Culture Shock Ch. 14

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From online to real-life in 23 chapters.

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Elaine touched up her lipstick and went to the toilet again. She'd eaten little and her stomach warred against her. When she returned, she slid twenty bucks and her front door key into her pocket and stood in front of the mirror in her bedroom, taking a deep breath. Her heart was thumping and she couldn't stop trembling. Her reflection stared back at her.

I don't know if I can do this.

The faces of her roommates appeared at her door. "What's taking so long?" asked Kendra.

"You're going to be late," Chelsea warned.

Elaine looked at her watch. "I still have a few minutes."

"You're shaking," Chelsea said. "Are you okay?"

"She's pale too," agreed Kendra.

“I’m okay,” Elaine insisted. She looked in the mirror again. She didn’t think she looked pale but she pinched her cheeks anyway.

“C’mon, Elaine,” Kendra said. “It’s just a guy.”

Chelsea tried to be helpful. “It’ll be fun. God, Elaine. You’ll have him eating out of the palm of your hand in no time. Stop worrying. And if he’s a goose, you can bail when I call you. Do you want me to call a bit earlier? I can call at quarter past if you want.”

Elaine swallowed. “Half past is okay. I might not figure him out until then.”

“Elaine,” Kendra said, with her hands on hips. “You don’t need to ‘figure guys out’. All you have to do is decide which head you want them think with.” Elaine’s roommates thought that was hilarious.

Elaine rolled her eyes and looked at the mirror again. “Y... You don’t understand.” She made fists and shook them out, hoping to ease the tension. She took another deep breath.

“We could come if you want,” said Kendra.

“Or arrive five minutes after you... Sit close by...” Chelsea winked.

“I don’t think so,” Elaine mumbled. She glanced at the two girls. They had no idea what she was getting into. To her reflection she said, “I can do this. I want to do this.”

“Go get him, girl,” said Chelsea.

“Yeah. Knock him dead,” agreed Kendra.

It was one of those cosy, late summer days. Thin clouds drifted laconically across the azure sky. Semester was coming to a close and Fall was around the corner. Being a Saturday afternoon, traffic was light. It would thicken later, when the nightclubs started to open. A light breeze blew off the mountains and it had rained a little before sun up, producing freshness in the air that was reminiscent of Spring.

Elaine thought memories were made of days like these. She committed herself to putting one foot after the other and soon enough she’d travelled three of the three and a half blocks. Waiting at the lights, she looked ahead and saw a figure standing outside Mario’s .

Could it be him?

She wanted to walk across the intersection, but she didn’t trust herself. It looked clear. But her head wasn’t. She glanced up and down the road again and thankfully the lights started changing.

I know it’s him.

The male figure up ahead was obviously waiting for someone. For a moment Elaine slowed down, hoping her heart would too. He looked right at her as she got closer, and then looked around, then back again. Then he started staring. The smile that spread across Elaine's face was unbidden. There was no way to control it. She wanted to be cool. She wanted to be calm. But her heart felt like it was about to leap right out of her chest!

It's him.

In the shadows of the awning in front of the coffee shop, little about him was discernable from fifty yards. He was tall and wearing a brown leather jacket over a white t-shirt, jeans and runners. Elaine almost giggled with relief. She allowed herself to think that maybe she did know him.

Whoa, girl.

Play it straight.

She bit her lip hard, trying at least to get a grip. It worked a little. As the distance between them diminished, she saw his smile, and it relit hers.

"I'm very glad you could make it," Gary said as Elaine drew within speaking distance.

His smile was almost mesmerising, but Elaine managed to slow down and stop, instead of walking straight into his arms. Out of reach, she managed to say what she'd been practicing all the way there.

“I’m pleased to meet you. I’m Elaine.”

“And I’m Gary. Let’s get a coffee and talk.”

