



*Reluctant Press* presents:

# Her Lesbian Husband

Blind Ruth



ILLUSTRATIONS BY C. HAIGHT

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A 'HER TV' E-BOOK

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# “HER LESBIAN HUSBAND”

**By Blind Ruth**

Charlotte Denise Watts was a young, beautiful, and ambitious woman; even now at the age of twenty-seven she had her own successful business. She was five-foot four and 120 pounds, with long auburn hair that swished around her shoulders. Charlotte’s face was an oval shape, with high arched eyebrows. Her eyes were like a pool of blue, with a smallish nose in between. Her face had been nicely made-up and her lips finished off with one of Virgin V’s lipsticks, called Pink Radiance. She wore a black business suit over a white silk blouse; her slim were legs in honey-colored stockings. On her feet were black leather court shoes with three-inch heels.

Charlotte always kept herself smartly turned out. Today, however, her appearance was the least of her worries as she had just ended a two-year relationship with her business partner and lover. Despite the end of the affair, though, even the thought of what they had done together in bed and elsewhere was enough to dampen the gusset of her panties.

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It all started two years after she left art school. Charlotte was a brilliant student about whom everyone said would make something of herself and they were correct. She first landed a position in a commercial art company, a company that specialized in making television advertisements. Her job was to listen to an “idea man” and make quick sketches of what he said afterwards Charlotte would illustrate the idea; sometimes he would take her to their client to help present the concept.

After a while, Charlotte had her own ideas and knew what was needed, but said nothing, for her job was limited to sketching the idea man’s inspirations. The thought came to

her that she could do a better job if she set up her own company; the snag was that she had no money. Her only hope was to go to the bank and ask for a loan.

So there she was one morning, sitting before her bank manger, having asked some days earlier for a loan of a considerable amount of money. He had not been what she had expected: a young and eager manager, about her age who listened carefully to her.

“Yes, Miss Watts,” he said, “I can see from your recommendations from art school and your work experience that you are well qualified. After some consideration, I have decided to take a chance and give you the loan.”

“Thank you so much,” she said. “I will work my butt off to prove you made the right decision.” Charlotte hadn't thought it would be as easy as this, but then again this was a younger man; an older married man with a wife and family might not have been so easy-going with her.

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And so it was that Watts Advertising Agency was launched. Business was slow at first. Even though Charlotte knew a lot about the business, getting work was no easy matter. There were the bigger, well-known agencies that potential customers were already engaged with.

After nine months, things were not going well. Oh, she had landed some small contracts, enough to keep the wolf from the door, but not as many as she expected or needed. She burned the midnight oil, thinking up ideas. It was a one-woman firm however, and when she did land a contract, a large part of the income was spent hiring film companies to shoot the spots, and actors to play the parts she had carefully scripted.

Charlotte was at her wits' end. She started considering packing it in and going back to work for someone else. However, if she did that, it seemed like she would spend the rest of her life paying off the bank loan.

There were always other companies competing for the same work as her. If only she could get a lucky break. She never lost faith in her abilities; it was her business approach that was lacking along with the presentation of her work.

Crossfords was a large company that canned vegetables of all kinds. They had a massive factory and were about to change their advertisements for canned beans. The contract for a new bean advertisement was out for proposals.

As always, Charlotte visited the company; there, she asked questions of both upper and lower level management and interviewed some factory floor workers. But the main part of her survey was its customers. After all, they were the people who bought their products. She did some spot checks at various supermarkets and shopping malls, asking people what they thought of Crossfords' beans and how they compared to other brands. Charlotte soon developed a number of creative ideas and worked day and night on the script and drawings to go with them. She hired a film company and actors; she would make a video and do her own presentation to the company at their boardroom meeting when other competitors would also be present.

Charlotte watched her competitors make their presentations. When it was her turn, she gave all members of the board a copy of her ninety-second spot. The commercial had taken a lot longer than she had anticipated. Charlotte had given it her best shot; she needed this work.

She launched herself into the presentation, looking around the boardroom as she did so at the usual hard-nosed businessmen whose only concern was how much money this ad might generate. If it was no good, she was a goner, but then she spotted one woman who might, she thought, give her a fair listen.

