

The
Seduction
of Natalie



Francesco Rizzuto

THE SEDUCTION OF NATALIE

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Welcome to Magic Valley



Click on the image to tee-off at the first hole.

Natalie recalled her golf coach's advice about teeing-off.

"Step up to the tee and address the ball."

"Hello, ball," she muttered, *sotto voce*. She shuddered at the thought of sand traps, water hazards, trees and shrubs, and the so-called 'rough' where small, and sometimes not-so-small, boys searched for lost balls to sell back to the golfers.

"Wanna buy it back?" he snarled. She didn't really. But the kid looked so menacing with those close-set, beady eyes like an ugly ferret and the swastika tattoo that decorated the jugular vein in his neck and the black ball cap with its peak skewed at a dangerous angle, and the low slung Levis that exposed the crack in his buttocks, that she immediately thrust forward a five-dollar bill and grabbed her errant ball from the delinquent's paw before he got any better ideas.

This weekend, Natalie and her husband Derrick are participating in what Beta Systems Incorporated calls 'The Client Cup', his employer's idea of a golf tournament. The Spring weather today is idyllic with a clear blue sky and just the faintest hint of a breeze. Not that their own team has any hope of winning this event, of course. The outcome is rigged.

It's all about networking, the boss informed his minions, an opportunity for their high-profile clients to showcase their skills – while they oooh-ed and ahhh-ed and praised their supposed betters to high heaven – then to seal that big sales contract by the eighteenth hole. What it's really about is selling sonoidal switches for digital news feeds. That's what Beta Systems does. But that's another story. Most important of all, make sure your team scores high, the boss advises with only the slightest hint of a sneer. The client's team needs to finish with the least number of strokes to win the tournament.

All Natalie could think of were those two beady eyes and that weasel-like snout peering at her over a proffered golf ball that wasn't worth more than a dollar and fifteen cents or three for two-forty-nine at Walmart.

Derrick, on the other hand, is full of confidence. He hasn't yet mentioned the little 'aid' that he purchased over the internet for a great deal more money, a special programmable GPS-guided golf ball that soars in whatever direction and for whatever distance he wants. Before approaching the next tee, he only needs to activate the associated app on his

smartphone and key in the name of the golf course and the number of the hole. The app does the rest. His ball never ends up in the rough. Derrick has been practicing for the last two weeks with this new fake ball which is totally undetectable and works flawlessly. The ball even has SPALDING stamped on its hard cover.

Derrick hates the boss. He wants to kill him. Back home in the rec-room of the couple's modest duplex, he has mounted a cork-covered toilet seat on the wall with the boss's smirking photo pasted into the oval opening, in the space reserved for one's ass cheeks. Each evening, while nursing the cocktail that Natalie meticulously prepares for him, he tosses darts at the picture. When one of the darts lands in an eye, Derrick raises both his fists and cries: "YES!"

Now, the reader is probably thinking that Derrick plans to murder his boss. He will programme the golf ball to fly straight toward its objective, like a CIA drone targeting a high-profile terrorist target. But Derrick isn't that smart. He merely wants to finish with the least number of strokes, win the Cup, and thereby sabotage the tournament. That would be revenge enough. For now.

The Magic Valley Golf Club is the centrepiece of the Magic Valley housing development, a community of up-scale homes that front onto plush, green fairways, affording each of these expensive properties the illusion of having its own endless grassy lawn. Most of the homes feature huge picture windows to take advantage of the magnificent view. The developers had assured buyers that the buildings were set back far enough that stray golf balls would never invade their airspace although the odd one has been known to come screaming in like a heat-seeking missile to bounce off a tile roof or crush somebody's petunias. The community's motto is: "Incoming!" The wealthy pensioners who can afford to live in Magic Valley wear hardhats and even motorcycle helmets while putting around their flower beds, pulling up weeds or just lazing on a chaise lounge in the sun. Most have falling objects coverage in their homeowner policies.

