

Playing the Game

Belle de Jour

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de
Jour

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PHOENIX

Dear Reader,

First things first, a little about me:

Hi. I'm Belle. If we haven't already met, well, hello there, and welcome. Yes, my eyes are up here, mate. If we have met, skip this part, you know all about it already.

I'm a call girl. I've been in the business of selling sex for a few years now. If you've ever seen those glossy websites with slightly out-of-focus girls throwing smouldering looks at the viewer, yes, one of those would be me. It's a neat little earner and I'm happy enough with the life but as with any job there are always compromises. In my case these are:

- 1 Some of my friends, and all of my family, don't know what I do;
- 2 Sometimes seems a bit of a waste of a good degree;
- 3 Makes keeping a boyfriend difficult.

I do have a boyfriend by the way, he's called, 'the Boy', who I met at university. And I do have a group of close friends whom I knew for years before I moved to London and became a call girl. They're A₁, A₂, and A₄, all ex-boyfriends of long-standing and A₃, whom I've always fancied but have never slept with. There's also N, who's my occasional fuck buddy when we're both single, my wingman when we're not and a constant source of solace when things go wrong.

If you were to pass me on the street, provided I wasn't heading for an appointment, I'd look just like any other

late-twenties young professional in London. I'm good-looking but not model material; I take care with my body but am no size zero. I like a pint, good conversation with great friends and I love sex. In fact, I could be just about any girl you saw on the Tube this morning.

And this book, it takes me and my friends and continues the story, only in ways that may not have actually happened. Think of it as a parallel universe for Belle and her mates.

Apart from that? Well, you'll find out the rest as we go . . .

Love,
Belle

A few things, FA2-style:

- 1 No other sex worker (or indeed anyone) speaks for me but me. I speak for no one else but me.
- 2 My fee is in the three-hundred-per-hour range, with deals for overnight and longer appointments. The client pays an extra thirty–fifty pounds on top for travel. About a quarter of the one-offs tip; regulars always do.
- 3 Most working girls I have met do not work for the same agency and are usually friends-of-friends. I only meet girls from my agency if someone hires two of us at a go. We arrive and leave in separate transportation and know nothing of each other beyond professional names. Making friends with my co-workers is not on the agenda.
- 4 My clients often offer wine but generally are not drinking when I arrive. I know one or two who use mild drugs; I don't partake. I have not yet run into an abusive situation. We are instructed that if this happens, we should take the money, ring the manager and leave. The client is instructed by the manager that if we find them objectionable, we leave.

You might say I'm lying or that I've been extremely lucky. You might also say that I have some skill in putting people at ease. Your call.

5 The agent – also manager or madam, if you will – takes thirty per cent of the fee. Tips and travel expenses are exempt from her commission. I only occasionally see her in person, preferring to pay in to an account – she knows I am reliable. She meets other girls at restaurants or at home. Apparently she has a boyfriend who doesn't know what she does for a living! Oh, the irony.

The agent was a call girl herself, and is a rather nice (if scatty and imperious) person, and for these reasons I trust her. She also has great legs – not that this matters but I thought it worth mentioning.

6 I get nervous if clients change the location or time of the liaison more than once. In these cases the agency provides a driver, or I ask N to do it. I tip the driver (or N) fifty quid for this. I don't know what the manager pays the drivers.

7 The manager confirms appointments with the clients by landline. I text her on my arrival and ring her when I leave. If she hasn't heard from me within fifteen minutes of the agreed end of the appointment, she rings the client, then the hotel, then her security, then the police. I know, because once I was having a rare old time and forgot to call.

8 If the manager 'plays favourites', it's not something that bothers me enough to notice. Perhaps I am the favourite?

9 Do I kiss clients? Of course. *Pretty Woman* is not real. Understood? Fiction. Julia Roberts is not really a prostitute.

Refusal to kiss is an affront similar to fake porn lesbians who won't put their tongues anywhere near pussy but are perfectly happy to pose with hands on each others' tits. Denial ain't just a river in Egypt, honey. Your tongue + girly bits in same scene = cuntlicker, so you might as well get in there. Similarly, when it comes to clients I don't hold back for the sake of imagined propriety. For goodness' sake I'm already a whore! Kissing is no more intimate than any other act – intimacy is what the mind does, not the body.

- 10 Today, my knickers are low-waisted, flesh-coloured lace shorts (La Perla). No bra.

Juillet

vendredi, le 01 juillet

There are two kinds of men in the world – the ones who want their sluts to look like ladies and the ones who want their sluts to look like sluts.

