

The Intimate Adventures of a London Call Girl

Belle de Jour

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The first thing you should know is that I'm a whore.

I don't mean that in a glib way. I'm not using the word as an analogy for working a desk job or toiling away in new media. Many of my friends will tell you how temping for a year or ending up in sales is equivalent to prostitution. It's not. I know this because I've been a temp and I've fucked for money, and they are in no way similar. Not even the same planet. Different solar systems altogether.

The second thing is that I live in London. These two facts may or may not be related. It's not a cheap city. Like almost all of my friends, I moved here after university with the hope of getting a job. If not a well-paying one, at least something interesting, or populated exclusively by handsome, eligible men. But such positions are thin on the ground. Almost everyone is studying to be an accountant now, including my friends A2 and A3, who are respected in their academic circles. Good god – a fate worse than death. Accountancy trumps even academia in the unsexiness stakes.

Prostitution is steady work but not demanding. I meet a lot of people. Granted, they're almost all men, most of whom I'll never see again, and I'm required to fuck them regardless of whether they're covered in hairy moles or have a grand total of three teeth or want me to recreate a fantasy involving their sixth-form history teacher. But it's better than watching the clock until the next scheduled tea break in a dismal staff room. So when my friends pull out the tired analogy of corporate employment-as-whoring yet again, I nod knowingly and commiserate with them, and

we down cocktails and wonder where all our youthful promise went.

Theirs is probably on a trunk road to the suburbs. Mine is spreading its legs for cash on a regular basis.

Having said that, the leap to full-on prostitution did not happen overnight.

I ended up in London like thousands of other recent graduates. With only a small student debt and a bit saved, I thought I was set for a few months but my surplus was quickly drained by rent and a thousand trivial expenses. My daily routine consisted of poring over the job pages, writing enthusiastic and sycophantic covering letters, although I knew I'd never be interviewed, and masturbating furiously before bed every night.

The masturbation was, by far, the highlight of those days. I imagined myself employed as a testing engineer for an office supplies manufacturer, and that the job involved covering my inner thighs with bulldog clips as someone screwed me vigorously. Or being the personal assistant to a powerful dominatrix, chained to her desk and eaten out by one of the other slaves, who in turn was impaled on a dildo. Or floating in a sensory deprivation tank, as unseen hands pinched and pulled at my skin, gestures at first gentle, then painful.

London wasn't the first city I'd lived in, but it was certainly the largest. Anywhere else there is always the chance of seeing someone you know, or at the very least, a smiling face. Not here. Commuters crowd the trains, eager to outdo their fellow travellers in an escalating privacy war of paperbacks, headphones and newspapers. A woman next to me on the Northern Line one day held the *Metro* just inches from her face; it was only three stops later that I noticed she was not reading but crying. It was hard not to offer sympathy and harder still not to start crying myself.

So I watched my mean savings dwindle away as buying a

Travelcard became the highlight of each week. And while I have a crippling lingerie-buying habit, even cutting down the intake of lacy things was not going to solve the problem.

Not long after moving I had a text from an acquaintance, known through my friend N. This is N's city and he seems to know everyone. He's at least four of my six degrees of separation. So when he went out of his way to introduce me to this lady, I paid attention. 'Heard you're in town – would love to meet when you're free,' the text said. She was a compactly sexy older woman, with a cut-glass accent and impeccable taste. When we had first met I'd thought she was out of my league. But as soon as her back was turned N indicated in half-whispers and furious hand gestures that she went like a train and liked women, too. I dumped a gusher in my knickers, as they say. Like, instantly.

I saved that text for weeks as my imagination grew more heated and restless. Before long she had morphed into the latex-clad hell-bitch-boss of my nocturnal reveries. The wenches and sex-crazed office drones in my dreams were developing faces, and they were all hers. I texted back. She rang almost immediately to say that she and her new man would love to see me for dinner the next week.