When she and her competitors had finished their presentations, the board said that all would be informed of the board's decision by letter. When Charlotte went to the woman's restroom and sat before the mirror repairing her make-up, a woman, the one she had seen at the board meeting, entered.

"I was quite impressed with your presentation, Miss Watts," she said. "You seem to have taken much care, time, and attention to our products. I would like further talks with you, if you have the time."

Charlotte looked at the woman through the mirror. "Sorry, I didn't catch your name."

"Martha Reynolds, but you can call me Martha, Charlotte."

"Okay, Martha. When can we make a date? I'm free whenever you are."

"Shall we say Thursday afternoon at my place? Here, I'll pop my card with my address and phone number into your handbag."

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Martha Reynolds liked Charlotte, who was young enough to be her daughter; she seemed like a go-getter who lacked business know-how. In that, Charlotte reminded Martha of herself. As Martha now had enough money and time to help the younger woman, she looked forward to showing Charlotte the ropes.

Martha also just knew that Charlotte was a lesbian; no one had told her but she had learned to trust her intuition on such matters. Although it had been some time since Martha had had a sexual relationship, her partners had always been younger women. She liked them so much; the fun was training them to her ways.

Martha Reynolds was a forty-five year old blond, five-foot six, 160 pounds. She was a bit overweight, but that did not worry her; she could afford the liposuction to lose ten or twenty pounds if needed. With her round face and her hair done up in bangs, her beautician had her nicely made-up. She visited her beautician about every other day if only because she loved being around beauty.

Martha didn't look forty-five, more like twenty-five, which was why Charlotte thought she was talking to someone of her own age. Martha was married but that didn't stop her from dating women—it was a marriage of convenience for both of them. Nathan Reynolds owned Crossfords and met Martha through a friend; it had not taken Martha long to find out Nathan was gay but did not want anyone to know. Being gay herself, maybe it would be to both their benefit to marry.

Once they were married, they went their separate ways and only appeared together at company board meetings, or at special events when the company would be represented. It was then that Martha started taking a special interest in Crossfords and thought it could do better. When Nathan learned of her plans, he gave her the go-ahead, and Crossfords prospered. As Martha and Nathan had no family, the only sex they had was on their honeymoon, Martha looked upon the company as her baby.

So Martha and Nathan lived apart and never interfered in each other's sexual affairs. However that was all kept quiet and private; everyone thought they were a happily married couple.

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Charlotte was a lesbian; she admitted that to herself and had no problem with it. She was a lesbian, but had not been active for more than two years now. All her energy had been directed to her own firm; she had no time for lovers. But it was not as if she did not *like* men. She had many male friends; they were nice enough companions for a meal and a friendly chat. She paid way on these occasions, which she thought was only fair. Her male friends held no interest sexually for her at all. Being with a woman sexually just seemed to be in her genes.

Inexplicably, Charlotte felt she had to dress up for her meeting with Martha. Since she first set up her business, she had always worn a business suit, heels and stockings. Yet on this day, she was compelled to put her best little black dress on, with a deep décolletage showing her ample cleavage. It was accompanied by sheer black stockings held up by a black lacey garter belt, black silk panties, and no bra (Charlotte felt her breasts were firm and needed no support). She finished the ensemble with a pair of black pumps with three-inch heels.

At around three that Thursday afternoon, Charlotte drove up the magnificent driveway that led to Martha Reynolds' mansion and parked her car on the chipped granite pathway in front. She left her car and walked up to the front door, all the time taking in the splendid sight of the house and gardens spread out around it.

After knocking at the door, the sound of approaching steps was soon heard. Opening the door, Martha Reynolds welcomed Charlotte with a kiss on the cheek.

"Come on in Charlotte, you look *so* nice today."

This was not the same Martha that Charlotte had seen at the board meeting. Then, she had been in a conservative pinstripe dress, black stockings and black pumps. Today she looked beautiful to Charlotte eyes, not that she wasn't pretty at the meeting. Now she was more *womanly*, in a bubble silhouette dress, black bodice and a puffed-out skirt patterned in large red roses which stopped just below her knee, honey-colored stockings, and a pair of white sling-back sandals, low heels.

