

NEITHER FOR LOVE, NOR MONEY

Phil Lewis

Science, romance, drama

It is the story of a woman who becomes instrumental in Earth's history. She marries a wealthy man and between them they develop Nanotechnology that changes how humans can live on Earth.

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TIME: TOMORROW

PLACE: A TROPICAL ISLAND

SET

The location is a tropical island with a small hut for shelter. There is a practical fire in the centre which adds atmosphere in the night sequences.

Other scenes are off island remembered sequences, played as is in a dream, with minimal, or no set, and props.

CAST

PATIENCE	An attractive woman 30-50s
JON	An attractive man 40-50s
TROTMAN	Man or Woman, any age (but not young)

ACT 1 - DAY TO NIGHT

THE SCENE IS A DESERT ISLAND. OCCASIONALLY THERE ARE SOUND EFFECTS OF BIRDS, ANIMALS AND WIND. THE FLOOR COMPRISES OF DIRT AND DRIFTWOOD. BEHIND, SOMEWHERE, IS THE JUNGLE. THERE IS AN OPEN WOOD FIRE IN THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE, WHICH APPEARS TO BE BURNING IN SCENE 2. THIS MAY BE A PURPOSE BUILT PERMANENT FIRE (SIMILAR TO A BARBECUE SET UP, MADE OF NATURAL MATERIALS, NOT BRICKS. OR, A LIGHTING EFFECT THAT CAN CREATE FLICKERING WHEN REQUIRED). IF POSSIBLE TREES DRESS THE EDGES OF THE STAGE.

THERE IS A ROUGH LEAN-TO ARRANGEMENT THAT PASSES FOR THE INSIDE OF A HUT. THIS IS MADE FROM BRANCHES, DRIFTWOOD AND LEAVES. UNDER THE CANOPY IS A ROUGH WODDEN TABLE, ON WHICH SITS A TYPEWRITER. A CHAIR IS BY THE TABLE. THERE ARE A FEW MODERN DAY MUGS AND PLATES VISIBLE. A WASHING LINE HANGS ACROSS BETWEEN TWO TREES. ITEMS OF SMALL CLOTHING HANG TO DRY. A HAMMOCK IS SLUNG BETWEEN TWO TREES [OPTIONAL].

OPENING MUSIC: MAMBO DEL A LUNA BY KIRSTY MACCOLL

THE SUN IS LOW AND AS THE SCENE PROGRESSES TO ITS END, THE SUN HAS SET AND DUSK IS UPON THE ISLAND.

PATIENCE ENTERS DRESSED IN SHORTS AND T-SHIRT. SHE CARRIES A RADIO AND A FLASK OF COFFEE. SHE POURS HERSELF A DRINK. SHE MOVES TO THE RHYTHM OF THE MUSIC AND PICKS UP HER TYPED SCRIPT. SHE TURNS THE RADIO OFF AND THE THEME TUNES STOPS. SHE BEGINS TO READ ALOUD WHAT SHE HAS WRITTEN SO FAR. AFTER A FEW LINES SHE STOPS READING AND LIVES THE STORY THROUGH WORDS AND ACTIONS ALONE. SHE TALKS TO THE AUDIENCE AS IF THEY WERE SCENERY. FROM TIME TO TIME SHE POURS COFFEE FROM THE FLASK INTO A MUG AND DRINKS. SHE USES THE STAGE TO THE FULL AS SHE RE-ENACTS HER MEMORIES AND FANTASIES.

PATIENCE:

"I was suddenly aware of how nervous I was becoming. The palms of my hands were damp. My breathing irregular. I paced the floor. I remember stopping in front of some paintings. Gilt framed and almost colourless with age. The room was warm, or was it that I was too hot? I breathed deeply to try and calm my nerves. I hadn't anticipated this! The room was excessively large and designed to impress. Only it did not impress me. It was too formal. Too stuffy. Ancient paintings, lit by overly ornate lamps, hung on cream walls. The ceiling was a mass of carved plaster, gilt finished with hints of red and blue desperately trying to give it some visual life."

(MOVES AWAY FROM THE TABLE AND SITS ON A LOG, FACES THE AUDIENCE AND STOPS READING)

I'd been collected at precisely 10.30 that morning, from my flat in Battersea, by a charming young man in an old fashioned chauffeur's uniform. He wore

a shining peak cap, elegant double-breasted grey jacket, with highly polished silver buttons the size of small hen's eggs. The plus-fours were of the same material as the jacket and tucked into high black shiny leather boots. Very fetching. Very weird. In an erect posture he'd confirmed my name and invited me to join him when I was ready. A last minute panic attack about whether I was wearing the right suit and I was out of the door. I'd been taken aback by the size and opulence of the car. I lost count of the number of doors along its gleaming flank and had been gently ushered into one of them. It was like stepping into a long, thin, luxury bungalow. The only thing missing, I decided, was a bathroom. The journey out of London slipped by so quickly, I hardly had time to take in all the car's facilities before noticing the view had changed to countryside. A short time later, a huge ornate wrought iron gate was swinging open to let the car glide up the long curving driveway towards the mansion in the distance.

I'm normally self-confident enough to lead my life the way I see fit. I make decisions based on a practical assessment of each situation. I govern this with a firm grip on what I believed to be right for me. Then I temper the whole evaluation with basic common sense. I never allow myself to be hurried and fully live up to my mother's christened name for me, Patience. There was a time when my mother wanted me to become a fashion model. I'd all the attributes - at the time. In a mood that was both curious and condescending to my mother, I'd gone along with the initial camera test, agency interviews and all the false hope scenarios. To my surprise, but not my mother's, I was accepted and offered a job as a model. To my mother's surprise, but not mine, I turned it down. You see.....I've always been in control of my own destiny. Always. But in that huge house, I was unsure. This was not my style. Not at all. It unsettled me. This job was going to be a lot more high-powered than my previous work experiences. But why was I being kept waiting for so long?

As I wandered around the huge room, I reached a second set of doors, placed opposite to my original point of entry. I cautiously opened the door. Yet another room, smaller, but almost the same. Exceptin this room sat a man behind a large antique desk. I gasped at my own stupidity. The man looked up and seemed flustered for a moment before standing and smiling at me.

(AFFECTING A MALE VOICE) "Miss Ewes?" He said.

"Yes", I said, "....I'm sorry. I didn't..."

"That's perfectly all right. It's me who must apologise for the delay. Would you come this way?"

He walked towards the next set of large wooden doors and I followed automatically. I watched as he walked in front of me. He wore a dark grey suit, white shirt and dark tie. All were of an old fashioned style. Just like the chauffeur, another clone employee. I'd obviously caught my employee's secretary napping, at least off-guard. This gave me a jolt of confidence as I strode purposefully after the aide into another large ornate room. This, however, was a little different. The lighting was very much subdued and the room was obviously a formal dining room. The long table was set for two, both together at one end. A large candelabra was alight. The place settings were in gold and seemed to contain enough cutlery to fill my kitchen drawer. Glasses, ranged in rows, gleamed, reflecting the golden light from the flickering flames. This was better. But lunch? No one had mentioned lunch!

He said, "Would you be so kind?"

My attention was dragged back to the aide, who was holding out a gold, high-backed chair for me. As I sat, the chair slid underneath me and I tried to relax, watching as the aide moved around the table. From the other room a telephone rang softly.

