

8. TOUCHING

He looks at me ever so intently. I am doing everything that I can do avert his glance. But that does not diminish its glare. I can feel him working his way into me. And the feeling is not simply imaginary. With each second it is becoming more and more physical. And for the time being, I allow him his fantasy as it only gives rise to one of my own. It is no doubt built on the assumption that his stimulation will provoke a most intense ecstasy on my part. I don't leave it at that. I only let him inspire a heightened base of pleasure. A recognition that his pleasure only returns something just as intense on my part.

I know that some women are not able to sustain this plateau. It is not a weakness on their part any more than this confession is a demonstration of my prowess. If anyone takes my avowal as the propagation of a myth so be it. I only relate how I seem to accommodate for his intrusion. I can only say that I have allowed myself to completely submit to this myth. In my mind's eye, I am fixated on the image of how I might adjust my stance to absorb completely his jabs. I almost see it as a physical law. Beyond simply reacting, I return his forays with an even more potent intent of my own.

He guards against revealing his delight. I expect a smile on his part. There is none. This means that things are only going to heat up more. I hope that I can exhaust him in his endeavor. He remains next to a fan and does not seem to even build up a sweat. This only offers him more pleasure. I don't hold back and throw everything his way. This only makes him more fierce.

I don't want him to approach me. The operative phrase is *no touching* and I want it to stay that way. Only now I realize how far we have progressed in our game of cat and mouse. He looks away as the smile appears on his face. Both of us are surrendering to that outrageous heat of the moment. I am getting a little delirious getting spun around in the maelstrom. I swirl my drink around to distract myself. But there is no doubt what is transpiring. I am feeling the exhaustion that I hoped to exact upon him.

"I don't want to seem forward. But I couldn't help but notice."

He can help it. That's why he does the same thing all the time. And I haven't allowed his currency to dissuade me from what is becoming a degrading encounter.

In the reigning heat, there are barely second thoughts on my part. As the ardor cools significantly, I shy away from any real contact. I can hear his words echo in my head even though he has not moved from his place at the other end of the bar. How is it possible that he can communicate so much to me?

The light catches the silver bracelet that snugly grips my left wrist. Its sparkle darts off his face and momentarily blinds him. He smiles.

"What do I have to do to please you?" he wonders.

"More than you know," I whisper to myself. He tries to ingratiate himself to his new found friend. And I do all that I can to oblige. Will any of it be enough to efface what is already a less than favorable first impression? He had done everything that he can to win my grace. And I am being all that I can to be the genial guest. After all, he has all the requisite points and I feel that I really should oblige his effort. But as he tries to gently touch my back, I can feel his finger poke me in the rib cage.

"No touching!" I make quite explicit to him. He jumps as he jerks his hand away. For

him this is the first step in an impending conquest. He quite resents the fact that I will not let his hand communicate the desired tenderness. I am already wary of him.

He is staring at my shoes. They are quite dainty and make him even more excited to run his fingers along my well-defined calf muscles. He must bear to the stated prohibition, and this only adds to his fascination. He will not turn away, and his insistent gaze replaces for now any actual contact. I need to reward his efforts or risk losing his interest all together.

I purse my lips to give him the appropriate focus for his affection.

“Did you say that you wanted to buy me a drink?”

He really hopes that all his activity up to this point has mattered for something. That all the flapping of his wings hasn't been in vain. I shake my head and let my hair run back and forth. He watches my every move.

I'm worth every bit of his concern. He still hardly measures up. All his exertion has only made him seem a little hapless. Try as he might, he is having difficulty keeping up. I don't want to see him melt down before my eyes. I have to throw him some crumbs if the night is not going to go to waste. I brush my hand against his in a contrived motion to reassure him that he still has my undivided attention.

When he hands me the full martini glass, I balance it so that none of it spills. That might only be the undoing of both of us. He likes to think that he has achieved some success up to this point. I leave him with that illusion.