Charlotte assumed Martha was older than her, by a few years she thought, because this outfit made her look so young.

Martha led Charlotte into her living room, which like everything Charlotte had seen so far was ostentatious.

"Sit down and relax, Charlotte," she said, "what do you want to drink?" Martha walked over to a cocktail bar set in the far corner of the room.

"Oh, a Barcardi and Coke, please."

"No problem, dear," Martha said as she poured herself a Gordon's gin and a small bottle of tonic.

Handing Charlotte the drink, Martha held her own up, and said, "Here's to you, Charlotte and the future." They clinked both glasses together. She sat down opposite Charlotte and made herself comfortable, all the while keeping her eyes focused on the younger woman.

"You look so worried, dear. I can put your mind at rest. You have the contract, if that is worrying you."

"But I understood that it would be next week when the board of Crossfords met and made the announcement."

"Listen honey, the board of Crossfords is *me*. What I say, the others follow. I made that company what it is today. So if they know where their bread is buttered, they go with me."

"Sure Martha, it's none of my business. But what about your husband?"

"Husband?" Martha laughed. "Nat is a yes man. He knows Crossfords would be nothing without me. He was lucky to be born to hardworking parents who started the company. Then they died and he was left with it. He knew nothing about business and almost ruined the company, till he married me. You know, he is gay, and we have never been to bed together since the honeymoon. Not that that worries me. You see, I'm gay too. Does that shock you, Charlotte?"

Charlotte had not expected quite the revelation Martha had given her. She was at a loss for words. After all, it was none of her business, so she said nothing.

"You know Charlotte, you remind me of a lot of myself when I was younger. I know we're not in the same line of business, but you seem determined to succeed. It's a man's world out there. As a woman you have to be 100% better than any man, and as far as I can see, you are.

"I looked at your video a number of times and I liked it, a great ad it is. A criminal being grilled by a tough policeman with the policeman saying, 'Come on now, spill the beans,' and the hoodlum replying, 'Not if they're Crossfords, they're too good to spill! I'll never spill Crossfords beans. I *always* eat Crossfords beans.' And then the cartoons you drew for paper and magazine ads based on that were really well thought out and funny. I'm confident these will attract people's attention to our products."

"I'm glad you like it, Martha."

"You know, Charlotte, in the next few years, there are contracts coming to an end on most of our products. I would suggest Watts Advertising Agency tender for them. Tell me all about you and your company, I'm quite interested."

“What's to tell, Martha? We're new to this game, although I have had experience in other businesses. I'm a one-woman business and that's about it.”

“Tell me about the budget for our spot, Charlotte. I mean how much did it take to pay for the film crews, actors et cetera?”

Charlotte told her and Martha replied, “I see. I know that you could have saved yourself some money. Unfortunately, it's clear to me you have little business sense.”

Charlotte blushed at the older woman's putting her down a peg, but she was right about her knowledge of the business world.

“What do you mean, Martha?”

“That ad cost you too much to make, your profit margin is way too low, and money at this stage means a lot to you.”

“Well you're right, Martha. Money means a lot just now, but how could I have made it any cheaper?”

“Just this: you have a struggling business, right?” Charlotte nodded her head. “Well, so are many film companies making ads. If you looked around, you could have come up with a lower cost with just as good a result, if not better. You went for a well-known company, and well-paid actors. I suggest in the future, you look for less expensive companies who will work their butt off, just as you had to do these last years.”

Charlotte looked with admiration at Martha; she was right. Charlotte never minded criticism as long as it was constructive.

“Yes you're right, Martha. To be honest, your ad means I won't starve for now, but I can't rest on my laurels, I have to press on.”

“I like that attitude and I will try and help you. I have many contacts that could do you good. And I may put some money in your company.”

Charlotte could not believe her luck, but why was this woman putting money in her company? After all she only just met her.

“Martha, why are you doing all this for me? Don't think I'm ungrateful or anything like that; I'm just curious. After all, we've just met.”