The man nodded to me and said, "Would you please excuse me. One moment." He was gone before I could reply. Left alone. Again.

I eased my small handbag underneath my chair and fingered the cutlery. It looked gold. It must be, in a place like this! Once again anxiety hit me. What was I doing here? There was no sound from any other part of the house. Just silence. It was unnerving. It was certainly the most bizarre interview I've ever attended. What was it they said about the English rich? Eccentric? That might explain it. Or....the idea slid to the forefront of my thoughts.....was this a test? Now that made more sense. A test of character before the main interview? I stretched back slowly and tried to relax. My eyes idly searched the ceiling for hidden cameras. I looked for eyes moving in the old paintings. I began to feel foolish. What sort of test could this be? I looked again at the table settings and tried to understand their significance. Two places. Set for at least four courses. Water glasses. Two types of wine glasses. Was this set for lunch, or dinner? Just how hungry was I? What was holding up the secretary? Anxiety was now giving way to anger. I didn't like to be kept waiting. I pushed back my chair and stood up. I picked up my handbag and moved purposefully towards the door, which opened on my approach.

The secretary smiled and entered, saying, "Sorry for that delay. Please be seated."

I was not ready to accept a simple apology after the way I thought I'd been treated.

So I told him, "My mother always said that being late was rude. A sign of disrespect for the people you were meeting". I added a raised eyebrow to challenge a response to the reprimand.

He seemed unflustered and calmly said, "I'm sure that would be a very appropriate ethic to live by. However, my life is not so....straight forward. I've an increasingly large amount of work to get through, that has far reaching ramifications if not completed. Consequently, if I were to cease work, just to occasionally be on time for individuals, then I would indeed be doing a disservice to dozens, maybe even hundreds, of people. That indeed would be rude. And disrespectful. Do you not agree?" He too raised a quizzical eyebrow to challenge a winning response. I thought it prudent to back down, lackey though he was.

I asked that if it was now inconvenient, I could return another time for the interview. He shook his head and motioned me to a chair, saying we could start straight away. I seated myself and asked if he was going to conduct the interview.

"Oh, yes", he said, I'm your new employer".

At that point I knew I'd ruined my chances. I should've realised that the interview may be a one on one scenario, not a board of directors.

But.....I kept control and managed a smile. "Please to meet you", I said, "I'm Patience Ewes. But then, you already know that" I felt foolish again.

He introduced himself as Jonathan Weiss and admitted I'd caught him on the hop. He asked if I was hungry. I said "A little", although the last thing I wanted was food. He reached forward and rang a small gold bell. The sound echoed around the room. I smiled to cover the resulting silence. He smiled a charming smile and asked me to tell all about myself. I've never had trouble in talking, so I launched into my rehearsed CV.

(RELIVING THE MOMENT) "I'm a University graduate. I've had several jobs, the current one being an account manager for an advertising agency. I was.....headhunted, if that's the correct expression, and agreed to come for this interview. I've no idea what the position entails. Perhaps you can tell me?" I made the question direct and I held his eyes until he could give a straight answer. He seemed suddenly ill at ease. After several false starts, that were making me very nervous, he finally said, "Miss Ewes. I'll be direct with you. Do you know the meaning of the word, 'concubine'?"

The implication dawned on me swiftly, but there was nothing I could think of to say. The door silently opened and two ladies entered with the first course. They each placed a large bowl in front of us and left silently. The bowl was large, dazzlingly white with a small discrete gold band around the top. It was only partially filled with a dark soup, which swayed gently to a standstill. All this I observed as the job description sunk home. Perhaps I'd misheard, misunderstood? I was aware of someone else beside me. An arm reached forward and poured white wine into the cut glass goblet. Still no words came to my mouth.

But he found his tongue. "You do like French Onion soup? The Chablis is supposed to be your favourite white wine?"

I looked up from my concentrated study of the bowl and said, "How do you know?"

"I've spent a long time making sure you're the right person for the job." He said.

I was losing control of my anger by then. So I said, "Job! Being a concubine is not a job.....it's...." I could think of nothing to say I was so wound up.

He said ever so casually, "A job, Miss Ewes. A paid service".

(SHE STANDS) I pushed the chair away from the table and got ready to leave. He stood and said, "Please stay. For five minutes longer. You must be at least a littlecurious?" Despite my anger and sudden fear, I hesitated. Of course I was bloody curious. But how to back down gracefully?

He thought for a moment before saying, "Let us continue with the job description changed to'companion'. At least until you've a better understanding of what's being offered here. You are, by nature, a curiosity driven person. You needed very little persuading to come for this interview. How many people turn up for a job interview without knowing what sort of a job it was?" I'd no answer to that, so he continued. "You're quite a

remarkable woman, Miss Ewes. Fiercely independent, causing some problems in your current position at Harrison Greer. Several reprimands". How did he know....?, I asked myself. "No real dependants I see. Father, deceased. Sorry to hear that. Mother in Australia. That's a long way away. You've all thephysical attributes I require and also a great deal more personality and intellectual abilities. You're a rare prize, Miss Ewes. I've been looking for you for nearly two years. I hope you don't mind too much, if I say that I've had you fully investigated and am convinced you're the right person for this totally unique position".

With an exaggerated look at my small gold watch and loosing my control of a rising temper, I said with quiet menace, "Exactly what position is that, Mr. Weiss?"

He hesitated before saying, "I need a personal companion. Someone that fills in all the areas normally covered by a good wife. Companionship, moral support....."

"And sex?" I said quickly.

"And sex. Yes. That's important too". He said quietly.

"What you need is a prostitute". I fired at him.

"Not at all. What I need is you".

He looked intently into my eyes. I was determined not to let him get the better of me in a staring match. I kept my voice low as I said, "What you need is a common prostitute, Mr. Weiss. And I'm neither common, nor a prostitute. All your research has deceived you. Nowhere in there will you find me willing to sacrifice my principles. Whatever gave you the idea that I'd be interested in becoming a whore?"

He gently wiped his lips with his napkin and rang the bell again. I thought the interview was over. He sat back and waited while the bowls were cleared and the second course was served. Once again a wine waiter filled a glass, this time with red wine. I noticed, bizarrely, how well the lamp cutlets were presented and looked just pink enough in the middle. Just how I liked them..... The wine was Rioja. My favourite..... I was aware that I was still standing and all this service was going on around me. I decided to sit. (SHE SITS).

He leaned forward, ignoring the food in front of him, to look directly at me, I had to hold his stare. He said, "Let's get the sex aspect out of the way first, shall we? I'm a very busy man. Rarely home, rarely have any spare time, rarely have time for.....sex. Yes, I could get in a prostitute to gratify the basic needs, and all that rubbish. But ...there's something seedy and uncomfortable about the thought of using prostitutes".

He picked up his knife and fork and slowly cut into the lamb. This allowed me to look away too. He continued with, "I hope you like the food. I chose it especially for you". He looked at me again. I kept my eyes down. He continued with, "I'd doubt that more than twice a month would you be required tofor you to complete that area of your contractual obligations. There, that's that out of the way. Now, the carrot. Please eat. At least you'll get a meal out of your day, it won't be totally lost".

I slowly picked up my glass of red and sipped. It tasted good. I drank some more, my mind racing. His voice seemed to fade into the background as I tried to analyse my own thoughts. I seemed to remember his next words in patches. He wanted to offer me a life style that's second to none. A once only offer, never to be repeated. Winning the lottery every week would not even come close. He moved in quite high circles, needing a companion for the more special occasions. A regular companion. Not some off the shelf escort whose name he wouldn't remember.

