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An Erotic Memoir

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1. AN APERITIF AT RIO'S

Mr New York, Action Man, the Scottish Antonio Banderas, the French Gigolo, the Danish Pastry, Tantric Andy, Opera Man, and on and on. And on. I rarely call them by their names. My friend Michelle says my men shouldn't get a name until I've slept with them three times and, using her criteria, most of them remain nameless. That doesn't bother me. I'm not looking for a boyfriend. I'm looking for sex. It's my weekend retreat.

That's where Rio's comes in.

My kids-free weekends always start with me in the car. There's the rush out of my office at five-thirty p.m., the zigzag through the Hampstead back streets to avoid the rush-hour traffic, and the quick hello to the kids, who are usually so immersed in the latest PlayStation game they barely notice my greeting. I yank clothes out of the laundry basket, making sure I've got enough tops, pants and pyjamas, adding something heavy for a sudden cold snap and something light for a rare

British heatwave. I got divorced almost five years ago and my kids still don't keep any clothes with my ex, so we operate on a rotating wardrobe scheme whereby every other week, when my ex has the kids, I ferry a bag of stuff over to his spotless penthouse flat, which he will later wash and return to me on Sunday when I collect the kids.

Weekends start off well if I've got the kids in the car by six-thirty and over to their father a few minutes later. If I make it to Rio's by seven, I get fucked for free. Otherwise, the admission fee kicks in, and I'm paying £11 for the privilege of getting laid. Until Sunday evening, when I cross London again to pick up my sons, it's 'me' time.

Many Friday evenings I'm tempted to stay home, pour a glass of wine and put my feet up, rather than serve as a human shuttle service. It's a struggle to get ready to go out on the town. I'm tired after a busy work week. My super king-size bed is calling, calling, even if I'll be jumping into it alone. And yet I think, Stop being so pathetic. You've just turned forty-four, for fuck's sake, and there are many men out there. And I've only got four days and two nights a month to meet them. When my ex-husband has custody, I have my freedom. And freedom means sex.

The temptation to stay home is short-lived tonight, bested by the temptations to be found at Rio's and the opportunity to be seduced by an anonymous male and serviced by him. I've got a web date and although, as usual for a Friday, part of me wants to take the easy option and send him a text to call the whole thing off, I can't. My date has travelled from Winchester to see me. Calling it off so late, and after his two-and-a-half-hour drive, would be rude. I was brought up to be a good girl.

His picture and his profile on TotallyGorgeous.com look pretty good. His photo shows off his fair hair and broad shoulders. He is wearing a blue Lacoste shirt – public-schoolboy vanilla – but he looks tall and athletic and his broad shoulders stretch the cotton at the collar and sleeve. Nice. Not

as 'totally gorgeous' as the site's name promises, not a supermodel, but good enough for one evening. He said he works in finance, which, since he lives too far south to work in the City, makes me wonder if he sells pension plans: boring.

'What are you into?' he asked, after a few email exchanges, when we spoke on the phone. 'Do you ever go out clubbing?'

I told him I went to fetish clubs from time to time, and that excited him. He actually gasped, which made me wonder just how extensive a sexual history someone in a Lacoste shirt really had. I always get worried when guys think going to a fetish club is the height of decadence. Anyone who's ever spent ten minutes in Torture Garden knows these places are costume parties for grown-ups. There's always the same middle-aged man in chaps being spanked by his overweight dominatrix partner, while hotties hover on the periphery, watching the show.

'I wouldn't mind being your companion at a fetish club if you're ever short of a date,' Mr Lacoste had said. He seemed disappointed when I told him I had a regular partner for fetish-club nights, but we agreed to get together anyway.

The only other guy I've met on TotallyGorgeous was also in finance – a banker with a penchant for talking dirty but who had bipolar disorder. Halfway through a blowjob he said to me, in his upper-crust English accent, 'You know, I haven't had an orgasm in ten years.'

I took this as a challenge, the equivalent of climbing Mount Everest to make him come. I failed. He was on lithium. While I was on Everest, he was in the clouds. I got a nice steak frites from the banker, at least. Tonight I'm hoping for three courses and a sexual aperitif.

I'm not scheduled to meet the web date until ten p.m. and it's only six-thirty. I have three hours to kill. I'm coming back from my ex's and am stopped at a light at Tufnell Park Station. It's a nondescript part of north London, with a strip of fish-and-chip shops, Indian takeaways and a Sainsbury's Local. If I go straight, I'm on Dartmouth Park Road, heading home, where I'll wait for my date. If I turn left, I'm on the

Kentish Town Road, headed to Rio's. I'm reminded of John, the killer in Luke Rhinehart's novel *Dice Man*, who shakes the die at night and, depending on how they fall, either goes out in search of a victim or stays at home with a hot pot of tea. I play my own version of the game: if there's a parking space in front of Rio's, I'll go in; no space, and I'll go home. Two minutes later I spot a space directly in front. That's the sign I'm looking for.

