



Reluctant Press

More Than Makeup

Dee Dee Perri



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHAS

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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More Than Makeup

By Dee Dee Perri

Chapter 1

Donald Pain Jr. was the fair-haired child, the crown prince of World Communications Inc. An unstoppable force within the company and destined, according to all “in the know,” to rise to the top-of-the-top, probably before he was thirty. There wasn’t a vice-president in that large pantheon of vice-presidents maintained by World Communications Inc. that didn’t wonder if it was his chair that Pain would soon occupy on the path to his coronation. It was well known that the CEO, Donald’s father, still a young, vibrant man himself, was preparing to move on to yet higher responsibilities (whatever those could be) and it was that fact that made Junior a dead cinch for higher corporate responsibility, probably before Easter (that and the twenty-six percent of WCI stock that Mr. Pain Senior owned and an additional twenty-one percent he controlled). Someone’s head was on the block, that was obvious but whose? Ah, that was the rub at WCI.

But for a man who’s path was paved with gold, Mr. Pain (never referred to as Junior, at least to his face) looked positively gloomy as he stood with his back toward his office door, looking out across the broad expanse of serfs toiling at their work stations. The peons, all aware of Mr. Pain’s presence, slaved with an energy that could not be sustained for long. The water cooler was devoid of human company. But the WCI employees could have saved their energy for the young man was oblivious of their combined presence, they were mere background. “Ah!” Mr. Pain exclaimed, his voice slicing through the office noise like an industrial laser going through plastic as another young man walked onto the tenth floor of the WCI headquarters. “Mr. Harmon!”

There was a noticeable pause in the collective activity as the sea of office workers heard and coded the exchange. Eyes swung from Mr. Pain to the doomed man

and then, as always, the background noise resumed, then grew slightly louder as they collectively made up for that momentary pause. Computer keyboards clicked, printers whined and all was intense, worrisome to the point of frantic, activity. Jack Harmon was toast.

“Sir?” Jack squeaked. His Adam’s apple was bobbing up and down, his eyes wide. He crossed the large expanse in a hurried scurry as Mr. Pain motioned to him. Pulling up a few feet away, he stopped. Hands still encumbered with a heavy stack of folders, he stood there at attention, “Mr. Pain, Sir?”

“My office, Mr. Harmon. Now if you please.” The large room went quiet for another instant, it was an involuntary thing and then recovering, the sound of busy workers resumed to a fevered pitch until the door closed behind the two men.

~oOo~

“Close the door.”

“Sir? Yes Sir,” Jack mumbled as he fought with his stack of folders. They spilled out of his arms and down on to the highly polished teak floor. Jack scrambled to retrieve the folders but he was too late as papers leaked from the arrant folders, spraying out in all directions.

“The door, Jack!” snapped Donald Pain impatiently, oblivious to the mess that had been created. The door closed with a heavy clunk. “Later,” he ordered as Jack resumed collecting the papers.

“Yes Sir.” Jack gulped, straightened up and stood there expectantly.

“For starters you can quit calling me Sir, Jack. Leastwise when we’re alone.”

“Yes Mr. Pain.”

Don Pain looked at the trembling man standing amidst the wreckage of that paper work. It had only been three years since they had started together at WCI in the mailroom. He let out a long sigh. “Christ, Jack. Don will do, OK?”

“Yes... Sir, ah, yeah, OK. Uh,-whatever.”

“I still pull on my pants one leg at a time Jack. Relax.” He turned away and headed toward a full bar that sat on one small corner of his expansive, richly-furnished office. Thoughtful, he stood there for a few seconds before pulling a bottle of ancient Scotch from its resting place. He poured a substantial slug of the almost clear, golden fluid into one and then another heavy crystal whisky glass. Then he turned, holding one in each hand. Poor Jack was still rooted amidst the sea of papers. “Here,” he said offering a glass to Jack. “For old times.”

Wordless, Jack stepped over the papers scattered across the teak floor and took the glass. “Sir?”

“Don.”

“Right.” A shy grin slipped across Jack’s face as he lifted the glass to his mouth and took a sip. “Wow. Good stuff.”

Don's eyes took on what some might call the thousand-yard stare. That somber, troubled expression returned; then he caught himself and forced a slight smile which he directed toward his companion. "So how's Susie." His voice had a forced lightness.

Jack blanched, "Oh you didn't hear," he stammered, "Of...course not. You wouldn't have. Ah, she left me. Almost two years ago."

Surprise bloomed in Don's face. "Sorry."