Natalie takes a driver from her golf bag and addresses the ball. She throws her whole torso into the swing as her coach had instructed, then watches the tiny white sphere sail straight down the fairway to land only a few meters short of the green, a lucky shot. She'll use her nine-iron to scoop the ball up onto the carefully manicured surface then grab her putter to sink it for a total of three strokes, one stroke under par.

Her husband isn't so lucky. Something has gone wrong with his high-tech golf ball. Perhaps the GPS has lost contact with its satellite. Or maybe another faulty sonoidal switch. Instead of sailing in a shallow trajectory toward the flag in the middle of the green, the little ball veers abruptly to the right in a severe dog-leg, then sails straight through the picture window of one of those expensive homes. Oh, oh!

"I think we'd better go over and check out the damage," he says to Natalie after she sinks her ball in three. Derrick had next played an ordinary ball and sank it in five, his strategy entering failure mode, and they were only on the first hole with seventeen punishing holes to go. Demoralized, he even forgot to use his laser-assisted putter.

"We'll offer to pay for the window, of course. No other choice, I suppose." He makes a mental note to check if the super-golf ball came with any kind of warranty or liability coverage. Maybe he could sue the manufacturer for product malfunction and somehow recoup the cost of the window.

They parked their electric golf cart along the side of the fairway so that other golfers could play through, then hiked over to the house where Derrick's errant ball had punched a clean hole dead-centre in the window pane, the remnants of which resembled a huge spider's web. He sheepishly pressed the front doorbell with the tip of his index finger but after a minute or two there came no answer. He rang again, but still no answer. He banged on the door with his closed fist. Still nothing. Derrick and Natalie looked at each other, then glanced back at the broken glass.

"Well, I guess there's nobody home. We'll have to come back later."

"I'm going to try the door," Natalie said, reaching for the door handle. The lockset clicked and the door swung open. They tip-toed inside. "Hello? Anyone here?"

In the centre of a large living room lay Derrick's ball, resting in the middle of a thick Persian carpet. Lying next to the ball were the remnants of a small broken pottery urn decorated with some kind of exotic script, Sanskrit or Cyrillic or Nepalese maybe. But when Derrick reached to retrieve his ball, there came the biggest shock of all. Perched in a lotus position on a low dais along the far wall was a naked man; well, naked except for the crimson coloured turban wrapped around the crown of his head.

"Oh. Excuse me, sir. We just came to retrieve this golf ball. I'm sorry for the broken window and of course we'll cover the damages. Here's my business card."

Derrick reaches into this wallet then extends a crisp, white card toward the seated figure, at the same time pretending not to notice the stranger's nakedness.

"Peace."

"Peace to you, sir."

Natalie is speechless, transfixed by the apparition.

"I am Enrod, the Genie."

"Pleased to meet you, Mister Enrod. My name's Derrick and this is my wife, Natalie. We're here to settle the small matter of your broken picture window. You see, my ball went off course and, well, yeah. It broke your window."

"Window is no problem. You have done Enrod a great favour. Enrod was trapped inside that urn you see lying in ruins before you. When your golf ball came through the window, it shattered the urn and released him. Enrod thanks you."

"We'd still like to pay for the damage, sir. If you'd kindly send a scan of the repair bill to the email address on my card, then I'll gladly cut you a check for the amount. We're very sorry for the inconvenience."

"That is unnecessary. I am a genie. I can fix the damage instantly. Now to celebrate the happy occasion of my liberation and your kindness, I shall grant three wishes, one for each of you and the last wish for myself."

Derrick and Natalie stared at the naked, turbaned man in disbelief. Could it be? Was today their lucky day? Their minds ran through the possibilities like a couple of slot machines on steroids. Enrod the Genie addressed Derrick first.

"Now, what is your wish?"

"Well, I think I'd like to have a hundred million dollars. That way I could quit my job and wouldn't need to murder my boss anymore."

"Granted," the genie declared solemnly in a low, husky voice. "Go to the nearest ATM and check your bank balance. You are now a multi-millionaire."