I don't want to sell myself short. It would be hopeless to leave him with the illusion that I am simply up for grabs. If there is a price to pay, I have to keep it edging upwards as he considers his next move. He is once again going over my body with a fine tooth comb. He is not simply a sculptor, he is a creator trying to breathe life into his handiwork. Down deep, he realizes the fatal costs of this project. That the goddess will only make short work of her master. I taunt him by doing nothing. He resents my independence. I am not going to lay down my arms before his silly campaign.

I know that this gets him excited. And he has been doing this sort of thing over and over again. I still feel privileged. He has set his sights on my security. I will make sure that his operation is not a success.

He runs my fingers through my hair. I imagine taking money from him to do his bidding.

“If you're going to play that game, you can't pay my price.”

He is looking for something to hold to bring him back to reality.

He wonders, “What do you want me to do?”

“You are being coy,” he puts his hand on my shoulder.

“I want you to look into my eyes.”

He smiles as I turn away.

“Are you trying to hypnotize me?” I ask.

His smile turns into a chuckle. He already thinks that he is way ahead in the game and that I am just helpless before his juggernaut. On the other hand, I have already resolved to myself that this is going to go no further. I just wonder how long I can maintain my composure. I can feel him warm and moist inside me, almost like a fevered cold. This is hardly the image that I need to build up any kind of resistance.

I move his hand away from my shoulder. He doesn't say anything. He has already made

his point by leaving it there for as long as he does. He doesn't want to make a fuss while things are still in his favor.

Despite my stand, he has probed deep inside me. Even though I want to put up a fight, I sense that I am being overcome by the circumstances. The night has brought us together, and I can feel that our destinies are temporarily entwined. I hate that feeling. But the sensation just rolls over me. And I am content to ride it.

Would that fantasy were enough. It isn't. His presence is so close that I can't put it out of my mind. I am really turned on by his intrusion. That no doubt is the problem. He does this thing all the time. There is no permanence in his touch. That is its appeal. It is so potent that it lives for its immediacy.

"I said no touching." I repeat to myself under my breath. But for the time being, there is no real opposition on my part. Just a quiet understanding that this is going to end here and now. I pursue the fantasy more aggressively. I act as if I am planning a work out strategy. I can sense his hands moving down my back, until he has achieved just the right placement to balance my body against his hips. This is not simply about his excitement. That sweaty coupling. That is only the beginning. My physical exercise has only prepared me for the exertion. He only has to squeeze tightly on my hard muscles to realize how far I can take him in this challenge. The two of us will only gasp for breath.

I smile as if I react to his pressure. I don't want to look up at this moment. I am too deep in reverie, and this would only admit how much he is part of my vision. I want him to be bolder. To take me here and now. There is no patience in this fantasy. Nothing to protect me against his over-active gesturing. And he has put into play all the elements of his attack.

I want him to touch me. I ache for his touch.

I need a stronger drink. I need to put it all in perspective. I am believing that the alcohol will comfort me. Its kick will reverse the dominance of my companion. But have I ever been that good. Once I get in this mood, I have been the aggressor. And the alcohol is going to act in the opposite way that I intended.

"I'll be back. I have to go to the washroom."

I retire from the scene. But I have given him all that he needs to bolster his strategy. I didn't need to say anything. Even though I want to win at this game, I want to see if I can deal him his defeat while he still has his forces amassed. I am not going to give in to a retreat. Not now. To give him even a few minutes alone would appear to grant him a temporary victory. And he will use that time to prepare for a final assault. I have given him the green light. There has been little of anything to slow down his engines.

If I returned and told him that I wasn't going home with him, that would only encourage him. He would believe that I have more than entertained that possibility. I can feel my hands on his naked body driving him deeper inside me. He is the convenient vehicle for my fantasy. Worse, I have accepted his desires as my own. If he acts aggressively, I want to act more aggressively. I want to exhaust him and have him begging for more. I am ready to lead him through an endurance-challenging routine. There is no tenderness here. Not until I have drained him of all his resources.