Jack shrugged, then finished off his drink with a large gulp. "History. I'm over it ...Don."

"Right," said Don as he retrieved the bottled and refilled Jack's glass.

"And June?" asked Jack.

Don's hand shook and the bottle clattered against the glass. "That's why I wanted to talk with you Jack. Well ...you and June were close ... way, way back when." He looked at Jack and read concern from his face. "I ... I think she is having an affair."

Jack attempted to look concerned, then tried to speak and then, finally, did neither. Don continued, "Worst of all, I'm just not *completely* sure. Just suspicions, yes? Little things like books of cocktail matches in her purse. She doesn't smoke anymore you know." When Jack still didn't respond, Don continued. "Phone calls where the caller hangs up when I answer and stuff ... like that," he said lamely.

"You talk to June about your ... ah, concerns?"

"No way. Christ, the last thing I want to look like is a Goddamned jealous asshole ... which I am," he finished with a twisted smile.

Jack looked almost relieved, "So it could be just your imagination, hmm? Gosh, June is such a sweet..."

Don interrupt with a wave of his hand, "No. Too many little things don't add up." He paused and looked around as if expecting to find a third party in the room, then he turned back to his old friend and in a harsh whisper said, "I'm certain she's going to see *him* this coming Friday." He nodded briskly as if to assert his certainty. "An e-mail I intercepted from her *honey bunny*." He said the last with a bitter twist that grew across his lips. "At Sammy Koon's party. You know, that Hollywood director..." He stopped as Jack blanched. "What's wrong?"

"I was going to that- the party, I mean."

Don grinned sourly, "Yeah. I know."

"Oh," said Jack in a small voice.

"I want you to help me catch her and him together, OK?"

Jack backed away. "No," he stammered. "I ... I can't do that to June. Get yourself someone else! Sir!" He spun around and headed for the door.

"Jack!" Don thundered.

Jack came to an abrupt halt but didn't turn around. "No, Mr. Pain, even if my job depends upon it."

"It doesn't *have* to be that way, you know, Jack." When Jack didn't turn around, Don added, "But you could leave here with a *very* negative employment record, perhaps some hanging, unresolved allegations..." Don paused, "There is that sexual harassment charge..."

Jack spun around, "There was nothing to that..." He blanched as he saw the unwavering gaze of Donald Pain. *Yeah, he's the kind of ass hole that'd do just that!* He felt the stiffness leak out of his backbone.

"Close but no cigar, huh?" laughed Don as Jack turned around; defeat was in evident in Jack's eyes. "Frankly, Jack, old pal, I want to see them with my own pair of peepers, OK? Just get me inside and I'll take care of the rest."

Jack blanched. "How? I mean I thought you didn't want her to think you were a jealous asshole."

"In disguise for Pete's sake, pal. She'll never know I was there." He laughed, "I could go as your date or something."

Jack blanched, "We'd look stupid! I mean, it'll never work, Sir. No way!"

"Way," snapped Don.

"Uh, sir?"

"Get me lined up with a really good makeup artist. Money's no object."

"You're serious."

Don nodded as he thrust out his chin aggressively.

Jack gulped, "As a gay couple, huh?"

Don laughed, "As a faggot? Give me a break! You gay? I don't think so, least-wise June would have told me a long time ago if you were. As a dame, for Christ's sake!"

"No way you could pass, Sir. I mean, it's more than just looking like a woman, you got to act like one, sound like one ... you know?"

"How hard can it be, huh? Get me inside. I'll find a comfy corner and watch with my mouth shut. No acting necessary. I'll be like a statue."

Jack winced, "There is a guy..."

"Yeah?"

"He's very good ... but expensive."

"How much?"

Jack shrugged, "Gosh." He looked at Don and calculated. "A thousand would get you a quality one-night rental: wig, dress, the works with professionally-applied makeup to boot. Not that it would fool anyone, Mr. Pain, especially the crowd that'll be coming to Sammy's. Herman, that's the guy I know, worked on

the 'Planet of the Apes' remake. He'd build you a believable body suit to put into that dress at, say, six thousand."

That got Mr. Pain's attention. "Six thousand?" he said softly. He looked impressed.

"Yeah. They build up a model...."

Pain waved him off. "OK," he said. "Enough."

"Herman's got electronic gismos to modify the voice, servomechanisms to alter the movement pattern..."

"All right all ready. I said yes, OK?"

"What I mean, Sir, is, all together it'll be more like eight thousand to do a first class number. Anything less and you might as well walk in wearing your birthday suit."

"Eight? That's ... ridiculous."

