the lecture gave way to a practice exercise. The audience divided into groups of seven or eight each and we practiced doing inductions on each other. When it wasn't my turn to either hypnotize or be hypnotized my eyes kept sweeping the room for them. Rob was in one of the other groups, but Karen stayed at the table and just watched him with that same soft, happy smile on her face.

After the exercise came break time. I exchanged a couple of pleasantries with my table mate and then looked for Anna just in time to see her slipping out in the direction of the bathrooms. Rob and Karen were still at their table, though, so I girded my mental loins and approached them instead. "You didn't play," I remarked to Karen.

A little extra color came to her cheeks. "I'm not ready for that. I love it when Rob hypnotizes me, but I'm still working up the nerve to try it with him."

"She doesn't give herself enough credit," Rob said. "I think she'll be great once she gets a little confidence." They exchanged another of those deep looks and tender smiles, and for a half second I wished I could be in his place.

"Confidence comes from practice," I said, directing it mostly to Karen. "You realize that hypnotists are the easiest people in the world to get into trance, right? So just believe you can do it and you will. He goes partway into trance every time he looks at you as it is."

Karen laughed. "I don't know about that."

"I do. Trust me, you can do this."

This time she took me more seriously. "Thank you."

"How about you?" Rob asked. "Have you done hypnosis with someone you were seeing?"

That was the sort of question that would normally send me looking for the exit, but Rob's manner and tone were sincere. He really wanted to know, and suddenly I really wanted to tell him. "Some. A few months ago I had a short fling with someone I met online, and we enjoyed playing with each other. I remember my favorite trigger that I gave her. It was something I saw in a movie and liked. Every time I said the word 'pleasure' she felt a rush of arousal and desire, and it got stronger every time I said 'pleasure' until it made her orgasm. I never got tired of that one. She never complained, either, so I figured she must like it too."

"I think I remember that movie," Rob said, and looked at his wife. "We'll have to try that."

Karen wiggled a little in her seat but her eyes were lit up brightly. "I'm think I'm in trouble now."

I grinned at her. "How much can you really enjoy fantasizing about that right now? Will you ask Rob to give you that pleasure trigger tonight, or will you have him do it another time?" Rob started laughing immediately while Karen looked at us and waited for someone to explain the funny part. "Those were indirect suggestions," I confessed. "Ericksonian language designed to slip the idea into your subconscious."

"Very smooth," Rob remarked. "I'm still working on those myself."

"I have a Zebu deck," I said. "In fact, I have them in my suitcase upstairs. If you like, we can rope Anna into a game of Crazy Eights, Zebu style. How cool would that be?"

"That sounds like fun. After dinner?"

"Great." I couldn't resist adding a lame joke. "We'll have some fun getting all suggestive with each other."

The rest of the morning session followed the same pattern. The instructor demonstrated and lectured, and I listened with one ear while my gaze kept wandering between him, Anna, Karen, and Rob. Karen caught me looking often enough that I just abandoned pretense and shrugged at her. She laughed and smiled at me in return.

At lunch I went off in search of a grocery store. The suite I was sharing with Anna had a refrigerator and a microwave, and snack prices in the hotel were criminal. I got back to the workshop room just in time for the afternoon session of the Intensive Skills Review, which focused on a wide range of phenomena and states. I enjoyed watching Karen's face while the instructor took Rob into the Esdaile state and was a little disappointed she wasn't drafted for a turn at the front of the room. I remember thinking she would look so beautiful in trance.

When the session ended I grabbed Anna to tell her about the plans I'd started making with Rob and Karen. She's a much more social animal than I am; by the time we actually assembled and decided on a place there were seven of us in the party.

We herded into the hotel's shuttle and had a leisurely meal at a nearby diner. The place was noisy and the group big enough that multiple threads of conversation started up, with me in the middle. Mind you, we were a pretty geeky bunch so the conversations weren't too hard to follow. I jumped between them inserting wisecracks and managed to get people laughing. It was fun.

After dinner we proceeded in our large group back to Anna's and my suite. By pulling the desk chair into the main room and using the ottoman as a seating device we had places for five, which left two people on the floor. Karen sat down cross-legged in front of the TV and a guy I didn't know, a New Yorker type named Casey, immediately sat facing her.

I got out my Zebu cards and started shuffling, but we couldn't come up with a game that everyone knew and that eight people could reasonably play. In the end I put the cards away and we just started playing in subgroups. Anna dropped Leonard, an old online friend of hers, into trance a number of different ways. She also caught me once or twice, which I didn't mind. I got her once, as did another online friend of ours, Patrick.

In the midst of all this I kept looking over at Karen. Casey's body blocked pretty much everybody's view because he was so close to her, but once in a while I got a glimpse of her face. She didn't look happy. Her eyes were puffy and red and her face had none of the glow that I'd been so fascinated by earlier. She spent long periods with her eyes closed, so I figured she was doing some trance work with Casey that was pulling up some intense emotions. Rob wasn't inserting himself, so I figured it wasn't my business to either, but it still bothered me a little.

The party broke up quickly about 10:30 when Karen rose from the floor. "I'm really not feeling too well," she told us. "I think I need to go lie down for a while."

"Right with you," Rob said. "Goodnight, everyone. This has been a great night."

Anna was hugging Karen. "Would you like me to come with you and tuck you in?"

She thought about it for a second and nodded. "I think I'd like that very much." Was she tearing a little, too?