I wonder if there is something random about our encounter. It seems planned. That he has picked me out of a crowd for the very deviance that he contemplates. This is not love. It

never could be. It is something more basic. And I have surrendered to that primary urge.

I have learned to derive my pleasures from just this sort of infringement on my privacy. I am not developing this gradually. It hits me like a lightning bolt. And that is why I can show no hindrance on my part. I want the smooth flow that brings on a welcome storm. I want him to explode inside me. To tear at my being. I want to scream from this ecstasy.

I wash some cold water on my face. I touch up my make up. I rub my fingers through my hair. It is time to go back out there.

He is still waiting at the bar. He has cleverly ordered me another drink. At this moment, there is little that I can do to say no. I need to summon my strength. I am only giving in to his intent.

At this point, I usually put my body on automatic. And I become one frisky little kitten. I don't want it to turn out the same tonight. I know that he is acting as if the barstool is his throne. I am contemplating a brutal overthrow. For the time being, I have tossed in my lot with the wonder boy, and this is how it will have to remain.

If he gets me good and drunk, that may be the cure that I need. Then I can just hop into a waiting cab and disappear into the darkness. I just hate going back to an empty apartment and my cat. Come to think of it, I don't even have a cat. I can barely take care of myself. Think of what would happen to the poor creature if I was in charge. I am the only one who purrs around my place.

Due to his constant insistence, I feel that I can blame him for turning me into a being driven by her desires. There is little of consideration on my part. Just this target blaring in red and my implacable progress towards the unstoppable conclusion.

A cigarette would be the perfect trick. It would punctuate my progress. Another rush to distract me from his overwhelming charm. I have too many bad habits at this point. I don't want to give in to one more.

Why is this little irritant taking so long to resolve? I could start it all over again.

"You look ready for some action."

Everything revolves around the fact that I have done this over and over again with always the same result. And I refuse to do it again. I am just waiting for everything to flow from out of his mouth. All these nuggets of wisdom that he has been saving. He's tried to use the glances and touching to do the work for him. I have only pushed him away. Now I am ready for the full assault.

"You look hot"

Hotter than you know. He looks at my exposed skin as an excuse for me to shed all my clothes. I am taking my cue from him. This sort of thing has worked for him in the past. Why should I be any different? I look the part for him.

I don't think that I am sleazy. And I know that when guys gaze at my face, they imagine some angelic creature in their midst. But that seems to be the very inspiration to their dirty minds. They believe that they will be the first to besmirch my tidy reputation. It ends up that I have accustomed myself to all sort of lewd propositions. I want to say that none of this phases me. That is hardly the case. I am waiting for the perfect invitation, just those words that will knock me off my pedestal. So I just let him do his damage.

If I take his blow with all its power and just let it glance off me, that should be enough to

throw him off guard. He will have to use all the resources that remain just to attempt a comeback. Lying helpless on the ground, he will hardly make a pretty sight.

I'm only afraid that he might use sympathy to his advantage. Thinking him weak, I only abandon my defenses. That will make it so easy for him to achieve his hoped for victory.

It is too early to let him dance around with such swagger. I need to confront him while he still feels so sure of himself.

I swirl my drink around. I need to make this last. I have to let things unfold on my timetable. He is working hard to break me down.

I love how he tries to make his financial success a component of our rendezvous. The game of course is that I believe that we are marrying together our collective resources. This couldn't be the furthest thing from the truth. He wants to maintain me in the illusion. That way I have no fear of permanently finding myself in our conjugal bed. I can rest easy that I am well taken care of.

Once I am close enough to indeed enjoy the fruits of his labor, that will be a sure sign that he has to send me packing. I am a big girl. I understand how these things work. I have a grip. I know how I am. I want my payout. He can smell it. That is why he has to make short dispatch of me here and now. If he fails to conquer, he leaves his crumbling empire exposed. He can't do that. It is time to aggrandize.

