



*Reluctant Press*

# The Social Worker

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*ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHAS*

**A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL**

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## *Reluctant Press TG Publishers*

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# The Social Worker

**By Jessica Matthews.**

“That man!” Shirley came into the office, her temper blazing. “If I didn’t need this job, I’d tell him where to go.”

“It’s okay.” Valerie put her arm round Shirley’s shoulder. “He tries on with anything in a skirt. He doesn’t mean anything.”

“Oh no?” Shirley spat. “Give him the chance and he’d do whatever he thought he could get away with. He needs someone to show him he can’t get away with everything.”

“Why don’t you complain?” Jeff asked from his desk in the corner. “There’s such a thing as the employee policy. It says sexual harassment won’t be tolerated.”

“What it says, and what our lord and master gets away with, are two different things.” Valerie looked at Jeff as if he was a child who needed things to be explained slowly and simply. “We tried once, but when the inquiry report went to the Mayor’s Office, it seemed like we were in the wrong. We misunderstood his support - I think that was the phrase - and we got warned for our non-cooperative behavior.”

“Well, why not try again?” Jeff asked. “They can’t just dismiss a complaint out of hand.”

“Don’t be stupid,” Valerie replied. “We need our jobs; we have kids to raise, rent to pay, things like that. We can’t just walk out and go live on Daddy for a few months like you could.”

“There’s no need to treat me like I was a fool.” Jeff replied. “I can’t help it if my father was rich and I went through college before I came to work for the department.”

“And why are you here?” Shirley asked. “You could be a broker in the big city, and make lots of money. It’s not as if you needed this job.”

“I want to help people.” Jeff said lamely. “I always wanted to be a social worker. I tried to be a broker like the family wanted, but it wasn’t something I could do.”

“I bet you have a trust fund though.” Valerie sneered. “You don’t have to live on the money they pay us.”

“If you must know, I was disowned when I left the family firm. I don’t have a trust fund,” Jeff said.

“But you live somewhere nice,” Valerie continued the attack. “I bet Daddy bought that place for you.”

“I bought it myself. It cost me all my savings. I have to live somewhere, and now I have to live on what I earn. I’ve only been with the department a few months.” Jeff’s face flushed with embarrassment. “I don’t get paid as much as you.”

“But you’re single. How could you know what it’s like to be trapped in a dead end job for years, with a boss like ours, and no money to spare after you’ve fed the kids?” Shirley was really angry. “And that fancy sports car of yours must have cost more than I earned in the last three years.”

“It goes back next month when the lease is up.” Jeff felt he had to defend himself. “After that, I’ll have to buy some old wreck or walk.”

“Shirley.” Valerie put her arms round the angry woman, pulling her away from Jeff. “The boy’s not to blame. Take it easy, he’s not the one who has upset you.”

Shirley stood back. “I guess you’re right,” she said. “I’m sorry Jeff. I just really had it up to here, then when he started feeling me up when I was trying to explain the case load, it just got too much.”

“I understand,” Jeff said. “I didn’t think you meant it personally.”

“Thanks, Jeff,” Shirley replied. “But I don’t think you could understand. We have to work with that pig. It’s awful to be a woman ‘round here.”

Before she could say more, the office door opened and George Saddler walked in. He glanced around with a look of self-satisfaction on his face. He knew they didn’t like him, but he was the boss, and what he said was the law in his department. Valerie and Shirley turned away, as if they were really working. He glanced at Jeff, then looked away as if he were beneath contempt. Together they were only a small part of his department; his project team assigned to the courts to deal with the unsociable offenses that all the other agencies couldn’t handle. It wasn’t fashionable or prestigious work, but someone had to do it.

“Here are a couple of tickets to the Mayor’s Charity Ball,” he said, throwing an envelope on the table. “It’s his new policy to have some of his workers to glad hand the great and the good. It’ll give you a chance to dress to impress me if you want your bonus payments this year.” With a crude snigger and a smirk, he was gone.