I hugged Karen, shook hands with Rob, and watched them go with Anna in between. With both women gone Casey quickly lost interest in our geek talk and left within minutes. The other two guys excused themselves soon after that, leaving me alone to wonder exactly what I'd missed.

It certainly wasn't Anna's interest in Karen. It was cute, really, watching her flirt all night and Karen, when she wasn't being monopolized by Casey, responding. And Anna had some very pleasurable ways of tucking people in. I figured it would be an hour or two before she came back up.

That led to a thought: had she taken her key? A quick look around didn't turn it up, but I didn't want to go through her things on the night stand so I couldn't be entirely sure. I figured I should stay handy, so I settled into the easy chair, put my feet up, and tranced out for a little bit. And then a little bit more. And more. Finally, when 2am came with no Anna, I decided she could knock loudly enough to wake me if necessary and dragged myself to bed.

She had her key after all. Some time later I half woke with an awareness that someone was in the room. "What time is it?" I asked.

Anna's voice answered. "Trust me, you don't want to know." She sounded exhausted but happy. "I was this close to just staying down there, but I knew you'd worry if you woke up and I wasn't back."

"Sounds like you were having a good time. I take it Karen got feeling better?"

The bed creaked as Anna climbed in. "Karen was fine once we got her away from that jackal Casey."

Internally I kicked myself for not paying more attention to my gut about him. "What happened?"

"He fancies himself this amazing erotic hypnotist." Anna's voice held a level of disdain that I almost never hear and it got my attention. "And he got it into his head that Karen was into him and that he was going to score."

"She didn't seem into him to me. In fact, she seemed decidedly uncomfortable. I kept expecting her to move away from him. You'd think he'd have noticed, as close as he was."

"Honey, he couldn't even be bothered to remember her name! He kept calling her Katherine. It was all about what he wanted. She told him her boundaries and he tried to run right over them."

"Grrrr!" The more I thought about it, the more I felt like I owed Karen an apology for not doing something. "Would it be an unforgivable breach of ethics to get him into trance and suggest that his dick will fall off if he comes near her again?"

"Hmmm ... Can I sleep on that?"

I had barely closed my eyes again, or so it seemed, before my cell phone alarm went off announcing that it was time to get up. "Anna." I put a hand on her shoulder and wiggled it, but she didn't react one bit. "Anna." A little more vigor got me a pained sort of groan through unmoving lips. I took pity on her and let her be while I showered, shaved, and dressed.

Finally by 8:30 she was able to rise if not shine. The first sessions started at 9:00, so this wasn't leaving us any time for breakfast, but I wasn't going to press. I am not a morning person, even with a full night's sleep, and neither is Anna. A shower did wake her up enough to start telling me about the rest of her night, though.

"Oh my gods, Tyler, Karen and Rob are so sweet! She was really upset after all that stuff with Casey, so we laid her down and spent, I don't know, maybe an hour just getting her out of that space. Once we did that she was so much happier. I just wanted to cuddle all night with those two."

"Seemed as though they'd be okay with that."

"They are poly and open," Anna said. "But you know what? I didn't get any kind of permissions before I left home. I mean, here I am, a hypnodomme, going to a convention where erotic hypnosis is acknowledged and allowed, and it never even crossed my mind that I might get laid. I mean, duh! I have to call home and talk to Bill, and then I have to touch base with Gary and make sure he's okay with it."

I laughed a little to myself. Anna was so full of new crush energy and it was cute as hell to see her pacing around the room going through the list of partners she needed to consult before she could

follow through on it. We monogamous types never have that problem, I suppose, but Anna made it look like a very nice problem to have. "I love seeing you like this," I told her. "You're so animated."

"I probably sound silly," she allowed, "but I really like them. They're so sweet and so nice and so much in love." She stopped for a moment and looked sharply at me. "And you know, they really like you too. They love your sense of humor."

I could feel myself flushing a little. "I'm glad, because I feel the same way about them. I especially like watching them look at each other. I want to be in love like that some day."

We missed breakfast but made it downstairs in time for the first sessions. Anna's was just about to start when we reached the rooms, but mine had been canceled because the speaker got held up in transit. I wandered around for a few minutes looking for any sign of any of our companions from the night before and came across Patrick lingering in the breakfast area with a couple of guys. One of them I recognized as a well-known stage hypnotist I'd seen perform before. I was feeling a little braver, so I walked up and took the empty seat at Patrick's invitation.

The stage hypnotist was telling stories about things that had happened in shows he'd done. He was very friendly and open, and his stories ranged from horrifyingly embarrassing miscues to unexpected and hilarious happenings. The fourth man, it turned out, was just breaking into stage hypnosis and was eager to get valuable tips from a pro. Me, I was happy to sit there and absorb that kind of knowledge even though I don't have any inclination to do stage work myself. That was the fastest hour I'd ever spent socializing and I almost regretted when it broke up for the second morning sessions.

After a short session on Conversational Persuasion, which turned out to be a specialized application of NLP, it was time for lunch. I found Rob and Karen out in the lobby area looking a little dazed and lost.

"Good morning," I told them. "Are we fully awake yet?"

They laughed. "We just got down here," Rob confessed. "We slept in until eleven and seem to have come down just as the sessions are ending."

"You did, but that's okay. Anna and I have sandwich makings in the fridge upstairs. Can I interest you in some?"

They looked at each other and nodded in unison. "That sounds wonderful, thank you."