On his view, money attracts money. That only guarantees that he can keep his ill-gotten gain and add a little more along the way. It means that there will always be bigger fish for the catching. And his nets are always trawling.

I could try to resist. Swimming against the current is not beyond my means. But why now. I'll let him show off. It will only make me look better. Under this light, I am looking good. He likes a good contest. And we are off to the races. I know that he is getting a little winded. I just pull up to give him the belief that he is still playing. After all, money doesn't grow on trees.

He has developed a requisite taste to go along with his acquisitions. He has to understand that this will eventually clean him out if he doesn't get a burst of energy. I don't want to disappoint him. If he's going to end up fumbling in darkness, I can maintain the fiction that this is a regime of a thousand years. Decay only begins with a commitment to forever. I'll light the first match as we watch the torches fire all around us. As we bask in the heat of our shared endeavors, I will realize how pride indeed goes before a fall.

When you're with a man of such authority, there is little sense in challenging his bedrock of beliefs. He can't have the earth shifting under his feet. I am here to reassure him. A digestible morsel. This will only make him feel that his own contribution is everything. His prowess can only take encouragement from this arrangement. As he feels that he is expiring, he only has to look at his portfolio as the self that works even as he sleeps.

He's been preparing for this moment from the first time that the silver spoon graced his lips. He is so kissable when such reminiscences grace his presence. This is the essence of destiny. He doesn't know want and really wonders how anyone else could err in financial dealing.

"You can't spend it all today."

Although he'd like to waste as much as he can to make that perfect first impression. I'm

not going to stop him. There is somewhat of a problem with excess under these circumstances. It really challenges the limits of physical tolerance. Hard drinking seems to be only a complement to clever decision-making.

He really is married to that little tread mill of his. The faster that the rat moves the fatter the reward. He is salivating as he imagines that tidbit at the end of the present workout. Hard work going in promises a firm reinforcement coming out. I am not going to deny him his due.

Accumulation promises celestial recognition. He can feel the paradise after which our bodies aspire. It is only right, divine right. I will not attempt an upheaval at such a critical juncture. No bloodletting. Time to pledge our loyalty to gold and monarchy. Self-admiration is only more brilliant when matched by such deep reflection.

He only has to look in the mirror to see the gleam radiating from his being. His whole body is a picture of health. It is all a testament to his achievement. How could I resist such appeals?

“You try this sort of thing all the time. Why should I feel blessed?”

“I am usually the one being propositioned,” he protests.

“As I said, why should this be any different?”

“Haven’t you listened? I am the one singing your praises.”

I wonder how long this chant can last. I don’t want to help him with his progress. He is doing all that himself, quite naturally.

Despite all the praise that he has proffered on the good life, I know his nostrils are better accustomed to the smell of cheap perfume. As much as his early embrace with destiny, his fate has been entwined with inherent seediness. I am willing to give him a run for his money. I admit that this is all part of the nightly entertainment. I can only strip down a few layers of the self before I have to refuse further intrusions. This will hardly stop him. He’ll just think that I’m raising the stakes. So be it. Let him make his play.

I’ve see that style. I lick his ear as the prelude to a deeper kiss. The give and take of tongues in the wash of passion. From that point on there seems little doubt about the outcome. I let his fantasy pass without any physical contact. He has been wishing for some kind of acknowledgment under the circumstances. I push his hands so that I can offer him a temporary victory. He savors the touch.

“Haven’t you been listening to me at all?”

In fact, he has been hanging on my every word and gesture in the hope that he might find just the invitation for his random tactics. It’s all part of the attrition that I face with the night wearing on. When my will seems to have been sufficiently eroded, he can play his major forces.