Derrick clenched both his fists and threw his arms into the air. "YES!" It was better than scoring a double bullseye on the toilet seat.

"Now it is your turn, young woman, to tell Enrod the Genie your wish."

Natalie thought a little longer than Derrick, but not much longer.

"I think I'd like to have a powder blue BMW Nazca M12. It's my dream car."

"Granted," the genie declared, even more solemnly this time. "When you return to your home, a powder blue BMW Nazca M12 will await you in the driveway. Enjoy your new automobile."

Derrick and Natalie grabbed each other's hands, jumping up and down and beaming like a couple of kids on Christmas. This was better than winning the lottery. Oh, thank you, you lovely errant golf ball!

"And now," said the genie, "I shall grant the third wish that I have reserved for myself."

Now what could that possibly be, the couple wondered to themselves? After all, a genie can have anything or transform himself into whatever shape he wants. They'd seen Disney's Aladdin and Prince of Persia and knew that genies were extremely clever beings. What was it that a genie would ever need or wish for?

"You see, because I was trapped inside that urn, I have not been with a woman for over five hundred years." He turned to address Derrick. "Therefore, my wish is to have sex with your wife."

The two golfers stared at each other, at first in utter disbelief.

"Well," Derrick offered, "he *has* made us multi-millionaires, right?"

Natalie was only thinking of the beautiful powder blue BMW Nazca M12 awaiting her in the driveway. She couldn't wait to slide her key into the ignition and rocket off down the highway, showing off the car to her friends.

After an hour, Natalie raised herself up on one elbow from the mattress in the upstairs room where the genie's wish had been fulfilled.

"By the way," he asked, crimson turban still attached to his skull. "May I ask how old you are?"

"I'm twenty-six."

"And how old is your husband?"

"He's thirty-two."

"And for how long has he believed in genies?"

Enter the Alligator



By the following morning, Natalie is still searching for her new BMW Nazca M12. You know, the one the genie had gifted her. She suspects that the car was stolen from her home driveway even before she'd cleaned up in the shower and took her leave of Mister Enrod with a discrete peck on the cheek. She has already placed a distress call to the local gendarmerie but when the police dispatcher asked for the license plate number of the stolen vehicle and Natalie couldn't come up with any, he rudely hung up the phone.

Derrick, on the other hand, is at the bank, trying to determine why the ATM reported a zero balance in their account and not a hundred million dollars.

Natalie decides that perhaps Mister Enrod – all genies are telepathic, you see – had misread her thoughts and therefore confused their home driveway with the Magic Valley Golf Club parking lot where they'd left their beat-up old Toyota before driving a golf ball through his picture window. After all, the poor fellow had been stuffed inside that nasty pottery urn for five centuries which is certainly sufficient time to rust one's magic skills. So, it was only logical that he'd leave the car in one of the visitor slots at the Golf Club. An honest mistake.

And if that's the case, then she'll need to go straight to the nearest carwash because the pine trees surrounding the parking lot drip their sap onto the parked cars and the impertinent birds fluttering around and nesting in the overhead branches deposit their poop-poop all over the cars' windshields. They planned to have their little 1993 Toyota – what Derrick jokingly called 'The Beast' – repainted due to bird damage, but now they've decided to simply junk the thing. From now on, they'll share the new Beamer. Natalie might even let her husband drive the car on occasion, that is, if he's extra nice to her. Anyway, on the way home from the car wash, she'll stop by the auto-supply store and pick up a black nylon car cover with a huge BMW logo splashed across both sides, just to remind nosy neighbours of their new status.

Natalie cruises the Golf Club parking lot, fruitlessly searching for a powder blue BMW Nazca M12 with a key in the ignition and her name on the registration papers, then rather

despondently steers the old Toyota into an empty parking slot and kills the engine. Natalie is a tiny bit disappointed but she's a patient woman and knows in her heart that genies never lie. In the movie 'Aladdin', the Genie did what he was supposed to do, otherwise the boy wouldn't have gotten the girl and, well, to be frank, the hour Natalie had spent with this genie's magic wand stuffed between her legs wasn't at all unpleasant.