We found Anna in one of the seminar rooms and took her upstairs with us. Patrick and Leonard wandered in shortly after and we had a nice, congenial lunch. Nobody mentioned Casey but we were all quite content with his absence.

Karen in particular seemed much, much better. She laughed freely, smiled constantly, and just had a shine about her that made me feel good every time I looked at her. Rob was such a lucky guy.

It felt so good to be with this group that when they headed to the MetaMagick seminar I changed my plans and went with them even though I had no particular interest in magick. The speaker was very engaging, though, and I found myself gaining interest as he went on.

Then came time for a practical exercise. It involved pairing off, and somehow Karen and I had ended up at a table by ourselves while Rob, Anna, and Patrick had the one next to us so Karen and I became partners. The exercise was simple: I was to stand in place with an arm out like a gate, and Karen was supposed to walk through me. The goal was to measure how easy that task was depending on how Karen's mind focused during the process.

When the speaker demonstrated, he held his hands up and walked through a volunteer's arm held at chest level. I followed that lead and held my arm straight out. Karen, however, did not raise her hands as she walked through me; instead she brought her chest right into my arm, and out of a sudden panic reflex I pulled it away from her instead of letting her walk through it.

"I'm sorry!" I blurted, mortified that I'd almost accidentally felt up her breasts.

Karen put a hand on my arm. "Are you okay?"

"Fine, really. I was just expecting you to have your hands up like he did, that's all." And even as I said it, I realized I was being stupid – if Karen wasn't okay with that kind of contact she would have prevented it.

"I can do that," Karen was saying. "Here, let's do it again."

We finished the exercise that way and sat back down to continue the session. My mind, I admit, was only half there at that point. I was distracted by her closeness, and by the sense of something developing that probably shouldn't be but that was apparently okay with her. I felt as if I was back in junior high sitting next to Rita Warren, at once exhilarated at being so physically near the object of a youthful crush and frightened that I might do something stupid or embarrassing.

I realized I hadn't moved in several minutes and sat forward, folding my hands together and resting them on the table. A few seconds later Karen also leaned forward but held her hands under her chin. In my peripheral vision I noticed her pushing a few stray hairs away from her eyes and suddenly felt a desire to scratch my temple. The hypnotist in me pushed the lovesick teen aside as I realized how strong a rapport Karen and I had established -- we were unconsciously mirroring each other.

There was a soft thud followed by a steady current of cool air from the ceiling. Somebody had turned up the air conditioning. It was pleasant at first, but whatever was supposed to be regulating the system must have been out of whack because it soon turned uncomfortably cold. I felt Karen shiver next to me and we both scooted a little closer. A glance at the next table showed Rob and Anna huddled together as well, but more closely than I dared with Karen. I didn't know what rules she and Rob had about that sort of thing, so I wasn't going to do anything she didn't give me explicit permission to do.

Then I thought of something I could do that should be within the boundaries. "Would you like a hypnotic warm-up?" I whispered.

She looked a little surprised, then nodded.

I held out my finger about a foot in front of her eyes and drew in closer so I could speak quietly enough not to disturb anyone around us but still be heard. "Focus on my finger, Karen. Let all your attention dwell just there, on the tip. Notice the texture in my fingerprints, the slow motion of my finger moving back and forth. As you watch so closely, so intently, you may notice that it becomes difficult to maintain focus." I slowly moved my finger closer to her face. "And that's okay; as your eyes lose

focus you can just let them close down ... closing down ... now.”

Karen's eyes blinked and closed on cue. I deepened her for a minute and then moved into the purpose of the trance. “Your body's controls,” I explained to her, “are inside your mind. Allow yourself to turn your attention inwards, deeper down, and address yourself to the part of your mind that controls your metabolism. You can adjust that control now, instruct your body to speed up your metabolism, to use a little more energy and to generate more heat and warmth. Feel your blood pumping a little faster, your lungs breathing smoothly and easily.”

I sensed her breathing deepening and went to the next step. I lifted her right arm and held it forward. “And as you feel that warmth rising through you, I want you to also notice your arm becoming stiff and rigid, locking straight, completely rigid. That's good. Now, Karen, you can allow this arm to lower itself back down to the table only as quickly as your metabolism can finish adjusting itself so that your body generates enough heat to remain comfortable in this atmosphere for as long as it needs to. Allow that arm to drift downward only as fast as your body can agree and achieve this, so that when you feel your arm reach the table it can relax completely and you can feel safe, warm, and comfortable.”

It took almost a minute, which is still impressive considering we had cold air blowing on us from above, before her arm reached the table and relaxed. I brought her out of trance and was pleased to see a bit of extra color in her cheeks. “Thank you,” she said, and the dreamy tone in her voice was enough to make me feel warmer too.

We sat close, with me still not daring to put my arm around her the way I wanted to (and the way Anna was with Rob), for the rest of the session and high-tailed it out of that frigid room as soon as the speaker finished.

“I'm sorry,” I told Karen outside as we stood with Rob and Anna. “I was seriously tempted to hold you the way they were for warmth, but I wasn't sure that would be okay.”

She gave me a look that told me I should've known better. “It would have fine. Next time, don't hesitate.”

The room for our next session was not hyper-cooled, fortunately. The topic was speed inductions and it turned out to be unusually popular. We couldn't get table space for five in proximity, so Anna and Patrick sat near the front while Rob and Karen and I took the last empty table toward the back of the room.