He clasped his hands and said, "I also need female company when I'm away on business, it's expected in some instances. I avoid, whenever possible, these functions, parties, and socialising in general. I personally dislike it, but as a means to an end....." He sipped the white and stopped short of wrinkling his face up in disgust.

"You don't like this wine?" I said, perhaps too harshly.

He shrugged and drank some water. "I just don't like wine. Any alcohol, actually". I looked him in the eye and drank deeply from my glass. He smiled and said, "Enjoy. It's for you, not for me. Where was I....?"

"Trying to justify hiring me as a whore". I said, more sarcastically than harshly.

"Oh yes. I was, wasn't I. Your duties, to act as companion, or host, on the rare occasions I have to attend functions. Entertaining at home here, or elsewhere, as required. They'll mainly be informal occasions. Friends, that sort of thing".

"Will I have to sleep with them too?" I said with unveiled sarcasm.

"Well.....if you really feel the need. But it's not compulsory". He resumed eating his meal.

I carefully put my cutlery together on the plate, as I had been taught as a child. I'd finished my meal. I'd finished with the interview and was about to finish the conversation.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Weiss, but I really don't think.....".

Weiss held up his hand and spoke at the same time, "I've not officially offered you the opportunity yet. I'll only ask you the once, when I think you are ready to make a full decision. Please don't pre judge. I don't require your answer yet. Understand the full implications before saying no. Or yes. Do you agree to that?"

I sipped my drink and took my time in answering. The glass was empty and Weiss stood up. He moved to the side of the room and collected the bottle. He stood close to me as he poured the wine. "Do you agree to that, at least?" he said again.

My mind was in a whirl. My answer was an emphatic no. The sheer nerve of the man, think me a willing pawn in his sexually devious life style.

(SHE PAUSES) On the other hand.....he'd been nothing but polite and charming. Kept me waiting, sure, but that could be forgiven.....possibly. He was right about one thing, though. I was intrigued by what was behind the whole issue. I certainly would like to know more. I made up my mind. "All right. I'll give you the opportunity to convince me. But I don't think....."

"That's all I ask". A small smile turned the corner of his mouth.

I wasn't going to let him get the upper hand. I leant forward and said, "Let me ask one question here. Bottom line question. What's the salary?"

He sat in his chair slowly as he said, "There's no salary". I was stunned.

He quietly changed tack and to thank me for my time offered me a "little gift. He slid a small blue box across the table and sat back, taking a sip from his glass of water. I looked at his face but could read nothing from his expression. I knew I shouldn't touch the gift. Nothing was for free. Everything had a price.

He sat back and watched me intently, smiling as he said, "No strings, I assure you. You can pick it up and leave right now if you wish".

Slowly, my hands shaking, I opened the box. I tried to keep my face passive, but my jaw dropped open and my eyes gave away my every emotion.

"Are these real?" I said eventually.

He said, "Of course. Have I not made the right impression yet? I'm a very wealthy man. Those are real diamonds. I've a small mine just east of JoBurg. I've been waiting for the right occasion. It seems fitting now".

I had to ask, "What're they worth?"

He relaxed slowly, he was on home ground now, "There's an old saying, 'if you have to ask the price, you cannot afford it'. I've no idea".

"Hundreds of thousands, surely?" I said, staring at the beautiful objects in my hand.

He gently pushed the water glass away and leant forward. His fingers were inches from my hands, now resting on the table, still holding the box. "Their true value is what it means to me to have you here. I want you to fully understand how important it is to me, that you decide to be part of my life. I've spent a long time getting to this point. Please don't throw it all away with a hasty, wrong decision, Patience".

I looked up. He was not smiling. He was very serious. Surely he knew I wouldn't be bought so easily! He surely didn't think that? The two earrings gleamed the candle light back at me. The sparkle held depth and a richness I'd never seen before. Each earring a single diamond, the diameter of a thimble. He said they were mine. Take the money and run, I thought. Now, or never. He may change his mind when I said no. I didn't know what to say.

After what seemed an age, I just blurted out, "The least I can say is thank you. And yes, I'll certainly give you some time to present your case".

His smile was broad, showing even white teeth. For just a moment I saw a new face there. A younger man, quite handsome. The face had relaxed. But within a brief moment the face resumed normality. Still handsome, but with an edge. A sharpness. A strain. His mind was being torn in two places. The telephone had not rung next door. At least, I couldn't hear it. Where was his mind then? Still on me?

He said seriously, "Perhaps you'd first consider a trial period.....for both of us. Say one month? See how it goes? Oh.....one other thing. Discretion is paramount to me. I don't wish you to see, or speak with ANY of the media. Both now and at any time after you leave here. Never. Is that fully understood?" His eyes were intense now.

"I think I can see the sense in that". I said.

“Excellent. Because your severance pay depends on it”.

I smarted at the phraseology. ‘Severance pay’ had a bureaucratic feel to it. It was getting clinical again. I needed emotion. When he’d looked at me studying the earrings...there was emotion. Where had that gone? In the distance a faint sound of the phone seemed to bring him back to reality. “We’ll continue tomorrow. Be ready at seven. AM, please. I want to show you something, you’ll never forget. I’m sorry, I really must go”. He stood and moved around to my chair. He took my hand and kissed it gently. “When you’re ready, please ring the bell and Michael will take you home. Thank you for coming here. I’ve enjoyed your company immensely. I’ll see you tomorrow”.

I was confused again, “What shall I wear?” I said.

“It won’t matter. Goodbye for now”, and he was gone.

I sat silently, allowing the rollercoaster ride of emotions to catch up with me. It didn’t matter now whether I was being watched, or not. The interview was over. My hands were still clutching the small box that held a fortune in jewellery. The symbol of wealth and power was not lost on me. Neither was the price I was being asked to pay. Sometime later I rang the bell and started my journey back from the dream. Back to reality.

(SHE FINISHES READING HER STORY SO FAR AND PLACES THE FINISHED SHEETS ON THE TABLE. SHE SITS AT THE TYPEWRITER AND BEGINS TO TYPE AS SHE SPEAKS HER WORDS. AFTER THE FIRST FEW SENTANCES SHE FINISHES TYPING AND JUST RELIVES HER LIFE THROUGH WORDS AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS.)

The phone rang at six o’clock, startling me from a restless sleep. It was one of Weiss’s aides reminding me I was being picked up at seven. I started to tell him I’d changed my mind, but he’d rung off. I pulled the pillow over my head and tried to get back to sleep. Thoughts and images ran around my mind. No pattern, but random, disturbing and at the same time - exciting. The pillow failed to dull my senses and soon I was peering out at my bedside table. The box lay open, the gems sparkling in the early morning light sifting through the curtains. Slowly I reached out and picked up the box. Rubbing my thumb over the smooth surface of the diamonds, my heart beating loudly in my chest. Jewellery was not one of my passions, but I could see how women throughout history had been wooed by the erotic nature of the rare stones. I held in my hand something probably more valuable than the flat I lived in. The earrings were worth more than everything I owned. Or had ever owned. It certainly put things in perspective. I sat up and cradled them in my palms. I looked up to the mirror opposite my bed. Slowly I eased the earrings out from their deep blue velvet home and placed them against my ears. Early morning was not my best time, but the gems shone back, lighting my face. They looked stunning. I saw myself smile. It faded as I realised I’d have to return them. The chauffeur could take them back with him. I carefully placed them back in the box and slowly closed the lid on them for the last time.