In fact, she had experienced what she thought of as a hole-in-one, a seismic event registering 7.5 on her personal Richter Scale that was later reported by the Central Florida Earthquake Watch as a minor earth tremor with its epicentre in the Magic Valley area. Of course, she hadn't mentioned these small details to Derrick. Natalie has begun to wonder what the fee for a divorce lawyer might be and whether Mister Enrod himself was still single. Surely, after a five-hundred-year absence, his first wife would no longer be in enviable condition.

Natalie strolled across the parking lot to the clubhouse where she enquired at the reception desk whether anyone had seen a powder blue BMW Nazca M12 parked in the lot during the past twenty-four hours. She knew that cars parked after mid-night were liable to impoundment and if that were the case then she'd go straight to the towing company and redeem her car. But the desk clerk informed her that no cars had been towed from the premises recently. He recommended that she visit the adjacent lounge and think on the matter. It wasn't at all unusual for women to lose their cars, he added with a wry smile.

"Why, didn't you know that even Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep?"

"No, I didn't. Is that something serious? Which way did they go?"

The clerk pointed toward the barroom.

The sight that met her eyes the moment she crossed the threshold halted Natalie in her tracks. There was Mister Enrod, crouched on his knees atop the shiny mahogany bar, stark naked as per usual and having inserted his male organ into the gaping jaws, now clamped tightly shut, of an enormous alligator.

Now, Natalie knew there were alligators lurking in the backwaters and sometimes even in drainage ditches here in central Florida, but she hadn't expected to encounter one inside the lounge of the Magic Valley Golf Club and certainly not in the act of devouring a man's privates. But then, Mister Enrod was a genie, so maybe he'd simply conjured up the huge, warty reptile for purposes of instruction. The bartender was poised to hand Mister Enrod a couple of tall drinks while a dozen patrons crowded the bar to take in the strange spectacle of a turbaned man being fellated by an alligator.

"And now my friends, as soon as this ugly monster opens its jaws, you shall observe that Mister Enrod, the world's greatest genie, remains unscathed. Skill! Daring! Mystery! I shall now rap the creature between its eyes with this beer bottle. Bartender, prepare our two free drinks as per agreement."

When Mister Enrod the Genie clobbered the alligator on the crown of its head with the beer bottle, its jaws suddenly popped open. The animal's reaction to the blow reminded Natalie of the stainless-steel waste bin she'd purchased at IKEA last week, the one with the foot pedal that caused the lid to mechanically fly open. The stench from rotting chicken guts that emerged from inside the bin was appalling. She wondered what alligator breath smelled like. Eating garbage and dead fish and the occasional decomposing corpse that turned up in the municipal drainage system was sure to cause halitosis. Her impulse was to offer the

animal a breath mint. She was rummaging in her purse for a package of Certs as the gleeful crowd cheered Mister Enrod, still perched on top of the bar.

Miraculously, Mister Enrod's male apparatus emerged unscathed from the jaws of the fearsome reptile. The sharp blow to its head and the broken glass from the shattered bottle didn't seem to faze the animal in the least. Nobody was rushing to ring up the local alligator rights group or summon the Humane Society on its behalf. The glassy eyed creature simply slapped the hardwood surface of the bar with its long, leathery tail while Mister Enrod poured a gin tonic down its throat. The crowd roared its approval.

"Now, my fellow citizens. Would anyone care to repeat this daring performance for the edification and amusement of those present and, as per my agreement with this establishment, to earn himself and the alligator free libations?"

Natalie raised her hand.

"I'll do it," she cried out. "But please don't whack me on the head with the beer bottle."

The Trouble Begins



After climbing down from the bar, Natalie reached into her counterfeit Gucci bag for the toothbrush and small tube of paste she always carried for use after these close encounters of the worst kind. The toothy alligator, however, refused to open its jaws. For not having paid sufficient attention during her training as a veterinary dental assistant, she was now at a loss about how to proceed and the leather harness looped around the reptile's head didn't make her task any easier. The six gin tonics the warty monster had imbibed, plus another two cocktails poured down Natalie's own gullet after her spectacular performance on the bar, doomed her campaign for fresh animal breath to less than effective conclusions.

