

Unexpected Stranger

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An erotic writer meets an unexpected stranger while shopping.

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It really bugged me when Sarah Clark started dating our boss. She was my fall-back friend, the one who always went out on Saturday nights if we hadn't any dates. I stopped going out. I wrote an erotic story about Sarah. It's obviously not her real name, just the one I used in the story that eventually led to a novel, and now I'm the author of *Clark's Cunt*. Nobody knows. I mean, I still have my job at Viking Research. I'm on the computer all day and it's fun to check out my spot on the ebook best seller lists. I'm working on the sequel, *Clarksphere*. Sarah got the boss, got to fuck him too, and I got some chump change for making up a bunch of lovers.

Writing replaced my desire for a real relationship, until Saturday night rolled around and I found myself alone again minus the time I spent writing to other writers, phantoms I'd never met, like Lawrence, my on-line critique partner.

Things changed last Saturday night, the last one of summer.

I went to the outlet mall. They'd planned this big event, Mid-night Shop-A-Thon, which included an additional tax deduction. The drive to the mall had been so peaceful - dark back-roads with only my headlights to lead the way until I hit the main strip with its kaleidoscope of night lights.

It was nine o'clock when I arrived. The clock tower chimed above the Wowza store. It took me out of the trance I was in. I was thinking about a scene in my new book, working it out in my head, plotting the innocent meeting and the dialogue, first kiss and fuck. I stopped to look up. The air reminded me of summer nights in Florida, specifically the time I went to Disney World when I was thirteen. *The whole country is as warm as this tonight*, I thought, like we were all one big happy family.

The stars in the sky flickered like they were sharing the code to the universe. Like they were there for me, to keep me company in case no one else would. That sentiment brought me back to my reality. I

continued to stroll past the rest of the children's shops, which had been placed side-by-side. It offered parents an easier way to corral their monsters. I hated this part of the mall because I hate kids. Do I? Maybe I'm just jealous of women who have them, because I can't. Can't-won't, what's the difference? *I'll never meet anyone*, I thought, because no one now would compare to the men I'd created in *Clark's Cunt*.

I had to trudge past this area to get to the Burberry outlet. I used to never bother. Even their discount prices had always been way too expensive on a programmer's salary. But what the hell? After my last residual check I wasn't in *Clarksphere*, I was in *this-money-is-burning-a-hole-in-my-pocket-sphere*. I wanted a Burberry Prorsum trench. It could keep me warm at night, right? In lieu of a man's arms.

The store had such an upscale feel. Perfectly aligned wooden hangers kept the plaid-lined coats in order on modern fixtures. When I looked at the ones with the most classic details, I noticed that they'd been placed in size order, smallest to biggest. I loved that. There were photographs in pristine silver frames of Hermione from Harry Potter. She's the current face of the brand. She looked so grown up, like she could be the thirty-five-year-old customer like me, shopping the racks for status.

"I'm sorry," he said. I must have zoned out because I hardly noticed someone had been sharing the rack. He had bumped my hand as I was pondering whether or not Emma Watson got the clothes for free. I looked up following the trail from the hand (with no wedding ring) on mine to a limb that extended from a tall guy with dark brown hair. "You'd look a lot better in it than she does. She's much too young for the ad campaign. Is that what you were thinking?"

I blushed, I could feel it. Because there are only a couple of types of guys on this planet. The shy, mind- their-own-business kind, the ass-holes who lack social skills, the listeners, and the mind-readers. So, you can imagine how disappointed I was that this handsome shopper was like Mr. Strong (also not his real name). Sarah had told me that Roy Strong had started a conversation with, "You must think I'm a giant ass-hole." He'd done some of that with me and boy, had I gobbled that he-knows-what-I'm-thinking shit right up with his cock - until he dumped me for Sarah.

"Mind-reader?" I answered in a caustic way.

"Luke Harbinger," he said with a smile. He offered his hand between the size 6 and size 8 trenches, which I shook firmly, the way I had when Roy had interviewed me ten years ago, firm and confident. Our eyes met, his were a crystal clear blue, and I wondered what the rest of him looked like, seeing that we were on opposite sides of the coat rack.