It soon became apparent that at least part of the reason for the turnout was the presenters themselves. They were a stage hypnotist duo who had just finished doing a run of joint shows in Las Vegas, and their joint shtick made the presentation great fun even as we learned the theory and method for the induction they were teaching.

After a fun lecture and a couple of demonstrations, it was practice time. Rob surprised me by getting up immediately and pairing up with the odd man out at the next table, leaving his wife with me. “It's okay,” she explained. “Rob needs to practice with people he hasn't already done a lot.”

“Okay. So, shall I do you first or would you like to do me?”

Karen grinned and gave me a mock leer. “You want to 'do me'? Isn't it a little public here?”

I grinned back. “That didn't stop me from doing you in the other room, did it?” Using the sexual

tension I'd been feeling all afternoon to fuel jokes helped me to relax, and having her laugh and enjoy wisecracking with me did even more to put me at ease.

After a little more banter we decided to have me do the induction on Karen first so she would have one more demonstration before trying it herself. We sat close and facing each other, and as she dropped into trance she folded into my arms in a way that was absolutely delightful. As she sat back up I saw her face was still dreamy and I just couldn't resist: I held up a finger, watched her eyes struggle to focus on it, and just dropped the finger downward while saying, "and sleep." Karen dropped back into me instantly.

Once I got her fully awake it was Karen's turn. "I'm not sure I can do this," she told me.

"Sure you can. I told you how easy I am – to hypnotize, I mean." Her smile was still nervous. "It'll be just as easy as when you do it with Rob."

Still she hesitated. "Umm ... I haven't actually done that to Rob. Or anybody."

"You're kidding!" But the look on her face told me she wasn't. "I'm your first? That's so cool! I feel special!"

"You won't feel so special if it doesn't work."

"You'll be fine," I told her. "Just remember the sequence and believe." I reviewed the steps in this particular induction with her until she said felt ready.

Karen took my left wrist in her hand. "Just relax this arm," she said. "Relax it so that I can just wiggle it around at will, so it's like a wet rag doll arm. That's right." When she was satisfied that my arm was relaxed, she held her other hand up with the fingers toward my face and wiggled her fingers. "Now follow my fingers, Tyler. Use your head and your eyes together, just like you saw me doing. Follow ... follow ..." As she spoke, she moved her hand from side to side, up and down, still jiggling my arm with the other hand. I felt the eye fatigue beginning and got ready for what was coming. Karen picked the exact right moment to pull my arm gently forward and say, "Sleep!"

Admittedly, I had been planning all along to drop myself into trance if I needed to because it was important for Karen to build confidence in herself. There was no need, though. One moment I was following her fingers and the next I was folded over into her, my head on her breast and her voice saying beautifully relaxing things into my ear. Her scent and her voice and the softness of her touch were the only things I knew and the only things that mattered.

"... three, wide awake now."

I must've looked so goofy as I struggled to bring my head back up. My mind didn't want to let go of that incredible foggy feeling. "That was ... *really* well done," I finally told her. "You have amazing instincts. Your voice was perfect, your timing was right on. I haven't been dropped like that in ages." All of that was completely true, which made it even more important to tell her.

Karen beamed with well-justified pride. I looked over to where Anna was and found her grinning at me; she'd seen Karen's performance, apparently. That was fine; she'd give Karen her perspective later and Karen would feel even better about it.

I would have loved to have Karen do the induction again, but we'd used up our time. Maybe it was

just as well, considering the hard-on I was developing every time I thought about her holding me like that.

There was already a plan for the evening, I discovered after the session. Rob and Karen had volunteered to get some Italian carryout and bring it up to Anna's and my room. Patrick and Leonard were to join us there to eat and play, then we'd come back down at 10:00 to catch an erotic hypnotist's cabaret-style show.

As it happened, play started a little early. Rob and Karen arrived with large bags of carryout containers. Karen plopped into the desk chair with a pained look on her face. I looked from her to Rob and he explained, "Getting around in traffic was hard. Karen's feeling pretty stressed from it."

Was that an invitation? I moved to Karen and put a hand on her shoulder. "Would you like to experience my favorite de-stressing technique?"

She looked up at me and put her hand on mine. "That sounds lovely."

Thanks to the day's experience Karen's eyes started to glaze as soon as they met mine. I moved my right hand from her shoulder to the back of her neck while my left went above her line of sight. I waved my hand downward, gently pressed on the back of her neck and said "sleep" and that was all she needed to go nice and limp in the chair.

"That's right," I said into her ear as I slowly rotated her head. "More and more relaxed with each breath ... with each movement of your head ... with each word I say. Going so deep now, Karen." I took her through a longish deepener that I like to use sometimes with stress cases in which she imagined herself in a furniture store trying out leather couches by lying on them, feeling and smelling and hearing and seeing them, and then moving down an escalator to another set to try. A few cycles of that got Karen to the point where I had to remind her to remain safely seated and balanced in the chair, which was the goal.

I had a hand on each shoulder at that point, keeping her upright and also letting her know tacitly that she was safe and protected. Karen went into her mind's control room, imagined a gauge reading out her current stress level, and told me it was at 90. We went through a cycle of deep breaths, each one expelling pressure like black smoke from a factory and replacing it with soothing, relaxing air. Her gauge crept down with each breath and she went deeper into trance. As she did, her tendency to wobble grew more pronounced and I ended up in a near-embrace to keep her safe and comfortable in the chair.

When Karen's stress gauge reached zero, I asked her a question I often use when I'm doing hypnosis recreationally. "Now that your stress is all gone, Karen, what else would you like me to do with you in this trance?"

