

10. JEALOUSY

Everyone seems to suggest that I take things too seriously. That I don't have a deep enough sense of humor. I really don't know how to have fun. Sure I might seem to be a creature driven by passion. But that is their point. I have turned pleasure into this chore that I approach as work or as a battle maneuver. I don't want to admit to being like this. But they do have a point. That is why I work to create this distance between myself and my lovers.

I know that I find a guy irresistible if he can make me laugh. But I think that I've pretty well prepared myself for any eventuality before he's even said a thing to me. I like to think about them like puppets on string. And I'm the marionette. So I'm not going to put myself out for some guy if I can find where to pull. It's that simple. As I size him up, I make him play my game. There's nothing else to it. That's just how it happens.

I am enjoying myself. I like what I do. But I'm starting to question myself. All the comments from friends and co-workers are starting to get to me. If they only knew the half of it. I have gone way beyond discretion. I am a recluse. Still they have gleaned enough detail to shake the foundations of my pursuit. It's not like that's going to make a real difference. Even when I do feel melancholic about it all, it only inspires me to do more of the same. This is how I cope with my displeasure. I get more into the game. It's a form of medication. That's why I've been playing like this from the get go.

Tonight hardly seems different from any other night. But I've promised to have a good time. I know that I say that every time. But this night is just for me. I have put aside all the troubles from work. I don't want to think about any of that. I am off on my own to make something for myself.

I guess a good attitude can be a big deal. But after a few drinks, I'm in the right mood no matter what. A bar like this just has a way of creating its own world. That's really enough to make me forget what I don't want to think about. Even as I concentrate, I can hardly bring to mind anything about today that might threaten my high. I am happy.

You don't come into a place like this unless you're ready to play. These are cutthroats. One night, that's it. The beginning and end of life. And I'm ready to challenge any of these high rollers. I haven't surrendered my integrity. And I'm not made up like this just to give some guy what he wants. But I am going to go the distance. I want to win!

Just a glance at my ankle and the leopard skin pumps is enough to make any guy melt. It gets him thinking. That everything about me is just as sleek. I don't care what else he has going for him. One look and I've got him hooked. From that point on he'd give me the world.

And I guess my friends are right. To be like this is work. If I let my edge slip, there really would be no place for me here. If he looks at my hair, takes a gander at my figure, gets close enough to smell my perfume, there has to be no doubt about my qualities. That's why I've got him drooling, as he run his fingers through my hair. Who knows what mischief awaits later on?

I can't sulk about any past foibles. I have to project this image of perfection. And even as he tries to take me apart in conversation, I am only adding to the stellar attributes that he has already observed. It's like a fine diamond. The facets only look more sparkling under the jeweler's eye.

Sometimes it's a high wire act. Failure really isn't an option. There are no nets here. And each trip only necessitates further attempts at the daring. Maybe add a new challenge along the way. I'm just that kind of girl. If I wasn't, I might as well stay home with a good book and my imaginary pet. But I'm not going to get any prizes watching TV. There's no cute neighbor to rescue my lonely nights.

He is at a table as if he is waiting for someone. He has downed most of his drink. He has been sizing me up for the better part of an hour. And I'm really surprised that he hasn't approached me. I wonder if I really do what him to approach me. But I have been giving him the green light. He acts as if he doesn't want to get caught *in flagrante delicto*. Sinning begins in the mind.

I'm not going to do the work for him. If he has something to say, he better get it out. There's no script here. He's going to have to go without the guide wire. And if he falls, that's his problem.

So I just put myself there out and wait for nature to take its course. He is still playing this game out in his mind. And he doesn't want to quit until he's tracked through every detail. He's already got me lounging on his couch. I'm try to squirm out of his fantasy. But he's doing his best to draw me in. He has the weirdest smile on his face as he drinks from his glass. Drink a little more, honey. You're going to need it

And he does need it. I can see the raging cat that he is releasing. Sure it's rather ironic. But I let him be. I may need all that energy later on.

"What are you afraid of?"

He looks at himself. "I don't know...myself."

"So you love a good game of hide and seek."

I turn so that he no longer has an angle on me. If he wants me, he's going to have to get up from his chair. I'm not going to telegraph any more signals.

"I want you to cry out for help."