“Bastard.” Shirley spat the word out after the door had closed. “If he thinks I’m going to waste my spare time playing the dutiful stooge to make him look good to the mayor, he’s got another think coming. I remember last year. His hands were everywhere. He even offered to take me home and tried to make it sound like he was doing me a favor.”

“Remember Carole?” Valerie asked, putting her papers away.

“Okay, I guess I have to be careful what I say,” Shirley sighed.

“What about Carole?” Jeff asked.

“She tried to play him at his own game,” Valerie explained. “She even slept with him a few times. When she tried to break it off, he put it ‘round that she was doing it for money. It wasn’t true, she was doing it to survive in his department, but it destroyed her in this city. She had to move away. That’s the kind of guy we have in charge here, Jeff. That’s why we hate him so.”

“He needs a lesson he won’t forget. If only we could get something on him.” Shirley paused. “Maybe he’s really into boys, and only uses us for cover.”

“If only,” Valerie said. “It may not be as good as catching him taking a bribe or two, but it wouldn’t help his campaign to be the next mayor. Not when he’s such a good family man.”

“Is he really so bad?” Jeff asked. “He never bothers me.”

“That’s because you’re male,” Valerie said. “It’s different for girls; you’ll never know.”

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Jeff worked steadily over the next several weeks. His salary was poor, but for the first time in his life, he felt that he was making a contribution to the world. It was better than just pushing deals. His car went back, and he bought something more anonymous to drive ‘round the poorer parts of the city. It was easier to drive a wreck, and it didn’t attract either the attention or the damage that the other one had done. Of course it broke down more, but Jeff couldn’t have everything.

The work was more difficult than he had ever imagined. The whole spectrum of human disasters passed through the team’s office. Whereas Jeff had been naïve when he started the job, he soon got used to being recognized and greeted by even the most outrageous of their clients, wherever in the city they saw him. He must have been getting better at the job, because George Saddler remembered his name - and remembered to be as rude to him as he was to Valerie and Shirley.

“I didn’t think you could do it,” Shirley said to him one evening as they were preparing to close the office. “But you’re really fitting in here.”

“Thanks,” Jeff said. “I really feel as if I’m making a contribution.”

“And if only we could get George off our backs, we’d be making a better contribution,” Valerie joined in.

"It's funny you should say that," Shirley replied. "I was taking one of the girls back to Marion's place after court last week. I was telling her about our problem."

"Well, we couldn't sneak one of Marion's girls into the Mayor's Ball." Valerie said. "Even if we did, George would spot her a mile away."

"I don't understand," Jeff interrupted. "Who's Marion?"

"You haven't met her yet," Shirley replied. "We were waiting until you were more used to the place."

"She runs a number of girls," Valerie explained. "Most are high class and we never see them, but occasionally some of them get into trouble - only they're not really girls, they're boys."

"And you'd like to set George up with one of these boys?" Jeff asked.

"If only we could," Shirley sighed. "A bit of blackmail could advance all our careers - or at least give us an easier life. It wouldn't work though, they're all too obvious, even George wouldn't get caught with one of them."

"But it would be wonderful," Valerie said. "And remember, we only know the ones that get into trouble. I bet there are lots of Marion's girls that George would never guess were boys, until it was too late."

A couple of weeks later, Jeff was alone in the office. There was a knock on the door. He called and a woman entered. She was tall and slim, dressed in a red suit with a tight jacket and short skirt. Her hair was bleached, obviously but elegantly, and although her make up was perfect, it was too heavy for the afternoon.

"I was looking for Shirley or Valerie," she said, her voice deep and breathy. "I'm Marion, and I wanted to thank them for their help."

"I'll pass that on," Jeff said, introducing himself. "I've heard them mention you."

"So you're the new guy in the office." Marion sat down and pulled a cigarette out of her bag, and held it out as if waiting for him to light it for her.

"This is a no-smoking office," Jeff said, feeling the color rising in his cheeks.