Elaine swallowed and nodded. She could hardly tear her eyes from him, and when she could, she was glad she didn’t need to say anything for a few minutes. Like a gentleman he opened the door to Mario’s and ushered her in before him.

A waitress approached. Briefly glancing at Elaine, she addressed Gary. “How can I help you folks?”

“I rang earlier. A booking in the name of Duke.”

“Yes, Sir. Please follow me.” She glanced at Elaine again and spun on her heels, heading deep into the restaurant. Following the waitress, Elaine thought they were heading toward the undercover area at the rear of the restaurant. Instead they veered through hanging beads and up a staircase that looked like it had been carpeted in the eighties. Elaine had never been into this part of Mario’s before. She didn’t even know it existed!

The stairwell itself was skinny, and Gary fell in behind her. She had the distinct impression he was checking out her ass and she glanced over her shoulder. Sure enough, his eyes were on her butt as she climbed the stairs. She poked her tongue out and grinned, hearing him say, “Feisty,” as she mounted the last of the steps.

At the top, the waitress pointed out the bathrooms then pushed open French doors into the sunshine. “Your table, Sir... and Miss,” she said, her arm out, guiding them in the direction of their destination.

Elaine stepped onto the balcony with Gary right behind her. Another couple were at the other end and Elaine nodded courteously toward them before heading where the waitress had indicated. As if out of nowhere, Gary appeared and held out her chair.

Feeling a little like a princess, Elaine let Gary slide the chair under her. The table itself was draped in white lace and made of wrought iron, matching the comfortably cushioned chairs.

There was a long-stemmed rose on the table in front of her and she stared at it, unsure what to do.

“I thought I’d at least make it memorable,” Gary said, breaking the silence.

Elaine tried to find her voice. “It’s unexpected.” Her eyes met his. This wasn’t going to be easy.

“Pretend it’s not there.”

“What if I don’t want to?”

“Then pretend it is there.” He picked up the rose and placed it on the far side of the table. For a split second she wanted it. Badly .

The waitress interrupted the exchange, handing them menus. “Will you be eating?”

Gary looked questioningly at Elaine and she blushed, shaking her head. He replied, “No, thank you.”

The waitress promptly picked up the cutlery then with pen at the ready, asked, “What would you folks like today?”

“Two cappuccinos,” Gary decided, watching Elaine. She nodded almost imperceptibly. “White,” he said, and she nodded again. “No su-“ Elaine shook her head slowly, enjoying the game. “One with no sugar, one with one.” Elaine grinned. “And cinnamon snaps. Enough for both of us.”

“Yes, Sir,” said the waitress, taking the menus and disappearing.

Elaine smiled at Gary, unsure what to say. He took off his jacket and hung it on the back of his chair, grinning at her. If anything he looked better than his picture, and Elaine could hardly believe she was sitting right in front of him. She had to concentrate on more than how he filled his t-shirt.

“You can almost see my house from here.”

Elaine blinked. “Sorry?”

“Look,” he said, nodding over the balcony. Elaine turned her eyes, and for the first time she noticed the incredible view. From the balcony she could see right over the tops of suburbia, all the way to the

blue hills in the distance. “I live at the foot of those hills. Well... Maybe just on the other side.”

Elaine nodded, unable to speak as she stared.

“I’m glad you came. I didn’t give you much time. I was sorry about that for a few minutes, but I’m not any more.”

“I, um,” Elaine began, clearing her throat. “I didn’t take long to decide.”

He grinned. “Will you forgive me?”

Elaine tried to suppress a smile but it didn’t work. “Yes.”

“Good.”

“I hope you drove carefully.” Elaine looked at Gary and immediately knew she’d made a mistake. A quizzical look crossed his face, as if she’d said something strange.

He simply said, “Trust me.”

Elaine wasn’t sure what he was talking about, but almost immediately she had an epiphany.

It doesn’t matter.

She looked into his eyes and for a split second it was all there. Everything she hoped for... everything she’d dreamed. This man was different . “I trust you,” she whispered.