I know how he would prefer things to be. That sweetie might take him back to his traditional haunt and work her loving on him. I'm in to humiliate him a little. Just take him out of his comfort zone. Fantasies are one thing. But I'm not here just to provide fodder for his illusions.

The dance keep on in that little brain of his. He is hoping for just enough of a jolt to get him out of his dream world. But for the time being. It offers him all that he needs. It's not as if I can distract him when he's this deep in his reverie. He's watching me with all his bemused concentration. I come to life as his plaything. His intensified gaze only makes the film run in his mind. He notes my every move and embellishes it with a more provocative gesture. He is lost in love-making. He runs his hands along my smooth legs. He imagines me stimulating myself. It only arouses him more. My seeming opposition to his desires. I am making him seem more hopeless. He's come this far along. Is his imagination strong enough to take him to the next phase. Perhaps he could help me draw my panties down. He might tempt me further. Ignore everyone here and just act it all out in public.

I look back at him for just a moment to confirm my suspicions. I am catching him in the act. He starts up as if to admit his offense. That hardly arrests his endeavor. He is too far along to quit now. And there is nothing that I can do to stop him. I am now part of his thoughts, and

he is dealing with me accordingly.

He smiles as he takes another sip from his drink. I can catch his image reflected in the mirror in front of me. He's going to need another drink soon. But he is hardly thinking about that. I am deeply on his mind. Nothing is going to shake him from his desired end.

If I try to get away now, he's going to be on to me. But what can he do if I just decide to leave. That will only make him seem more desperate. He's going to have to commit himself sooner or later.

"Do you want a drink?" I look to my right, but there he is standing on my left side.

I look down. "I'm OK. You're the one who looks like he could use another drink. Do you want to sit down? I could use some company."

"I wouldn't mind if I do. I saw you over here. I wanted to say something. I'm really a pretty shy guy." Aren't they all?

"Did someone stand you up?"

"Why did you ask?"

"I noticed you sitting at a table. I just figured that you might be waiting for someone."

"Not really. Sort of. This girl at work told me that she comes here now and then. I said that I was going to stop by. I guess she's not coming in tonight."

"A girl at work. You play it close to the vest."

"I take what I can get?"

"A true fisher of women."

He laughs. I guess I'm not all that serious.

"You don't want a drink."

"I'll take one now that you've reminded me. But don't think that means anything."

"You just look thirsty."

"And you look a little hungry yourself. But I'm not offering you a meal." My words are getting a little ahead of me. I don't want to ruin the play.

I just give in to where this fantasy is taking me. His hands on my hips moving up and down my body. Is that enough.

"Not here. We're not going to do that here!"

I move a little away. I don't want things happening too quickly even if my imagination is way ahead of our progress.

"What do you do?" he asks.

"I work in a lawyer's office."

Or should I tell him that I'm a lawyer. Something like that. Anything to keep his interest. To convince him that I'm a member of the club.

"I couldn't help noticing you over here. You really are hot!"

I pretend that I didn't here that. I didn't. He's just trying to help along his own case.

I confess, "You know there are times when things just seem to get out of control in our lives. That's why I do everything that I can to plan it out, to make sure that I'm getting what I need to stay sane. Not drinking too much. Sobering up with a soft drink or some water. Never going home with a guy if I really can't take care of myself. That's almost a rule."

He's getting turned on hearing me talk. For him it seems like only a short step to getting me out of this place.

“Let’s go sit at my table.”

“I really prefer the bar. It just feels like home.”

The table just seems to deep in the action. I like my perch being able to look down on the world.

He’s touching me as he talks to me. I’m sure this is all part of his routine. I again move so it becomes just too obvious for him to reach over and touch me. I have taken him out of his game, and he is a little disoriented. He takes a longer drink from his new glass. For the time being, he goes all silent. I guess his dirty mind has just gone blank. It’s not as if I’m here just waiting for him to save me.

My life seems to have less and less to do with me. I just have to go along with these strange events that come my way. I am becoming overly accepting of all this. And everything is spinning out of control. I feel that I am being led on as if part of a most extraordinary conspiracy. From this moment forward, I expect the whole world to just come tumbling around me,

“Why are you acting like this? This isn’t good for either of us.”

I am defensive, “I have to agree to what you want if you really expect anything to happen here.

There is nothing impetuous in my attitude. I am just reacting to what is going on around me.