Her lips moved just enough to form the words. "Make me feel good."

A simple enough request, but it left me to guess what Karen's subconscious meant by feeling good. Given the context of the day it could mean any of a number of things, and Karen was in no state of mind to analyze it for me. I looked to Rob for a clue; his wide grin told me how he was interpreting it.

"Karen," I said softly, "do you remember me telling you about the 'pleasure' trigger I used with someone once?"

She nodded silently.

“Would you like me to give you that trigger?”

“Okay...”

I looked at Rob again and found him almost jumping out of his skin with excitement. Clearly I had his blessing. “Karen, from now on any time either Rob or I says the word 'pleasure' to you, that word will fill you with a rush of very happy, pleasant, feelings. Those feelings will arouse and delight you, making you feel very, very good in all the places you most love to feel good, and each time Rob or I says the word 'pleasure' you can allow those feelings to grow stronger and stronger.” I drew out the word for emphasis, making it sound deep and delicious. “Is that okay with you?”

She paused just a moment. “Yes.”

“That's perfect. From now on then, each time Rob or I says the word 'pleasure' to you, you can experience that wonderful, arousing, delightful pleasure all over your body and allow that feeling to grow more pleasurable and intense each time you hear it. When you've completely accepted that suggestion and made it a permanent part of you, you can give me a nice, big smile.”

The smile came almost immediately and was dazzling. Rob's was even better. As Karen slowly straightened up and gave a happy sigh, I moved back just enough to let Rob get a good look at her face. “Feeling better?” I asked.

“Thank you,” she answered, her voice still dreamy.

One more quick glance at Rob confirmed that I had clearance. “It was a *pleasure* to help you, my dear.”

At the word *pleasure* Karen gave a little squeak. Her face flashed a look of surprise and then melted into softness. “Wow...”

Rob said, “Looks like he's not the only one who got *pleasure* from that.” Karen gave another little start and a quiet little moan.

This was so much fun. “Karen,” I added, “it's always a *pleasure* to bring you *pleasure*.”

“Oh, god!” Karen squirmed a little more and then abruptly stood up. “I need food, guys.” And while Rob and I exchanged high fives she moved to the floor near the coffee table and helped Anna finish setting up the plastic containers.

We used the lids from the containers as improvised plates and ate with little plastic forks provided by the takeout place. It was a delightful sampling of pretty much everything on the menu: alfredo, various meat dishes, garlic rolls, chunky and smooth sauces. We ate very well and then secured the leftovers in the refrigerator to divvy up later.

After cleanup Rob and Karen sat on the floor and leaned against the TV stand. Karen stretched and looked around with a highly satisfied smile and announced, “I'm ready for my nap now.”

“Is that so?” I came and sat on her right side, making space on the couch for Leonard to sit with Anna

and Patrick. Rob was on her left and already grinning with anticipation. With a finger on her chin I swiveled Karen's head and made eye contact. She was already glazing over. "You're right," I said, dropping into my hypnotist voice. "You are ready. In fact, I can already see that your eyelids are becoming heavy ... so heavy now ... try to keep them open just a little more, just until I count three, and then you can let them close down and relax into trance for me. Going so deep, even as you struggle to keep your eyes open, that when you do close them on three you'll be all the way down. One ... two ... three."

The sight of Karen's eyes fluttering, drooping, and closing was one of the most beautiful and erotic things I'd experienced all weekend. She slumped in my direction, and I was happy to hold her up with my body while I gently stroked her arm with one hand the the back of her neck with the other.

On the other side, I heard Rob begin to speak. "That's right, honey, just let go. Hear our voices and let our words take you so deep."

I love a double-team, so of course I joined him. "Every word taking you deeper."

"Every breath taking you deeper."

"Deeper into relaxation."

"Deeper into *pleasure*," Rob said, and when I looked over at him I saw him wink.

Okay, I was getting the hint. "So much *pleasure*, Karen. More and more *pleasure* the deeper you go..."

"Allowing our every touch to bring you *pleasure* in the places where you so love to be touched..."

"To be caressed..."

"To be kissed..."

Karen was feeling it for sure. The skin around her neck and chest was turning a healthy pink, and her breathing was coming faster and deeper. I became suddenly very aware of her hand resting limply on my thigh. "Ten times as much *pleasure*, now ... ten times as much."

"Feeling so aroused, so hot, so horny."

"It's okay to let go to those feelings ... it's okay to fully enjoy this *pleasure*."

"Okay to come now ... come now."

Her body shuddered and gasped and I felt the tension in her leg muscles as they pressed against mine. "That's right," I continued, "let yourself really feel this *pleasure* ... let yourself go completely and enjoy this."

"Coming so hard now, so good, so hot, feeling it in all those places where you love to feel hot."

"Letting it build and grow, stronger and better, more and more *pleasure* with every breath."

We kept her in orgasm for a couple of solid minutes before Karen gripped my thigh and moaned, "Stop

now, please.” We fell quiet and Rob allowed her to fold herself into my arms as her body relaxed.

From across the room we heard Anna chime in. “That’s right, enjoy the afterglow. Feel the endorphins rushing through your system, making you feel so dreamy and good, so happy, so loved and cherished.”

“Safe and protected,” I added. “And so pleased and proud of how well you’ve learned to let go and enjoy what Rob and I love to do for you. It may even surprise and delight you when you discover that each orgasm we give you is stronger, easier, and more satisfying than the one before. You can come easily and often, as much as you want to, any time you want to.