Natalie was vexed. Mister Enrod, on the other hand, didn't appear in the least perturbed, which pissed her off even more.

"What I want to know, is where's my BMW Nazca M12. Remember? The powder blue one?"

"Ah, yes. That one. Well, you see, my lovely enchantress, after five centuries cooped up inside a pottery urn, one's magic becomes a bit rusty. But let's get this leathery fellow onboard your car and I'll help you find it. I'm sure your new BMW is around here *someplace*.

Half an hour later, the pair are cruising down Florida I-580 with an eight-hundred-pound reptile strapped to the creased roof of the ancient Toyota, now grossly overloaded, coughing and wheezing and struggling along the busy highway. The animal's enormous jaws are cranked wide open and the inrush of air has caused it to sober up enough to pound dents into

the car's thin metal roof with its armoured tail. Another blow and the rear windscreen shatters into a million tiny fragments.

“Whoa!!!!”

Natalie practically loses control of the vehicle, careening wildly from one lane to the next then narrowly missing an eighteen-wheeler speeding towards them from the opposing direction. The trucker leans on his horn and tosses her a one-finger salute.

“I'd offer to drive but I fear my license has expired over the centuries.”

“Yeah, well. If you're a genie, then maybe you can fix the kink in my spine. I'm not used to lifting such large critters.”

“Again, my apologies. You see, five hundred years doubled over inside an urn has caused me this permanent stoop and some serious back issues. I would have helped but, oh, the pain, the pain....”

“Okay. But where to now?”

“To your house. Then you can treat me to a nice relaxing massage to relieve my backache.”

“Sure. But what about the BMW?”

“The BMW, my lovely, is resting right above our heads. Get it?”

“Huh? You mean that alligator is my car? Oh man, you really fucked up this time. For a genie, you're pretty incompetent, I'd say.”

“Everyone is entitled to his or her opinion.”

“Yeah, well, my opinion is that you should turn this hideous monster back into a powder blue BMW Nazca M12 like you promised. Then we can dump this wreck of a Toyota and drive home in style. I can smell its stinking breath from inside here, even with the windows closed. It's worse than pig-shit mixed with turpentine and onions and garnished with a gym sock.”

Mister Enrod places the palm of his hand to his face and exhales, as if sampling his own halitosis. Five centuries without a toothbrush.

“That could prove difficult. On the other hand, I can easily turn you into an alligator. And why not? Then you can enjoy your new BMW on more or less equal terms. I noticed there was some synergy happening with you two back at the golf club lounge.”

The crimson turban is coming undone. Its ripped and frayed end flaps in the wind like fingers of flame licking from the open car window into the slipstream.

Natalie's ears detect the menacing whoop-whoop-whoop of an approaching police siren. She glances toward the rear-view mirror. Blue strobe lights flashing. She turns to Mister Enrod, resting naked in the passenger seat.”

“What now, genie?”

“Relax. Shit happens.”

Beyond the Law



“Stay inside the vehicle, please. I’ll need your driver’s license and insurance papers.”

Natalie reaches into her fake Gucci bag to retrieve her credentials.

“Wow! Where’s that awful stench coming from?” The trooper is pinching his nose with one hand while adjusting his Smokey the Bear hat with the other.

Natalie gets confused and instead hands the officer a toothbrush, the one she’d earlier used on the alligator.

“Would you care to explain why you were driving erratically with an alligator perched on your car’s roof and a naked man in the passenger seat? I suspect we have more than a few misdemeanours here. Let’s see now. Overloading a vehicle, public indecency, a slew of animal rights violations, failure to produce a valid driving license, no insurance. Not to mention the odour. It smells like a cocktail of raw sewage, rotten eggs, vomit, skunk spray, and used surgical swabs. Open the trunk please. There might be a body decomposing inside. I’m calling for backup.”