“You really could use another drink.”

The alcohol makes me more edgy. I don’t want him to touch me. I don’t want to go home with him. That is a constant on his mind. He is staring at me.

There is a side of me that just wants it raw. I could wish for these rude advances by every man in this place. This is too ugly to contemplate. But I follow through with the rather grotesque fantasy.

“Is it any different from what you do any night?”

He snaps me out of my reverie. Is he reading my mind or what? I ask, “What are you talking about.”

“Nothing really. I mean don’t you always come here. You just seem jumpy as if you’ve never been here before.”

Maybe I am no longer good at what I do. I could go back to his place and just lie there. I could make all these noises but not move a muscle. He wouldn’t even know the difference. I am tired of being thought of like this. All these guys just want to get in on me. There is no in. Closed for business.

His uncanny ability to anticipate my mood changes is bothering me. I am getting in a pissy mood just to get on his nerves. He doesn’t take a hint. If this is what he has to put up with to get what he wants, he’ll accept the tradeoff. He has before. It’s all about the bottom line. He runs his finger along his drink. It might as well be along my skin. He is going to succeed.

I look over at the bathroom. I don’t have to go. I just want an out. Things are progressing too fast. I’m the one putting things in his head.

I can’t get away. I need to let the game transpire. I don’t want to ruin this before he thinks that he has it easy. If he frightens now, I am going to be alone tonight. Sure, I’ve been looking ravingly at every other man in this place. But that is part of my strategy. I am going to hardly follow through with someone else with these odds. I’m not that cheap. If these

negotiations fail, I will accept the inevitable and head home. I want sex, but I am not really into an anonymous anatomy lesson. If I can't coax up a little caring from the one near me, I am not going to send out missives at this late juncture. No one else could do the trick in the time remaining. We have to keep up pretenses that we are after the same thing. This is not a cattle call, and I am not going to make strange noises.

I wish that he would imagine me in a more pleasant light. That he could see the ocean breeze waft through my hair or the morning sun dust my smile.

I concentrate on what gives me the confidence to face head on the challenges around me. To help me maintain my reputation. I really am afraid of ceasing to be a player in my own life. Those grueling work outs at the gym everyday are something that I can't miss. Whether it's early morning before work or in the evening. There's no compromise on good health.

I don't want to pretend that I am obsessed about my weight. It's really not like that. But I still feel that bright light shining on me all the time. And if I deviate from what I think is right for me, I can feel this nasty pang inside. I do everything that I can to avoid it. I don't have to face the punishing eye because I am a good girl. I make the adjustments on my own.

There are those times when I just want to go home and hide in the dark. But I learn to create some regularity with regards to these feelings. So I end up basking most of the time in the glare. Even in the safety of my apartment, I remain quite aware of my limits. I am only prepping myself to face the fierce competition. I adjust the edges.

I have spent quite a productive evening fooling with my hair. Sometimes I'll leave it in the capable hands of a hair designer. Other times, I am the one who applies her craft to shaping things in my favor. A highlight here or there or the right trim can make things just devastating. It's all about maintaining that incredible body.

I can't very well do something for some guy if I can't take care of myself. So I am constantly vigilant about maintaining that essence of my appeal. I know that it might make me seem vain. And there are times that I am just at wits end sensing that I am starting to unravel. But I do everything that I can to try to hold things together. It's not like someone else is going to come to my rescue. They'll only be sympathetic if they really believe that I am this exquisite creature. Otherwise, I might as well pack it all in by the side of the road. I know that sounds terrible.

There are others hanging on ready to take my place. I know that they can't wait for me to go down. It's sick to think that such vultures seem to hover all the time. It's not as if I'm the only one. I think that those who themselves are on the verge of self-destructing are the most critical. I can feel girls giving me that stare all the time. They just think that they can cut me dead in my tracks.

"It's not like anyone is going to miss you!"

Did someone say something to me? I can feel that sensation just cut right through me. And I know what the flip-side is of these insecurities. I'm ready to go off with just any man. I'm not like that—really I'm not. But there are those moments when I'm totally helpless. That hurts.

So I return to the guy who is keeping me company at this moment. I can feel him taking my identity from me. And I am giving it willingly. He knots his hand into fist. I can almost feel myself contained in this gesture. He cups the other hand around the fist and with that action seems to be challenging me.