“And when you fully understand and accept these suggestions, you can allow yourself to come back out of hypnosis, completely alert, completely aware, and feeling absolutely wonderful.”

About a half minute later I felt her begin to stir and sit up. As soon as she was supporting herself I got up and fetched her a soda from the refrigerator. “Welcome back.”

Karen threw her arms around me and pulled in tight. “That was so wonderful,” she said. “Thank you so much.”

“It was my pleasure,” I replied. Karen shuddered and I realized I’d accidentally used the trigger word. “Oops!”

Rob chuckled. “Is he giving you more *pleasure*, honey?”

I’ve always felt it’s bad form to get a lady all aroused and not follow through. Well, that’s the rationalization I used in my head, anyway. “Just let go,” I told her. “Enjoy this pleasure as much as you like. So much pleasure. Pleasure, pleasure, pleasure.” Her body began to shudder again in those little spasms that marked her first orgasm. I held on and let her ride it out until she felt strong enough to sit up again. “I really didn’t mean to start that one so soon,” I confessed.

She flashed me a soft, dreamy smile. “I think I’ll forgive you for it.”

Rob shifted into a crawl and crossed the room to an empty chair. “That’s better,” he said. “The floor was getting a little hard.”

Anna chuckled. “The floor? Is that what you’re calling it these days?”

“He does have a point,” I said. My butt was starting to get a little numb, too. I got up and helped Karen to her feet. She sat down on the ottoman next to Rob and I moved the desk chair around to next to her, completing a loose circle.

As I rounded the desk, my eye fell on one of my favorite toys – a replica of the current sonic screwdriver from *Doctor Who*. Ever since I’d bought the thing I’d been thinking it would make a fun hypnosis prop; now was my chance to find out.

“Have I ever shown you this, Karen?” I held out the plastic cylinder, about the length and thickness of a large marker, in front of her.

She took it from me and looked at it. “I don’t think so,” she said, handing it back to me. “What is it?”

"This is my sonic screwdriver. It generates micro-sized sonic waves that can be used for a lot of different purposes. In fact, I can put people into hypnosis with it."

Karen looked dubious, and for good reason. After all, it was obviously just a toy.

"No, really," I insisted. "The sound it makes is in the theta frequency band. Watch this." I held the toy up near her face and pressed the button on the side. A low buzzing sort of sound came from the device. "Right now your brain is processing that sound, and the longer you hear it the more your brainwaves slow down to match that frequency. Yes, just like that. You can probably feel it already, can't you? That sense of everything ... slowing ... down ..."

She didn't stand a chance. Sure, the whole explanation was bunk, by this point it almost didn't matter what I said as long as I used that soft, even tone that her subconscious was so conditioned to heeding. She glazed over and looked blankly ahead until I passed a hand down in front of her face and said, "Sleep."

Rob was shaking his head and chuckling. "That was so cool."

"Oh, you like that? It gets better." I held on to Karen and deepened her trance until she needed my support to stay on the ottoman. At one point I was vaguely aware of Patrick speaking softly in the background but my focus was all on Karen.

"Karen," I continued once she was nice and deep, "you've experienced one effect of my sonic screwdriver. Would you like to know what else it can do?"

"Yes," came the mumbled reply.

"You know that sonic devices work by vibration. My sonic screwdriver has another mode, one that will affect you even more strongly than the trance mode. For the rest of the night, Karen – and that means until sunrise – you're going to find that whenever you hear the sonic screwdriver it is the most erotic sound you've ever heard. You'll feel the vibrations it makes all through your body, and especially in those intimate places where it feels so good to have vibrations against you. The arousal you'll feel will be ten times more intense, ten times more erotic and exciting, than when Rob or I says 'pleasure' to you, and the feelings will keep building as long as the sound is on, even to the point of causing a wonderful, powerful orgasm. And when you're ready to accept that suggestion for the rest of the night, until sunrise, you can give me a nice, big smile."

The smile came almost right away. "One more thing, Karen. Although your body will react to the sonic screwdriver exactly as I've suggested, would it be okay with you, just for the fun and surprise, for your conscious mind to forget that I've given you that suggestion? Will you allow your conscious mind to forget that the sonic screwdriver causes you to orgasm while still responding to the suggestion?"

"Mm-hmm."

"That's wonderful." I tossed the sonic screwdriver to a grinning Rob and counted Karen out of trance. As she shook the fuzz out of her mind I noticed that Patrick had Anna collapsed on his lap and was whispering to her. I gave him a double thumbs-up and watched him bring her out of trance.

"Hey," Anna protested as she sat back up. "I was watching that."

"I noticed," Patrick replied. "And just a little too closely, it seems. You went out like a light."

"I did? I knew I was fractionated, but wow."

Patrick's smug look told me he'd done something mischievous. As I was wondering what, Rob turned on the sonic screwdriver and held the button down.

Karen gasped immediately and folded in her seat, prompting me to quickly take hold of her to keep her from falling over. "What the ...?" Her legs twitched and I felt more and more of her weight shifting into my arms, so I held her firmly while she rode out the orgasm.

For a half moment this orgasm seemed louder than her others, until I realized it wasn't Karen making the extra noise. I looked over and saw Anna writhing on the sofa panting and moaning while Patrick snickered. "If I had a free hand," I told him, "I'd salute you."