“No, wait,” Mister Enrod shouts the passenger seat. “I can explain.”

“So?”

“You see, officer. I’m Mister Enrod, owner and CEO of Enrod Enterprises. This young woman visited our establishment this afternoon to enquire about purchasing a pair of alligator shoes. She didn’t fancy any of our showroom stock and commented that she intended to visit the canal and thus capture her own alligator. I informed her that it was a really bad idea.

“After closing shop this evening, I was passing the canal on my journey home and observed this same young person immersed waist-deep in the murky water. She was pointing a shotgun toward a rather large animal swimming rapidly in her direction. I called loudly from the bank, advising that alligators are protected species in this state. All the alligator shoes we sell come from Venezuela. And they’re not even real alligator leather. They’re caiman. Well, anyway, by this time, she’d noticed that the approaching alligator wasn’t wearing any shoes, and so her quest was entirely in vain, but by that time she’d become

hopelessly stuck in the swampy quick-mud of the canal that began to suck her down. She would have been alligator comestibles by now if had I not thrown off my meticulously hand-tailored, grey pin-striped business suit, starched white dress shirt with gold cuff links, and matching silk cravat and dived in to save her life. Unfortunately for me, the distracted gator swam off with all my clothing.”

“You expect me to believe that?”

“Look for yourself. There’s a 12-gauge shotgun in the trunk.”

“And what’s an alligator doing on the roof of this car?”

“It’s not an alligator,” Natalie chimed in. By this time, she’d managed to recover her driving license and insurance papers from inside the voluminous shoulder bag.

“No? Then what is it?”

“It’s a powder blue BMW Nazca M12.”

“I’m calling the loony bin. They’re gonna toss both you idiots into a rubber room. For your own sake. Now, let’s see inside that trunk.”

Natalie pops open the trunk using the small lever inside the car. The officer has advised them to stay inside their vehicle with their hands resting on the dashboard. He places one hand on his firearm.

“Yep, 12-gauge pump shotgun all right, recently fired.”

“You see, officer? We’re telling the truth.”

“Yeah, but I’ll have to call the animal protection guys to deal with the alligator. How’d the thing get onto the car roof, anyway?”

“I told you,” Natalie insisted. “It’s a BMW, not an alligator.”

“She lifted it up there,” Mister Enrod said. “All by herself. Isn’t that amazing? We’re waiting for the animal to have a bowel movement, so I can get my clothes back. Could take a while. Alligators normally defecate every two weeks. They have a rather long digestive tract.”

“A BMW?”

“Yes. You see, Mister Enrod here is a genie. He gifted me a powder blue BMW Nazca M12. Well, it wasn’t exactly a gift. It’s the most expensive BMW in the world. Isn’t that great?”

“Yeah.”

“So, can we go now?”

“Sure. You can go when the van arrives. I’m taking you two characters into custody. And your little pet too.”

“Watch out!” Mister Enrod suddenly screams from the passenger seat, loudly enough that the enlivened alligator on the roof lunges toward the officer who jumps backward into

the traffic stream. The enormous chrome-plated mirror of a passing pickup truck impacts the man's head, sending him reeling toward the ditch. The truck slows for a short distance then, realizing what has just occurred, its driver steps on the gas and speeds away.

Astonished at this turn of events, Natalie rushes toward her naked companion, who has left the Toyota and is holding the prostrate officer's wrist to check his pulse rate.

"Yup. He's dead."

"They're gonna charge us both with murder!" Natalie screams, a look of sheer terror in her eyes. The alligator opens its jaws wide, gulping air, and slaps what remains of the already shattered rear window with its tail.

"Relax, Sweetheart. Worse things can happen; like the time I faced the papal executioner in the piazza of the Castle Gondolfo in 1495 after a night of purloined pleasures between the thighs of the pope's favourite mistress, who by the way was also his daughter. That would be none other than the infamous Lucrezia Borgia if memory serves me right."



Click on the image to learn more about Lucrezia.