"Do you always obey the rules?" Marion asked, holding his eyes with hers, then deliberately blinking her heavy eyelashes at him. "I thought George's rules were made to be disobeyed."

She crossed her legs, allowing him to see long legs, and high-heeled red shoes. She rummaged in her handbag, then with a jangle of bracelets; she pulled out a lighter and handed it to him, her rings grazing his hand.

"Would you mind?" she asked. "I've just had a manicure and I don't think they're properly dry."

She held out her hand to allow Jeff to see the impossibly long nails, painted to match her suit. Without wanting to, he found himself flicking the lighter and holding it towards her cigarette. She took his hand in hers to stop it shaking, inhaled and blew smoke away from him. She did it all without taking her eyes from his.

Fortunately for Jeff, the door opened at the moment she was about to speak again.

“Marion,” Shirley said, dropping her bag on the floor. She stood languidly, then they air-kissed on both cheeks, and she sat and crossed her legs again for Jeff to watch.

“I’ve introduced myself to your new assistant,” she said. “He’s got real possibilities.”

“And we saw him first.” Shirley said. “He’s on our side.”

“Pity.” Marion smiled at Jeff as Shirley jerked her head to signal that he should leave the office.

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“Are you taking anyone to the Mayor’s Ball?” Shirley asked Jeff the next evening.

“No, I wasn’t thinking of going,” Jeff replied. “I can’t afford to hire the tuxedo, and even if I did, there’s no one to take.”

“Would you go with Valerie and I?” Shirley asked. “We’d sort of like you to do us a favor.”

“What, like defend you from George?” Jeff looked at them both in turn.

“Sort of.” Valerie smiled. “Remember Marion? She had a suggestion, and offered to help.”

“What, she’s going to set George up with one of her girls?” Jeff laughed. “I thought you said they were all too obvious.”

“They may be, but you’re not.” Shirley said.

“I’m not?” Jeff was puzzled. “I don’t understand.”

“Marion says they could fix you up,” Shirley grinned.

“Make you look really believable,” Valerie added.

“So when George hit on you, he’d have no idea he was hitting on a boy until it was too late, and we’d got our evidence,” Shirley said.

“Hold on there.” Jeff blushed. “Are you saying that I should dress up or something?”

“Not something,” Valerie replied. “We’re asking you to let Marion dress you up. Give you a few lessons. How to act like a girl.”

“They’ll teach you so good even your own mother wouldn’t know you from a girl,” Shirley said. “We’d be there to protect you.”

“Please say you’ll do it,” Valerie asked.

“Please, Jeff,” Shirley added.

“I think it’s a bad idea,” Jeff said firmly.

“Have you a better one?” Valerie responded. “We thought it was a good plan when Marion suggested you.”

“Marion suggested me?” Jeff blinked in shock.

“Sure, she says she could recognize the potential in you,” Valerie said. “It is her profession, after all. She has some of the most beautiful and expensive girls in the city working for her.”

“Jeff, please give it a try,” Shirley almost pleaded. “If you can’t do it after Marion’s given you some lessons, then we’ll understand.”

Jeff looked at his colleagues. He took in the earnest expressions on their faces and knew he couldn’t let them down. It had taken him a long time to be accepted as part of the team. It was as if this was a test that he had to pass.

“Okay,” he said. “But I don’t think it’s going to work.”

“You never know,” Shirley laughed. “You might enjoy it.”

“And if you do, there’s a better career out there,” Valerie added. “Some of Marion’s girls make an absolute fortune.”

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“Well, hello.” The girl who answered the door could have been Jeff’s dream if her voice hadn’t been so masculine. “You must be Jeff. Marion is expecting you.”

He stood aside and allowed Jeff to enter. The house stood in small grounds just outside the city. It was light and airy inside, not at all what he expected to find when he had agreed to come after work. He was shown into a conservatory opening onto a terrace, where Marion was lounging in the late afternoon sun.

“I’m so glad you decided to come.” Marion stood to take his hand, holding it a little longer than necessary. “I see you met James.” She indicated the girl who lingered in the doorway. “He’s my houseboy, and he’s going to bring us some tea while we talk.”