I sat in bed with a cup of tea and allowed the sequence of events to run through my mind once more. I remembered everything. Every detail, every nuance, every word. It still made no sense. But, in the cold light of the following day I felt more in control to make a rational assessment of the offer. The answer was, of course, no.

I lay in the bath with my second cup of tea and felt the water caress my body like velvet. This was my daily luxury. Foam nearly reached the bath rim, hiding some of the grimmer secrets of the bath's enamel. The room needed decorating. The plumbing visible and stark in the morning light. Hardly the lap of luxury. I thought. Weiss had no idea what 'making do' was all about. He thought a few bribes and anyone would fall over themselves to do his bidding. But not Patience Ewes. He'd met his match.

My eyes rested on the large crack in the corner, above the old metal water heater, that didn't always work. I knew that I certainly needed a change in my life. Something soon and something significant. But was this the right direction? Obviously not. "Okay. Let's look at the facts". I said aloud, realising I was in the intense analytical phase of my decision-making. Briefly I was surprised I was even considering the offer. Never mind. I'd nothing better to do. Let's think it through.

What exactly is the job? To sleep with the boss, when it suits him. I'm not going to do that. The water was losing its heat. I turned the tap on with my foot. "Not Patience Ewes." I reminded myself. The water warmed and I snuggled down deeper. Just think of all the courtesans and concubines throughout history. Many royal families had them. It was part of the way they lived. If it's good enough for them..... I let the thought go unfinished. Now, thinking about this.....famous prostitutes were never actually ridiculed, or persecuted. Mata Hari, Christine Keeler, Nell Gwyn. I'm sure there are others. The oldest profession is becoming almost respectable. Look at Christine Onassis! I started to turn off the tap, but it burnt my toe. I sat up and turned it off by hand. I massaged more shampoo into my scalp and thought some more.

So, Weissy wants me to be there - when and where he wants, eh? Anywhere in the world. What, like, Jamaica, New York? Hawaii? Well...being there wouldn't be so bad, but to have to sleep with him? I slid back into the comfort of the water. All right, so he's not exactly ugly. In fact, for the slightly older man, not bad at all. How much older? Ten, twenty? You're....twenty eight now, he's about....forty-five...ish? Call it fifteen. Not impossible to live with that. Now....sex. The biggy. What did he say? 'I'm rarely home, rarely have any spare time, rarely have time for...sex'. How often is that? Once a month, week, day? Twice a day? Say once a week. So, he said a month's trial period. So let's assume that's.....four times! I looked across to the small table and saw the box, closed and finished with. I thought...."If they're worth....even fifty thousand, that's.....no, say forty thousand...that's ten thousand pounds a screw! Jesus!" I slid beneath the water and the shampoo slid off my hair. I surfaced spluttering. "Of course I'm worth it!"

(SHE MOVES AND LOOKS INTO THE JUNGLE)

Time for a pee.

(SHE EXITS. JONATHAN WEISS ENTERS FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE. HE IS DRESSED IN SMART DARK SLACKS AND OPEN NECK BUSINESS SHIRT. HE MOVES TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE, IGNORING THE TROPICAL WORLD BEHIND HIM. HE IS A FANSASY

IMAGE AND DOES NOT APPEAR IN HER WORLD - JUST YET. HE TALKS TO THE AUDIENCE.)

JON:

I was very excited. For the first time, in a long time. Five minutes before seven the next morning, I was there at exactly seven o'clock. She was towel-drying her hair as she opened the door. My chauffeur's smile was broad, his uniform in place.

(AFFECTING A FEMALE VOICE) "Oh, yes. One moment please", she said as she walked to the dining table to pick up the small box.

"Please return this to Mr. Weiss. Tell him thanks, but no thanks", she said.

The chauffeur smiled and said, (ADDING ANOTHER MALE VOICE) "Why don't you tell him yourself", and pointed to the car.

"Mr. Weiss?" she called, through the open door of the car, still offering the box. There was a click behind her and she turned to see the front door shut and the chauffeur moving towards the car.

"Hey!" she said.

"Ready when you are, Miss Ewes". I said in a voice soft, yet still in control.

I reached for her hand and gave a firm, but gentle, pull on her arm. Before she realised it, she was seated next to me in the car. The doors shut and the car smoothed away from the curb. She thought I was kidnapping her and began to get agitated. I said that she'd agreed to give me my chance to present my case and I was taking it. She tried to say she'd changed her mind, but I would have none of it. Not after the effort I had to ensure I was on time for her.

She then wanted to change her clothes and I said there was no time as she had to take a medical. She was naturally surprised, but I explained that it was for both our sakes. If we find any.....problems, I'd ensure she'd have the best medical care to sort everything out. Look at this as a free check up. The best she'd ever have.

Still she protested until I asked if she'd anything better to do that day. "No....", she said. "Then let's get the tedious part out of the way and let's have some fun", I said. And for the next few days, that's just what we did.

(HE SMILES IN REMEMBRANCE AND STROLLS OFF THE STAGE AS PATIENCE RETURNS).

PATIENCE: THAT'S BETTER.

(SHE MOVES BACK TO THE TYPEWRITER AND READS SOME OF THE SHEETS PREVIOUSLY TYPED. SHE SMILES AT HER OWN WORDS. SHE TURNS BACK TO THE AUDIENCE.)

I remember waking with a start. I looked around at the familiarity of my own bedroom, suddenly no longer real. My head pounded and I knew I'd over done it. Too much to drink and also..... the memories flooded back. Fear and exhilaration mixed together. I sat up and held my head in my hands. First things first. Headache pills.

An hour later I was still sitting at the breakfast table, head in hands an untouched cup of tea in front of me. I was reliving for the third time, the events since Weiss had picked me up.

The hospital experience should've been a nightmare. I was put through six major tests and the results were almost instantaneous. All were negative. I certainly came out feeling healthier than I went in. All in all, quite painless. What surprised me was the attention I was given. At least three nurses and several doctors. All the testing equipment areas seemed to be empty and waiting for me. Within two hours I'd completed all the main physical scans and tests required for a complete medical examination. Apart from the claustrophobic CAT scan, I found the experience almost pleasurable. It reinforced my belief that the medical people were the most human and nicest people to be around.

Weiss was waiting for me in a sumptuous office on the third floor.

He finished his glass of water, smiled and said, "All clear. Never doubted it, but had to be sure. Now.....ready for some fun".

I'd looked at myself and said, "In these rags?"

Weiss smiled, "Is shopping for clothes fun?"

I grinned, "Yes".

"Then let the fun begin".

As we drove out from the underground car park I noticed the front of the hospital. It was very modern in design and bore a discrete sign, which said, 'This Hospital funded by the Weiss Corporation'. I asked if it was his. He craned his neck as if to see it for the first time. "Yes. My second", he said.

Within two hours the car was full of elaborate, designer decorated shopping bags. It seemed that one of Weiss's entourage was an expert in shopping. Jill had whisked me through a series of Oxford Street stores, while Weiss sat in the car. Probably on the phone. I sat on the wide back seat, opposite him, and just looked at the array of clothes he'd purchased for me. He suggested that I might want to change into something for the flight. Flight? Something smart, he suggested. There were a few embarrassing moments when I had to take my outer clothing off and put on the Versace dress. Weiss turned his head while on the phone, to protect my embarrassment.