In a certain sense, all that he offers is a sort of imposition on my comfort. And that perhaps is the fundamental aspect of his appeal. I know that I am giving in to a power that is so much greater than me. Just the fact that we can partake in such a reward is sufficient to get me going. The more that I do this, I feel that I am accommodating myself to these intense levels of pleasure. A blinding shock that just shakes my whole body.

I don't what it is. I just look at him and can see that he has it. It's not just a physical thing even though that I realize down deep that this a major part of this. It's like watching a thoroughbred open up on a clear track. I am breathless imagining myself keeping up. But I am willing to go the distance. He is trying to break me. Waiting for me to just burst. I am anxious. I can feel these tremors just shudder through my body.

I can't let on that he has an edge over me. Really, it just isn't like that. Down deep, he might think that he has the ability to hurt me. Or if I become accustomed to this sort of delight that he can just take it away from me when it has most provoked my interest.

There is nothing loving in this intrusion. I don't want there to be. It's not a magic, it more of a strength that he offers me. So I accept the trespass. I wouldn't want it any other way. I have settled for less. Hope that a caring touch might take the place of the real thing. There is no substitute. Either he is able to arrive at this apex or he is just an empty promise. I don't want my aspirations to melt in my hands. My grip is firm. I hold on tight.

I could move my hands along his legs and hold on tight to his hips. This would only be a preview of what might follow. I'd pull on his belt until it would eventually give way. But this is not enough. I need to be more certain.

He has that hungry look in his eye. That feeling is just spreading all over his body. I can tell. It's this heat that he radiates. And I have no doubt. I let the feeling come all over me.

There is a drama to this buildup of excitement. At the same time, it is something that I can touch. Almost brutal in its starkness. I embrace it.

There is nothing to say. Once we both give in to the power, it will all be automatic. And our bodies will continue to discover new energies that extend our endurance further and further. He is a man of the flesh. Someone who gives all of himself to that little bit of his existence. It is almost a form of annihilation. The opposite of pleasure. And he extends himself just to reach these unique flavors. Neither will be able to keep up with the delectable.

Just imagining such ends seems perverse. If he promised me these enchantments, I would probably deem him a psychotic. But just the fact that our bodies will take us this far underlines how important is my special kind of seeing. And I am aware of the appeals of this perversity. That my only release from my obsession will be an exhaustion that verges on self destruction.

I don't want to be touched. Or caressed. I am ready to get torn apart like a crab.

"I can tell what you're about just by looking at you."

I smile back at him. "Can you now? What are you trying to say? That I'm just like you."

"In a manner of speaking, we are the same."

"You don't know how different we are."

But are we really? I'm giving him enough rope. And he is pulling tighter and tighter. I try to brace myself. My imagination has gone leaps and bounds beyond our present situation. Here he is just soaking it all up. It's pushing him on. He thinks that he can do anything that he wants with me. He's already said the word.

I'm not going to walk out. I'm here for the duration. I'm going to let him lead me back to his place. Then I'll pretend that he's convinced me to go along with his advances. In fact, I'm way beyond that. I'm looking for that crazed intensity that he has been promising from the moment that he started chatting me up. He is an expert. Even when he feigns modesty, I know that there is more going on here.

It's not just an expectation on my part. We have really pushed way beyond the niceties. He is a dirty man. There are no illusions on his part. He wants to talk romance just so that he doesn't seem like such a cad. But I've really given him no encouragement on that account. Here we go down that same road together arm in arm.

Once the forgetting sets in, there will be nothing that can save me. I want that bizarre connection. And that rope is still dangling. He is waiting to pull it even tighter. There is something anonymous about our coupling. He's trying to follow procedure. He wants to fill out all the required forms. He wants to make it perfect. There is no possibility of redemption. This is damned through and through.

I look in his eyes. These are the eyes of a killer. I know what I see because I can feel that cold emptiness of the heart. Only at a moment like this can the body be completely free.

As this guy is chats me up, I can feel each word undress me. I am responding pretty favorably. But I just happen to see one of my conquests pass me by. I glance over. I usually try to hide my face when up against this sort of thing. But I find that I am staring. I feel a little pissed tonight. I always thought that he was a weak fuck. And I never was that turned on by how he dressed. Just real sloppy. And I wonder where he picked up this girl that is hanging on his arm. I just don't know what it is. He really is getting to me.