"Hi. I'm Veronica." I used my pen name. I don't know why I didn't just say, "Hi. I'm Annie Stevens." It would have been much easier. It's just that I had pretended I was Veronica, in my mind, you know

and, I don't know – it slipped out like that.

He came around and removed the 6 from its hanger. He held it for me so I tried it on. I threw my bag over my shoulder and put my hands in my pockets as he buttoned and belted. Then he guided me to the three-way mirror and from behind he adjusted the lapels so they laid flat.

“Smart, very smart. Veronica-eh?”

“Almond.” What the hell, I thought. He probably didn't read erotic literature. He sounded too intelligent, I guess, with that British accent. And he looked too handsome to need a book to whack off to.

“Veronica Almond. Do people call you Ron-Ron?”

I said, “Ronnie mostly, although my mom just calls me Princess. I'm an only.” Being an author had turned me into a good liar.

“Well, what do you think of it?” he asked. I looked at the coat's price tag. It was pretty much the most expensive coat I would ever own. “There's a 20% discount offered and coupled with no tax plus the additional deduction, I'd say this is the best deal in the entire shopping complex.”

“Okay, I'll take it,” I said. “Do you want to ring me up?”

“I'm afraid I don't work here.”

“Oh...” God, I felt so fucking embarrassed. Relieved, I guess, once I'd remembered that my real name was on my credit card. Hey, he was dressed up like one of the mannequins in a head-to-toe Burberry look, so thinking he'd been a worker wasn't that far of a stretch. Of course, he hadn't all the accessories, just great fitting trousers and a white cargo-style linen shirt with the sleeves rolled up. He carried a leather knapsack, like an Italian man-bag, but it looked chic on him. I guess it was because he wasn't American that the look worked on him.

“I'm actually here on a mission of sorts,” he said. “I'm a friend of Christopher's.”

“Christopher Bailey's? You mean the designer?”

“Yes, he's a college chum. I said I'd stop in to investigate the American Burberry customer and I've found *you*. I live in Boston.”

I blurted, "I live about an hour in the other direction."

There was an awkward pause. There always was with me. I wondered if he thought I was too pretty to ask out, too attractive to be the girl without a boyfriend. He probably thought I was just killing time until I went out clubbing or something. They all do. I'd dressed up for my shopping excursion as though I was on a date with myself. I took a couple hours to straighten my shoulder length auburn hair then used the curling iron on bits for that beachy look that's popular now. I wore my favorite jeans and a tight-fitting silk halter with an ikat pattern, and gladiator heels. Now I was glad I'd made the effort because Luke looked the visual equal to the Luke I'd envisioned in my novel, and for that reason alone I wanted to fuck him.

But, I mean, I don't fuck strangers. I'd dated Roy for several months before I realized he was married. And we only had sex that one time when he practically raped me in the woods. So this whole meet-a-guy-in-a-clothing-store seemed a bit out of character for me.

All of that was going through my head as the cashier sold me the coat. Luke had ventured over to menswear and he was texting someone on his cell phone, probably his girlfriend, making arrangements for a late tryst.

I took my package and walked out. The weather was much warmer out of the store than in it. Not so much humid but bath water warm, kind of like a warm hug. I headed towards the Jimmy Choo store. I needed something for that erotic book convention I planned to attend in Boston next month.

I decided to stop for a frappuchino. There was a cute place up ahead that put almond shavings on the whipped cream and that always made me feel special. It's why I picked Almond as my fake last name. I sat at the little ice cream table out front and pulled out my BlackBerry. There was a message from Lawrence.

Hey Annie - I finished this chapter and hope, when you get the chance, you'll tell me what you think. Hope your Saturday night is filled with sexy experiences. What are you up to? L.

I emailed back.