"My point exactly, Sir. So if you don't mind..." Jack turned to leave.

"OK."

Jack stopped, OK what, Sir?"

"I'll do it."

"Eight K?" Jack let out a long, low whistle. That seemed like an awful lot of money to Jack just to scope out one's own spouse.

~oOo~

"I could do it for a quarter of that kid, two thousand. I got all the components I'd need left over from my last big last job, more'n enough to do your friend. He is a friend of yours, right?"

"Herman. A friend of mine he isn't and his wife, well, that makes it worse. June, that's his wife's name, is a really swell gal. In fact, I think you met her last summer, at one of Jeff's parties, as I remember. And you two hit it off real good."

"The little blond number..."

"Brunette, tall." Jack rolled his eyes. All Herman ever noticed and remembered were men, preferably very handsome and very young men. "Anyhow, she deserves better and if she's getting a little love on the side, well, more power to her, I say."

"So how come you're going along with this dude? I mean, just tell him to fuck off!"

"That dude, Herman, is my slimy-assed boss and worse, he's the heir apparent at WCI."

"Donald Pain?"

"Ah, Junior, but yeah, that's him."

"Wow! Rich!"

“You better believe, Herman. And vindictive. And jealous. So you see the spot I’m in? It isn’t just my job on the line, it’s my career.”

Herman pulled at his nose for a moment, “OK you tell him thirteen-five...”

“Thirteen thousand?”

“Yeah and five hundred dollars. So? The mother’s rich and no friend of yours, right? And I promise you and him, I’ll do one hell of a number. The best one on the lot.”

Jack looked confused.

“Look Jack, it’ll be a true work of art. Utterly fantastic. A masterpiece.”

“But ... you said you could do it for two...”

“Yeah but not *this*. Hell, you just tell Mr. Pain, not even his mother would know him, OK? Guaranteed! Besides, it’ll be good for business.” Herman looked at Jack. “Look kid, if he’s as rich as I’ve heard, he can afford thirteen g’s and who knows, if he really likes my work, it couldn’t hurt in the long run, OK?”

“So you’re not just stiffing him, jacking him up.”

“Naw. It’ll be a piece of art. Yeah, something special. Awesome. Tell him he needs to get over here tonight. I’ll need to get a holographic image of his face and body dumped into my computer ASAP.” He paused, “The party’s Friday right? I’ll need maybe an hour Friday to put him together. You got all that?”

Jack muttered, “Holographic image? An hour? Doesn’t it usually take, you know, six to eight hours to...”

“Kid?”

“Yeah?”

“Entirely different technology. Trust me.” Herman looked thoughtful for another moment, “I was just wondering Jack, are you going to warn the lady?”

“Damn it Herman, I really want to but it’s my damned career.”

“Correct decision. Life isn’t always fair, unless of course you’re as rich as Mr. Pain.”

“Ain’t that the truth!”

“Besides Jack, maybe she’s not even stepping out on her old man. I mean like who would ignore *that* kind of bread, huh?”

“Yeah, someone really dumb, I guess.”

“Right! Not your problem.”

It didn’t matter though, Jack still felt like shit over toast.

~oOo~

The truth was Herman wasn’t making a dime on this project. The software alone had cost him forty g’s. The “goop” ran about five hundred dollars a gallon

and Mr. Pain was going to require almost two and a half gallon for a full workover. But he'd been dying to work in this medium ever since he'd seen the first demo. Of course the software was generic and he could use it over and over again. Like the holographic system he'd bought six years ago; that had cost him the better part of seventy g's, it'd paid for itself several times over when he got the Ape contract. Ditto the new software, or at least Herman hoped that would eventually be the case.

"Keep your eyes and mouth shut, Mr. Pain," he said as he slathered the goop on the man's face. "Just breath through your nose." He carefully worked around the soda straws inserted in the man's nose with his brush. He added an extra thick coat across that face, then stood back to look at the final product. "Just relax, Sir. It'll take five minutes to set up properly."

He couldn't very well just let his client stand there unattended. Like a good barber, he kept up his chatter though there was absolutely nothing more he could do until the goo solidified. "This stuff was originally developed by NASA Ames for a new generation of space suits. The problem was it didn't have the thermal properties they required. Anyhow, someone over at Defense noted that this stuff was tough, really tough, so they tried to develop a new form of total body armor. Worked like a charm, it did. Stopped bullets better than steel. Unfortunately, it didn't dissipate the energy like steel. Anyhow, the military dropped the project after a few dozen animal subjects got turned to jelly inside their armor. Sorry Sir, you really do need to remain motionless for a few more minutes." Herman walked around his client. He had a large tube sticking from his butt and it was still in place. Satisfied Herman walked back around, bent down and checked the penis. There, too, the straw was still in place.