Our huge black car swept through Heathrow airport and pulled outside a very smart awning. People in dark suits opened the doors and welcomed Mr. Weiss. His entourage, now numbering six people were escorted through several adjacent rooms and finally into a private room, where two customs officers made short work of the formalities. That was when my blood froze in my veins. My passport! Still at home. But, within moments we were being swept along again. Through quiet corridors and suddenly I found myself at a boarding gate. Down the short umbilical and I was shown into a huge grey leather aircraft seat. Weiss gave his topcoat to one of the cabin staff and settled in beside me. Champagne appeared on my armrest and in a daze I looked around. I was sitting in Concorde!

The journey was too short and I drunk too much champagne. All my diet went out the window as I was offered an array of excellent food, none of which could I refuse. Weiss ate sparingly. He stretched his legs from time to time and conversed quietly with his colleagues. I was most of the way through the flight before I realised that the ever-expanding Weiss entourage

had taken up the whole of the front end of the plane. How had he managed that, at such short notice? With a sudden thought, I realised that Weiss had spent two years preparing for my arrival. This was no last minute decision.

Further exhilaration was yet to come after we landed in New York. As I was led gently away from the plane and straight onto a large helicopter. Six other people joined us as the whirlybird rotated into the sky above New York. It was a dull day, but that meant nothing to me. I was so excited I kept pointing out landmarks, I'd only ever seen on movies, or the television. For the rest of the day, I shopped. Driven from one major shopping street to another in a large, this time pink, limo. I finally knew what was meant by shop till you drop. As dusk fell and the millions of lights made New York City into a fairyland, shops began to close. But not for Weiss. Stores reopened their doors, allowing Jill and me to browse and spend. At first with great reluctance, but later growing confidence, I began to spend serious money. Treated like royalty, I was denied nothing. Encouraged all the time to buy the best. What didn't fit, would be altered.

Three hours was spent at a beauty makeover, where three separate women manicured, pedicured and gave me a facial. By the time they were finished the car was awaiting for the next stage. I managed to eat a little here and there. Most of the shops offered me a complimentary glass of champagne. Slowly the effects were catching up on me and I found myself refusing alcohol and asking for soft drinks.

Weiss had disappeared for about five hours, but suddenly appeared in the car as I scrambled in with another pile of bags. He once again suggested I changed. This time for dinner. Once again I changed in the car, undecided which of twenty highly expensive dresses to wear. Once satisfied I looked in a small mirror and was amazed at my transformation. I looked like a princess. I smiled at my reflection. Different now from when I left home. Home - thousands of miles away and in a different world.

Weiss sat opposite, just staring at me. He wore the almost identical suit, shirt and tie he'd on when I first met him, the day before. That seemed weeks ago! He looked smart and ready to go anywhere. He reached into his pocket and pulled out the familiar blue box. He asked me to wear them for him. The diamond earrings set off the dark red dress perfectly. I could not believe how good I looked until I looked into the eyes of Jonathan Weiss. He could. He could see something there that he'd waited a long time to be a part of. His patience did him credit.

In a moment of unguarded weakness, I moved over and kissed him on the cheek, to thank him. I thanked him for the day, the fun - everything. For a brief moment we looked into each other's eyes. What I saw was a lonely man. Somewhere trapped inside was a young man trying to get free. He leaned forward and touched his lips with mine. This was getting into areas I had decided not to visit. Fortunately he grinned and said brightly, "And we haven't started yet."

The restaurant, I discovered sometime later, was probably the most exclusive and expensive in New York. Only Weiss and I sat for dinner and were treated as if we were royalty. I noticed how little Weiss ate. After my active day I made my way stoically through four courses and several glasses of wine. At one stage, I excused myself and made for the bathroom. The polished finish of the suite of rooms staggered me. I could

live in a place like this! I sat and gave myself time to reflect on what was happening.

I WAS being won over. No doubt about that. But who wouldn't? Without even trying he was giving me a taste of his world. The attendant ensured I was comfortable and had everything I needed. I placed my new Gucci bag on the stand and sprayed my new Channel perfume carefully over my neck. Everything I stood up in was new. And it wasn't really mine!

This was a dream. A short interlude. If he was willing to play that game, then so was I. I stood alone looking at my reflection. What the world could see was a woman with an immaculate sense of style, wearing top designer's clothing and accessories. Bright diamond earrings adorning her face that was perfectly made up. What I saw was a whore.

Several times during the evening diners would come up to Weiss and say hello. He seemed pleased to see them. He introduced them all to me, calling me 'Patience, my friend'. Two well-known movie stars were introduced to me and I was speechless. Twice during the evening I turned suddenly and caught Weiss watching me. He'd smile and look down at his food, or his coffee. On one of those occasions I reached across and held his hand. For the first time I called him Jon and even asked him to dance. He was clearly embarrassed, but I forced him anyway. I pulled him to his feet, led him out onto the small dance floor and made a little room for us.

I held his shoulders and slowly he put his arms around my waist. It was a slow number and didn't take too much skill to keep up to the rhythm of the music. I thought it was the time and the place to put an end to the tension. Put a closure on my personal dilemma. I stared at him and told him I wanted to sort things out now. I thanked him for the trip and everything, but was not going to take up his offer. Before I could finish he stopped me by saying he hadn't officially made the offer yet. I wasn't allowed to argue and I thought the excellent evening I was having, made me not push it any further. We finished the dance and the music continued. We danced some more. He looked at his watch and said it was getting late. My heart skipped a beat. Was this the next stage of his plan. Time to go to bed? I reached forward and held his wrist. I somehow expected an Omega, or something really expensive, but a Swatch? He explained it was a sentimental attachment. I teased him and demanded to know who from. He asked if it would help me consider the position more carefully, he'd tell me. We stopped dancing and went back to our candlelit table. He studied his fingernails for a moment. I noticed they were perfectly trimmed. Short, yet still masculine. His skin was still quite smooth. They were hands that had never done a day's work in his life.

He explained how he'd been married twice before. I asked was it one or two? He looked puzzled. "The watch!" I said, "From wife one, or wife two?" He said neither and that both marriages were a disaster he should've seen coming and avoided. I let him talk.

He was in another place and another time. I had the feeling that he'd never voiced this part of his history before. I felt sad and yet exhilarated that he was telling me. All his ex-wives ever wanted was his money. A quick settlement, alimony and they both disappeared. He admitted he had poor judgement in women, at which I laughed. I felt immediately guilty. I

suggested he ought to look for a wife from a rich family. He didn't think there were any as rich as him. Everyone was after money, he thought. It always comes down to money, rarely for love.

I sipped some water and asked just how rich he was. He didn't know! "If you have to ask....you can't afford it, eh?" I quoted him. Perhaps a little too flippantly, for the seriousness of the moment. The wine was having an effect, I suppose.

He didn't want another wife, history repeating itself. The wine did the talking for me as I said what he was asking for was a live-in prostitute - concubine to use his words. He said he didn't view me as a whore, concubine....anything. He'd said companion and meant companion. I'd be given a great lifestyle. Everything I wanted. In return, for companionship. No commitment from either side. No years of developing a working relationship, based on give and take, compromise.