L. – Remember I told you I was going shopping? I just bought my first Burberry. Am at a coffee shop at the outlet mall having a frappuchino and thinking about sex with a stranger. Is that weird? Have you ever had sex with someone you'd only just met? A.

After sending my message I opened his attachment and began to read through his chapter. His writing is so different than mine. Way better, I thought, but that's probably because he was a hetero

man. I loved reading romantic sex from a man's perspective because it always made me feel hopeful that there was a man out there I could actually love who'd love me back.

I was at a particularly sexy passage. My tits got hard and I needed to stop. Kept thinking everyone would stare at me, like the kids with their mother heading my way. "Look at her tits Mommy," they'd say. "She looks like a fucking whore. She probably writes smut." I mean, it was practically written all over my face, I thought. A tap on my shoulder snapped me out of it. I turned as Luke Harbinger sat down next to me.

"These are not the most comfortable chairs are they?" he said.

"I think they're antiques."

"I was going to ask you if you wanted to get a coffee but I'm afraid I wasn't quick enough. You've beaten me to it."

I was at a loss for words. The writer in me had lots of sexy things to say, but the real me held back. I just – I don't know. I lost confidence. Or maybe it was that text. I'd been having fantasies about Lawrence because in the absence of a real man, he'd been a sort of surrogate and I'd gotten a little hung up on him, the way I'd been when I'd first met Roy. Like he was absolutely the only man in the world who would ever understand me.

"Will you be here when I get back?" he asked. "I'd really love your company. Do you want anything else?"

"Nope. Go ahead. I'll still be here. But the Choo store is calling to me so I can't guarantee anything."

He went into the café. I checked my email again. There was another message.

Hey Annie - You're either plotting or someone's about to get very lucky. Go with your gut. He may surprise you. L.

I wrote back.

L- Shit. You know I always follow your advice. Details later. A.

Luke returned with a drink and one of those long-stemmed foil rose things from Godiva chocolate. He handed it to me in a sort of mock chivalry.

“You better eat it now, otherwise it might melt.” He took it back and unwrapped the chocolate flower, popping it into my mouth like a heavenly gag. I tasted the raspberry liquor as it melted in my mouth and bit down to enjoy the crunch of a hazelnut. He sat down again and smiled.

I swallowed and dabbed my mouth on my napkin. I said, “Have you lived here long?”

“Only just a few months. I’m from Wales.”

“What do you do?”

“I’m a guest lecturer at Harvard. Art History. And in my spare time I like to dabble in writing.”

“What kind of writing?”

“English language.” He must have looked at my engaging scowl. “I guess you mean genre? I shouldn’t say in mixed company, you being a lady and all.”

Huh?

“I’m a huge fan of erotica,” he continued. “Mainly that within the context of art. When I saw you in the store I couldn’t help but think you looked so much like a character in my most recent novella.”

I said, “Seriously. That’s the worst come-on I’ve ever heard.” I started laughing nervously. Had he recognized my name? What were the chances of that happening? I only had one book out – there was no way my name was house-hold material. And I looked nothing like my fictional Veronica Almond. This weird guilt washed over me like a hot-flash. If he wasn’t such a good looking guy, I’d have thrown the last bits of frap in his face and hoped the almond shavings got lodged in his eyes, but it tasted too good to waste and his eyes were too pretty to cover up with whipped cream.

Instead, I could feel the heat softening up my cotton thong. I *liked* the idea of being a character in someone else’s porn. Lawrence’s girls were always much younger and blonde with giant asses.

“What’s a better one then?” he asked.

I said, “Pick-up line? It really depends. If a man and a woman are attracted to each other, I mean in an erotic story, you know, I’m speaking hypothetically - then I prefer a little banter first, followed by something natural and more direct.”

“Maybe we should continue this conversation over something a bit stronger, like a bottle of wine? I’d

prefer that over this iced tea. There's a restaurant at the eastern tip of the mall, *Rescue*. Would you like to go there? Unless you have other plans?"

"Just Jimmy Choo."