"Anyhow, there were some medical types that saw this as the future of prosthetics. The jell could not only be shaped by electrical currents, but by dynamically altering the flow, one could actually create a kind of exoskeleton that moved. The problem was ... well, it was strong, but not quite strong enough for limbs. I mean, it could shape the movement but not actually provide enough thrust for arms or legs, you know, to do any real work. Anyhow, like NASA and the Defense Department, these people finally quit on it. Lucky for us, a lot of the software they developed was sold to Crystal River Industries. And the rest is history, as they say. There, Sir. You can open your eyes now."

Donald Pain did just that, then growled, "You sure talk a lot." He ran his right hand across his left forearm. "Looks like I'm covered in snot." He turned and looked at the mirror on the far wall. That only produced a grunt. "For this I paid..."

Herman interposed himself between Mr. Pain and the mirror. "It's a system, Sir. A very advanced system. In a few seconds, that 'snot' as you called it, can be configured into... Ah, Sir, if you'll look at the image on the screen over here."

Donald turned. There was a holographic image of himself, naked of course. The three dimensional image turned slowly. "Yeah, OK. Nice picture."

Herman, hunched behind a work station, hit a few keys. “First step, a generic female body, no distinguishing features.” He hit the key and the image on the screen changed. The silhouette was distinctly female though flat, no breasts. Broader hips and a smaller waist appeared. “Your actual skeleton, ah, places limits on the construct, though adding soft tissue is, ah, no serious problem.” The figure developed decidedly female breasts, fuller butt cheeks but the waist narrowed only slightly more.

It was obvious Mr. Pain was not charmed, “Enough all ready. Just show me...”

Herman was miffed. After all, it was a great toy and this client seemed totally uninterested. He had dozens of distinct, female creations that were well within the tolerance of the system to generate. He chose his favorite, a long-legged chick with an athletic body. “This do?” he said, overly pleased with the resulting boy-girl image.

“Naw. No tits! No ass!”

Herman glared, internally of course, “Ah.” He hit a couple of keys until he found the 1960’s Vargas calendar-type girl. “This?”

“Naw. Too fat!”

Herman’s finger hovered over the key board. There was an exotic version, a real steamy number based upon an anime cartoon and one of the few configurations actually designed by one of the nerd hot dogs over at Crystal River Industries but it would take at least another gallon of goop. And it would press the system to its limits. He’d been told that one could apply simple compressional forces up to three-hundred pounds per square inch, though it was decidedly not recommended for long term application. He looked up at the expectant client. What the Hell! “This?” He hit the key.

An hourglass figured, pointy-breasted, bimbo appeared. The diamond-shaped face was dominated by a pair of succulently puckered lips. In her every aspect she was ... excessive.

All his client said was, “You got to be kidding!”

“Damn!” concluded Herman as he extended a finger toward the keyboard.

“No. What I mean is, ah, yes, that will do *marvelously*.” Donald Pain was in rapture with the image. Truth be know,, he would have had a hard-on if the jell hadn’t thwarted that reaction.

~oOo~

Jack came by Herman’s studio at nine o’clock as arranged. He’d spiffed out to the max but inside his gut there was more than a little uncertainty lurking. He only hoped that Herman had made a passable job of it, though, to be entirely honest, turning a sow’s ear like flabby Donald Pain into a silk purse seemed like an impossible assignment. “Herman?”

“Just in time, Jack. We’re almost ready. Still working though the movement program.”

“Say what?”

“Hand movements, limb carriage, you know.”

“Whatever.” Jack entered, then stopped. “Holy shit!” He hissed.

“Like?”

“That’s ... really you, Mr. Pain?”

“Yeah. What do you think, pal?”

It was Mr. Pain’s voice all right but the body, the face! As *she* turned and moved away, *her* movements were unmistakably feminine. “Awesome.”

Herman grinned, “Like I promised. Looks like a lady, moves like a lady and now ... Mr. Pain, if you’ll put this in your mouth.”

The excessively gorgeous woman wrinkled up her bimbo face, “What’s this?”

“Same material as on your body. It’ll kind of melt in your mouth and...”

“And what?” Mr. Pain looked suspicious.

“Coat your throat, tongue, then we can control those surfaces like we did with the rest of you.”

