

# The Gibbous Moon

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Snow had just begun to fall as Todd exited his loft, intent on purchasing a paper and a meal. By the time he'd triple-locked his door, descended the three flights of stairs and weaved his way past bikes and boxes in the hallway to the street, a tissue of snow outlined every door and windowsill, each street lamp and the telephone lines strung across the street. To Todd it looked like piping on a suit.

Coatless, hunching up his shoulders to his ears, he thrust his hands into his pockets and then shuffled, almost slalomed down the street. Through flakes that parachuted down in waves, now, spotlight in the street lamps' glare, red neon from The Peter Pan glowed warmly down the block.

Todd thought of their clam chowder, served in thick white bowls, accompanied by crusty bread and cutlery of heavy silver, wrapped in napkins stiff with starch and whiter than the snow that swirled outside the steamed-up window front. He tasted clams and felt the linen on his fingers as he passed the restaurant and reached out for the door. He froze. Something tugged at his attention and he turned, under the neon sign.

Retracing his steps he recognized it in a lingerie store window front display. A female mannequin, torso only, made of plastic, opaque, white, lit from within, – glowed inside the store. It was dressed in a delicate black bra and thong, made partly out of pearls. A salesgirl, hanging bustiers on a rack, looked up as he entered, a bell ringing above the door. He circled the display then turned his head and asked, "How much?"

"The bra is thirty-seven fifty, the panties twenty-five."

"No," Todd said softly, "How much for the mannequin?"

"Oh," the girl said stepping closer, "yes, it's beautiful, isn't it? I dressed it myself."

"All it needs is elbow length black evening gloves," Todd muttered.

"And matching heels," the salesgirl quipped.

Todd looked toward her sharply. "How much for, everything?" he asked.

"The mannequin isn't for sale," she laughed. "But the lingerie is."

In the restaurant Todd got a booth and placed his purchase, in a pink bag, opposite. The waitress, leaning down, handed him a menu and afforded Todd a view down the front of her blouse. She smiled and said, "I haven't seen you for a while."

"Uh, no, uh Vicky," he said, turning his eyes from her breasts to her name tag. "I've been busy."

"I can see," she said, looking at the bag. "How come you never ask me out?"

"Too shy," he told her, then he slid his left hand in her blouse and in between her bra and her left breast.

She hesitated just a moment, then said, huskily, "You're not shy now."

He pulled his zipper down with his right hand and freed his penis from his pants. It was fully erect and, placing her hand around it, he encouraged her to masturbate him as he rubbed her tits. "Are you the same guy that's been coming in here for a year?" she asked, then moaned a little as he came. Todd left the lingerie as tip after he ate.

Outside, it was snowing hard as he walked slowly back to the store. Ignoring the two plaster figurines that flanked it, Todd approached until his mannequin was opposite, – three feet and a pane of glass away. The same salesgirl watched as Todd advanced a step, hands outstretched, and ran hard into the glass. Snow fell off his head and shoulders and the glass shook dangerously. Her hand flew to her mouth when she saw Todd was obviously, unashamedly erect. Her other hand flew to her crotch and covered it when he began to hump the glass.

Back in his studio, Todd paced between his bed and the back door. He had made coffee when he first returned, having bolted when the salesgirl screamed, but he shook so much he'd poured it on his hand. He waved his hand in the air now as he paced. Suddenly he stopped, went to his workroom and removed three metal panels from a rack. They were car parts, – hoods and doors – paint stripped and polished to a metal sheen. Stripping to his boxers and construction boots, he pulled thick gloves onto his hands and slid his welding mask over his head. Turning valves on two tanks, – one red, one green, he sparked his torch alight, then – holding it before his mask, adjusted the flame.

Hours later he sat on his haunches and hinged up the mask. He wiped sweat from his brow with his

forearm, spreading grime onto his face. Before him, on a three foot metal stand, a hand perched, palm flat, fingers and thumb curled. Metal ticked as welds and solder cooled. Lifting it in an embrace, ignoring the heat – he carried it to the centre of the living room and placed it on a Persian rug, then shone two pencil spots toward it from a bar. He stood for several seconds, looking, then put on his trench coat and left by the back door and down the fire escape, sheltering his face from the wind and beating snow.