Still holding his hand possessively, Marion led Jeff to a seat beside a table where several folders had been piled to one side. He sat beside her, feeling less comfortable, and wondering why he had agreed to come. He had never expected to find such a luxurious place. Shirley and Valerie had both hinted about Marion’s business, but he’d expected something seedy, something faintly unclean, yet the reality of her home belied all his preconceptions.

“I can see you have a lot of questions,” Marion read his mind. “I’m not going to answer everything, but I’ll tell you a little about me.”

“I don’t mean to be rude.” Jeff’s manners came to his rescue. “I didn’t expect anything like this.”

“I know,” Marion smiled. “You expected some sweaty brothel. I’m not like that. I may have a business supplying escorts and hostesses, but they’re doing the real quality end of the market. The last thing I want is one of my girls appearing in



court. When they do, I give them one chance, and if they let me down again, they're out."

"So that's how you know my office?" Jeff asked.

"I've known Valerie for years. We were at school together." Marion noted Jeff's reaction to that statement. "Yes, I'm really a girl." She laughed. "Valerie and Shirley always tell me when one of my girls is getting into trouble and I try to sort it out. They've sent some new girls to me before they get into trouble. I'm a sort of social worker too."

"Sure." Jeff caught the glint in her eye and laughed.

"I may not save them from sin," Marion continued. "But I make sure they're safe, and when they sin, it's both satisfactory for all concerned and profitable."

The sound of James' heels clattering on the patio floor interrupted their conversation. Jeff watched him approaching, and wondered how he ever managed to walk in shoes like that. He took in the sight, and found himself wishing he had a girl like that. James was definitely all girl to look at, it was impossible to think of this creature as a he. She had such long legs, emphasized by the tiny denim cut-off shorts. She leaned forwards to put the tray on the table, deliberately giving him a close-up view of her rear cheeks. Without standing, she turned to him, her cropped top hung forwards, allowing him to look down her cleavage. Was James really a boy? What Jeff saw looked real enough.

"I said would you like milk or lemon with your tea?" she asked.

Jeff tore his eyes away, feeling embarrassed to have been caught so obviously staring. "I take lemon, please," he replied lamely.

James smiled knowingly at him, touching her pink lips with the tip of her tongue in a wicked gesture. She flicked back a couple of strands of her shoulder-length black hair, tucked them behind her ear, then poured his tea. Her earring glistened in the sun and swayed against her neck; it all seemed to happen in slow motion, as Jeff was unable to tear his eyes away from her - or him. Marion took it all in, but said nothing. James poured for Marion, then turned and walked back inside. Marion noted Jeff watching until James was out of sight.

"Pretty, and very impressive," Marion said when Jeff's attention came back to her.

Jeff blushed. "I can't believe he was for real," he stammered. "He had real...well, he looked so real."

"Do you need to look in his pants for confirmation?" Marion drawled in a mock accent.

"No. I didn't mean to be rude. I didn't expect a boy could look like that," he explained.

"It's not difficult when you start with the right material, and the right attitude," Marion replied. "James is going to be one of the best. I saw you looking down his bra. He did that deliberately to show off. He's just had small implants to get that bit of extra authenticity. Judging by your expression, it worked."

“Sure did,” Jeff agreed. “But isn’t that a bit permanent?”

“He can still dress as a boy,” Marion replied. “Just as long as he doesn’t wear anything too tight, nothing will show. He can’t go topless of course as a boy, but the implants are small and hardly noticeable when he doesn’t want them to be. When he wears a modern bra, it’s a different story. He’s got obviously real breasts and real cleavage.”

“And how,” Jeff laughed, a little relief allowing him to share some humor.

“I brought these folders for you to look at.” Marion handed the first to him. “These are the before and after pictures of my girls. It shows what can be done when you know what to do with make up and hair. The first picture shows the boy underneath. The rest of the pictures are the various looks he can do. It’s like a model’s portfolio. A client can choose the girls they want, and how they’re to appear, depending on who they’re being hired for.”