“Not so fast. I just meant about driving.” He grinned. He was having fun.

Elaine returned to the present with a rush. “I...”

“Just relax. Take a few deep, head-clearing breaths.”

Elaine did. She started to feel better just as the waitress returned. “Will there be anything else, Sir? Miss?” Elaine shook her head, her eyes flicking to Gary’s momentarily.

“Everything is fine,” he said. “Thank you.”

“I’ll be back to check on you soon.” With that the waitress disappeared again.

Elaine leaned forward, adding sugar to her coffee and stirring it. She glanced at Gary and he was staring at her. “ What?” she asked playfully.

“You don’t want to know,” he replied softly.

Elaine raised an eyebrow and froze like a statue. “I don’t?”

“No... You don’t.” His grin held a fascination of future possibilities. His eyes too told a story. There was something wise about them. “But I can assure you that in the future, you won’t have to wait long to know what’s on my mind.”

Elaine’s cheeks reddened and a ripple of pleasure scorched her skin. She broke his gaze, staring instead at her cup. There was no way she could pick it up. Her hands were shaking too much! She tried sitting up straighter in an attempt to get herself together. She had to open her mouth to stop her breath hissing through her clenched teeth.

Seconds ticked by.

“And I thought I was nervous,” Gary said and winked. “Would you like to talk, or would you rather I did?” he asked.

Elaine swallowed again. Her nipples were throbbing harder than they ever had. “Y... You,” she whispered. “Please.”

“All right. Show me how well you can listen, okay?”

Elaine brightened a little. She could do that. “Okay.”

He sipped his coffee and licked the foam from his top lip. “I was thinking on the way over here... Well, I’ve been thinking a lot for the last week really, but I had some interesting thoughts on the way here...”

Elaine nodded and sipped too, watching Gary’s eyes. She glanced at his lips. God, they were beautiful. They started moving.

“As you know, when we first met I was intrigued by you. Intelligent. Fresh. Innocent. Lots of words come to mind. Did you know that asking questions is one of the most important traits of a new submissive?”

Elaine shook her head.

“It is,” he continued, lowering his voice and leaning closer. “Asking questions gives you the opportunity to listen. Submissives who don’t listen aren’t very good submissives, are they?”

Elaine shook her head again.

“That’s right. But it’s also true to say that Dominants who don’t listen aren’t very good Dominants. From the beginning, I’ve tried to listen very carefully to everything you’ve said. I feel like I know you.

The real you. The you inside . And I like you. That’s why I’m here.”

“Th... Thank you, Gary.” Elaine bit her lip hard. She hoped it wasn’t bleeding.

“It’s okay to be nervous. So am I.”

“Why?”

“Why am I nervous?”

Elaine nodded.

“I’m nervous because I’m in the presence of a beautiful woman.”

He’s gotta stop smiling like that.

Elaine giggled. “Charmer.”

“There she is,” he said. “ There’s the girl I’ve been talking to.”

Elaine felt herself blush all over again, this time in pleasure. “I... I’m sorry. I’m not good at this. I haven’t had much practice.”

“Which, to me, means you haven’t learned bad habits.”

“Oh.” She hadn’t thought of it like that.

“Raw clay.”

“Sorry?”

Just then, the waitress arrived, interrupting their conversation. “Excuse me. I’m sorry, but there are two girls downstairs who wanted to track down someone called Elaine . You fit the description, Miss. Is this your phone?” She held out the mobile phone and Elaine laughed nervously and nodded. The waitress glanced at Gary then back to Elaine. “They said they’d call soon.”

“Thank you,” said Elaine, blushing deeply. She took the phone and placed it on the table. Within a minute of the waitress leaving, it rang. “I’ll just get this,” she said to Gary, shaking her head as she picked it up.

Caller ID told her it was Chelsea. “Hey, Chelsea,” she said. Gary just smiled and watched her.