I just don't like the fact that I let this guy go. We hung around for a few weeks at the most. And it was very insipid. All the more so because we repeated the same thing over and over again. The dinners filled with all the implied tension. And those nights of abandon and release.

My present rendezvous is making his presence known. He has his hand on mine. I jerk mine away. I am still watching my ex. He is really bothering me now. He looks down at his date with such a sense of pride. Why am I even thinking about this? My prospects are certainly better with my present beau. So why is my attention being drawn away. I dumped this guy. And now I want to pull him back. I feel that time is finally catching up with me.

There's really no use crying over spilt milk. I'm not going to get him back by staring at him. And this other guy is raring to go. He's grabbing at my arm trying to get my attention.

"Can't you see that I'm busy?"

I consider if my jealousy will only contribute to a better fuck. I can just throw all my energy into the moment at hand. But it really isn't working that way. I'm getting more turned off by the stallion in my vicinity. And I'm directing all my attention to this other guy who is making out with his sleazy girl on the couch.

I've known about this thing before. That point when it's nearly impossible to reverse events. I've seen girls try to get their men back as I've escorted them out the door. So I've been through this kind of thing all the time. But here it is frighteningly real for me.

I could play the bitch and embarrass the both of them. That's what I'm good at. How am I going to make this happen? A spilled drink can cool off their ardor might quickly. Am I that

ruthless? Sure I am.

Jealousy is really this strange thing. I've always gotten what I want, so this is something completely new for me. I think back to my younger days. Sure I couldn't get a guy to leave his sweetheart for good. But I've always tried to make my point. Preferably with a dagger and a deep cut.

I've got method. And madness. What do I do? The longer that I wait, the more the unlikely becomes the super impossible.

I hate how I am thinking. I can't concentrate. I want a miracle. Maybe I could get this other guy with me to feel me up as I watch the two of them. That would only make me feel worse, less powerful.

The guy is a slob. Sure he looks a little better tonight. But what is it? I'd usually laugh to see him stoop so low. But I am suffering. I cannot fuck this pain away. I am the pain. Everywhere that I turn, this feeling.

I could make an entrance. There seems to be a lull. He's not ready to close. He has to question his choice. I could go over there and introduce myself. I look at myself in the distant mirror. I feel like a knockout. Black high heel pumps accentuate my great legs. I'm wearing a tight black dress, sort of a box cut to show a lot of skin. And a haircut with such body. I am ready to kill. Here I come.

I'm not even sure what I'm supposed to do. Should I get rid of Bachelor Number One. I rub my finger along my bare leg. It give me a sense of confidence to feel the firm muscle. Everything that I've got that he doesn't

That is how I wanted to leave it. That he would ache to get me back. And it worked out so perfectly. He wouldn't stop calling. This went on for months. He couldn't put the pieces back in his life. He didn't know how good he had it. And to be honest, he never really had me.

This is going to require some quick thinking. I down most of my drink to add that kick to my strategy. But my ex is now looking deep into her eyes. He is being hypnotized. What do I have on him to break him from this trance? I wait for her to get up and go to the washroom.

"I see an old friend. Wait for me."

The stallion is speechless. He sees me turn on my after burners. He's not going to let me go right now.

I finally catch the eye of my ex, and he is just dazzled. That tingle is back. Sure he's with this other girl tonight, but she might as well be halfway across the world. I decide to sit on the back of the couch so that my legs are right in his face. His mouth is watering. All that she's done is get him in the mood.

"Who's that girl that you're with?"

"Just a friend."

In fact, she's his fiancée. And the more that he talks, the more she is being put on the back burner. They have all these plans. But it seems that everything is being put on hold. He is looking at me with this hunger.

I know that I am provoking this feeling in him. I came over here with hopes of a little revenge. Revenge just for him bringing back these feelings in me. But now that I'm here, I am a little overwhelmed by my jealousy.

I work to stay on top of the conversation. I am doing so well. He is trying to touch my

hand. I move it away.

“You’re with another girl.”

I really do ache for him. This is grotesque. I am going down for a principle. This is not like me. I’m independent.

The stallion is getting nervous at the bar. At first, he loses himself in his drink. Now he is starting to look at some other women. I am juggling both guys.