“In for a penny, in for a pound,” the gorgeous bimbo babe with the male voice said, then inserted the dried goo into her mouth. Her eyes widened, “It ... tingles.”

Herman shrugged, wandered over to the key board and pulled up the menu for speech patterns. “Say ‘How now, brown cow’.”

“OK, how now brown *cowwwwl*.” The pitch and timbre of the last word cow altered.

“Again.”

“*How nowwww brrrown cowwwwl*.” The second attempt came out sweet as honey and soft as a puppy’s tongue. You could have covered ice cream with it and called it a Sunday. “You’re a fucking genius,” the gorgeous gal gushed, again in that rich, dreamy voice.

Obviously there was still a problem with what *she* said but that was way, way beyond Herman’s craft. “Ah, lets try again, this time dropping the ‘*fucking*,’ my dear.”

“You’re a genius,” she simpered sweetly as she batted her long lashes and cocked her head like the doll she was. The mannerisms were as richly feminine as the voice.

“You can leave the check on the counter when you leave. Mr. Pain, Mr. Harmon,” Herman nodded, “I bid you good night and good hunting. Oh yes, try to get back here before 2 AM or wait until, say, ten-ish tomorrow.”

Chapter 2

Jack Harmon and June Pain had met while doing community theater in Burbank about four years earlier. Had Jack not been married to a gal he adored, Susie, he would have been all over June like a moth drawn to the light and that was an apt analogy. June was one of those rare creatures that truly glowed with an inner light and when she smiled... Well, for Jack, that smile alone was worth remembering. A year later, their paths re-crossed. Jack and June's husband were now working in the same department at World Communications Inc. Small world huh? For about six months, the two couples had been virtually amalgamated into a single social entity. Of course that couldn't last. Donald Pain was on the fast track to the top of WCI and Jack ... wasn't. It was the latter fact that eventually led to Jack's wife's abrupt termination of their three-year marriage. But that's another story in itself.

Suddenly, Jack found himself free and available and June, well, she could have moved to the moon in the mean time; the social-economic chasm that had open up between them was at least that vast. The difference between Eagle Rock and Beverly Hills, between a wage rat pulling in fifty thousand and the future CEO of WCI for whom money existed in mountains, those facts had always been there but hidden and unmentioned. Now the covers had been thrown back. She was way, way up the social ladder now, relative to Jack.

Still, Jack had made every opportunity to maintain contact with June; they were both involved in theater after all and, in Hollywood, theater was a society unto itself. The light of hope burned eternal inside Jack ... until tonight. Tonight, by aiding June's husband, Jack had sealed the fate on that potential relationship-not that it had ever held much potential. One way or another, June would surely discover his role in this affair and for what? A meaningless job in a huge bureaucracy, a career in which his highest aspirations were already below what Donald Pain had already passed through on his long voyage to the top? But it was the cards Jack had been dealt and he'd have to play them. Or would he? Jack held the car door open for the marvelous and magical creature that continued to fuss with her hair, a blond wig to be sure.

Her head turned, eyes looking up through heavy lashes which fluttered like a coquette in heat. "Sorry," she purred as she extended her hand, palm down and limp from the wrist.

As Jack took the offered hand in his and helped her rise from her car seat, it was all he could do to remember that this delightful creature was, in reality, Donald Pain, Jr. His eyes caught the movement of unfettered breasts under the "basic black cocktail dress," his nose was greeted with a flood of rich perfume and his hands... One fact bloomed sharply into focus: Donald Pain's hands felt exactly like the hands of a manikin, that is, smooth and "plastic." "Ah, Sir?"

"Debbie, remember. Debbie Day." Her already pursed lips pursed more as if she were about to kiss Jack. He jerked back from this semblance of feminine beauty. For him, the illusion was now broken. It was only Junior in a rubbery, whole body suit!

“Ah, Sir,” Jack started again, ignoring Donald’s instruction to the contrary. “Try not to touch anyone.”

The false bimbo’s eyebrows shot up in alarm.

“I mean, you feel like, ah, a mannequin, like in a store, ah, Sir. Like rubbery plastic, your touch.” Jack pulled his hand away from Don’s cold, lifeless pseudo-flesh.

“Right,” said Don as he examined his own hand. There was, of course, no way he could have known what it felt like. The “suit,” for all its perfections was, after all, a suit, a garment. “Thanks.”

In response to Don’s raised eye brows, “Ah, Ms. Day.” He turned, Donald now clutching his arm with both hands, “Ready?” It was showtime.