I could leave the field here and now. The door is open and beckoning. That would leave him empty-handed. But it would also leave me without a clear victory. I am to make myself more available. I want to gloat over my success. I have to reveal him to be the panting animal that he is. I have let decorum protect him from my actual opinion of him. If he doesn’t resort to outright begging, he can pretend that I don’t offer enough for him. That he is the one that is holding out. He can claim that my no touching prohibition is an act that merely invites more intense passion on his part. I have to lead him to the point where he faces his own incapacities. That is the heart of my skill. I take my mission very seriously.

I realize that I am out here on my own. All others would have succumbed. But his charm

really has serious limits. I am ready to expose them all.

“Would you like another drink?”

I need to slow things down, “I am close to my limit.”

“Your limit to having fun.”

“My limit to resist.”

“The cat doesn’t like to chase the mouse.”

“You’re the one with big teeth and a nose for fresh meat.”

I laugh at my own humor. He claws at the air to make his point. He comes ever so close to mauling me.

“That’s a little too close,” I tell him.

“It really doesn’t hurt.”

“That’s for you to say.”

He is trying to push me over, trying to gain just enough leverage to make his point. And he almost succeeds as I retreat to avoid his exploring hand.

“It’s not going to be that easy.”

“So it is going to be.”

I shake my head. I’ve never been so stuck up in the past. I would take this as a credit. Just keep myself in practice and see how far he could push. Restraint is now the order of the day. I am doing all that I can to hold back. I do admit that I find it all so tempting.

I realize that temptation has been my primary motivation. I have condemned myself to taste pleasure without actually swallowing. What detriment must follow from such a strategy. I hope none. It is not much different from engaging in a strenuous work out. My heart will pump fast. The arteries will distribute oxygenated blood throughout my body. I just will not have to endure the more unpleasing aspects of a stranger’s embrace.

I am making up the rules as I go along. What is allowed? A long intense stare. His breath on my shoulder. His hands gliding through my hair. My regulations are already getting out of hand. I am giving him too many liberties. The longer that I let him gaze in my eyes, the more that he can pretend that there is something going on. I know that I’ll just get off on this sort of chemistry. I admit I am weak. I am doing everything that I can to achieve a sense of resolve. My workout is making me more confident. It is almost automatic.

There are places where his touch can be lethal. I feel that I am engaged in an ancient art of combat. And I am losing severely in this contest. He knows the pressure point. He can cut off my circulation at will. He reduces me to one helpless thing.

Knowing all this only makes me more determine. He can tease me, but it is no avail. I know what I want. I want to resist his advances at all costs. I could just leave. Walk out on temptation. That would be too easy. I am gaining a special satisfaction in pushing this as far as it will go.

What difference is actually following through? I am giving him more than enough. But am I giving myself enough. Do I really thrive on such mental challenges. I am feeling a little lonely. He preys on just this sort of feeling. It goes way beyond seduction. It is that loneliness that offers confirmation to his strategy. He feels it down deep. And he tries to link that hollowness to his plan of attack. It works so well. I can barely suspect such a fine line of attack. It seems closer to a joint surrender.

If I suspect him of being so weak, how can I accept the supposed promise of his love-making. That is indeed the key. He shines in adversity. He knows how to transform weakness into strength. That is why he has to feed me with flattery. Underneath all the malarkey, I will feel the need to give into the glitter of fool's gold. After all, what is a precious metal, but the desire to project our deep solitude on the outside world. That we can somehow be cured by rare gifts. I worship at the same altar that he does. He is activating my fears.

I drink deeply from my glass knowing that this only make me want more. It is working. I have been pledged by the darkness to my partner in crime. And his nefarious deeds are approaching critical mass. If we share the same intoxication, why stop there. The ecstatic embrace follows.

I realize how difficult it is to maintain my tact. I look in my purse for some candy. If I smoked. I would light up now. But that would only make me more of a target. He would recognize the signs of stress. He has his act so well-timed. I need to be smarter about this. But the alcohol is killing my clarity. And there is the calling from the far reaches of the night. I am losing it.