Business Before Pleasure

“That’s your husband’s shotgun in the trunk, right?”

“Well, yeah. I guess. He uses it for target practicing on toilet seats with the boss’s picture inside. No way he can miss.”

“Go fetch the gun but don’t touch it with your hands.”

Natalie goes to the open trunk. She slips her hands inside the loose cuffs of her blouse then gingerly lifts out the long-barrelled weapon.

“Okay, what now?”

“Bring it over here.”

Mister Enrod has retrieved the dead officer’s leather gloves from his gadget belt and slipped them onto his own hands. He takes the shotgun from Natalie.

“What’re we gonna do now?” She whispers in a small, frightened voice, the words staggering like a parade of drunks from her lips as if she’d consumed too many gin tonics back at the golf club, which of course she had, otherwise they wouldn’t be in this prickly situation in the first place.

“Strip off his uniform.”

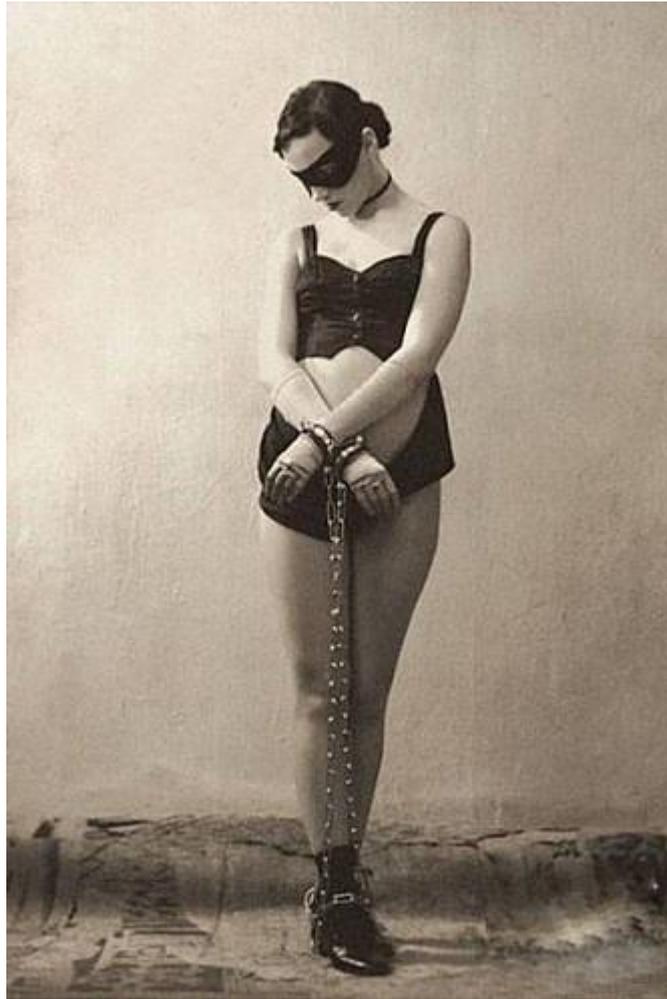
“W-w-why?”

“I need clothes.”

“Can’t you just use magic and conjure up some new clothes?”

“Sure. But they’d be medieval fashion. Damascus style. My magic has its limits. At least walking around naked isn’t anything unusual here in central Florida, so nobody would notice much. But it isn’t Halloween.”

Mister Enrod dons the dead trooper’s uniform. He straps the heavy gadget belt around his waist then extracts a Glock automatic pistol from its holster and checks the clip. Natalie realizes that it’s the first time she’s seen the genie clothed. She thinks maybe a little role playing might be in store for her. You know, kinky stuff. She can’t take her eyes off the shiny metal handcuffs.



Instead, Mister Enrod takes the shotgun in his gloved hands and pumps three quick rounds into the naked officer while the alligator slaps its tail again, as if applauding this barbarous act. The blasts are deafening. He lays the discharged weapon alongside the defiled corpse.

“Let’s go.”

Natalie opens the Toyota door to get into the driver’s seat.