I know that I have only a few more minutes. The new catch needs a few more minutes in the bathroom.

“Do you want to get out of here?”

He is a little daring. He’s going to abandon his fiancée without anything to show for it.

“I’m not going to go home with you,” I tell him.

“Why not?”

I ask myself the same question. I’m feeling these pangs of jealousy. I have a chance to act on them. And that’s just the sort of girl that I am. I feel that there is more at stake. I want him back just so that I can dump him again.

The time of decision is quickly dawning on me. She is about to come back. We can handle our exit only if we make it happen immediately.

I examine my options. I am good at strategy. My rational side comes into play. A swift antidote for my fit of jealousy. I size him up. She is about to open the door for the bathroom. Do I have that power?

I want none of this. I’ve proven my point. I feel as if I’ve wasted my night. The stallion looks ridiculous over there. I need to give him the impression that I am leaving with my ex. And my ex, that is another story. I don’t want to leave with him. That would be suicide. Let his silly girl take him back.

I’ve ruined a perfectly good feeling. I never really recover. I’ve faced this weakness that is something new for me. I’m not going to pretend that I always get what I want. But I play so close to that ascending curve that good fortune is my middle name. And my ex isn’t that much of a rising star. It’s just the principle of the matter. I have felt outplayed.

I take a long shower before bed. Sex isn’t going to do the trick for me. Maybe I just need something more permanent. I know that I have all the skills. But it hasn’t made me happy. I’ve never wanted some guy to get in the way of my plans. That is why I am independent. And I’ve strung along a few men at a time. This is too new for me. My game is being disrupted. I’m not sure what to do.

The next night I turn a quick trick just to reassure me that I have the magic. It’s ugly that I have to resort to such measures. But there’s this point in the sex when I feel so free. I’m not even thinking about anything. I’m out of my body.

For a little while I can feel that this is my spirituality, my drug. It opens me up to this supernatural kind of being. I am floating in the cosmos with nothing tethering me down. I don’t want to wake up from this high.

When I again make it home, I realize that I’m not really satisfied living like this. I want something a little more permanent. I can’t use these revenge fuck to get even for something that I’ve done in my past. I’m not a machine. I want real feelings.

I hate the fact that I am starting to sound like a greeting card. My strength is my

cynicism; I can feel my vulnerability. I don't want sympathy or dime-store psychoanalysis. The only reason that people become shrinks is that they want easy answers to difficult questions. Down deep they like the idea of being able to pry into other people's personal lives. I dig the power of a good mind fuck.

Sure the world's gone mad! I've gone mad!

I'm sitting in a bar by myself. I know that I look hot. I'm not going to melt with a couple of bad nights. But I don't feel all that great. Guys can just tell that I don't want to be bothered. They are all hovering around me like a school of shark. I don't flinch. None of them feel that they have an opening. They don't. I'll snap off the head of the first one that tries.

"What are you drinking?"

I hear the question echo in my head over and over again. This is my mantra. The answer that will unlock my fragile psyche.

I sip slowly. Drunkenness is not my answer. I am just going to have to hold out for the night. It's just concentration. It's all mental.

All my beliefs are focused on my resilience at this moment. I am trying to hold out. I don't want anyone belaboring the obvious. I've got everything that I need. This is it!

I place both hands on my drink. I stretch my arms out as I sit back in the seat. This has to look like some weird exercise. As the bar thins out, I know the stragglers think that my desperation will make me easy prey. Watch out! I'm angrier than ever. Just the fact that I've made it this far is enough to make realize that I'm coming out of here a winner. When I get up to leave, they all leave a path for me. They can tell that I have a purpose in mind, and the pain of death awaits anyone who stands in my way.

I have no doubt that I have my wits around me. A couple of drinks have made me no easy game. But I am becoming a new me. My jealousy has reminded me how possessive I am. There is no simple remedy for how I feel.

I have always believed that jealousy is a sign of weakness. It's uncertainty about trying to get a man and hold him. I write my own ticket. But now I am getting to learn something new. Life has thrown me a turn. I'm not sure how to react.

Maybe I've come to expect so little of myself. So I've never really tested my powers. I take on easy targets all the time. I think about this guy who got away. And he really isn't worth much thought. He is just another guy that I bowled over with my excess of charm. He had the nerve to flaunt his new sweetheart in my face. I have no patience for his shit.