“Oh, thank God you’re okay,” Chelsea gasped. “I rang earlier, you know just in case, and the bloody thing went off in your room, you ditz.”

“So now I’m a ditz?” asked Elaine. She winked at Gary and he chuckled.

“Yes! We ran all the way here! Kendra nearly needed a paramedic!”

“Oh stop it.”

“Okay, I’m kidding. Actually we stopped for some juice. I’m glad he’s not an axe murderer, though.”

“No,” said Elaine. “He’s not an axe murderer.”

Gary laughed out loud.

“Is that him?” asked Chelsea.

“Yeah,” said Elaine.

“He sounds gorgeous.”

“Go home.”

Chelsea told Kendra that Elaine wanted them to go home. Elaine heard Kendra say, “No way. I want to check him out!”

“I think you’ve been outvoted.”

“Ugh. All right. I gotta go.”

“We won’t make a scene. Don’t worry.”

“Okay. And thanks.”

“No problem. Chat later.”

Elaine pressed the end call button, put down the phone and chuckled. “Sorry about that.”

“Ditz,” Gary teased.

“Axe murderer,” Elaine replied. They both laughed. “I can’t believe I forgot my frigging phone.”

“I’m just glad everything is okay.”

Their eyes met again. Elaine whispered, “Yeah. Me too.”

Gary picked up his cup. “Feeling better?”

“Yes. Thanks for being patient with me.”

“My pleasure.”

Two simple words. ‘My pleasure’. They touched something deep inside Elaine and her eyes misted over. For a moment she thought she was going to cry. She shook her head and blinked.

Gary regarded her intently. His eyes said he knew she was affected by something, but he didn’t push. “Before your well organised and executed call back ...” He winked. “I mentioned ‘raw clay’...”

“That’s right.” Despite her plans going belly-up, Elaine felt better. The laughter must have helped.

“Well, I’m not happy with the metaphor, but I meant you were yet to be moulded.”

“I’m yet to be a lot of things.”

“Yeah. Let’s steer clear of that subject.” Gary winked again.

Elaine looked down and whispered, “Yes, Sir.” She didn’t mean to say it. It just popped out. When she looked up at him, his smile was so gentle, so genuine, she melted.

“We have a lot to talk about, but not today.”

“Is... Is it all right to want something?”

“It depends what it is.”

“I want... I want a moment. Something to hold onto.”

“Give me permission to touch you.”

“Please... touch me.”

Moving his chair closer, Gary held out his hands, palms open. “Give me your hands.”

Elaine did. When they made contact, it was electric.

“Close your eyes.”

Elaine swallowed and did as she was told.

He took her wrists, raising her hands to his face and laying them gently on his skin. “Keep your eyes closed. Pretend you are blind.”

Elaine’s heart hammered in her chest as she caressed his face as gently as she could. She trailed her fingertips along his square jaw, on down his neck, feeling the beat of his pulse. He was warm. And masculine. Hard muscle under tight skin. Back up she traversed, tracing his cheekbones, his eyes and eyebrows.

“Mmmmm,” he murmured quietly.

With her fingertips Elaine could feel that his eyes were closed. Down the sides of his nose they trekked, lingering as she enjoyed the smooth, soft feel of his lips.

“All right,” said Gary quietly. “Enough. You can open your eyes now.”

Elaine glowed. “Thank you, Si... Gary.”

He grinned and gazed into her eyes. Again he whispered, “My pleasure.”

She gulped. Each time he said it, her skin prickled with delight. “Please,” her mouth said, before her brain had a chance to stop it. “Do me.”

Gary chuckled. “Would you like to rephrase that?”

“Oh, my God . I... I meant...”

“Shhh... Relax. I’m teasing.”