“Not that car. The police cruiser. I’m taking you in for questioning regarding the murder of a highway patrolman.”

“Huh?”

“You heard me. I might even run for Sheriff one day.”

“What about your alligator?”

“It’s not *my* alligator. It’s *your* BMW. You deal with it.”

Hi, I'm Natalie



The massive iron door of a concrete cell in the Central Florida Women's Remand Center clanged shut behind her. CFWRC is one of those Prisons for Profit that Washington is so proud of lately. In fact, shortly after axing his predecessor's bill to prohibit the states from contracting out their prison services to the private sector, the nation's new Chief Executive approved a federal subsidy to build more. After all, his own garish mansion was located here in alligator-infested central Florida, along with the swarming mosquitoes and a soaring crime rate. Not to mention a few dozen species of poisonous snake. Paired with the bill was an executive order prohibiting the press from distributing any more copies of the First Lady's nude photo shoot for a Czechoslovakian men's magazine. If the country wanted the benefits of the one, then it had to also approve the other. Prison building, like pornography, is a growth industry in America.

Natalie, however, isn't in any mood for politics.

"And what are you girls staring at? I thought you jailbirds were wearing bright orange jump suits these days."

Her two sultry cellmates remain mute. Maybe they were instructed by their lawyers not to say anything. This newbie could be a police plant, a spy.

Blondie in the black Wonderbra breaks the ice. "It's a little hot for jumpsuits. No air-con in his dump."

Natalie hadn't noticed the heat. She was too preoccupied with the impending murder indictment to worry about creature comforts. Her lovely head would soon be on the block. She recalled what Mister Enrod had said about messing with Lucrezia.

“So, what’re you in here for, bitch?”

“Murder.”

The two corset-clad women suddenly emerge from their lethargy. The burning cigarettes dangling from their lower lips pop to attention at the mention of ‘murder’. It reminded Natalie of Mister Enrod’s dingle hopper only some twenty-four hours earlier when she’d disrobed in the upstairs room of a ranch-style house adjoining the Magic Valley Golf Club, the one whose picture window her husband had punctured with a GPS-misguided golf ball. In retrospect, it didn’t seem like such a good idea; breaking the window, that is, and releasing a mischievous genie from its bottle, only to do mayhem in the world. Nonetheless, she was still hoping to find the powder blue BMW he’d promised her.

“Murder One, Two or Three?”

It was the brunette with the big melons this time. Natalie thought she seemed the more intellectual member of this tag team. The two were opposites in almost every other way except that their cigarettes fluttered in unison and burned at the same rate of combustion.

“I’m innocent. I didn’t kill anyone.”

“That’s what they all say.”

“It’s true.”

“Who killed him, then?”

“Killed who?”

“You know. Your boyfriend.”

“It wasn’t my boyfriend that got killed. I’m a respectable married woman! I’d never cheat on my spouse. Well, almost never.”

“Okay. We give up. Who did you murder?”

“A policeman.”

“Ooooooh, then you’re gonna fry, Sweetheart. That’s for sure. When they throw the switch it’s gonna black-out the whole city of Tallahassee.”

“I didn’t do it. I swear.”

“So, who did?”

“Well. It was a genie that pulled the trigger. But the guy was already dead, so I guess it wasn’t actually a murder, at least not the pre-medicated kind.”

The two semi-naked denizens look toward each other, then burst out laughing.

“You mean premeditated? Or did you drug the guy first?”

“He got whacked with a car mirror.”

“Interesting. You might just have a good defense for yourself, Honey.”

“Yeah, plead insanity. It’s your only hope.”

When they hear the crisp clatter of a key being inserted into the lock of the cell door, Natalie’s new friends return the cigarettes to their lower lips and restrike the same welcoming posture (see illustration above).

“Natalie? Your lawyer is here to see you. Please step into the visiting room.”

“Lawyer? What lawyer? I didn’t call no lawyer.”

“The lawyer called you. Step out of the cell, please. With your arms extended in front.”

End of sample chapters

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