If I'm going to let him get to me, then every guy that I see is going to do the same. It's all this drama in public that really brings me down me down. The more that I think back to that night makes me think that he was just acting like that to get to me. And he really did get to me. I feel that he walked by me and realized that he needed to get back at me for treating him so badly. So he got his girl to perform for him. Then I broke it up. I put him back where he belonged. But I didn't feel that good about it. I still don't feel that good. He might as well have done her right in front of me with the way that I feel now. I do feel pretty terrible.

I am bracing myself as I cross that narrow bridge to the new me, whatever that means. I balance myself precariously. I could slip. The bridge could break, and I would plunge down the ravine. This really is pathetic. I am going out of my head over this kind of shit.

I stay in for a week. Lead the simple life. Refuse to return phone calls from ex-lovers. I

want to go cold turkey. A total lock down.

It's unreal! The transformation seems complete. I feel as if I'm in a convent. I go for long walks. I drink lot of water. I feel this purity come over me. I am redeemed.

I really don't believe that a transformation can ever be that simple. I have to admit that work is just driving me crazy. I never felt this way when I was going out. On some days, the buzz from the night before would last for a good part of the morning. I need a distraction.

I can feel the old me creeping in. And with it, I am reminded of the green monster of jealousy. I never wanted to be like this. I am feeling dumpy. I'm exercising like crazy. It still doesn't seem to do the trick. What do I have to do? I am swimming upstream. And the currents just get stronger and stronger. I don't want to just give up. I am so close to that point.

I hug the bar tonight. All the stools are occupied. But I don't want to venture out further in the room.

He gives me one of those looks, "What do you want?"

"I'm just looking around."

"You just do that."

That's all I'm doing," I remind him.

"You motioned me over here!"

I feel the need to correct him, "I love it when a guy tries to pretend that I want what is his sole desire."

"I can leave if you want."

"No, darling. Buy me a drink."

I need to get something out of his eagerness.

"Honey, you look hot."

"Did your friend over there tell you to say that?"

"I'm alone. I'm not with anyone."

"And now you're hoping that I'll hitch my wagon to your nightly pilgrimage."

"I'm just looking for some company."

I try to take it easy on him.

"You really are hot," he notes.

"I hear that all the time. Touch there."

"You feel warm. Do you have a temperature?"

"That's natural for me. I always feel hotter than usual. I think that my blood is just on the verge of boiling."

He smiles at my humor. He tries to touch my forehead again. I brush his hand away.

He tries to make further inroads with me, "I've been watching you. You're like a moth by a flame. Don't you settle down."

"What are you saying?" I ask him.

"Let me buy you a drink." He's taking a while getting to it.

"Is that all that you're going to do about it?"

"Give me a chance. I've just gotten started."

He seems like he'll do for the evening. He's polite and eager to please. A bit of a smart-ass, but I can handle that.

He touches me again on the shoulder. I try to resist. This is moving too quickly.

“Do you have somewhere to go?” I wonder.

“Why?”

“You don’t seem able to settle down.”

“You’re making me a little nervous. I’m not used to such stunning women.”

“I suppose that works all the time.”

“I wish that it did.”

Down deep, I can see that he’s no sensitive soul. But he does live for pleasure. Pleasure shared and pleasure for himself. That is all that I want and all that I need. I can let him coax me out with these conventional gestures. Each push and tug of the skin only gets me more involved. So for the least instant, I can believe that he has opened up an intimacy between us.

I wonder if he has come to believe his own hype. Does he recognize the inherent emptiness in his quest? I’m not really one to upset his apple cart. I am not a missionary. There is no death bed conversion that will rescue him from his dilemma. He’s not as lucky as Sleeping Beauty.

I don’t like to think of myself as easy. I feel that I have standards. That isn’t exaggerating things. I know that I gush a little when a cute guy catches my eye. But I’m not a teenager. On the other hand, that little thing is enough to drive me crazy. I don’t how to explain. Sometimes it’s his approach. Other times, it’s more than that. What he says. How he see right through me. How he touches me just by looking in my eyes.

I take a sip of my drink to tell myself that this is all real. If I’m going along for this ride, I need to convince myself that my heart is in it.