"Then to Choo it is!" he said with enthusiasm. Maybe he had a foot fetish? That wouldn't be a bad thing, I imagined, although I'd never actually had my toes sucked or anything – I'd only written about it.

We finished our drinks and walked the 500 feet to the Choo outlet. I wanted everything in there but focused on a pair of suede boots to go with my new trench coat. I found my size in the stack of boxes and tried them on, rolling my pant legs up and walking the length of the store to the little floor mirror.

"You're very graceful," Luke said. "Have you ever modeled?"

"No, it's just from years of experience walking in heels."

"I hope you'll get them. You look very sexy."

That was the same thing Lawrence had said when I'd sent him a photograph, that I looked sexy. In the course of several months it had been the only thing he'd remotely said that could be described as flirtatious. I didn't know what he looked like.

I needed to stop thinking about him. There was no way Lawrence looked as sexy as the man shopping for shoes with me on this beautiful summer evening in Lee. Luke went to retrieve a pair of sandals with colored rhinestones in my size. I tried them on for him as if he was my boyfriend or Prince Charming or whatever.

"I want you to have them," he said.

"I can't afford both. It's either the boots or...well, I'll get more use out of the boots."

"Since when have you been practical?"

"Since always," I said.

"Then I'll have to take matters into my own hands. Cinderella needs her slippers if she's going to find her Prince Charming."

I blurted, "I couldn't accept them. We don't even know each other." It seemed a little too much too fast. Like I'd have to owe him something. I started to wonder if he thought I was a whore.

"I'm a guy, Veronica," he said. "And this has been the best shopping experience I've ever had. Allow me this one indulgence."

I didn't want to argue. I'd learned that the hard way, that it's much worse to deny a gift because it's an insult. Just ask my mom if you don't get that. I think it's "don't look a gift horse in the mouth." Something like that. We took our purchases to the register. I handed over my credit card then kind of secretly pinched my leg the way I do sometimes to see if I'm awake and alive and not dreaming. It hurt.

I went to my car to put the packages in the trunk. Okay, so I drive a minivan, but only because it was a good deal and because sometimes I have to load it with top-secret work stuff to take to the other offices upstate. I drove to a closer parking spot by *Rescue*. When I arrived, I found Luke at an outdoor table on the back deck.

"I've already ordered for us," he said.

"I'm a picky eater so I guess this will be a test of restaurant dining compatibility," I said. "Although I must warn you, I've yet to meet someone I am compatible with."

"Maybe you ought to believe in the power of the night sky."

"What?" I looked up and it felt like being reunited with a friend.

"Look at it," Luke added. "It feels like a night of possibilities don't you think, Princess?"

I laughed at that. He started to sound like a soulmate in my wine-diluted brain. He was transitioning from mind-reader to listener and listener was the very best kind of man. I didn't want to start planning our children's names yet or anything, but that's the way it is with women. We always want to jump the gun on relationships, even the kind that resemble *Penthouse forum* one-night stands or would after two more glasses.

Every time I looked at him I noticed he mirrored my gestures. Hand on chin, left elbow on table, that sort of thing. He liked me. That made me feel like I could say anything and he still would. I think I challenged myself to make him dislike me. Because after wine and a delicious London broil with roasted potatoes, I revealed some really stupid things.

I said, “I guess I’m still single because I’m searching for the perfect cock. And by perfect I mean in length and girth. And it needs to be straight. I walked away from a curvature once. I just put my panties back on and left. Oh my god, TMI, right? I just sounded like such a slut.”

“No, just honest. You shouldn’t be afraid to share your opinion. My thought is you’re hoping mine won’t disappoint.” Oh, I thought, back to mind-reader. “I assure you it won’t, if you’ll give it a chance.”

I love getting drunk for so many reasons but relinquishing responsibility is such a good one. The best one. If this ended badly, I thought, I’d blame the wine. I couldn’t drive yet, but I could tell the wait-staff wanted us out. Everyone else had gone.

I went to the bathroom and freshened up, reapplied lipstick. I pulled out my phone to check email again. Lawrence’s advice had always comforted me in these last eight months, and I thought he’d direct me one last time, another way I could erase responsibility. I must really be submissive.