~oOo~

Even with only one-inch heels, Donald Pain towered over most of the women there. At an even five foot eleven inches, sans heels, he would have been taller than their host by a good three-four inches but that seemed not to distract either Sammy Koons or, for that matter, any of the males that were interested in females (quite a few were *not*). In his role of heir apparent, Don was familiar with excessive attention being paid toward him, but not like this.

Had he wanted to hangout with Jack Harmon- and he didn’t- he, or rather *she*, would have been hard-pressed to do so. Egos several yards taller than the men who carried them descended like vultures. Men bloated with their power in the industry (or at least pretending to have excessive power in the making of movies) made a beeline for what appeared to be the hottest young babe in a small ocean of babes. And it wasn’t just the plastic form that attracted their eyes and elevated their collective penis either, for this Debbie Day bimbo-girl child moved like a vixen in heat. *Thank God*, thought Don for the one hundredth time, *for Herman’s program*. There was simply no way he would have been able to manage such an impersonation on his own hook.

There were five middle-aged men who had surrounded Don and at least a half-dozen younger and more attractive men that would have joined the swarm except they lacked the social clout to enter while their betters were making their play. It was all too much of a success, noted Don, as he saw, for the first time, his wife June at the other end of the room. He tried to move in that general direction but that only drew the swarm with him.

What was that? Had he just been offered a chance to audition? His bimbo eyes looked down at the little man who was about nose level with Don’s false breasts. Enough was enough! He brought his wrist to his forehead, fluttered his eyes while looking at the ceiling. “I’m simply overwhelmed,” he sighed in his rich, sweet voice.

“Then it’s a yes?” the little man said with obvious excitement. He was now openly eyeing Don’s bosom.

“Excuse me. I ... I must ... go to the powder room,” Don blurted and pressed through the assembly. Several men didn’t take the hint and started to follow. Eyes locked on the far door, Don swept toward no man’s land, his lush, false hips swaying appropriately. This was just ... too much!



Sammy Koon’s guest bathroom was a lavish affair and large. The latter feature was essential, for the room was crowded with boobs and legs and acres of hair in all colors. There was at least seven women in front of the single, long mirror making adjustments to their faces. The babble of voices, the sights and smells was utterly a new experience for Don and there were some very choice females in various states of undress that made the trip here completely worthwhile. Yes indeed! He tried not to stare but that was like asking a drunk not to drink.

One could gawk only so long until eyes met eyes and one was found out. Don would have blushed if he could have but there was one set of eyes that caught and then held his gaze that was most unexpected. He almost blurted *June* but didn’t by an eye lash. Instead, he looked away.

“Hi. I’m June. I don’t believe we’ve met.”

“Ah...” Don felt like a bug caught on a spider’s web. He turned. “Debbie.” He was afraid to hold her gaze. He turned away again and pretended to check out his makeup. In the mirror, he saw that June had slid in beside him, lipstick in hand, but her eyes continued to study him in his girlie suit and wig.

“You came with Jack. Jack Harmon, right?”

“Uh-huh,” he mumbled as his fingers flicked at his false hair, avoiding her gaze. He could feel her eyes on him.

“I ... I feel that we’ve met ... somewhere,” June said, obviously trying to force a conversation.

“No, not likely,” Don purred but icy fingers seemed to be working down his spine. “I just got into town from ... back east.”

She was still looking, her eyes troubled. “Where?”

“Cleveland,” Don said catching her gaze for a brief moment before shifting back to the mirror.

“Oh.” She shrugged, “How do you know Jack?”

Damn! Don was thinking furiously. They had no agreed cover. It had to be something safe. “I ... we ... er, just met.”

She smiled knowingly. “We’ll have to get better acquainted, Debbie.” She started repairing her makeup and Don took that as a cue and fled as hastily as he could. Of all the luck, he thought! Had he been made? If so, why had she said nothing? Finally, and most important, who was she with ... this *honey bunny*?



Jack saw Donald Pain exit the powder room in that Debbie Day costume. Like a magnet attracting loose steel filings, the tall, voluptuous Debbie was soon again surrounded by would-be suitors. It wasn't the body, or rather the idealized form that had been constructed by Herman that was so successful, but that body in combination with *her* motion. From the tips of *her* fingers to *her* toes, with every flick of *her* hand through *her* hair to the thoughtful pursing of *her* lips, *she* was the essence of *femininity*- a seductive *coquette*. It was while he was staring across that crowded room, watching Don attempt to deal with his admirers, that it dawned on him- *This could be the end of acting as we know it!* Don was no actor and, under the circumstances, not likely to be able to fully attend to his female impersonation even if he had wanted to. Yet the evidence was indisputable; he was projecting a very compelling female, even sexy, personality!