I realize the mess that I have placed myself in. And the trap is only getting deeper. This would be the ideal time to extricate myself. I have proven my point. Only I am the one that seems to be dying. This is only too hopeless.

I want more tribute to my resistance.

"It's getting a little late," he tells me. That is supposed to be my line. He knows that he is using it against me. Why hold out this late? It's surely time to throw in the towel. At this point, only a bitter loneliness awaits me. I balance on the precipice. Another drink and I am completely under the spell. Without a drink, I won't be able to muster my courage. I can't even walk out that door. If there was just something else here to grab my attention.

I want to make up for lost opportunities. I hope this is not one. For him, this is his last chance. His villainy has been exposed. This is a sheer test of wills. And he is keeping his wits about him. How is he doing this? For him it is easy. His natural inclination is to take me home. And my natural inclination is to follow him. That is the problem. I am working to resist that natural inclination.

I wonder if I was committed to another guy, could I resist him at this moment.

"Your lover won't be there for you at home."

Once I have come to expect such intensities, I don't want to settle for anything less. The suggestion is just enough. I'd even start it off in his car.

There is not the least division in his mind. Even if he has no intention of carrying this over the long term, he can declare victory for the short term. He only has to collect his spoils. I am a reluctant prize and doing everything that I can to maintain my resilience. He has only taken this to honor his seductive powers. He has met a worthy opponent, and now she can admit to defeat at the hands of a more adept player.

Really. This may be my last resource in not handing him the victory that he desires. His cockiness nauseates me. It make him less attractive. But I think that I have even given up on such perceptiveness on my part. I want it raw. And that is what he offers at this moment. Bring it on!

I purr as I go by him. If I am going home with him, I want to fix myself once more in the

washroom. I admit it. I love the sex so much that I really don't care if he disgusts me. I've disgusted myself sufficiently to go along with his escapade.

In the washroom mirror, I look like a catch. Even the nasty affects of the night haven't been enough to throw me off my game. By tomorrow evening all this will be forgotten as I will be caught up in another conquest. And I see that this is the whole problem.

I can't accept his advances as meaning much more than this single night. That was the line that I drew before coming out. And I have let down my guard. He is already crossing that boundary. When do I draw the line? When it is too late. When the line gets drawn for me.

I can see the fatigue in my face. I need to sleep. I need to get out of here. In the morning, everyone will know. My shame will be written on my face.

I leave the washroom with a new purpose. I am not going to let down my guard. Not this time. Not for this guy.

He has a drink waiting for me.

"You needed a refill."

I look at it. I want to refuse. I know that this is the end. I draw a sip. My lips linger on the rim of the glass. I hope that this is not my demise.

"I mean you shouldn't play games. I've seen you leave with other guys.. I know what you're about."

I work to maintain my composure. It is really essential that I don't give in to his prying.

"You don't know anything about my private life. I get a ride home. That hardly amounts to much."

"Not much? These types are players. I know their itinerary. Don't pretend that it's different for you."

I am adamant, "I don't do anything that I don't want to do!"

"Exactly."

Either way. I am doomed. If I don't go home with him, I am trying to cover for all my past misdeeds. But if I do go along with him, it means that I am the easy target that he has characterized.

"I know what you want!"

I stare him down, "You do. I wish that I was so aware."

"Honey, don't pretend. I've seen you before."

Down deep, he is trying to paint us as the same. We both love the sport. If not the sport, what do I have? Even if I try to hide it, there is something that I become when I'm with a guy like this. There is no protection. Total freedom. I love it.

I imagine the physical contact progressing. I am stretching the bounds of decency. This is what I live for. The embrace of pain so that it becomes a more exquisite pleasure. We both seek this breakthrough.