This one, he's definitely of the former variety. He actually requested pearl earrings. Though why he did is a complete mystery, as he's currently banging away from behind. You couldn't possibly see earrings from that angle.

'God, yes . . . you love it like this, don't you? When I take you hard like this . . .'

His short nails dig into the fabric bunched around my hips. I make encouraging noises and grind back onto him, spreading my hands over the hotel bedsheets. Maybe 'pearl earring' actually means something else, could it be some euphemism I've never heard of? If so, he'd better get round to it quickly, because with all the talk beforehand of my upbringing and educational background, the action itself has only just got under way.

'You're going to tell all your friends . . . I'm going to fuck you till you can't walk straight . . .'

Unlikely. Still, points for trying – I give a little giggle and 'ooh!' as if the very thought is making me chafe.

'That's right . . . no one's ever had you like this . . .'

Um, he did remember picking me out from the website, no? Not only have I been had like this, a hundred times at least, by hundreds of other men, he'd be doing well to be the first person who had me like this this week.

‘Ahhh . . . right . . .’

Never let anyone tell you a man can fake an orgasm when he has a condom on. I feel the head of his cock swell inside me and know he’s close. A few well-timed ‘oh’s and ‘my’s and he’s away. I reach back and check the rolled end of the rubber is still around the base of his penis and shift myself off him. He collapses to one side, sweaty, sated. I pull my knickers back up, smooth my hair and smile. I never even had to take off the pussy-bow blouse.

samedi, le 02 juillet

Sometimes it feels as if I’ve been doing this job forever, but really it’s only been a couple of years since I started. My preparation is down to a well-timed art: the shaving is done in under ten minutes; the plucking in under five; the last hair in place well in advance of the taxi’s arrival. Makeup still needs a certain amount of time but I have the look down to a reliable result. Because I have only a handful of regular clients and there are only so many situations in which a call girl is seen in public, the capsule wardrobe is well established. This doesn’t eliminate the expense entirely, of course; the last shoes I bought were a pair of Louboutins identical to a pair I’d claimed as a business expense last year. And naturally I spend something closely akin to an equatorial country’s GDP every month at the chemist.

Other times, it feels all so recent. Take my boyfriend for instance – and yes, I have one who, yes, knows what I do – whether by wilful stubbornness or real forgetfulness, he still asks me what jobs I’m applying for. The answer, as he must well know by now, is none. Not for years at least. Maybe it’s a coded clue to change my job. But, really, I don’t consider the work to be a problem. There are no holes in

my CV so gaping they can't be explained by a soft job market and a heaping helping of parental experience. Not yet, anyway.

But still, after yet another bukakke lunchtime appointment, it occurs to me that one thing that would be nice about a straight job is that I wouldn't have to worry about stinging eyes as an occupational hazard.

Something to consider.

dimanche, le 03 juillet

'Oh, mate, I had to tell you,' I said when N returned to the table with our pints – lager for him, bitter for me. 'You remember that girl from the Christmas party?'

N did. I'd bagged a hot invite that my boyfriend couldn't make it to, so took N instead. And what does he do? Only leaves with the number of the hottest girl in the room of course.

Anyway, N kept me up-to-date on their phone-related to-ing and fro-ings but between the season and suchlike, sex with the Hot-Christmas Girl never came to pass. He was up to his neck in some German lady and two or three flexible athletes, and the HCG had met a nice Irish bloke, so their hooking up amounted to a bit of talk but not much else.

'Don't keep me in suspense,' he said, raising an eyebrow. 'Out with it.'

'If you still have her number, lose it,' I announced. 'I've found her blog, and you are not going to like this . . .' and I related, to the best of my recollection, her last three entries. Turns out HCG may be fit, she may be fine – but she's an anal virgin. Who declares with some vehemence that the very idea of any minor discomfort puts her right off.

Now, I know that not all kinks involve discomfort (but a

lot of them do), and not all kinky people like anal (but a lot of them do). I also know that not all sex is kinky and that N does non-masochistic beautifully. And he's blessed with one of South London's nicer cocks. But really. If I were N I would stay well clear of someone with such arbitrarily prissy sexual demands. Intolerance of sexual experimentation definitely crosses my 'can't be doing with that' threshold. HCG has reached her advanced age, and was previously married, and has lovers stacked seven deep and has never been tempted by anal? Not even a tickle?

'Serious case of princess complex,' I declared.