“Let's just say I like to help my own sex beat hard-nosed men into the ground and I like you Charlotte, you're pretty. I like *pretty women* who are also good business women.”

“Oh,” Charlotte said, not quite knowing what to make of that statement.

“Look Charlotte, we've been talking business for over two hours now. I'll take you out for dinner tomorrow night for a more social night. Just us two girls together, no business talk, my treat. Is that okay with you, Charlotte dear?”

This took Charlotte by complete surprise; it was like being asked for a date, not by a man but a woman.

“Well yes, Martha, okay, I suppose. Where are we going?”

“Leave that to me. I'll pick you up, say, about seven. What's your address?”

Charlotte gave her address. This woman had a captivating spell over her.



The women kissed each other on the cheek as they parted. Charlotte felt there was more passion in the kiss for some reason.

“Yes,” Martha thought, as Charlotte departed. “Charlotte Watt is a beautiful woman, but she’s intelligent as well.” Martha had had many young women in bed with her before. Some were just dumb bimbos good enough for a roll in the sack. Charlotte had brains; she was going places, but she needed that special guidance that only Martha could, and would, give her. Martha had fallen in love with a young woman again!

Charlotte departed with admiration for the older woman. There was no doubt about Martha’s business acumen and perception of her situation. She was glad Martha had made the offer to put some money in her business, which she knew she would accept. There was no doubt the money would provide a breathing space for her to organize the company better, and she could learn much from this older woman about business.

Also at the back of her mind was Martha’s admission that she was a lesbian, with no shame about it. Charlotte now wondered if she was falling for the older woman. Her lesbian instincts were rising again, but maybe Martha’s were not; she could not tell. Charlotte had never made love to an older woman, just girls around her own age. Charlotte was in a happier mood for the rest of that day.

The following morning, Charlotte stayed in bed until 10 in the morning. Getting up, she put on a blue velvet tie-wrap dressing gown over her blue nylon baby doll nightdress and slipped her dainty feet into a pair of blue fluffy mules. She made straight to the kitchen, cracked two eggs on the side of the cooking pan and poured out their shells into the pan, listening then to the sizzle as she added two slices of bacon.

She poured herself an orange juice; after putting muesli in a bowl, she poured milk from a jug. She sat down and waited for the eggs and bacon, then she laughed; why not have some beans to go with the eggs and bacon? Beans she had, hundreds of tins of them. Crossfords had given her plenty while she was in their factory. Opening a cupboard, she took out a tin and opened it, poured the beans with tomato sauce into a small pan, and put it on the gas ring beside her eggs and bacon.

Charlotte enjoyed her breakfast that morning; the beans were good, maybe better than she had given them credit for. An advertisement was business and the product had to be made to good for the company, and more importantly, the customer. But Crossfords beans *were* good.

Charlotte was in a good mood, the best she had been since branching out on her own. Her heart skipped a beat as she thought about tonight, and Martha. “God,” she said to herself, “I’m like a little lovesick schoolgirl.” She went about picking out clothes for the evening, spent hours deciding on, then rejecting all the dresses in her wardrobe. Finally, she had the outfit she would wear when she was with Martha.

Now she gave a quick phone call to Sadie, her hairdresser, to ask if she could fit her in for a hair-do later that afternoon.

“Sure, Charlotte sweetie. For anybody else, it would be no!” Sadie laughed; she too was a lesbian, and knew of Charlotte’s sexual inclination.

Charlotte laid out her plan for the day: a light lunch, then a relaxing soak in the warm, scented bubble bath. She put on the clothes that she had set out for her visit to Sadie the hairdresser.

Charlotte finished her bath and smelled delicious, as she spread purple scented talcum powder over her ripe young body.

She went into her bedroom to select her underwear. She chose the peach-pink under-wired Lycra bra, slid it up her shoulders, eased her breasts into the cups, clipped the hook and eye at the back, and adjusted the shoulder straps. Then she secured the garter belt around her waist, rolled the honey-colored stockings up her smooth legs, and snapped the garter tabs. She lifted her red silk-jersey cocktail dress with the strapless bodice, which had gold beaded embroidery following the lines of its plunging neckline. The dress settled over her head and stopped above her knees. Finally, she stepped into gold kid ankle strap sandals, and Charlotte was ready to go to Sadie for her hairdo.