It was all very simple to him. Quit when I wanted to. He'd ask me to leave when he wanted me to. No messy legal tie-ups, taking time and effort. Pay the alimony up front, rather than at the end? I said. I added that he really didn't know what he was asking from me. Or any woman, come to that. His face had changed. He said, "Let's continue this tomorrow, shall we?" and signalled the Matre de. Suddenly people were all over us. Moving chairs, bringing coats and before I could think of anything else to say, we were back in the limo. We were alone in the almost silent car as it cruised through New York. Destination, unknown.

Nothing was in my control and I was beginning to resent it a little. Weiss shrugged off his overcoat and laid it carefully on the seat beside him. He undid his jacket buttons and settled back in the seat. He lifted out a bottle of champagne from the mini-bar and poured two glasses. He held both glasses in his lap. He'd obviously been thinking through his next move and quietly said, "My business interests take up virtually all my time. I really don't have time to enjoy the fruits of my labour. I don't have time for relationships, or a family. However, like any other man I've.....needs. I've a need for a woman at the core of my life, female companionship. For both business and personal reasons. It seems to me, most married people live separate lives. Staying together, although sometimes disliking each other? Being married is no guarantee of a good life. I think I've found a personal solution that suits me best. I've chosen you from a wide selection of other candidates. Yes, you were headhunted, but not for a job. For an opportunity second to none".

I wanted to speak but he wouldn't let me. He continued with, "Money is nothing. Time is everything. I've set aside these few days to make sure you're the right person and to allow you time to make a proper decision. Here's the deal. Take the opportunity for one month. At the end of that month you can take away £250,000. You need never see me again. If you're happy with the deal and want to stay on until six months, then you can take £500,000. After one full calendar year, £1 million". I sat with my mouth hanging open. No dreams had even come close to this sudden rise of fortune. Winning the lottery was the nearest anyone could come to being a millionaire within a year. I reached for the drink and almost spilt it. Once a week for six months equals 26, say 25. Divided by £500,000 that makes £20,000 per screw. Now was I really worth it? Who could say no to that sort of money? I said, "I'll certainly think about it. Jon". We both drank from our glasses. I held his eyes as I drained my glass in one swallow. I continued to

look deep into his eyes as he tried to finish his drink. Slowly he drained the glass. Somewhere between us a new understanding had begun.

(SHE EXITS TO GET MORE PAPER AS JON ENTERS AS BEFORE).

JON:

The hotel room was nothing short of splendid. I wanted nothing but the best for her. The balcony looked out over Manhattan and even the night was clear enough to see the stars. There were three rooms comprising her suite. No sooner had she been shown the facilities than hotel staff arrived with more champagne, fruits and snacks. Flowers almost filled the room. My suite was next to hers. She went to the adjoining door and knocked. Then opened the door slowly. I was on the telephone and turned to see her enter. I waved her in and hurried my call.

"How'd you like the suite?" I said.

"Love it. And right next to yours, too. How convenient". She said.

"Do you have everything you need?", I said, ignoring her sarcasm.

"Yes, thanks. You?"

"Yes. Then I'll say goodnight". I said.

"Goodnight", she said.

I walked to the connecting door and opened it for her. She walked through and I quietly closed it behind her. She must have heard the lock being turned.

The following morning I left really early. I returned some time later and apologised for not being there earlier, but now we could do some shopping. She felt she'd enough clothes already. But, accessories were now the agenda. Jewellery in particular. I only had an hour to spare, but wanted to see her get started. I would then leave her with Jill, who knows how to spend my money better than anyone else. The pink limo was waiting outside of the hotel and us three passengers were soon seated in comfort. The car pulled away and headed for Tiffanies. I pulled out a small leather wallet and gave it to her. I wasn't being presumptuous, she could return it any time she wished. It held a Platinum Card with unlimited credit and I promised not to check what use it was put to. She hesitated to take it. She'd need many things and I wouldn't always be here. Without that, we couldn't start anything!

She said, "What makes you think I want to start anything?" Whether she stayed with me or not, these things were for her to keep. Set herself up for a fresh start in life.

"Patience," I said, "Don't let this opportunity pass you by".

She queried how any card could be unlimited. After being pressed, I admitted that I owned the bank. If she was to accompany me to functions, she'd need the best of everything. That much I insisted on. There were no strings attached. She could keep everything, give them away, I really didn't care. As long as she didn't hold a garage sale at my house.

I needed her to have quality accoutrements, I needed her to always look her best. Within one hour I spent over a £3m on jewellery. Items for day

wear, evening wear and formal occasions. The packages were entrusted to one of my staff to return to the hotel safe, while her day continued.

Jill was always ready to spend some more of my money and ensured Patience bought gifts for friends and relatives. Jill insisted on having them sent overseas, rather than Patience carrying them in her luggage. Patience agreed, but she suspected it was just another ploy to get her to stay longer with me.

And it was.

(SWAP OVER AGAIN. PATIENCE BRINGS IN A REAM OF PAPER AND OPENS IT, PLACING THE PAPER ON THE TABLE AND LOADING THE TYPEWRITER. ALL THIS DURING THE NEXT SCENE.)

PATIENCE:

Jill and I finally sat and had a light lunch. The grand piano was playing gently and the warm elegant room helped relax us. We sipped our lattes and made idyll conversation. Slowly I brought up the subject of Jill's employer.

She'd worked for Jon for five years, apparently headhunted like all the rest of his staff. She was a 'Fixer'. If things went wrong, she'd help fix them. She made things happen. It looked like I needed 'fixing'. Jill stopped playing with her hair and lifted the bone china cup to her lips. She sipped, leaving a small red stain on the edge. The piano player was taking his ten-minute break. The small noise of chattering people was heard over the occasional chink of china.

After a pause, she told me she was here to make me comfortable and help get all the things I was going to need. I told her I wasn't going to be in his employ. At least not for long. What was the point? I tried to wheedle out of her what she knew about my supposed 'offer'. Officially she knew nothing, but was aware Weiss was looking for a more permanent companion. Not a wife. It wasn't her place to question her employer's actions and motives.

She told me about the times she was in Jon's employ during the reign of his second wife. The wife had made his life hell. He was a good man and didn't deserve all that, Jill added. I can understand now if it left a scar. And she fully understood if he wanted someone, let's say, less permanent and less problematical.

I said, "A whore?"

She said, "Your word, not mine".

"My word, yes. I seem to be the only one using it".

She said, "That's because you're the only one thinking it. Excuse me. Bathroom time".

When she returned, I reached across and took her hand. There was a surprised look on her face. I said, "I feel like a whore, Jill, and I haven't even done anything".

She tried to smile and gripped my hand tightly, saying "A whore is someone that does it as a profession. Is that you? I don't think so. Are you expected to sleep with many men, in many situations? I don't think so. I think you

have a very strong character, Patience. I'm a little surprised at the lack of faith you're showing in yourself".

I felt tears forming and forced a smile. "A lot's happened to me. I feel forced into a corner".

She smiled as she said, "Most of the time you'll be Mr. Weiss's companion. I cannot say what other, more intimate, requirements he has for you. But for most of the time it's companionship he wants. And he might as well have an attractive companion, than an unattractive one".

I felt in a confessional state of mind and found myself talking to this woman who was a stranger a few hours ago. Somehow it was right. At least, that's what I felt right then.

I told her I'd always had this sense of destiny. I felt I was destined to do something important with my life.