“And what are they hired for?” asked Jeff, leafing through the pages. “These guys look fabulous. I’d never know they weren’t for real.”

“We hire girls for stage shows, for trade promotions, receptions, all kinds of functions both in groups and alone. Some are trained dancers, so stage work is possible, although we’re not a theatrical agency. The basic business is escorts though,” Marion said in a matter-of-fact voice.

“Isn’t the escort business...” Jeff hesitated.

“If you mean is it a cover for prostitution...” Marion guessed his question. “Well sure, it can be. We make it clear that our girls are not hired for sex when they go out on a job. If they like the client and want to make another arrangement, well, that’s their business. I don’t take on girls who only want to use my agency as a way of soliciting, though. If that’s all they want, they can go elsewhere.”

“Valerie and Shirley persuaded me to come,” Jeff said.

“I know.” Marion opened the folder and showed Jeff a page. “This is James’ page. You can see what he looks like as a boy, and all the looks he can do as a girl.”

Jeff flipped the pages, seeing him dressed formal to casual, innocent to downright blatant, from blonde to brunette, short hair, long hair. “I can’t believe these pictures are all of the same person.” He gasped in amazement when he arrived at the bikini shots. “He’s amazing.”

“He’s not, I am. I created all those looks for him,” Marion laughed. “You can see why he decided to have the implants. It makes the illusion more complete.”

“Isn’t that going beyond illusion?” Jeff asked.

“Maybe, but he can still be a boy when he needs to be one. Remember, I told you he has only small breast implants. The image he can present in those pictures is created with push-up bras and padding. It’s real flesh at the top though, and that’s what takes the client’s eye, and earns him more money than he could before he had the operation.” Marion looked at Jeff carefully. “This is all about money, he’ll tell you that.”

“So what about me?” Jeff asked. “You know why I’m here.”

“Sure I do, and I wanted this chance to talk you through some of the concepts.” Marion took the folders from him. “If I’m going to work with you, I need your full cooperation, and I need you to enjoy what you’re doing. You need to understand what you’re getting into.”

“Hey, it’s only for one night,” Jeff protested.

“I know, but to trap George Saddler, you’re going to need a lot of work and a lot of practice.” Marion said. “I told Shirley I would only help if I thought you were good enough to be totally convincing.”

“And can I be convincing?” Jeff asked.

“I believe so,” Marion replied. “If you want to be. Who knows, you may find it’s fun. I’ll call you in a few days, and you can tell me if you want to go ahead. It’s going to take a lot of work on my part, and I need some real commitment from you. Think about it, and give me an answer when I call.”

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“Did you see Marion?” Valerie asked Jeff as they were preparing to close the office the following evening.

“Yes, she’s asked me to think a few things through,” Jeff said. “She’s going to call me in a few days.”

“Please don’t let us down,” Valerie said. “We could all have fun with this.”

Before he could answer, the door opened. James walked in and smiled at Jeff. He was a vision of femininity as he approached Jeff’s desk. His short denim skirt showed his legs to best advantage. The strappy sandals with their pencil slim heels made his walk quite feline. His top was low-cut, deep red and had string shoulder straps; a denim jacket hung from his hand. His hair was fastened back in a careless French pleat with bits which had come loose, dangling seductively over his ears.

“I was hoping you hadn’t left,” he said to Jeff. “I thought you might like to take me for a drink after work.”

“Sure,” Jeff stammered, looking at James in a state approaching shock. James smiled back, all eyes and perfect teeth.

“I’ll just sit here until you’re ready,” he said, taking a chair and crossing his legs in a really blatant gesture. He looked over at Valerie. “I’m Jamie,” he said. “A friend of Jeff’s.”

“Pleased to meet you.” Valerie smiled, looking at Jeff. “You can go, I’ll finish off here.”

“Thanks.” Jeff’s face showed his relief at not having to answer any more questions.