It went like that for a while. Rob would give Karen enough time to recover some energy, then hit the sonic screwdriver and send both her and Anna into ecstasy. Then he tossed back to me and I got to induce a few climaxes. In between I distracted Karen with a barrage of simple, stage-hypnosis style mind games: forgetting her name, getting stuck to the ottoman, feeling high. It got to the point where no induction at all was necessary – all I had to do was look Karen in the eye and speak in my hypnotic voice and her mind would accept any suggestion with no preamble.

At one point Karen protested a little. "Wait a minute," she said as I was passing the sonic screwdriver back to Rob. "This is fun for you guys, but what about me?"

"I'm sorry," I told her. "Are you not enjoying yourself?"

"I am," she replied, "but it's a bit one-sided. I know Anna is enjoying the way I am, but I haven't gotten to see anybody else experience that because I'm always in the middle of it myself. I want to see that happen with one of you guys."

"Fair enough." I stood up and stepped over to Rob. "Can I borrow that for a second?" I asked, indicating the sonic screwdriver.

It was a misdirection. Instead of taking the toy from his hand I held Rob's wrist, put a finger on his neck as I pulled him forward with the arm, and said, "Sleep." He was every bit as fractionated as the rest of us, so it dropped him instantly. "That's right, Rob, letting go all the way. Deeper down now, letting yourself drift and float. Knowing that Karen wants to see you experience pleasure now, to enjoy what you've allowed her to enjoy. Let yourself sink all the way down now, and prepare to receive her suggestions and allow them to bring you great pleasure."

Karen did not react the way I expected. A look of near panic came over her. "I can't do this," she stammered. "I'm not ready."

Anna stepped in just as I was about to start extemporizing a pep talk. "Let's talk in the other room for a minute."

I kept Rob going deeper while Anna and Karen talked in the bedroom. Their plotting was brief; in just a minute or two they came back out and Karen took a seat on the floor directly in front of Rob. Anna waved me aside, sat on the arm of Rob's chair, and pulled his head to her breast. "You're so wonderfully deep now," she crooned. "So ready to receive pleasure. You know how you and Tyler aroused Karen before. You liked that, didn't you?"

"Yes," he whispered.

"And you know that what Karen wants now, what would please Karen the most now, is for you to experience that same kind of pleasure. You want Karen to have that, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Good boy, Rob." Anna began to gently stroke her hand up and down his chest. "Allow your body to respond to my touch, to my voice, and become increasingly aroused now. That's right, so aroused, know that Karen is watching and enjoying this feeling with you. So aroused now. It's so hard now, too hard to think, so hard, but you don't want to think, you just want to let that arousal continue to build and build ... feeling it so hard now, and you want to give Karen what she really wants, and what she wants is to see you come. You want to please Karen, you want to make her happy, and she wants you to come, so feel the pleasure building, so hard, so hot, so aroused. Feel your arousal doubling now, doubling again, twice as aroused. So ready to give Karen what she wants, what you want, you want to come for her, you want to come now, Rob. Come now."

Rob's breath grew rapid and labored as Anna seduced his mind. At the final command to come his face clenched and his body lurched in the chair. Karen sat transfixed as her husband labored through an intense climax, guided and encouraged by Anna. Anna held Rob closely until his body relaxed again, and then gently talked him back out of trance. Then she looked at Karen. "You can do that, honey. You just need some more confidence."

"You can practice on me if you like," I joked. At least, I meant it as a joke, but in the back of my mind I half hoped she'd take me up on it.

We never did make it down to the stage show; we were having too much fun. The play continued with light, mostly non-sexual hijinks. For a long time I think we were in a tacit conspiracy to avoid looking at any form of clock because we knew it was getting obscenely late. Finally, though, Karen started to fade. "I think it's bedtime," she announced.

I helped her up from the floor and she folded me into her arms. "This has been so wonderful," she said into my ear. "Thank you. Thank you so much."

"Believe me, it's been a joy playing with you. Thank you for playing with me." My eyes found Rob and I continued, "and thank you for letting me play with your amazing, beautiful wife."

"It was a pleasure watching." Something passed between us in that moment and I knew I had made a great new friend. Two of them, really.

We said goodnight to Patrick and Leonard and then I exchanged hugs again with Karen and Rob while Anna gathered a few things. "I have my key," she told me, holding it up for me to see.

I grinned because we both knew she wouldn't be coming back that night. Then Anna closed in for a hug and added, in a low voice, "Besides, this way you get some private time. I'm sure you can make use of it." It was her subtle way of saying she expected me to have an orgasm of my own once everyone was out of the way.

Under normal circumstances Anna probably would've been right. All that sexual hypnoplay was amazingly hot, and just thinking about it would normally be enough to get me hard and horny. But by

the time the door closed behind them it was after 3am and all my body wanted to do was collapse. So I stripped down to my boxer briefs, flopped on the bed, and passed out almost immediately.

I don't know what time it was when I became aware of someone else in the room. I do know it was still dark. Something – maybe movement, maybe a soft sound – caused me to stir, but before I could open my eyes a gentle hand touched me on the back of my neck and a voice whispered into my ear. “It's all right, Tyler. Wake into trance ... deep, delicious trance.”

Anna hadn't used that trigger on me in months, but it still worked. One kind of fog rolled out of my mind and another took its place. “That's right,” she said, still whispering. “So deep.”