I panicked for days about what to wear and splurged on a haircut and new underwear. On the night itself I tore my wardrobe apart, changing outfits a dozen times. Finally I decided on a tight aqua jumper and charcoal trousers – a little office-temp, perhaps, but modestly sexy. I arrived at the restaurant half an hour early, even after half an hour of trying to find the restaurant in the first place. The staff said I could only be seated when my party arrived. I spent the last of my money on a drink at the bar and hoped they'd cover the cost of the meal.

The sound of couples talking in the narrow rooms mingled with the burbling background music. Everyone

looked possibly older than me, definitely better off. A few might have just come from work; others had clearly been home to refresh. The door, each time it opened, let in a blast of chilly autumn air and the smell of dry leaves.

The couple arrived. We were seated at a table in the corner well away from the attention of the staff; I was tucked between them. He looked down the front of my jumper while she talked about art galleries and sport. As I felt his hand creep onto my right knee, her stockinged foot started to slide up the inside leg of my trousers.

Ah. That's what they're after, I thought, and hadn't I known it all along? They were older, libertine, gorgeous. There was no good reason not to fuck or be fucked by them. I followed their lead in ordering: rich, buttery dishes. A mushroom risotto so thick it could barely be torn away from the shallow bowl, so glutinous the only way to dislodge it from the spoon was with teeth. Fish with the head still attached and its heat-glazed eyes staring up at us. She licked her fingers and I had the feeling this was a purposeful gesture rather than a lapse in manners. My hand slid over her skintight trousers to her crotch, and she clamped her legs together around my knuckles. At that particular moment the waitress decided our table needed more attention. She brought over a sampler of tiny pastries and chocolate treats, and the man fed his girlfriend with one hand, gripping my hand in the other, while my fingers crawled in her lap. She came easily, almost silently. I brushed her neck with my lips.

'Excellent,' he murmured. 'Now do it again.'

So I did. After the meal we left the restaurant. He asked me to strip to the waist and sit in the front passenger seat while she drove. From the back seat he grabbed my breasts and pinched my nipples as we travelled the short distance to her house. I walked from the car to the door topless and, once inside, was ordered on my knees. She disappeared into

the bedroom as he put me through a few basic obedience lessons: holding uncomfortable positions; holding heavy things in uncomfortable positions; holding heavy things in uncomfortable positions with his cock in my mouth.

She returned with candles and whips. While I have had both hot wax and the business end of a riding crop applied to my flesh before, it was a new experience to have it done with my legs in the air and lit candles plunged into me, dripping over my torso. After two hours, he entered her and, using his cock like the domme in my fantasy, drove her face-first into my pussy.

We dressed, she showered. He walked me out to find a black cab. His arm threaded through mine. Father and daughter, any passing stranger might have thought. We looked a comfortable pair.

‘Quite a woman you have there,’ I said.

‘Whatever it takes to keep her happy,’ he said.

I nodded. He waved down a taxi and gave the driver instructions. As I stepped into the back, he handed me a roll of money and said I was welcome any time. I was halfway home before I unfolded the wad of notes and saw it was at least three times as much as the cab fare would cost.

My mind made the calculations – rent due, the number of days in a month, the net profit from the night out. I thought I should feel a pang of regret or surprise at being used and paid for. But it was nothing like that. They’d enjoyed themselves and to a wealthy couple the expense of dinner and a taxi was nothing at all. And, truth be told, I hadn’t exactly found it a chore.

I asked the driver to stop a few streets from my flat. The staccato sound of my heels echoed off the pavement. It was early autumn, but still quite warm at night, and the red candle-wax marks under my clothes glowed with sympathetic heat.

The idea of selling sex festered; it grew. But for a while I buried my curiosity about prostitution. I borrowed money off friends and started seeing a young man seriously. This was pleasantly distracting until the first overdraft statement from my building society arrived, suggesting I see them about a loan. The festering whispered and itched with every job application rejection and failed interview. I couldn't stop thinking how it felt, swept away in the back of a black cab in the middle of the night. I could do it. I had to see.

And it wasn't too long after deciding to do it that I started keeping a diary . . .