Elaine’s cheeks were so hot. Her skin tingled in anticipation. Their eyes met again, and this time he closed his. Elaine’s eyes closed too and she tried not to moan as the feeling of his gentle, yet firm hands caressed her face. He investigated every curve and hollow as if trying to remember them. He explored her lips, very slowly brushing across the bottom one with his thumb, barely touching. Elaine couldn’t help herself. She gasped for breath, her mouth opening and her tongue instinctively making contact.

Her eyes shot open and he was staring at her and smiling softly. She swallowed again but it was no use. Her mouth was completely dry. She couldn’t have spoken even if she knew what to say.

“Our time is almost up.”

“We don’t have to stop now. We only just got here.”

“The coffee is cold, Elaine. Look at your watch.”

It was almost four P.M. “I can’t believe it...”

He smiled again. “We should always stick to our plans. Besides, I have things to do at home.”

“Oh, yes. I’m sorry. I...”

“C’mon, I’ll walk you to the door and let your roommates satisfy their curiosity.”

“They’re gonna flip.”

Gary tilted his head, as though he had no idea what Elaine was talking about. “What do they know about me?”

“Almost nothing.” Elaine grinned. “Just regular stuff.”

“Good girl,” Gary said, then realised what he’d said. “Aw, shit. Sorry. I wasn’t going to let that slip.”

“It’s okay. Don’t take it back. I want it.”

“It’s yours.”

“Thank you.”

Gary stood but Elaine didn’t trust her legs. She needed a second.

“This is yours too,” said Gary, holding out the single rose. “If you’d like it.”

“Yes! I mean, yes. Please. Thank you, Sir. I mean Gary.” Elaine giggled. “This went well, didn’t it?” she laughed and rolled her eyes. Gratefully she took the rose and climbed unsteadily to her feet, adjusting her jeans. She leaned on the table.

“Are you okay?” Gary asked.

“Yes. I’m... fine. I shouldn’t tell you how turned on I am, should I?”

Gary shook his head and smiled. “No. You shouldn’t.” He winked boyishly and Elaine’s knees trembled but held. He said, “I’ll go first down those stairs.”

“Thanks.” Elaine picked up her phone and slipped it into her pocket.

“Yeah, don’t forget that.”

Elaine laughed easily. At the top of the stairs Gary took a step and looked back at her. “Hold my shoulder. I don’t want you falling.”

Stepping in behind him, Elaine’s scanned his broad back. He was carrying his folded jacket in one hand and there was nothing but a thin white t-shirt between his skin and Elaine’s fingers. She slipped them around his shoulder, the muscle hard and hot and alive. She was holding the stem of the rose in her other hand and she was sure thorns were piercing her skin, but she couldn’t even feel it.

“I’m paying. Don’t complain,” Gary said softly when they reached the foot of the stairs.

“Thank you.” Elaine slipped her hand around Gary’s bicep as they stood at the register taking care of things. She searched out her roommates and found them sitting by the window. Chelsea made eyes and Kendra shook her hand like she’d burnt it. Elaine hushed them and looked up at Gary. He’d caught the exchange and Elaine blushed even more.

Gary leaned down and breathed in her ear. “I’m not going to kiss you on the mouth, so don’t expect it.”

She nodded, unsure whether she was relieved or disappointed.

He led her to the front door of the coffee shop. Glancing at her roommates, Elaine had to try hard not to laugh. Both of them were staring at Gary with their mouths open as they passed by. Elaine glanced up at him but he hadn’t even looked at them.

He held open the front door so she could step outside. He joined her and held her gently by the shoulders, smiling down on her. “Would you like a hug?”

She nodded. “Yes.”

Gary wrapped his arms around Elaine and all kinds of emotions crashed through her. Being careful with the rose, she held his waist and bathed in his scent, turning her head, resting her cheek against his chest. His hands ran slowly up and down her back. It seemed to go on and on forever and it felt like heaven.

“I have to go,” Gary said finally.

“Okay.”

“I’ll talk to you tonight.”