At Sadie's, she had her hair fluffed up. Sadie made conversation as she sorted out Charlotte's hair

"Got a heavy date, dear?" Sadie asked.

"No, not really Sadie," Charlotte said, blushing.

Sadie made no further comment.

Meanwhile, Martha Reynolds was also getting herself ready for the night. She wriggled into a yellow polyester-chiffon cocktail dress, spotted in red, with a strapless bodice, red velvet ribbon belt, bow-tied on the side. Its gathered three-tier skirt ended above her knees; it was worn over stiffened petticoats, which caused the skirt to balloon out around her thighs. Red satin shoes with pointed toes and stiletto heels finished the outfit.

Of course, both women did not realize that they had picked similar outfits: both were red, strapless cocktail dresses.

Charlotte stood at her window looking out at the street below her fourth floor flat, waiting for Martha. She had put on her long black coat, and a black quilted leather shoulder bag was slung over her shoulder. Sadie had attached a red velvet rose to her hair and whispered, "For that special lady, dear." Charlotte blushed a deep red but said nothing.

On opening the door for Martha, Charlotte was greeted with a kiss on each cheek, which she returned.

"You look heavenly, dear," Martha said.

"And so do you, Martha." Charlotte admired her look: fox fur coat, fox fur hat with fur trim, and her wine red shoulder bag with its scalloped flap embroidered in gold thread.

"Well, if you're ready, let's go, honey."

They arrived at a haute cuisine restaurant. While taking off their coats, they realized they were both wearing red cocktail dresses and laughed.

"Great minds think alike, Charlotte!"

"Well, I hope you're right, Martha... I would like a mind as observant as yours—in a business sense, that is."

As they walked into the restaurant, the headwaiter came forward. "Mrs. Reynolds, good evening. I have your reservation over here." He led them to a corner table and held the seats out for the ladies. He handed them each a menu; they ordered a three-course meal, the main course being grilled sirloin steak with port and truffle sauce.

"Thank you, Frederick, please send the wine waiter over."

"Yes, right away, Mrs. Reynolds."

As they waited for their starter course of prawn salad with Marie Rose sauce, Martha struck up a conversation with Charlotte, who began telling her life story.

"Your mother is a very religious person, then, from what you're saying," Charlotte said.

"Oh yes. My father died before I was five. He was a member of a very right-wing evangelical church, which Mother also attended. Mother took me there faithfully every Sunday. She was a strict disciplinarian, and was not afraid to use the strap on me."

"Poor dear, you had a hard life," Martha said, taking Charlotte's hand and squeezing it.

"But there was sunshine as well... My Aunt Lucy, how I loved her."

"Yes, Charlotte? Why was that?"

"I owe a lot to her," Charlotte said. "You see it was her who encouraged me to take up painting at the age of five. Aunt Lucy was an art teacher at the local high school, and stayed with us after my father died. She was my mother's younger sister. She said I had talent and from an early age, she went out of her way to teach me all she could. I appreciate the sacrifice she made for me, more than I appreciate my own mother."

"Where is she now?"

"I can't answer that. She just disappeared when I was about twelve. That was, let me see, fifteen years ago. She must be in her forties by now."

By this time, the wine waiter had arrived. Martha studied the list, and said, "The house white wine here is delicious, Charlotte. I would recommend it to you."

"I'll take your word, Martha."

The waiter took the order, left, then returned to pour a small amount in each woman's goblet.

Martha took a sip. "Yes, good." The waiter left the bottle in an ice bucket beside the table.

In good time the meal arrived and, as they ate, Charlotte asked Martha about herself.

"I did not quite appreciate your age," Charlotte said. "I thought you were much younger, Martha. Please understand, I'm not trying to be rude."

"Oh, don't worry yourself. I'm flattered you think me so young. I've had cosmetic surgery of course, but I can afford it. I need some liposuction soon."

While eating her meal, Charlotte scribbled something on the back of her menu.

"What's that, dear?" Martha said.