From the innocent spanking to a more provoked stimulation, these are all extremes that make me shudder. But there are very much part of me. The tenderness is only a plateau, a place to catch my breath. He does know my type. We are both alike. I hate it.

I need to assert my independence. I will not be taken down this easily.

I can taste the blood from a brutal kiss. I am vampiric. I need more.

"You try to hide it. But you're given to dark colors. A certain garishness in your eye

makeup. Intense lines and deep cuts in fabric. It all says the same thing.”

“You’re a fashion psychoanalyst.”

“I’m just observant. I know what I like.”

“But it could be a tease. You just see what you want to see.”

“And you do everything that you can to encourage that. Like your skirt. The way that it hugs your curves. It’s almost vulgar.”

“It’s a skirt.”

“But the cut is so exaggerated. I can tell that is what drew you to it in the first place. You always make a statement. An exclamation point.”

Is this his last gasp. Or is he getting to me?

“You make up for whatever you might lack in confidence by being so assertive.”

Is he implying that I lack more than confidence.

“I’m always on the lookout for a girl like you. Sex is an end in itself for you. Like a good meal. At a young age, you realized what you had. That you were good at it. You could say so much with your body. And it didn’t stop there. It gave you access to another kind of being. And you embraced that. It enabled you to cross over into a new kind of existence. That was everything for you. And once you attained that, you’d do everything to hang onto that high. You’re an addict. Not strictly. You drink to mask that hunger, not to feed it. But it’s part of you.”

He continues, “You’re never going to be satisfied with the run of the mill. The mundane.”

He doesn’t mind pretending that he has my number. He’s going to ring it again and again.

“If what you say is true, why should I want to go home with you. You’ve perfect this game over and over again with different faces and different name. All to the same result.”

“You want to contest. I’m going to get you off. Give you the mind-blowing orgasms that you desire.”

“You are brutal. You think that I’ll just give in to your boldness.”

“You’re not here to waste time. We could be back at my place testing our limits.

Discovering what we are really about?

“Is that your final offer? It seems pretty tame.”

He squeezes my arm, “Honey, what are you after.”

“Your big hard cock in my wet little pussy.” I push him off, and he loses his balance.

“You like girls with dirty mouths. It gets you aroused.”

I fake him out. I run my hands along his pants legs as if to grab him. He gets turned on.

“Remember what I said, *no touching*.”

He grabs both my legs and his lips precariously close to mine, “Like this.”

I push him harder, “No like this.” He almost loses his balance.

“It’s not going to be that easy.”

“So I’ll keep coming back.”

“I’m not going to be waiting.”

He reminds me, “You still need a ride home.”

“I’ll get a cab. I don’t want to get all weak when I see my apartment window.”

He again grabs my arm, “You don’t really want to leave like this.”

I really don’t. But his challenge is only making it easier. If he had just held out a little longer. But he has made his play a little too early. He needed to imply all this. But he bought all his force in the open. It only weakened him against my more subtle approach. Next time out, I have to watch what I wear. Softer lines and lighter colors. Oh what the hell.

In the cab, I really don’t feel all that much better about myself. He was something. Even in our little battle, he showed that he knew what he was doing. I had held out as much as I could. And I was losing all the way. But I didn’t let on how close he was getting. And when push came to shove, he had nothing left to bring me down.

He achieves a sort of victory when I arrive at my apartment. It really does seem empty. I wanted to get away with a little more than this. Victory is only sweet when it is shared. This kind of game is not meant to end in sorrow. I shouldn’t have played so hard.

I take a longer than usual shower. I’m not going to have long to sleep. That may be somewhat of a consolation.

As I put my head on my pillow, he is pretty well out of my mind. He’s not the sort to hang around after he’s made his play. But he was so insistent. I wonder if I should have planned my exit with such certainty.

As I feel the morning sun play on my face, I feel rejuvenated. I really didn’t drink that much last night. A quick visit to the gym, and I am ready for my day. The hardship is long gone. I have something to look forward to.