There are only eight spaces in front of Rio's, so even in the off hours scoring one can be tricky. Regulars at this self-described naturist health-and-relaxation club say the local Council changed the nearby Pay and Display machine from all day to two hours maximum, because Rio's' many customers monopolised the few spaces on the high street. I've met people who've stayed at Rio's from when it opened at eleven a.m. until it closed at seven a.m. the following day. They grumble about having to run outside in their towels to deposit coins in the parking machine.

'Fucking Camden Council. They really know how to take the fun out of life,' said one man I was fondling in the Jacuzzi, who lost his rod when he realised he had five minutes left on his parking voucher.

I turn the white plastic handle on the front door and enter Rio's reception. The space is designed to fit about five people and its décor is minimal: a wicker chair in one corner and a mural on one wall featuring a topless woman in a sarong reclining on a beach in Polynesia. There's also a glass window through which customers receive their essential equipment – a fluffy white towel, which comes in handy later. I've never actually seen anyone sit on that chair, nor have I seen anyone wait in the reception area. Most people are anxious to get inside, where the action happens. The receptionist is in the back office beyond the glass window. She looks pissed off today, but then she always looks pissed off. As the dour and lumpy controlling finger on the buzzer, she's the one who witnesses my frequent comings and goings,

and I always wonder if she's resentful, or even jealous, of the number of times she's buzzed me up to the 'relaxation rooms' reserved for couples or, in my case, singles with strangers. Maybe she wishes she were seeing that kind of action herself.

The new admission rate – free for girls Sunday to Friday, eleven a.m. to seven p.m. – is designed to attract more women, as that's what keeps the men paying £18 to get in. It's expensive to look at tits. I'm not sure they're getting what they pay for. Most of the women who come now insist on wearing their swimming costumes, denying men even the peep. Too many women treat Rio's like it's a trip to the hairdresser, spending most of their time in the steam room putting conditioner on their hair. Before the girls got in free – my heyday – it was rare to see a single woman at Rio's. Even then, women used the place as a kind of health-and-relaxation centre, and, even though that's what the brochure says it is, these girls blow the atmosphere. They are not there for the very thing Rio's is really devoted to: sex.

Because I tend to go during the day, I am a rarity. And, because I walk around naked, I'm as exotic as the Polynesian chick in the painting. And since so few women interface with the men, at least during the daylight hours, I've pretty much got this beach all to myself.

From the expressions I see on other women's faces, I can tell they think nudity is not so respectable. There is disapproval in their watchful eyes. None has ever commented, but they seem to perceive my nakedness as a transgression; whereas, given the sign over the front door advertises it as a naturist club, I feel they, too, should be naked. Might their discomfort arise from the disparity between the number of men and women? Men outnumber women by about ten to one at any time and, when I am there, only one woman is naked – me. Maybe they really do think of Rio's as a health club, and I'm the only one who gets fucked there. Or it could be that few other women have figured out that, if you're a naked woman in a room with ten

naked men, some of whom are displaying some degree of arousal, it's easy to get laid.

In any case, I just like being naked. I'm not shy about my body. I'm a 5'5", blue-eyed blonde and, after investing years with a personal trainer, I'm finally down from a size 16 to my dream size, 12. I'm a busty 34DD, with a small waist, a woman's hips, a flat stomach and a round bottom. I reckon I've done about ten thousand lunges over the past ten years and have great legs to show for it. I'm not vain, but I do like being noticed. It has taken me forty-four years to look this good and feel confident about my appearance.

En route to the ladies' changing room after the receptionist has handed me my fluffy white towel, I glance at the lounging area to check out the talent. Rio's is a bit of a dive. It has no state-of-the-art equipment, no Philippe Starck-designed interior or, in fact, any design at all except for a tropical theme that would be sadly dated were it not so unintentionally ironic. But it's functional. And it delivers what I want: sex on tap.

Today there are a couple of average-looking guys crashed out on the cheap plastic loungers, staring at the wall. There are three rows of ten loungers here, each facing the wall-mounted television that permanently shows either football or soap operas, which strikes me as odd for a swingers club. The men glance at me. As always, there is at least one in whom I detect some interest. I ignore them all and move on to the changing room.

A large window separates the lounge area from the 'bar', which, instead of alcohol, serves orange squash, lemonade, water, coffee and tea, along with digestive biscuits for dunking, all free to customers. Those with a wholesome appetite may purchase toasted sandwiches. 'Nice touch,' said a boyfriend the first time he accompanied me to Rio's. 'A toastie between mouthfuls, as it were.'

Across the room I catch a glimpse of an old guy sitting on a bar stool. I would guess, based on his wrinkled torso and

equally wrinkled face and the seven remaining strands of grey hair on his head, he must be about eighty years old. I recognise him from past visits, as he is a permanent fixture here, usually found at the bar, naked except for the towel wrapped around his sagging waist, chatting with the topless waitress with the bad tit job, colourful sarong and kinky Marigolds. I often wonder if the old guy owns the place, but I've never thought to ask. It could simply be Rio's is just happy for his £18.