“Oh, just a quick drawing of you.”

“Let me see.” Charlotte handed the drawing over to Martha, who studied it.

“That’s good, you know. I’ve never had a drawing of myself before. Do you paint in oils?”

“Yes, of course. I learned that way back with my Aunt Lucy and art school, but I have no time for it at present. When I started in commercial art, it was all quick draw and I had no time for oils. That’s especially true now, as I try to make a living.”

“I see, dear. Whenever you do get some time, could you paint me, not just my face but full-length, from face to toes? I expect to pay for it, of course.”

“Well yes, Martha, but as I said before, all my efforts at present are directed towards my company. Here, take this as partial payment for the meal,” Charlotte said, handing Martha the drawing.

“Thank you, Charlotte. I shall treasure it always. I admire you even more because you’re not a freeloader, you want to pay your way.”

The two women eventually finished their dinner and leaned back in their seats, sipping coffee with their petit fours.

“I’m full, Martha. I couldn’t eat another thing,” Charlotte said.

“Yes, I’m full too, but you looked as if you needed a good meal when I saw you last night.”

“Yes, you’re right Martha, I was worried about my business going to the wall. Even now, your contract only eases it a little bit.”

“I see, Charlotte. Forget it for tonight. I know a little club where we can relax, have a drink or two, a dance and maybe even loose a few pounds.”

Martha asked the headwaiter to phone for a cab; she would leave her car there and pick it up in the morning.

The cab ride ended up at a club in a quieter part of town. The bar was brightly lit and everyone seemed to know Martha. She took Charlotte’s hand and led her over to a far corner.

A waitress came over. “What will it be, Martha?”

“A Gordon’s gin and tonic for me. The same as last night for you, Charlotte? A Barcardi and Coke?” Charlotte nodded as Martha looked at her.

Charlotte saw a small dance floor and a woman sitting at a disco console, feeding in discs. Then she noticed it was all women dancing with each other, which did not worry Charlotte as she had been in lesbian clubs before. The waitress arrived with the drinks and sat them down on the table. Martha gave her a generous tip, which she put in the top pocket of her waitress uniform.

“Like a little dance, Charlotte?”

“Yep, okay, Martha.”

They held hands as Martha led them out to the dance floor. There were a couple of other women dancing with each other. Martha held Charlotte tight around the waist as they danced.

Charlotte felt weak in Martha's arms, then felt a wet kiss on her cheek. She was in heaven and automatically returned the soft kiss, which led to a full kiss on the mouth from Martha. The floor was crowded now as the lights dimmed down. Martha and Charlotte danced close to each other; their perfume blended together in a sweet heady aroma. After awhile, Martha led Charlotte off the floor for a rest.

As they were sipping their drinks, a voice from behind Charlotte said, "Well, hello there, Martha Reynolds. Long time no see."

Martha looked up, and said, "Judy darling, where have you been? Sit down beside us, and have a chat." Martha got up and kissed this Judy on the cheek. Judy appeared to be the same age as Martha.

As she sat down and made herself comfortable, she said, "You must introduce me to your enchanting little friend."

"Sure Judy, this is Charlotte Watt; she is working on an advertising contract for Crossfords. She's an up and coming business woman in her own right." She turned to Charlotte. "And this is Judy Henderson, the head of Henderson's Houses. You know, the 'We build better houses' ad."

"Yes of course, I've seen that ad many times on television," Charlotte said as the two women shook hands.

Martha and Judy talked away about old times that Charlotte knew nothing of.

"Sorry, Charlotte dear, just memories of old times," said Judy.

Martha said, "If you're looking for new talent and a clear, refreshing look at your housing market, Charlotte's your girl."

"From you, Martha, that's some recommendation. From anybody else I would have ignored it. Charlotte, here is my card; give my secretary a call and we can arrange to meet. It just so happens that our ad for country cottages needs renewing. I'll catch you up on what is necessary but don't let that stifle you from other ideas. But we're getting too serious here. Let me buy you ladies a drink."

The night ended with Martha ordering a cab, dropping Charlotte off at her flat with a full kiss on the lips.

