



JChap 8

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There she is. No dancing brothers are ⁱⁿ this place, nor any [laughing] girls waiting for the ^{white} blue bulb to be exchanged for the ^{blue} white. This is an adult party-what goes on goes on in bright light. The illegal liquor is not secret and the secrets are not forbidden.

Dorcus is comfortable. Two arms clasp her and she is able to rest her cheek on her own shoulder while her wrists cross behind his neck. It's good they don't need much space to dance in because there isn't any. The room is packed. Men groan their satisfaction; women ^{hum} chuckle in anticipation. The music bends, falls to its knees to embrace them all, encourage them all to live a little, why don't you? since this is the it you've been looking for.

Her partner does not whisper in Dorcus' ear. His promises are already clear in the chin he presses into her hair, the fingertips that stay. She stretches up to encircle his neck. He bends to help her do it. They agree on everything above the waist and below: muscle, tendon, bone joint, and marrow cooperate. And if they have a ~~question~~, a moment of doubt, the music ^{it} solves ^{it}, clears up any confusion.

Dorcus is happy. Happier than she has ever been anytime. No white strands grow in her partner's

there is hesitation

at a moment

the dancers hesitate

any question

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not printed

mustache. He is up and coming. Hawk eyed, tireless and a little cruel. He has never given her a present or even thought about it. Sometimes he is where he says he will be; sometimes not. Other women want him--badly--and he has been selective. What they want and the prize it is his to give is his ^{savvy} ~~splendid~~ self. What could a pair of silk stockings be compared to him? No contest. Dorcus us lucky. Knows it. And as happy as she has ever been anytime.

"He is coming for me. I know he is because I know how flat his eyes went when I told him not to. And how they raced afterwards. I didn't say it ^{nicely}, although I meant to. I ^{practised} ~~rehearsed~~ the points; the obvious ones about ^{sneaking around} ~~cheating~~, and having to be secret, and his wife and a couple of different ones too. I never said anything about our ages ^{or} ~~or~~ [tk]. But he argued with me ^{so} ~~and~~ I said leave me alone. Just leave me alone. Get away from me. You bring me another bottle of cologne I'll drink it and die you don't leave me alone.

"He said, you can't die from cologne.

"I said, you know what I mean.

"He said, You want me to leave my wife?

"I said, No! I want you to leave me. I don't want you inside me. I don't want you beside me. I hate this room. I don't want to be here and don't come looking for me.

* or about Acton. Nothing about Acton.

"He said, Why

"I said, Because. Because. Because.

"He said, Because what?

"I said, Because you make me sick.

"Sick? I make you sick?

"Sick of myself and sick of you.

"I didn't mean that part...about being sick. He didn't. Make me sick, I mean. What I wanted to let him know was that I wanted girlfriends to talk to about it. About things. About stuff. To be with them and everything and I couldn't talk to anybody about him. I tried to tell [x] and she laughed before she stared at me and then frowned.

"He is coming for me. Has been looking for me all over. Maybe tomorrow he'll find me. Maybe tonight. Way out here; all the way out here.

"When we got off the street car I thought he was there in the doorway next to the candy store, but it wasn't him. NOT yet. I think I see him everywhere. He is coming.

"He didn't care what I looked like. I could be anything, do anything--and it pleased him. Something about that made me mad. I don't know.

"This man, my ^{Acron}boyfriend tells me when he doesn't like the way I fix my hair. ^{I do it how it likes it} I never wear glasses when he is with me and I changed my laugh for him to one he

likes better. I think he does. I know he didn't like it before. And I play with my food now. Joe liked for me to eat it all up and want more. ^{Acton} My boyfriend gives me a quiet look when I ask for seconds. He worries ^{about} me that way. Joe never did. Joe didn't care what kind of woman I was. He should have. I cared. I wanted to have a personality and with ^{Acton} ~~this~~ man I'm getting one. I have a look now. All my bracelets are just below my elbow. Three straps are across my instep and at home I have shoes with leather cut-out to look like lace.

"He is coming for me. Maybe tonight. Maybe here.