“At nine?” Elaine asked, remembering his mother was visiting.

“Maybe earlier.”

Kiss me. Kiss me. Kiss me. Elaine blushed hotly at the thought. “I... I’ll leave the thingy on. I mean, Messenger.”

“I’ll get there when I can.”

“Okay.”

“Thank you, Elaine. You’ve made my day.” He grinned. “Who am I kidding? You’ve made my year .”

Elaine felt playful and light-headed. “Just your year?” She took a step back and pouted like an overpaid actress.

Gary chuckled. “Don’t get cocky.”

“What if I want to get cocky?” She glanced ‘down below’ and surprised the life out of herself by noticing the distinct outline of his thick cock in his jeans. She could hardly tear her eyes from it. She gulped and looked up at him. He was posing with a fist on his hip, the other hand hanging loosely, holding his jacket.

“See something you like?” he teased.

“No! I mean... I’m not saying anything!” Elaine giggled and covered her mouth, glancing at the window of Mario’s . The windows were tinted and from the outside one couldn’t see in. She suddenly felt like she was naked.

Gary folded his jacket over his arm, covering his crotch. “Is that better?”

Elaine was feeling mischievous. “I don’t know about better.”

“Stop it. You’re making it worse. I have to go.”

Elaine didn’t know what came over her, but she found enough courage to step closer and look up at him, their mouths inches apart. “Thank you for meeting me,” she whispered, their bodies almost touching.

Gary’s smile morphed into an intense stare that captured Elaine like a fly in a web.

In the blink of an eye, butterflies attacked. Her chest strained for air as larger and larger breaths were needed to stay ahead of the surging adrenaline. She couldn’t move, and she couldn’t look away. As soon as she squeezed her thighs together, her pussy clenched hard, then spasmed in cruel flutters across the surfaces of her slick inner membranes, sending hot blood throbbing into her clit.

“I have to go, now ,” Gary hissed through clenched teeth, breaking the moment into a million pieces and turning on his heel. In moments he was walking away from her and Elaine gasped, watching him, hoping and praying he’d look back.

Just before he rounded the block, he stopped and looked back at her.

He smiled and then he was gone.

“Oh. My. God!” It was Kendra, bouncing out of the café, side by side with Chelsea.

Chelsea had to get in on the act. “He IS a fucking God!”

“Jesus, Elaine! Are there any more like him at home? I’ll take a dozen!” Kendra shrieked.

Chelsea noticed something wasn’t right. “Are you okay?” she asked, patting Elaine’s back lightly.

“What’s wrong?” asked Kendra. “Don’t tell me he dumped you.”

“No,” Elaine said, trying to catch her breath. “It’s... It’s not that.”

“Then what is it?”

“Yeah, tell us.”

“He likes me,” Elaine replied, almost too stunned for words.

Chelsea and Kendra looked at each other then burst out laughing. “You’re nuts,” said Kendra, threading her arm through Elaine’s.

“Yeah. Certifiable ,” said Chelsea, taking Elaine’s other arm and heading for home.

“Totally,” agreed Elaine.

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Opening a new email, Elaine stared at it as though it would write itself. Nothing came to her. Nothing needed to be said. She attached her BDSM checklist to it and typed in Gary’s address. Reluctant to press ‘send’, she stared at the screen.

Glancing at the single, long-stemmed rose in the slim glass vase beside the computer, her skin flushed, fingers suspended over the keyboard. She was about to share her sexual and BDSM preferences with him. She took a deep breath.

He’ll know what turns me on... He’ll know what I want... And he’ll know how far I’m willing to go...

She swallowed.

This is SCARY.

He’s going to know what makes me tick... He’s going to know everything...

Everything...

Another part of her psyche intervened.

If he doesn’t know the truth, then you won’t connect.

It’s as simple as that.

You have to risk it.

Elaine clicked ‘send’.

She stared at the screen.

Shit!