That night, Charlotte lay in bed, starry-eyed, remembering all that happened that night. She was falling in love with Martha, who had thrown up a good contact, Judy Henderson. Maybe Watt Advertising Agency was on an upward turn.

Next morning after breakfast, Charlotte phoned Henderson's Houses and was put through to Judy Henderson's secretary, after saying she had to ask for a date to meet her.

"Yes, Miss Watts, let me see. Miss Henderson is not free this week. In fact, she is away in France to open up our business in Paris. Ah, there it is, a date in two weeks time, Thursday afternoon. Say, two o'clock. Would that be alright, Miss Watts?"

“Oh, yes sure,” Charlotte said with a little bit of disappointment in her voice, but at the same time taking note of the appointment. She heaved a sigh and thought that Rome was not built in a day, and then laughed to herself. Henderson's Houses, “Rome built in a day.” Hey, there might be an ad in there somewhere. She was now more cheerful and went about her work for the day in a better mood.

Charlotte's flat had a bedroom, kitchen/dining room, and she had converted her living room into an art studio where she could work on drawings and sketch to her heart's content. When she was content, she would paint scenes for her ad, not in oils, which would take too much time, but in watercolors. At the same time she worked on dialogue between characters she created. Charlotte had a very active brain. Today there were some finishing touches to put on a few ads she would be pitching in the next few weeks. She went about her painting with more excitement than she had for a long time.

Just then, the phone rang. On answering it, Charlotte heard Martha, “How did you enjoy last night, darling?”

“It was wonderful, Martha. I had a great time. Did you have a good time too?”

“Of course, dear. What do you say to doing it again tonight?”

“Sure. By the way, thank you for introducing me to Judy Henderson. That was nice of you.”

“Think nothing of it. That's what I mean about business sense; I have a lot of contacts. But your work is good. It's just that you don't know how to go to the right places. Pick you up around seven again? I've just had a thought, Charlotte. It might do you a lot of good. Forget about tonight. Are you free this afternoon?”

“Yes, why?”

“Just a little surprise. I'll pick you up at three; trust me, it's all for the best. Bye, darling.”

Putting the phone down, Charlotte was very curious but her trust was in Martha.

Martha turned up at three sharp; soon, Charlotte was in her car, traveling to a part of town she was not familiar with.

“Where are we heading, Martha?”

“You'll soon see, dear. You're about to experience something I believe will be mind blowing. Trust me.”

“I would trust you in anything,” Charlotte said.

The older woman had a hold on her. The only relationships Charlotte had had were with women closer to her own age. It seemed to her that Martha was a strange woman with a mystical aura around her.

They had now entered the Chinatown section of the city, and parked in a small lane. Now on foot, Martha led the way; apparently she knew where she was going. They walked through a large open oriental street market, with stalls selling many things: clothes and shantung silk cloth, vegetables, fruit—many of which Charlotte had never seen before, and could only guess at their name—rings, earrings, bangles, necklaces.

Men and women shouted about their various wares, trying to entice Charlotte to buy. Martha paid them no attention and pulled Charlotte by the arm. Charlotte made a mental note of all this; some day she must come back and sketch this scene, and when she had time, oil paint it.

"Come on, Charlotte, no time to look around."

"Where are we going, Martha?"

"You'll see soon," Martha said.

They now found themselves in a maze of busy streets, with cars going past them at high speed. The streets were full of Chinese businesses and restaurants with signs in Chinese lettering. Traveling many streets, now walking down one, they crossed the road and stood in front of a small shop with red and gold Chinese lettering on the window, and two large green dragons breathing fire.

They entered the compact herbal and Chinese medicine shop; the air was heavy with the smell of incense from the burning joss sticks in copper bowls around the shop. To the right was a counter and behind it were two women in gaudy dresses of dark green, crimson, and purple with Chinese symbols on them. Their skirts were split up the right side, the older woman's split ending much higher than the other's.

"Good afternoon, Madam Martha," the other woman said. "Ah, you bring the beautiful young lady. I have prepared everything." Madam Ling spoke in a soft lilting voice, put her hands together and bowed slightly.

"Good afternoon to you, Madam Ling." Martha returned the curtsy.