She was sympathetic and said, we all feel that way at some time, or other. No-one wants to feel they're insignificant in the overall scheme of things.

I said, "No. I mean REALLY having an effect on the world. Something major. Big. Important. I've always seen my name being associated with something grand. Not inventing a three-wheeled bicycle. More...changing the world". It must have sounded silly, but she didn't say so.

She said we all have dreams. Hers was to be an airhostess. Now she spends a lot of time being served by one. I laughed out loud. It seemed to break the ice.

She squeezed my hand again saying, "He's a very genuine man. I'd trust him not to mess you up in any way".

But it had been such a tour de force. It's was all so.....much! Jill stood and moved around to table to sit next to me. The piano started up again and seeped into our conversation.

She said earnestly, "Mr. Weiss is an extremely busy man. Non-stop all day, every day. He has to cut corners. I'm really surprised at how much time he's spending with you. Okay, he's fitting in meetings over here, but he's had to reschedule a great deal. You should be flattered, not frightened".

I told her I still had a real problem with the morality of this. All right, I'm not overtly religious. I don't go to church regularly, but I do believe that what I'm being asked to do is wrong. She asked what exactly did I find wrong with the offer? I played with my napkin and looked around the classic room. I didn't really know. Being paid to sleep with a stranger? At his convenience? No....emotion, romance, whatever.....?

"Just the sex?" She asked.

"Yes. Just the sex". I said, rather quietly.

Jill stood up, collected her handbag and smiled saying, "There've been times in my life when 'just the sex' would've done me just fine. To get paid for it too.....what a dream".

Both of us laughed as we left the restaurant.

There's a definite limit to how much shopping anyone can do. Despite the luxury of a car from shop to shop, the extreme pampering once inside exciting stores and the best part of all - not having to carry the bags. There comes a time when you have to stop. To stretch out on the bed and just relax completely. Back in my hotel suite, I slipped into a restless sleep. My

mind drifted and dreams played around inside my head. I dreamed of sailing on foreign seas, flying high in huge aircraft. Running my hands through piles of diamonds. It all seemed so unreal. I knew it was.

That evening I had to make do with Jill for company. She suggested a quiet little restaurant not too far from the hotel. Having had enough of sitting in cars for one day, we walked there and back. Jill never brought up the subject of Weiss, neither did I. It was to be my decision, no one else would make the difference.

We walked back to the hotel, arms linked and laughing at each other's jokes. We wished each other a good night and Jill kissed me lightly on the cheek. "Good luck. I hope to see you again", said Jill as I walked off down the corridor with a last wave goodbye. I slid the card through the security panel and entered into my sumptuous suite. All the lights had been put on and eveningwear laid out on the bed. As I slept in the nude, the gesture was wasted. But appreciated, none the less.

I stood on the balcony and looked over the city, twinkling in its neon splendour. I turned and saw the adjoining door to Jon's room. With only a slight hesitation I crossed the room and knocked gently. After a moments pause I opened it and walked into the room. Jon was on the phone and he turned and waved. I waited patiently while he finished the call and hung up the receiver.

"Had a good day?" He said.

"The best. Thanks, Jon".

"You're welcome".

"No, really. Thank you" I said, I moving closer to him "I really appreciate you taking the time off. I don't know how I can thank you for showing me such a good time".

"You'll have your opportunity", he smiled.

Despite all my earlier misgivings, I now found myself moving closer to him. I put my arms around his neck and with a slow, deliberate movement, kissed him fully on the lips. I pulled myself into his body and turned my head, moving my lips in slow motion. With a slow sigh, I pulled away, moving back to the door. "Good night. Sleep tight". I said and shut the door with the softest of clicks. (SHE LOOKS AT THE TYPED WORDS. SHE TYPES A FEW MORE THEN CARRIES ON WITH HER REFLECTION.) I did not lock it.

When I awoke I was confused. It took a while to realise I was in a hotel room in New York. Then a smile spread across my face. The phone rang later and asked me to be ready within the hour. I was about to pack when two maids entered and started to do it for me. I let them get on with it, taking my coffee onto the balcony. The city was covered in a light mist. The sun barely visible to the east. My breath showed lightly on the air. I felt a slight chill and moved back into the room. I sat and watched television and then had a shower and looked in the wardrobe. There was a very smart business suit hanging in solitary splendour, the rest had been packed and the cases taken away. I dressed and picked up the small blue box, opening it with a tingle of excitement. I slipped the earrings on and realised it now completed my new look. The phone rang and asked if I was ready for my car. Outside the pink limo was waiting, but was empty.

The drive to the airport was too quiet. I turned on the television, to break the silence. At the airport I'd another moment of panic as I realised that I still hadn't got my passport. How was I able to enter this country without it? As I got out of the door the chauffeur handed a leather package to me. He escorted me to the check-in desk and my baggage was already being processed. I opened the package and my passport was there. How? I somehow remembered the chauffeur.....he'd closed my front door. It must have been him. He'd stolen it!

I was soon seated on the plane and this time the flight seemed longer. Still enjoyable, but I was alone. This too was to be part of the deal. I sat staring into my champagne glass and with surprise, realised I was missing Jon.

The night before, I'd left my door unlocked as an invitation to him. The biggest surprise of all, was that I was disappointed that he hadn't taken up the opportunity. An opportunity he'd been planning for over two years. I drained my glass and placed it on the armrest, where it was immediately filled up again. Screw him!

One more large limousine from the airport to my home and I was behind familiar doors again. I stared at the state of my living room. It was almost covered in packages from Bloomindeals, Neman Marcus, Tiffany, etc. etc. I sat and stared at the physical aspects of the turn in my fortunes. As I looked the tears started. I could not tell whether they were from joy, or sorrow. For a few minutes, it really didn't matter. I was home.

Within a few short days, I'd gone from someone struggling to sort my life out to being a wealthy woman with tremendous prospects. All that stood in the way of a promising future was my own moral ground. What was really wrong with taking this opportunity for just one month? I could put the negative aspects to the back of my mind for that long. My self-esteem and pride should remain intact. My decision would harm no one but myself. Who was going to judge me? Who was to say it was wrong? Maybe my mother, so long out of touch. No one need ever know.

I could explain my new money as a windfall. Lottery, anything. I need never work again. The very thought sent shivers of anticipation down my spine. Money didn't guarantee happiness, but it could buy a pleasanter sort of misery! It was all too good to be true.

Something had to go wrong. I stopped the train of thought right there. I'm not a negative person. Things would **not** go wrong. I would remain in control. At least in control of my thoughts and emotions. Where my body was to be in the world, was not going to be in my control. Could I accept that? I began to pack my things away. Reliving the excitement by trying them on and knowing they were going to be mine. The blizzard of emotions of shopping in New York was thousands of miles away and in a different world. It wasn't my world. But it could be, if I chose so.

I stood in front of the mirror, dressed in some of the more expensive items and realised I was wearing over £2m of clothes and jewellery. For a moment it sobered me. No historically famous prostitute has ever earned that much! Then I burst out laughing and could not stop. I sat on the floor crying with laughter and letting all the tension and emotional restraint of the last few days flood out. Now I needed a close friend to confide in. To help. But I realised that I didn't have anyone close. Neither male, or female. I

dried my eyes and stood up slowly. I noticed an envelope on the dressing table. Carefully I opened it and realised it was from Jon. Just a plain piece of paper. A line of hand written text in blue ink. 'I'll call in today at 2, for an answer'. The paper fluttered to the floor. The time had come for a final decision.