The bed dipped up and down a bit and I felt her lying down beside me. She nestled my head in one arm and began stroking my upper body with the other. “Your mind clear and open, focusing only on the sound of my voice, the pleasure of my touch. It feels so good to be like this, to let me hold you and stroke your skin, caressing your body and your mind at the same time. You know how much you enjoy it, and it's okay to enjoy it fully now.”

As she spoke, the caressing hand moved in broad circles across my chest and belly, dipping lower and lower with each circle. Something stirred in my mind: Anna doesn't touch me that way, not ever; we're friends, not lovers. Could it be ...?

I started to raise up, but she touched that magic spot on my neck again and dropped me back down. “Relax, Tyler, and let me take care of you now. You brought me so much pleasure tonight ... so much love and joy ... and now, I want to bring some to you. So relax and go deep, and let my touch arouse your body more and more. So much pleasure, Tyler. Everywhere I touch you feels so warm and pleasant, so aroused and happy. The more I touch and caress your body the more aroused you become, and the more it pleases me to bring you this pleasure. I know you love to make me feel good, and now it's time for you to feel good. Let each breath increase your arousal and pleasure. More and more aroused. That's right.”

There was more movement and then a tugging sensation at my waist. I dimly realized that Karen was pulling off my underwear, and that I was already hard enough to drive nails. Her body pressed against me and I sensed warm, soft skin against mine from head to toe. “That's right,” she repeated, “let go.” Her fingers lightly danced against the side of my hard-on and brushed across the tip. “You're so hard now, Tyler, so hard and so aroused. It's okay to be aroused by my touch, by my words. It pleases me to make you feel so good. Go deeper for me now and let the arousal get ten times stronger ...”

My mind shut down to the point where I stopped registering individual words. Her voice continued to float through the void, her fingers continued to stroke and caress me, and I felt myself getting so aroused I would have come already if I hadn't been so relaxed.

She asked me a question. I have no idea what it was, but I remember the answer: “Yes, please.”

There was a tearing sound and a sensation of something smooth sliding down over my cock. Karen shifted from my side to on top of me and guided me inside her. My arms went around her all by themselves and my lips moved to meet hers. We kissed and rocked together and then Karen went back to giving me suggestions.

“So nice, Tyler. It feels so good doesn't it, to be so aroused and hard. So much pleasure. Even through the condom you can tell how wet I am and you can feel good know that you arouse me so

even as I arouse you. Ten times more aroused now, Tyler. It's okay to be aroused, it's okay to enjoy this, and it's okay to come whenever your body is ready. Let the pleasure build, let the arousal build, and come for me. Let me look into your face as you come for me, Tyler. Come for me now."

A gentleman always sees to his lady's pleasure first, or so I've always felt. Under those conditions, though, I didn't stand a chance. Karen's voice reached deep inside my mind and my body obeyed. Holy cow, did it obey. My hips rose and a flood of heat poured over my cock as I came into the condom. She rode me the whole time, telling me to let go, to fully enjoy, and I think she gave me the longest and best orgasm I've ever had.

When it was over, I was mostly out of trance. She let me open my eyes long enough to look into hers and say, "Thank you." Then Karen snuggled down against me, pressed my neck one more time, and everything went spinning away.

When I woke in the morning I was alone but not abandoned. Karen had covered me with a blanket and left a pillow nearby that still smelled like her. It made for a very pleasant awakening despite the egregiously short sleep time I'd had. We'd had, presumably.

A shower cleared my head but didn't do much for my tiredness level. Fortunately, today was a light day – a morning session, then head to the airport for the flight home. And, I noticed with satisfaction, we had time for breakfast. We'd all be much better after some food and a little caffeine. Okay, make that lots of caffeine.

I woke Anna by calling her cell phone and she trudged upstairs to shower and change. Exhausted as she had to be, though, she was positively glowing. "Do I look as well laid as I feel?"

"Even more," I answered. "You're radiant."

"You look pretty happy yourself there," she noted. "Something you want to tell me about?"

I laughed. "Nothing you don't already know, I suspect." We joined together in a strong, happy hug. "Thank you."

"Thank Karen and Rob."

"I fully intend to."

Breakfast was interesting. We met up with Patrick and Leonard and a couple more people we'd hung out with intermittently during the weekend. Anna and Karen had an inescapable radiant aura about them, and Rob and I were almost as bad – or as good, depending on your viewpoint. The funny thing to me was that for once I was one of the insiders, while others at the table were in the position of knowing they'd missed something but not quite daring to ask what.

I was also relieved that what had passed between Karen and me the night before hadn't diminished the connection I felt with Rob. This was clearly a relationship that had legs, and I was glad for that.

It was at breakfast that we began making tentative plans to get together again at an upcoming

convention in Baltimore. I found myself looking forward to another weekend of crowded spaces and hotel food, which surprised even me.

Way too soon after, it was time for goodbyes. Karen and I hugged and hugged, whispering thanks into each other's ears, until we were both tearing. Rob and I also exchanged hugs and proclaimed ourselves brothers in spirit. Anna and I walked to the car with them and watched them drive away before loading up for our own trip to the airport.

"So," I asked Anna on the way, "did you circulate as much as you wanted to?"

She had been staring into the distance and had to come back to me. "Yes. I got to meet a bunch of people I'd only heard of, or knew from online. How about you, hon?"

"Not bad," I told her. "I was a little shaky at first, but I think I did pretty well."

"Baltimore will be a bigger convention than this one. Think you're ready for it?"

"Absolutely." I reached over and squeezed her hand. "I'll be in very good company."

-wg
2/11/2008