By this time, Charlotte was looking at the various jars, bottles, and pill boxes of herbal medicine, containing herbs, leaves, and flowers. She lifted a jar to look at the contents and was interrupted by Madam Ling, who said, "Ah, that is not for you. It is for men who cannot have erection." The younger woman giggled. The older woman glared at her and she stopped.

"Ah, I have something for you. This is for beautiful ladies like you. Try it."

Madam Ling handed Charlotte a very small tortoise-shell comb. Charlotte had never seen such a small comb before and questioned Madam Ling, "Is this for my hair?"

The young woman beside Madam Ling quickly and enthusiastically cut in. "Yes, for the hair on your pussy." Xiu Mei giggled, as Charlotte blushed deep purple.

Madam Ling giving Xiu Mei an angry stare. "Xiu Mei, will you mind your own business?"

"Yes mother," Xiu Mei said.

Madam Ling carried on talking as if her daughter were not there. "You must forgive Xiu Mei, my third daughter. She is very intelligent, but sometimes acts like a silly school-girl. She is at on mid-term leave from university and is helping me out in our shop."

Although Madam Ling may have scolded her daughter, there was no doubt she looked upon her with affection. Xiu Mei was a small woman, with a mischievous childish face and two little pigtails hanging to her shoulders. Her mother was taller, with one long braided pigtail going down her back.

“Beautiful lady, now try acupuncture for happiness.”

Charlotte looked at Martha who said, “It’s okay, I have arranged it all. This will do you good and unwind the tensions in your body, give you the zip you need for the work you have to do. Madam Ling has used acupuncture many times on me.”

This cheered Charlotte up. Madam Ling added to Charlotte’s confidence by saying, “This is very *special* acupuncture for only ladies. Do you good, you see.”

Madam Ling now turned to Xiu Mei. “Lock up shop while I take beautiful ladies to our flat and prepare acupuncture.”

Martha and Charlotte followed Madam Ling upstairs and were led into a well-furnished luxurious Chinese style flat. In the center, all laid out for the purpose of acupuncture, was a large chair, the likes of which Charlotte had never seen before. The chair was made of pine and was so large that three people could sit on it with comfort. Beside the chair was a small table; on it was a tray that held many thin needles of sizes from an inch to a foot, and a little bottle of clear liquid.

Unseen by Charlotte, Madam Ling nodded to Martha, who nodded back. Madam Ling looked at Charlotte. “If beautiful lady will remove her blouse and bra, then kneel on chair, we begin.”

Charlotte glimpsed at Martha, who said, “It’s alright. Here, I will hold your hand if you’re afraid.”

Charlotte stripped to the waist and knelt on the chair. Martha took both her hands in front of her.

“Close your eyes, pretty one,” Madam Ling said. She poured the small bottle of liquid over the needles in the tray and then dipped some cotton wool balls into it. With these she now gently wiped them down Charlotte’s spine, which immediately became numb. Madam Ling took a long needle soaked in the liquid and pushed it into the flesh of the spine at the top, then another, and so it went until Charlotte had a long line of quivering needles swaying from side to side down her back, from the top of her spine to the bottom. The needles had been immersed in an ancient Chinese drug, which acted immediately. Charlotte did not feel Martha let go of her hand, or even Madam Ling inserting two needles in each of her nipples, or tell her to open her eyes, which she did anyway.

Charlotte started seeing things, in colors she never knew existed, in hideous grotesque shapes, along with ear-splitting sounds.

By this time, Martha had divested herself of her skirt and panties. She stood naked except for beige stockings on her legs, before Charlotte. She put her hands behind Charlotte’s head and pulled it into the thick bush of her pubic hair.

Charlotte saw a massive jungle of trees, and when Martha pushed further, Charlotte seemed to be going through the ground into a world of vivid purple and pink, with pools of white-colored water that she wanted to drink. The white liquid tasted so sweet that she wanted more. She had never experienced anything like this before; it was wonderful, she was in heaven. She hoped it would never end and although she did not know it, she had her arms around Martha’s *derrière*, pushing her face further into Martha’s pussy.