As an alarm rang wildly down the lane, Todd returned, running, with the mannequin half hidden by his coat. The electrical cord hung down between his legs and bounced on every step as he clanged up the fire escape and made his way inside. He placed the figure on the sculpture, ran the wire to the wall and plugged it in. Turning off the overheads he flicked the spotlights on then circled the display. He stood before it in his boots, unbelted his trench coat and slowly opened it. Holding the folds behind him with his elbows, he bent and pulled his boxers to his knees. Then he spread his legs as far as the elastic would allow. He took his cock, erect already, in his hand and squeezed. Forearm bulging from the pressure, he pounded his fist into his groin relentlessly until he bent his knees, threw back his head and growled. He came in arcing spurts that landed at the sculpture's base.

He woke up on the floor at three a.m., sore at his hips and shoulders. He urinated in the bathroom, shaved, shampooed his hair and washed the grit from his face, chest and shoulders in the shower, rinsed, then stepped onto the rug. He was achingly erect, again. Stuffing himself as best he could into his shorts and pants, he padded barefoot to the kitchen and placed eggs and milk onto the counter from the fridge. Finally, he looked toward the mannequin, licked his lips and nodded, wearily. Nostrils flared, he finished dressing, put the food away and left.

It was snowing hard now, twirled by the wind, piled into drifts in doorways, beside cars and garbage bins, whisked into the air and in his face. Todd bent his head and put his hand before his eyes. He wanted breakfast but the only restaurant still open was the Burger King. He ordered, got a bag to go then spied a woman looking at him from a booth. She was staring at his crotch. Looking down he saw it bulged with his erection. He slid his zipper down and pulled his penis through his fly as he approached her. Then he pressed his hip against the booth back, hiding himself from the room, and presented his erection to the woman as if she'd ordered it. She looked at it for moments, then up into his eyes. Her hand reached for the ketchup and, still looking up, she squeezed a line along its length. She bent her head, stuck her tongue out, licked the ketchup from his head and sucked it in her mouth. She bobbed her head along his shaft, slowly at first, then faster. He put his hand onto her head, pulling her closer to him as he pushed his penis farther down her throat. When he finished, pulled out of her mouth and put himself away, she wiped cum and ketchup from the corners of her mouth with a white napkin, printed with a yellow crown.

Back in the loft, she draped her coat onto a chair back, kicked her boots off then undid her blouse

while circling the statuette. "Where'd you get the girlfriend," she asked Todd, "the girlfriend store?" From behind, he clamped a hand over her mouth and – with the other – reached under her skirt and yanked her panties to her knees then let them fall. Bending, he retrieved them, balled them in his fist then stuffed them in her mouth, making her breathe through her nose. Her breath whistled as he spread her legs with his foot, bent her at the waist and pushed her bra above her breasts. He ran his right hand, roughly over each one, rolling her nipples on his palm while his penis hardened, rose and entered her vagina with a minimum of guidance from his hips. He thrust himself inside her, hard, releasing her breast and grabbing a handful of her hair. She fell to her knees and he with her, still inside, pulling her hair like a rein, grinding himself into her as far and hard as he could. He fucked her, kneeling before the mannequin, head bowed, looking up at it.

He woke up in the same position, in the same spot as before, unaware of what day or what time of day it was. He was ravenous. He was also erect, again. Naked but for his boots, he struggled to his feet, looking for and finding no sign she had stayed. He saw she'd eaten both his burger and his fries, leaving a crumpled brown bag and his drink on the kitchen counter. He pulled the lid and straw off, drank a quarter of the Coke then poured the rest over his hard on. He went to the fridge for eggs but pressed himself against the door instead. Extending his arms he curled his fingers 'round the back, turned his head toward the mannequin and, embracing the appliance, humped the cool enamel 'til he came, crying out in short, staccato bursts.

When the police broke in they found him kneeling on the floor, bleeding from the forehead and his penis, but masturbating still. There was broken plastic all around him, spattered with his blood as was a light fixture with broken bulb. He was keening in a high-pitched voice and staring out the window at the moon. It was waxing gibbous, gleaming in the twilight, whiter than the snow that covered everything.