Granted, I'm being a complete hypocrite in this regard. Who am I to tell someone else to back away from the prude? How many lovers have I inducted in the darker arts of sex? How many people, even years later, have commented that I was easily the best they've had? But I made a promise on getting out of the call girl business and that was, unless True Love was involved, I am so not going to be anyone's tutor again. It's one thing keeping up the kindly and interested façade when being paid but rather another to do it on a voluntary basis. I like them experienced.

'Okay, yeah, I see your point,' N said. 'But should it ever come down to it, that's a face that needs a comeshot. It would be a good one-off just for that. The fact that she wouldn't really be into it makes the thought just that little bit better.'

'Fair enough,' I said. Like so much else that goes on in men's minds, what they find appropriate wank fodder is something of a mystery to me; however, it's part of my job to know. Anticipating a client's desire is what sorts the wheat from the chaff in this biz. And while I am remarkably bad at doing so in real life, according to my exes – the ones who still talk to me, of course – I've something of a sixth sense for it in my working life.

Still, at least it's good to be settled with someone. In theory this means I don't particularly have to worry that the Boy finds being with me a turn-on; the amount of time we spend together both in and out of the bedroom would seem to confirm the fact. And he is very, very careful not to ask too many questions about my work . . . anymore.

lundi, le 04 juillet

As far as appointments go, I would rather be pissed on than give a blowjob.

There, I've said it. Whew.

Why? Well, I'm fundamentally lazy, and being pissed on is easy to do – you just sort of be there and remember to not breathe through your nose. Also, it's not remotely as bad as everyone thinks it is. It's sort of like eating (sorry, Mum) shellfish – if you dwell on the mechanics of what it is you're doing, you might be sickened momentarily otherwise, everything's tickety-boo.

Also, you can brush your teeth and have a hot shower straight after and no one would think you unromantic for doing so. (If, on the other hand, you do want to do the couply thing, be certain to wash the worst of it off before inviting him into the shower. Trust me on this.)

Honestly, I feel I shouldn't be telling you this. Now everyone will want to do it! And that being one of my extra-high-fee special services for regulars, once the word gets out, I may well find that I'm out of a job. Hmm. Maybe time to start trawling for 'real' work again . . .

But, seriously, it's not bad. Try it. You might not like it but, let's be honest, you might like it about as much as, or even slightly more than giving a lockjaw-inducing blowjob. And it buys you mega points to cash in later on the

perversion of your choice, be that pony play, rope bondage, or a meal at Royal Hospital Road. Everyone's a winner!

mardi, le 05 juillet

'It's finally starting to look like your place,' the Boy said as I arranged books on the shelves.

'You think?' When A4's lease came up he decided to move closer to work, so I took over his flat. It was a self-contained granny flat above a garage. The owners were constantly threatening to knock down the house and garage to build a twenty-four-unit block of flats but, thankfully, Camden council always rejected the applications.

'All your little things we picked up on holidays, your socks scattered everywhere . . .' He picked up one limp little pink scrap, run grey at the heel, wrinkled his nose and chucked it into the corner.

'Oh, stop it,' I said. I'm not famed for my mad house-keeping skillz. And, luckily, I'm not one of those girls who meets clients at her own flat. Personal maintenance I can whip up in a jiffy. But Hoovering in advance of an appointment? Not my bag, baby. And it would make having a regular boyfriend infinitely more complicated. 'You know you're not dating your mother.'

'No, it's sweet,' he said, wrapping a strong arm around my waist. 'Problem is, we've yet to fully christen the place.'

'What do you mean? We've done it on the sofa, in the shower, in the bed . . .'

'Mmm hmm?'

'Oh, you mean the kitchen? Okay, but I thought looking at pots and pans was probably the antidote to sexy.'

'True enough, but I've been dying to see you model those oven gloves.'

mercredi, le 06 juillet

Please don't misunderstand, I like the heat of summer as much as – if not more than – the next person. But if and when I make my millions, I'll retire to life as a mad inventor. First innovation: an antiperspirant dispenser specifically designed for attacking the under-boob area.

vendredi, le 08 juillet

Working in an office is an attenuated form of servitude. It's sharecropping for the modern world. With all the time and effort that goes in to normal modes of employment, where do you end up at the end of a year? Are you ahead, what have you achieved? You work for a salary because you have a car payment, a mortgage – why do you have those? You need a car to get to the office at the hour prescribed by your superiors. You need a house because you're told you do, because there is inherent insecurity in your world and turning your sweat into capital over thirty or more years seems like the right thing to do, even if you're not sure why. In contrast, my body is available for rent but when the job is done I still take it home, it's mine. Your time and your potential are what your employer takes from you; ask yourself, when you go home, do you still have them? What lifestyle equity has eight or more hours at a desk bought you? Was it worth the exchange?