I enter the changing room. There are rows of small yellow lockers on all four walls of the three-metres-square room. Green plastic outdoor chairs of the type normally found at barbecues sit in two of the corners, and a large blue plastic bucket for the used towels is in a third. I grab a plastic bracelet on which a key is fastened, turn it, and a locker pops open. I take off my clothes, wrap the towel around me, pop a £1 coin into the locker to release the key, and then fasten the bracelet to my wrist, taking a quick look at myself in the full-length mirror. I think I look pretty good, if not fucking hot. Well, not so fucking hot after all, because I see rings around my ankles, showing where the elastic of my socks pinched my skin, and another around my waist from my admittedly too-tight jeans. It's not a great look, but I know from experience that, after a few minutes in the steam room and Jacuzzi, the rings will disappear.

As I pass through the lounging area, I take a better look at the bodies on the loungers. There's a middle-aged Indian guy with a big belly passed out on one. A skinny young white guy with a complete absence of muscles is asleep on another. A short Greek man about fifty years old, a commercial airline pilot whom I've met before, is sitting on a third. He nods hello and returns to the football rerun. None of them takes my fancy, so I walk past them to the spa. There are two Jacuzzis on the right, each large enough for six people but now empty. A small steam room is on the left, and further ahead are two saunas and two more steam rooms. Through an archway further down the hall is a small swimming pool and a very

large Jacuzzi that can hold about twenty but it is closed. Beyond that is the smoking area, which is usually empty, and past that two 'relaxation' rooms that often host orgies but that always reek of cigarettes, since smokers tend to combine one pleasure with another at this end of the hall. As a vehement anti-smoker, I never go this far down the hall. I indulge other vices.

I enter one of the saunas and see a good-looking fit black guy whom a year ago I fucked two Friday lunchtimes in a row. He's about thirty-five and is bald and muscular, with a great six-pack and a thick nine-inch cock. I definitely remember him, but he either hasn't seen me come in or is pretending he doesn't know me. This is suspect, because typically all heads turn when a new body enters a sauna; even those not on the lookout for fresh meat notice when cold air breaks the heat of a sauna.

Mr Familiar is rubbing the back of a black woman in a bikini. It's an intimate moment for the two of them, but I don't care. I stare at him alone. He continues not to look my way and part of me wonders whether I should interrupt their revelry and say hello, if only to send the message 'Fuck you for ignoring me.' Then I wonder if what I really want to say is 'Fuck you for not remembering me.' While contemplating this ego quagmire, I don't say anything, but I continue to stare at him and he continues to ignore me. Ultimately, I graciously decide now is not the appropriate moment to remind him that, just a year ago, we were each other's Friday lunchtime dish.

We really had connected on those two Fridays. The sex was great – great enough that he was the only Rio's man I'd ever arranged to meet a second time. It's possible that he truly did forget me. That's the way it goes in such places. If you sleep with enough people, after a while you lose track. The brain can only store so much information before it shunts memories into little compartments that eventually get buried under dust. Still, when his hands reach under his lady friend's string top, I feel a twinge of jealousy.

The sauna door opens. In walks another guy I've met before. This one's white, about forty and 5'10", slim and slightly muscular, with spiky dark-blond hair. He's tanned and quite handsome, with an angular face, beautiful eyes and high cheekbones – Ed Harris with hair. He takes off his towel and sits down next to me on the hot wooden bench. 'Hello,' he says. 'Haven't seen you here for a while. I'm John.'

For a few seconds I debate whether I want to talk to him. The last time we met, John was a major pain in the ass. Yet today I'm almost grateful that someone here remembers me. It's disconcerting to think you're a good fuck, and even be told you're one, and then not be remembered.

'No,' I respond. 'I haven't been here in a month or so.' I do not add, 'Nice to see you again.' Flattered, or relieved, as I am by his attention, I am weighing up whether I want to carry on the conversation. Rio's was meant to be just a pitstop. After all, I have a web date tonight, Mr Lacoste, and there's a strong chance, based on his sexy text messages and phone calls, I might end up taking him home after dinner.

I hadn't planned on coming to Rio's for anything more than a chill-out, but John is obviously coming on to me. How do I know this? He's naked and I can see his cock thickening, already eight inches even in a semi-aroused state. Nothing like a growing cock to indicate a man's interest.

What if my web date doesn't work out? I find myself wondering. Suddenly, like Dice Man, I have options. Should I (a) take what's on offer now and greedily anticipate a second round in a few hours, or (b) reject the here-and-now man and risk getting blown off by my dinner date? Web dates are notoriously unreliable, and I'm reminded that my one previous experience with a man from TotallyGorgeous was not a success. There's a fifty-fifty chance Mr Lacoste may turn out to be a loser – or, worse, a no-show. One thing is clear, however: not getting fucked at all is not an option. I love sex. My kids-free Friday nights come along just twice a month, and I have to take advantage of them.