Annie – Trust me. L.

Luke walked me to my van.

“This is yours?” he said. It was the only one in the lot, save for the car I assumed was his – a Prius. I opened up the back of the van, climbed over my packages and kind of hopped in. I could see the lucky stars through the glass hatch. It reminded me of the nights when I was a little girl when we used to go to a mall and sit in the car and watch fireworks on the fourth of July, only back then we had a convertible. I used to think the stars were the main event.

“I use it for work,” I explained. “Had the seats back here removed so I could...”

He climbed in after me and kissed me, the natural way. The way it always happens in my erotic stories, with passion that I often mistake for love.

“This is nice,” he whispered. “I knew we’d fit.”

Of course we’d fit, I thought. There was a lot of room back there. The packages kind of got banged around while we made out but it wasn’t uncomfortable. It felt more like this great abandon-style adventure and I was going to rock my own world. I deserved this.

I hate the term “sopping wet pussy.” It’s just so tacky and slutty - and the perfect way to describe mine at that moment. I stopped attacking him and sat up, sliding off my sandals one at a time, unbuttoning my jeans and trying to get out of the tight things pronto. I wanted to look all seductive-like

doing it but the truth is the jeans felt like sausage casing on my legs as tight as they were, and getting them off proved much more difficult in the dusk.

“Let me,” Luke said. I laid back down using my new coat as a pillow. He removed his leather bag in order to get more comfortable, moving it to a spot in the corner. He cupped my ass in his hands and kissed my gin-gin mons then gave the jeans a tug on the belt loops. Lifting my ass up to assist in the removal, he continued to yank and tug until I was finally free. Luke rubbed my clit through the wet panties without prompting.

“This is for me,” he said.

He went down on me. First he teased my cunt with his fingers. He took the cotton cloth in his mouth and nearly ripped it with his teeth until he'd pushed it down to my thighs making it easier for me to slide out. I grunted. I stared through the glass hatch and thanked the universe for giving me this gift, this unexpected stranger.

“Thank you,” I said aloud. I laughed the drunken way.

“I'm going to make you come.”

He continued his enjoyment of my pussy. Lick, slurp, guzzle, kiss. Nothing short of amazing. I ran my fingers through his thick hair and tugged with each contraction of my happy cunt.

“No, stop,” I said, thinking I might come too soon. I sat up again and he moved next to me. We kissed my favorite way, tasting myself on his lips, his soft pink perfect lips. I reached to the side zipper of my top and pulled it down. Luke helped me get it off.

“You're beautiful,” he said. I was glad he did because I felt so vulnerable with him still fully clothed. I'm not voluptuous like Sarah, more like exercise thin. I started getting that weird sense of doubt. It had happened after Roy had dumped me, but now I was all pre-emptive, trying to protect my feelings before the inevitable ending to this one-night fuck.

I looked into his eyes. I sensed more from him but that meant nothing. Wishful thinking on my part. I touched his face with the back of my hand. The prickles from his five-o'clock shadow sent the signal to my brain that he was very real.

“What's the matter?” he asked.

“Nothing.”

“You’ve shown me yours so I’ll show you mine,” he said playfully.

He unbuttoned his shirt and revealed a toned chest, light hair sprinkled around his nipples. When I saw his stunning cock I think I inadvertently let out a yelp of glee. It didn’t disappoint. Looked like a fantasy dick all at attention and ready to deliver me from evil. I didn’t question what I was doing anymore. I was on auto-fuck . He folded up his clothing like a gentleman going into battle. Then he leaned over and picked up my big Choo box.

“Put these on,” he said.

I slid my legs into the soft suede boots and he helped me zip them.

“You are so much sexier than I’d dreamed,” he said.

“Were you expecting to meet someone tonight?” I asked.

He hesitated. “I meant that when you went to the bathroom in the restaurant I started fantasizing about fucking you and....”