Herman had said that there were movement patterns encoded in the suit. Patterns probably picked up and digitized from hundreds of video tapes of real women in motion. Far too many movement patterns to be employed at any one time; someone had probably edited which patterns to use. And it was, from the looks of it, some sexually frustrated males who had chosen what they liked. And the result? Donald Pain moved as a horny man would have wanted a seductive woman to move, an interesting idea. It was clear that, with this technology, one could reconstruct a John Wayne or Britney Spears, not just in form, but in movement, even speech. What was left for the professional actor, memorizing lines? Would directors get involved with the programming of the suits worn by their cast? Edit their mannerisms and speech patterns to achieve the desired effect? All and all these thoughts were disturbing to Jack, a wannabe professional actor. His musings were interrupted by the exit of June from the powder room a couple of minutes later.

There was Honey Bunny all right! June made no outward displays of affection toward the man who had been waiting for her just outside the powder room door but her attitude was clearly amorous. It was visible in the way she leaned her body toward her companion, the near constant eye contact. One could almost see her connection with...? Jack struggled to recognize the man. He was familiar, but from where? His face was handsome to the point of pretty, like a young Tony Curtis. From the way the clothes clung on his body, he was obviously in great shape. A male model? Ah hah! *Thorn Hamilton!* Did a few perfume commercials last year. Artsy stuff. A very expensive production with pretty boys and girls and Thorn Hamilton. There, that hadn't been so hard!

Jack leaned back against the wall and watched the couple. So Junior's concerns were well founded after all. Pity, thought Jack as he continued to watch the couple, June was almost as much in love with this Thorn as he, Thorn, was in love with himself. The latter was obvious by his carriage, mannerisms and his frequent inspections of his image reflected from the mirror on the wall beside them.

June could have done better, a lot better! The truth be known, it could or *should* have been him, Jack Harmon.

His next thought was, *Oh brother!* June and her boy toy were heading his way! He flipped his gaze toward Don. The tall, gorgeous blond was breaking free of the drones at the same instant and heading his way as well. Jack rolled his eyes and waited for the pending collision.

~oOo~

“This is way, way over what we agreed upon, Mr. Pain. I mean, I got you into the party as you demanded but this...” Jack glanced over at his companion in the seat beside him, then back to the road. The traffic on the freeway was frantic. *Her* perfume filled the car, *her* presence was utterly unmodified from what it had been at the party, only her words were pure Donald Pain, Jr. Why things hadn’t gone belly up and crashed and burned, Jack hadn’t a clue. And then, after a few minutes of small talk, it had been Don Pain, a.k.a. *Debbie Day*, who had suggested that the four of them retire to a small club in West Hollywood. For Pete’s sake, it was as if Mr. Pain wanted something to happen! *Totally weird*, mused Jack unhappily.

The voice was still as sweet as butterscotch and the delivery just as feminine but the words were harsh. “Nothing but a cocksucking two-bit actor!”

“He’s ... Ah, very good-looking, Mr. Pain.”

“Shit! I could buy a dozen like him,” snarled Don. “Probably works as a waiter between jobs and drives a ten year-old Ford, for Christ’s sake!” Of course through all of this, if one ignored the actual words, it still sounded like Don was offering cookies and milk to a five year-old, a very nice five-year old. That fact wasn’t entirely lost on Don. Frustration bloomed in those big blue eyes. Rage didn’t translate well in that voice.

Jack had a gnawing suspicion that it was Mr. Pain’s ego and male pride that had been hurt. Whether or not he really loved June, that was unclear and, perhaps, unimportant. Jack suspected that if Thorn Hamilton had been a peer, a man of resources and power, he might have shown *real* jealousy, but as it was... “You now know your suspicions were correct and you even know who has your wife’s affections, so why this club thing?”

“I want to teach her a lesson.” Don looked at Jack, “You know I think that bastard was flirting with me.” This last was said with a definite lilt in the voice which was most certainly *not* Don’s intent. Thwarted at every turn, those sweet bimbo lips pouted like a spoiled child.

Jack shrugged. Yeah, he’d seen that. Had June? Unlikely. She was obviously smitten by Thorn. “So?”

Don chirped, “I’m going to make a play for that twit, right in front of my wife!”

“Oh brother!” groaned Jack.

“I plan to get my money’s worth out of this costume, OK? You might have to take my wife home later.”

