

Comotoes

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A droplet of water, like a tear makes a tiny inaudible splash and imperceptible ripples, your senses register it, as another forms.

Its about you, it's always been about you. You know that. You surrendered to it years ago. You don't have an ego, you know that. You acquired the feeling years ago. You, and its always been you, and here you are, in the light and the sunshine, the light breath of a breeze just enough to stir the musky sweet smell of jasmine as you alight the terrace. You, and you are right on, right minded, rightly deserving. And it all feels just like it should, just like it did by Lake Como.

You stand and look over the vista on this perfumed moment, everything seems so slightly surreal, unreal, and yet so real, like over the lake the wind lifts sails of the yachts gliding over the shimmering surface below you, and the mountains in the distance seem cold and blue, yet around the golden villas on the other side fertile green erupts, the technicolor the sun gives for free as it starts to slow.

A breath, time stood still, a journey here, you try to remember but it evades, like a dream. A glimpse of memory, first class flight, chauffeured luxury car. Fleeting thoughts, irrelevant. You are here, and you are present perfect. You've wished for this as hard as you can conjuring the thoughts of what it could be like ingredients for the ultimate recipe. Bringing them together like a shopping list. It's you and it's yours and your having it.

Like the beautiful terrazzo, herbs, flowers, sculptures, walkways round the miniature ponds filled with lilies and darting shoals of red fish. The blue and white tiles depicting faces from hundreds of years ago set on the columns rising by the sweeping steps that lead from one level to another of the maze of terraces, droplets of water pouring and gurgling from the pitchers of babes, into miniature fountains beneath. You move your head as a bird sweeps over, singing as it goes by taking your view with it, over the ancient beige buildings that cling to cliffs dropping down to the valley and the lake.

A feeling of warmth all around and over you, a moments peace as for no apparent reason with fascination you study a butterfly flitting over a water garden.

Here because you flirted with that man on that internet dating site, he'd put up a post asking, who would like grilled asparagus and pancetta served with strawberries? And you'd cheekily replied, where will it be served? And he replied, "At my holiday home". And here you are.

"Madam", its the chauffeur, who looks a lot like the man that works in your bank, Mr Hardy?. "Please come this way", You follow up more steps towards the ancient stone edged doorway, you linger a moment and take in the weather worn stone carvings, a coat of arms long since eroded. The chauffeur stands to one side and motions you in, a maid nods as you enter the hallway. You take a glimpse of a magnificent fireplace in what you take to be main room as the maid ushers you down a marble tiled hall towards a bedroom. "Your room, Madam", she says opening the door, to a beautiful white walled room, sunlight cascades through the windows and you can see the blue lake, there's no air conditioning, and yet the room feels cool. The maid opens the bathroom door, to reveal a full bath, bubbles and opened prosecco and a single glass. "Madam", the maid says, and smiles, "I hope you enjoy your stay, I really do, look, Sir has left these for you!", she opens a bedroom cupboard to reveal a black dress, black shoes and a black jewellery case, "The necklace, to borrow, for tonight, very special", the maid says as she opens the case to reveal a diamond necklace and matching earrings.

The maid picks up an envelope and as she hands it to you and says, "Time to leave seven thirty, join Sir when ready, he back about seven". She turns and walks out, smiling knowingly at you as she quietly closes the door.

You take in the room, a beautiful double bed in white linen, the flowers, the oak framed windows, outer shutters enclosing the setting sunset, casting beautiful amber colours over the lake and onto the hills in the distance. Mahogany cupboards, the dress - which you inspect, in your size, and by Gucci, The shoes also by Gucci too, such beautiful shoes and in your size, how did he know? The diamond necklace, "Oh, Wow", you sigh and think to yourself, how ever much must these be worth, and who's are they? You open a drawer and find exquisite lingerie, black, sheer, sexy and again a perfect fit. You can't help it, you do a little dance on the spot, and inside you shriek with excitement, " Me, me its all for me", you stop and stand still, and for a moment, a second of emotion as you feel slightly overcome, you wipe a little tear away, you can't believe all this, its like a dream.

Then you remember the letter, and written in a beautiful script on the front it says, "This is for you, from me"and concentrating you open the embossed flap, and as you turn it over and carefully open the envelope you gasp, tickets to La Scala. Wow, girl, its me! And I am going to the world's most celebrated opera house (you know that you know nothing about opera) but that's what it says on the tickets, La Scala, Piazza della Scala, Milano. This evening! With the dream man. Milano. I bet he works in the fashion industry, or its old family money, you think to yourself.

Glancing at your watch, an hour and half, time enough to bathe and relax. You kick off your shoes under the bed, where you notice a recent "Horse and Hound" magazine is lying, a fleeting thought comes and goes, "that's odd, I read that" but you can't remember when. You enter the bathroom, test the bath's temperature with your finger, pick up the glass, sip the sparkling wine, it's lovely, you undress, climb in and unwind in the warmth.

A night at La Scala you smile to yourself lying amongst the bath's bubbles, enjoying the drinks bubbles and the bath's fragrance, you notice a tiny droplet form under a tap, it seems to hang there quivering before descending as a tiny tear drop ending its life with a tiny "plop", as another suicidal drip wells up.

There is a tap on the door, "thirty minutes", the voice says, you blink awake, realize you'd drifted off and you climb out.

You reach for a lovely warm towel and pat yourself dry, catching yourself full length in the mirror, "You look great", you think to yourself, and you look at your face and smile, happy, for the first time in what feels like years.

In the bedroom you sigh as you lay the lovely silk dress and lingerie out on the bed, and whilst dressing notice a few stars out of the window. You wonder whether you will be in this bed later.