I kissed him again. I didn’t need his explanation. It didn’t matter. I wanted to get my hands on his cock. I led the dance with a new determination. Tongue, tongue, kiss, kiss to his lips. He leaned back allowing me to control him.

I started thinking about the way I’d portrayed Sarah in my novel and how the real person wasn’t nearly as naïve. I was that girl, not Sarah, and I didn’t want to be her anymore. I wanted to make things happen for myself and if this was my only chance, then I’d go for it...and suffer the consequences later on.

“Is it what you expected?” he prodded.

I smiled at him. The night sky lit up our place in the universe. The van existed as its own perfect world. When my hand touched his cock he shuddered. I followed its contour with the tips of my fingers like a blind person feeling a marble sculpture. I couldn’t wait any longer. I pressed my lips against the shaft and let my tongue follow its length until my mouth settled on the head.

“You are brilliant,” he said. His hands were on my shoulders. He didn’t push my head down and force me to perform like Roy had. Luke made me want to do better. I deep throted then used my hand to work the bottom while sucking him off. He didn’t feel like a stranger to me.

I could feel him getting close and it gave me this unbelievable sense of power. I didn't care about myself. I just wanted to make him come. I held him down until his semen filled my mouth, until I swallowed every last trace of it like a fantastic dessert.

I thought he'd get dressed and leave this tawdry back-seat fuck but he didn't. He reached for me and I cuddled up in the nook. He kissed my forehead and held me there in the post-oral fuck silence.

"Thank you," he said.

Feeling his naked body alongside mine, I realized that we did fit together. I let my fingers travel around his nipples. I wanted to memorize every ounce of him before he vanished forever. I kept thinking that every time I wore my new purchases I'd think of him, the way he smelled, the way he felt. At least I'd have that.

I said, "Do you really know Christopher Bailey?"

"I do, actually," he said. "I'd never lie to you. I was absolutely on a mission of sorts tonight. To find you."

"I'm a pretty good liar," I said. "I've had to lie a lot lately to protect myself."

"I'll protect you," Luke said.

He pulled me into another deep and passionate kiss. His rejuvenated hard cock rubbed against my thigh. I straddled him. Our genitals acted as magnets to one another. I wanted that cock inside me as much as he seemed to want the same thing.

It took a minor awkwardness to sink onto his cock. Once there I didn't want to detach - like ever. His cock felt like my other half. Had he not come across the Atlantic for a job here, I might have never had it inside of me. And since I hardly knew him, I might never have it again. I fought for every moment. Easing off and then planting down again feeling every ounce of wetness and shuddering at the perfection of our union. I laughed at the slurps and sounds of our joust and he muffled my shrieks with hard kisses.

I started having those pesky visions of the white picket fence and the wedding ring and the baby. I mean, what the hell was I doing? And what about him? A thirty-something college professor fucking in the back seat of a car? It made me think about a story Lawrence had written about a teacher fucking his student in an illicit fashion behind a church. I tried to get him out of my head. He wasn't there. I

had something better, didn't I?

Luke sunk forward and I leaned back, my head pushed into the carpet. He pounded me in a vigorous missionary rhythm. I moaned and squealed with delight. I wanted to scream "I love you" like an idiot, and I successfully suppressed the urge. I thought it, and telepathically told the universe that I wanted to love Luke Harbinger. I wanted him to love me, Annie Stevens, so, so much.

I came then, fiercely, and he could feel it, I knew, because he shuddered a minute later in orgasm too, and he cried out my name.

"Oh, Annie! Annie, my darling!"

I looked up and saw our reflection in the glass framed by the secret power of the universe.

I fell asleep cradled in his arms.

When I woke up, I was wrapped in my Burberry trench and Jimmy Choo boots...and alone. The other shoe box was open, tissue paper flung at my feet. There was only one jewel-encrusted sandal in there. I picked up my phone and checked my messages.

Annie – Let me surprise you again sometime soon. How about next month at the erotic book convention? We'll be more comfortable at my place. Happily ever after anyone? L.