“You ... you can’t be serious!” But Jack saw that look in Don’s eyes. He’d seen that looked the other day when he’d threatened Jack’s career. “And then I’m done, right? I mean, that’s it, boss.”

“Sure. Whatever,” Don said, looking at his long, false finger nails like a thug might examine his switch blade. He, or rather *she*, seemed all too confident.

~oOo~

Of course Don wasn’t confident. This was a whole new world, an utterly alien environment he’d entered tonight. The trick was to relax. Inappropriate movements, such as reaching for the Martini glass the way he did a few seconds ago, caused resistance to build up in his fingers, hands and arm. But when he relaxed and didn’t try to force the movement, the appropriate feminine pattern emerged. He’d first discovered that fact at Herman’s house this evening when he’d tried to cross his legs in this suit man-style. At first the resistance to his intended movement was just noticeable, then it increased exponentially. He’d fought it, only to discover that the system had hidden resources. The first indication of those considerable resources was a mild electric shock localized at the point of conflict. That mild reminder rapidly escalated into a painful throb as he continued to hold his right cafe across his left knee. It fell just short of a painful charliehorse when Don relented. So he discovered that the suit didn’t just guide his every movement, it demanded his obedience to the program. And that was not something to his liking. On the other hand, sitting directly across the small club table from his wife, he was more than a little glad to have the advice of the suit at that moment as his little finger sprang away from the glass and his gulp became more of a ladylike sip.

Odd, there was no taste nor coolness in his mouth. It could have been room temperature tap water except for the afterglow that bloomed in his stomach and the odor which struck unattenuated in his sinuses. “Do? Like in career?” he said in reply to June’s question as to his occupation.

Don shot a look at his “date,” then with an inward laugh, said, “Dancer. Exotic.”

June blanched but, more important, that dimwit Thorn’s eyes lit up as expected.

“Where?” responded Thorn with poorly-hidden interest. That interest did catch June’s attention because her eyes hardened momentarily. Of course Jack was looking aghast at that comment, but he’d been looking half-sick all night anyway.

Don shrugged causing his artificial breasts to dance. “I’m still looking for a good gig.”

“Perhaps I can help you,” said Thorn.

In more ways than you can imagine, thought Don. “Oh! I’d be ever so grateful, Thorn.” He batted his long lashes and then, slowly ran his tongue across his upper lip. The effect on June was delightful from Don’s point of view as he slipped off a shoe and ran his nylon-clad foot up Thorn’s calf. Though this movement was hidden from June’s direct view by the table, the shifts in Don’s upper torso clearly signaled what he was doing and to whom it was directed.

The eager, hungry smile that grew on the cad’s face was more than enough reward for Don. Things were going better than Don could have hoped!

Flustered, June muttered something about going to the ladies room. When she stood up, Don almost missed his cue. A short, abrupt silent pause followed. And then, June, looked down at Don and nodded, “Debbie?”

“Oh! Yes! Excuse us,” said Don, a bit startled and momentarily flustered until he’d finally caught on to what was happening. For some unknown reason, women have always gone together. Can you imagine men doing that? Never! But for all practical purposes, he wasn’t a *he* at that moment, right? *Well, this will be a novel experience*, thought Don as he put on the arrant shoe, stood up and started to follow June. Realizing that Thorn was probably watching him at that moment, or to be more exact, his feminized ass, Don tried to put an extra twist into the sway of his hips. Apparently, though, his idea of a sexy movement and the suit’s idea were at odds. The suit won.

“You all right?” asked June after Don had all but fallen on his butt.”

“A slick spot on the floor, I guess,” he murmured properly chastised.

~oOo~

June turned on Don the moment the restroom door was closed. Spinning about, eyes hard, she glared at the taller “woman.” “What-are-you-*doing!*” she spat.

“Huh?”

June’s nostrils flared as she continued to stare up at Don. “Why the heavy handed play on my Thorn? I mean, how obvious can you be?” But before Don could respond, June continued. “And what about your poor Jack? My God, do you treat *all* your dates this way?”

“Thorn’s very uh, attractive.”

June rolled her eyes and then abruptly eased up. She laughed, then shrugged her shoulders as she turned and checked out her face in the mirror. Her anger appeared to dissipate almost as quickly as it had come. She opened her purse and began pulling items out and setting them on the counter as she studied her reflection. It was almost like she’d forgotten Debbie’s existence for a few moments and then, just as she prepared to powder her nose, she said, “I can’t blame you, I guess. The first time I saw Thorn ... Well, after being married for six years, I’d forgotten what it had been like to be near a *real* man.”