Maybe even then the thought of sex as a transaction still bothers you. Maybe the knowledge that marriage is a plain and simple business contract still does not convince you. Ask yourself, then, what sort of a person you are. Are you a humanist? Then blame the social structure, not the sex

worker. Are you a Christian? Then love the sinner, hate the sin. Who I am, and what I am doing is a rational response to the current economic and cultural climate. Deal with it.

samedi, le 09 juillet

‘Who are we meeting again?’ the Boy said, spritzing his pits with deo.

‘L,’ I said. ‘Remember? She’s the one who was at school with me.’

‘Oh, one of your posh friends,’ the Boy said. This is a bit of a joke; the Boy’s family are far more posh than mine or indeed than of anyone I know. He’s always pegged me as a bit of a social climber. It’s not true, though – L and I were friends at school because we were equally bookish, lousy at social niceties and unpopular. Nowt to do with money. ‘Is this the one who’s a barrister or the one who hates me?’

‘Both,’ I said, slipping on a pair of satin heels. ‘She’s a barrister and she hates you.’

‘Two great tastes that taste great together,’ he said and grabbed his keys. ‘Am I driving again?’

‘As you’re the one with a car and zero alcohol tolerance, I’m afraid the answer to that question will always be yes.’ I pecked him on the cheek and turned off the hall lights. ‘I’ll stand you lemonades all night.’

‘One of these days we should go out with my mates,’ he said.

Wow, it’s been years since he even offered. ‘Ah, there’s the rub. Your friends hate me, but aren’t posh enough to hide it behind a veneer of polite chatter. L is.’

‘If that’s true, how do you know she doesn’t hate you, too?’ he said, waiting for me to lock the door. ‘She’s ever so polite when you’re together.’

‘If you think friends aren’t out to destroy you, then what do you know about friends?’ I smiled. ‘Come on, or we’ll be late.’

dimanche, le 10 juillet

Cleaning out old files on the computer, I ran across my CV. Been a while since I updated the thing, not since the last time I tried looking for work. But I told myself that once the sex-work gig was under way, I’d wait until it looked like there were more jobs in my sector. Then I left it because the money for entry level didn’t look very good, especially when I found myself peeling pinks off a roll of cash on a very regular basis. Finally I stopped looking at it altogether – though I can’t say I never looked back.

They say the past is another country – but sometimes mine seems like another planet. But I wonder, was it worth it? Did I make the right choice?

lundi, le 11 juillet

‘You’re a dirty girl,’ the client said. ‘Dirty, dirty girl. Do you want to suck my fingers after they’ve been inside your pussy?’

Honey, I want whatever you want me to want. ‘Oh yes, I want to suck them.’ There was the familiar tang of my own juices, the slight sweetness of lube – many of them, particularly the edible ones, contain glycerine – and the not-so-faint taste of latex, as we’d already fucked once this hour before he started fingering me while wanking himself back to hardness.

‘God you’re filthy. Why don’t you come on my hand, you dirty girl, and then you can taste it.’

Meep. Always a slight problem there, as I have a policy of not coming with clients. To be honest, when you’re concentrating on what he wants, and how it looks, and how it sounds, and thinking ahead to the next assignment, plus keeping half an eye on the time, who can let go enough to orgasm? Every call girl has a repertoire of faking which is honed over many clients, and there’s always the safety valve that if he doesn’t believe it, well, he doesn’t have to book you again. Serves them right for wanting orgasms on demand anyway.

Step 1 for faking: the audio

‘Oh, yes . . . yes yes yes . . .’

Step 2 for faking: the visual

I arched my back and shuddered, rolling my eyes back into my head and thrashing against the bedsheets.

Step 3 for faking: the internal

Especially if his hand is inside you, clench, baby, clench. Rhythmic or solid? Doesn’t much matter. Just tighten those pelvic floor muscles for all they’re worth.

Finally, step 4: the follow-through

Remember, your world has just been rocked. Breathe shallow and quickly, and look away – a direct eyelock is the number one tell-tale sign that you’ve actually been pulling a Meg Ryan. Oh, and you’re a lady, when you finally catch your breath and come to, don’t forget to thank the gentleman.

‘No, it was my pleasure to watch you,’ he said, smearing his fingers over my cheek. ‘You dirty, dirty girl.’