^{Acton} "He will look, then, and see how close me and ~~my~~ boyfriend dance. That I rest my head on my arm holding on to him. The hem of my skirt taps the calves of my legs while we rock back and forth, then side to side. The whole front of us touches. Nothing can get between us we are so close. Lots of girls here want to be doing this with him. I can see them when I open my eyes to look past his neck. I rub my thumbnail over his nape so the girls will know I know they want him. He doesn't like it and turns his head to make me stop touching his neck that way. I do. ^{of here. This is not the place for}

④ Joe wouldn't care. I could rub anywhere on him. He let me draw pictures in places he had to have a mirror to see. ^{Acton} ~~ing. This man is holding me up but I am falling~~

^{any} Anything that happens after this party breaks up is

nothing. It's like war. Everyone is handsome, shining just thinking about other people's blood. As though the red wash flying from veins not theirs is infused into their faces making them glow with health. Inspiring. Afterwards some chatter and recapitulation of what went on; nothing though like the action itself and the beat that pumps the heart. In war or at a party everyone is wily, intriguing; goals are set and altered; alliances re-arranged. Partners and rivals devastated; new pairings triumphant. The excitement here is ~~do~~^Y dorcus' taste because here--with grown up^S and as in war--people play for keeps.

"He is coming for me. And when he does he will see I'm not his anymore. I want to please ~~this~~^{Acton} man; do anything to please him. He expects it. With Joe I pleased myself and Joe encouraged me to. With him I worked the stick of the world, the power in my hand."

Oh, the room--the music--the people leaning in doorways. This is the place where thing^S pop. anybody from outside trying to disrupt or make a dent in this crowd is a fool. Any thrown-away lover in wet unlaced shoes should stay out of here. This is not the place for romance; this is the place for [tk].)

"He is here. Oh, look. God. He's crying. I am falling. ~~This~~^{Acton} man is holding me up but I am falling anyway. Heads are turning to look where I am falling.

It's dark and now it's light. I am lying on a bed. Somebody is wiping sweat from my forehead, but I am cold, so cold. I see mouths moving; they are all saying something to me I can't hear. Just there at the foot of the bed is my ^{Acton} new man. Blood is on his coat ^{jacket} and he is dabbing at it with a white handkerchief. Now a woman takes the coat from his shoulders. He is annoyed by the blood. It's my blood, I think, and it has stained through his jacket to his shirt. The hostess is shouting. Her party is ruined. My ^{Acton} new man is angry; the woman brings his jacket back and it is not clean the way it was before and the way he likes it.

"I can hear them now.

" 'Who? Who did this?'

"I am tired. Such sleepiness. I ought to be wide awake because something important is happening.

" 'Who did this? Who did this to you?'

"They want me to say his name. Pretend the world did not rock from a stick beneath my hand. Felice leans close to me. I try to say with my mouth to come nearer. Her eyes are bigger than the ceiling fixture. She wants the name. She doesn't know what it was like to be named, provided for, and set loose in the world without fear. There in that room with the ice sign in the window. A sort of gift; one I could use when it was my time to name, to provide for and to set somebody else loose in

the world without fear. Felice leans close and I scream it to her. I think I am screaming it. I think I am.

"Now it's clear. Through the doorway I see the dining room table. On it is a brown bowl, flat, low like a tray, full to spilling with lemons. I want to sleep, but it is clear now. So clear in the dark wooden bowl the pile of lemons. Bright. I see. I see. It's bright."

is comfortable. She was sleep her and she is able to rest her cheek on her own shoulder while her wrists cross behind her neck. It's good they don't need much space to dance because there isn't any. The room is packed. Don grows their satisfaction: women hum anticipation. The music leads, leads to its knees to embrace them all, encourage them all to live a little, why don't you? since this is the it you've been looking for.

Her partner does not whisper in Dorcas' ear. His promises are already clear in the chin he pressed into her neck, the fingertips that stay. She stretches up to embrace his neck. He bends to help her do it. They agree on everything above the waist and below: muscle, tendon, bone joint and marrow cooperate. And if the dancers hesitate, have a moment of doubt the music will solve and dissolve any question.

Dorcas is happy. Happier than she has ever been anytime. No white strands grow in her partner's