(IT IS GETTING DARK AND COOLER. DURING THE NEXT SCENE SHE MOVES TO THE WASHING LINE AND REMOVES SOME CLOTHES. SHE PUTS ON A JUMPER FOR WARMTH. SHE BEGINS TO BUILD UP THE FIRE.)

The doorbell startled me. Two o'clock. Precisely. A last check in the mirror and I opened the door with shaking hands. Ignoring all the clothes Jon had bought me, I chose to wear my old jeans and loose fitting blue top. In these I was myself. More comfortable. I'd chosen to leave off any make-up. I wanted to be completely myself.

It was no surprise to see Jon in a dark grey suit, white shirt and dark tie. He stood there without a smile. It was an important day for him. In a way, I saw it as a proposal. I expected him to go down on one knee. Almost. He would ask for my hand, or body in this case, and I would be saying 'No'.

I invited him in. He took no notice of the surroundings, but turned to stare at me. I closed the door slowly and turned to look at him. Neither of us smiled. Jon put his hand in his pocket. I pushed away from the door and held out my hand, "No....no more presents, Jon. Please" I said. His hand withdrew holding a handkerchief. He mopped his forehead. He chose a seat and carefully eased himself into the chair and waited. I asked, "Something to drink? Tea? Water?" He shook his head.

I decided to take the bull by the horns. "Well then. Down to business, I suppose". I moved and sat opposite him. "Before you say anything, Jon. I would just like to say how much these last few days have meant to me. I appreciate the time, and money, you've spent on me. I shan't forget it. Ever. So, I thank you. However, you've also put me in a very difficult position. My mind is in a whirl and I really didn't know which way was up for most of the time. But! I've had time to think. I've come to a decision".

He stood up and moved nearer to me. Rather than have him standing over me, I stood up too. His face showed no emotion, though he suspected what was coming. His hands rested at his sides as he waited. I carried on with my rehearsed speech. I said, "Before anything, I wanted to thank you. I didn't know how. I can only think of one way. But it's my idea, with no strings attached".

I moved to him and slowly put my lips on his. Gently I pressed harder and felt him respond. My arms went around his neck and his around my shoulders and waist. I pressed myself into him and made the kiss long and lingering. Slowly I drew away and looked into his eyes. There was a dampness there that made my heart jump. I realised that I was breathing heavily and he was swallowing deeply. Our arms were still around each other.

I'm not sure who moved first. So I always called it a draw. Our lips met again and all hell broke loose. It'd been a long time since I'd had felt such a

surge of passion within me. With it came a blindness and an abandonment that I knew I'd regret later. But nothing would stop that adrenaline rush. The kiss started it, but when his lips moved to my neck, they seemed to home in on the exact spot that was guaranteed to tip me over the edge. Within moments we were both lying on my bed trying to undress each other. I was vaguely aware of the satisfaction in divesting him of the boring grey suite, white shirt and dull tie. I tried to dominate our love making but found he was firm and gentle and always in control. He brought me to the brink several times before allowing me the total release I was almost screaming for. He held back dutifully, finally allowing himself pure abandonment as two years of planning and waiting seemed to condense in a few minutes of ultimate satisfaction. Passion was replaced by heaving breathing and sighing. Our bodies lay at odd angles across the bed. Clothing littered the floor.

I started to laugh and said, "Well.....I never intended that!"

He began to laugh too and through his giggling said, "I suppose this is you saying 'yes'?"

I controlled my laughing and looked seriously at him. "I suppose this is you 'asking'?"

He nodded and said, "Yes".

I kissed him gently and said, "Then the answer is yes".

Suddenly he burst out laughing again. "What? What?" I said excitedly.

He leant over the bed and picked up my crumpled top and said, "I hope this is the last time you wear anything without a designer label".

I grew serious quickly. I said, "It's only a trial run. I'm still not convinced. For a month, as you agreed?"

His smile was there as he said, "Thank you. If one month is all I'm going to get, then we'd better make it a memorable one".

And it was.

(SHE BEGINS TO CLEAR AWAY HER BITS AND PIECES INTO THE LEAN-TO FOR THE NIGHT)

I didn't see Jon for nearly three days. We spoke a great deal on the phone and I was never sure if I was interrupting anything important. He never hurried me off the line. I moved into his river-view apartment in Chelsea. It was very modern and decorated in very low-key style. There were only three staff at this residence. None would've been perfect, but I knew better than to try and change too much of Jon's arrangements. He needed staff to ensure he'd everything he needed, when he needed it. He had little time to 'make do'.

I'd relived our first love making many times in my mind and was constantly surprised at how easy it all was. I'd felt no guilt, or reservations. At no time did I feel I was a paid courtesan. Mainly, I thought, because it was on my grounds and my terms and at my instigation. From now on that would all change. The next time would be different. I was unsure just how different. This made me nervous and brought back all the old demons and along with them - guilt. But! I'd made my decision and was not one to back out. It was only for a month. That was all. If things didn't work out, then....so be it. No harm done.

I knew I'd return all the presents and be left with nothing for my pains, but I'd have seen a little of the world and had a good time. I hoped. My old job would be available. Jon had seen to all that. Some sizeable bursary to my old company for my extended leave of absence. That had certainly made me feel easier. Jon was keeping every door open for me. Making sure I didn't feel hemmed in at all.

It was nearly midnight before he finally arrived. I'd been alerted he was leaving Birmingham some hours before. I sat up watching television and then some videos. I'd changed my clothing several times. Sheer underwear. Negligees. Housecoat. Nothing! I couldn't find anything to fit my mood. In the end I thought what would I wear for an evening in at home? Tracksuit bottoms and tee shirt. I rummaged in my three wardrobes and found some clothes that fitted the bill. With designer labels of course! Now I was happier.

He looked very tired. I helped him off with his coat and slowly moved forward and kissed him. It was probably the best welcome home he'd had for some years. His face lightened and I could tell he was already feeling better. We stood looking at each other for a long time, unsure what to do next. Slowly I undressed him and shed my own clothes. Without any foreplay, we were on the carpet and getting passionate. All his tiredness vanished. My boredom left me and for half an hour we enjoyed each other's company to the fullest. We showered together and prepared for sleep.

I lay in his arms, listening to his regular breathing and knew he was happy. So was I. More so than I'd hoped. I snuggled closer to him and felt him respond. A little judicial probing with my fingers and I knew he was not altogether spent for the night. Once more we wrapped ourselves within each other and the evening slipped away. When I awoke the following morning he'd gone. There was a note left on the dressing table. 'Call me' it said.

At least he hadn't left any money!

(JON ENTERS AS PATIENCE EXITS)

JON:

I was talking to Nathan a while later, after a particularly distressing phone call. I suggested I needed a break. We found a suitable slot and cleared all business for a few days. Nathan was confused by my change of tack.

"Are you thinking of the island?", he said in that overly quizzical manner of his.

"Yes. I think it's time. Loneliness is a terrible thing".

"You should know, sir" he said.

"I've just been reminded". Then, almost to myself I added, "Thanks to Jill".

(SOUND EFFECTS) The wind buffeted the helicopter as it struggled to land in the clearing. For the last few minutes it had rotated over the top of the lush green jungle, trying to find the right spot. Patience had watched eagerly through the window, while the pilot struggled to perform his duties.