Dressed in that stunning dress wearing those sparkling diamonds all of a sudden, you are in the chauffeured limousine, with your Milan Gentleman, who is explaining the history of the house to you, it had been built for and belonged to a Lombardy Prince long ago, and he had bought it as a ruin many years ago. Then he says that we are to have a light supper at Da Giacomo following the performance. Your Gentleman speaks perfect English with a gorgeous Italian accent, you hang on every word he says. He tells you how his company manufactures for top Milan designers and has done so for many, many years. That the diamonds where his great Aunts, she was once a famous starlet, he adds that she would have been delighted that they look so beautiful on you.

The night sky changes from diamonds on a black canvass to neon as the limousine sweeps through the traffic into central Milan, you glimpse the Duomo resplendent with the floodlights reflecting light up off the domed roof. The car creeps along the cobbles past designer shops, the world's fashion brands, and parks outside the opera house. The chauffeur opens the door for you, the Gentleman tells you again how perfect you look, he is immaculate, taller than you imagined, his eyes captivate you. You join the crowds, and the atmosphere and your excitement rises as you enter La Scala and he leads you up the stairs and you realize you are to experience 'Tosca' in La Scala from a box.

Puccini's 'Tosca', and for several hours your heart rises with the arias, every now and again you pinch his hand, and look into his eyes to keep it real, a show, an experience, that touches your mind, your soul. The travel through time in moments to last in memory forever. Fascinating and invigorating. Tosca sings of her hopes for a night of passion, "Non la sospiri, la nostra casetta", although it's in Italian it's as if you understand it all, and are brought to tears as Tosca "Amaro sol per te m'era il morire", ("Only for you did death taste bitter for me") in the final act. As the performance closes, the crowd roars, and you throw the rose the Gentleman has passed to you, it seems to hover for moments in mid air as it gracefully falls to the stage.

Laughing you both dash through light rain across the Piazza and in moments you are in the restaurant, the patrons greet you both warmly. Da Giacomo is full of theatre goers and everyone seems to be looking at you and smiling for you, the Gentleman acknowledges quite a few friends and introduces you to some of Milan's fashion glitterati as you are shown to his table. The restaurant is alive with chatter and laughter, clinking glasses, and the aroma of garlic. A glass of champagne appears in front of you accompanied by a starters of white truffle, smoked salmon, cannellini bean salad, he had pre-ordered the food, his favourite, and it could become yours too. Followed by grilled asparagus, pancette, linguini, with parmesan and truffle flakes.

Through your meal when he speaks, you sit back and enjoy the gentle timbre of his voice, this man is neither trying to be something, nor denigrate himself, he is what he is, confident as he is articulate, considered, careful, charming, dignified, educated, engrossing, intelligent, intriguing, inspiring, manly yet unprepossessing. You laugh, you giggle, he tells you your eyes sparkle like the diamonds. You don't seem to remember leaving.

Back in the car as it steals its way towards the countryside you feel safe and warm with him. You glance longingly at him, then you turn away and gaze away through the window at the moonlit landscape for a second to prevent a tear welling up in your eye. All tonight he has talked to you, treated you with an absolute respect, without the slightest hint of anything other than honesty. And others tonight have treated him, and you, with respect and courtesy, you don't want the night to end.

It's in that safeness, the warmth that you feel that the loving can come, the first time will be gentle, sensitive, tender, careful, and together, and the second time will be wonton, abandoned, passionate. A shiver runs through you, and he holds your hand as the limousine approaches the imposing gates and the driveway of the house. You both walk to the edge of the top terrace, pebbles crunch under your feet in the still of the evening, you both stand and view moonlight over the lake, twinkling lights from Lucerne further away, and all the stars of the constellations are out exclusively for you. Is there anywhere more beautiful, more intense? You have goosebumps on your arms, and he puts his arm around you.

Silently you stand taking in the view as if almost recovering quietly from such a heady evening, you hear the chauffeur approaching, bringing you both a drink, limoncello for you and a campari, the chauffeur bids you both goodnight. The Gentleman tells you Campari was invented in Milan at the cafe at Piazza del Duomo, and you touch his lips with your finger to quiet him and then you come

closer to him and your lips meet. It's magic.

Its you, this is for you and it's yours, and no one is going to take it away. "There's something I want to do", you whisper to him, as you embrace him, feeling his strength as you cling to him and as your lips find each other. You want him, your heart tells you so, you want to make love to him, you want to feel his passion. You realise your heart is beating so fast.

You take his hand and pull him towards the house, you can see through the window that there is a light on in the hallway and low fire in the fireplace casting a warm glow around the stately lounge and you feel the warmth of the house as you enter, and you take him in your arms. You gasp as you feel his touch over your nipples, and you know you want him so. He kisses your neck, the top of your arms, your neck and then back to your lips. You are ready. You feel like you could explode.

"Give me five minutes", you gasp, "And then come and get me!". Before unsteadily heading in your bedrooms direction, In the bathroom, you set both the bath taps running, the prosecco bottle has gone from the bath side and in its place is a container of Radox, "Odd", You think and then add some to the bath anyway.

You take off the beautiful diamonds and then undress. Thinking, he can find me in the bath, into which you climb, enjoying the warmth for a moment, quickly washing and then lying back in the bath amongst the bubbles waiting for him, closing your eyes and thinking, "I want this so much, I am so ready, it's been so long, tonight I am going to be loved and give love as long as I can", You touch your nipples and you feel a wave like a gentle warmth inside yourself.

There is a gentle tap on the door, your heart skips a beat and you look up towards the door, "Avanti", You say. The knocking on the door becomes louder, "Avanti", you say again but louder, then you hear that little wining voice that brings you back to reality, "Mum, I really need a wee, and Mum, you've been in there for absolutely ages".

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