

A New Reality

Gabe wondered how he became such a cliché as he tried to free himself from the handcuffs. He had nothing but time to reminisce on how he ended up in such a sad state.

One of the many problems with Hollywood was that you couldn't swing a dead second unit director without hitting a dozen out of work actors. And most of them were waiters or baristas or in some wage slave job that barely paid the bills and made you feel humiliated on top of everything else. He liked to think he bucked this sad tide by becoming a cater waiter, but he knew even as he thought it he was delusional. He was still a waiter, it was just the restaurant location was unfixed.

So there he was, in a house on the Hills large than his apartment building - hell, the smallest closet was bigger than his apartment - with furniture that cost at least a hundred times more than everything he had ever owned lumped together, and quietly but passionately loathing the dick owners of the house, a trophy wife whose lips and breasts were so inflated he was reasonably certain she was a certified floatation device, and her withered old raisin of a husband, some producer who made a lot of money in the '70's and was an unhealthy shade of Donald Trump/Jersey Shore orange. He used all sorts of slurs and acted like he was King Dong of Hollywood. When he didn't like the mushroom puffs, he threw a whole tray of them onto the floor. All afternoon, they'd killed time by concocting elaborate revenge scenarios for the old fruit bat, many of which ended with him as the labradoodle's evening dinner.

It had been a strangely fraught and yet boring evening, until he met Mister Sexy. He was tall and lean, good looking but not in the perfect plastic way of many actors who'd had a little cosmetic "help", hair unkempt in a non-fussy, sexy way, and on top of that, he had one of those British accents to die for. Gabe and Kathleen hovered near him until they could determine an orientation, which was really difficult since he'd come to the party with a straight man and his wife, but it became pretty clear when Sexy began flirting with him. He might have fainted, but if he dropped one of the ceviche mushroom caps, he was a dead man.

Sexy hung around, and slipped him his business card, which conveniently had his phone number on it. It turned out his name was Graham Foster, and he was a casting director over in England. He was in Los Angeles visiting friends, and he let it be known he wouldn't mind seeing Gabe again, before he left. Seemed too good to be true, which in retrospect it was, but Gabe had been too horny to care.

Meeting him the next day for coffee, Gabe found out Graham was looking around L.A. for a “fresh face” he could cast in a new reality show. He worked for some cable channel over in Britain that he’d never heard of, and they wanted to a “different”, racier reality show that would be controversial and get the network needed attention. He thought Gabe had a nice look, and would be perfect for the show if he was interested. There were, of course, a few catches.

He needed to be gay or bisexual, or at least not averse to kissing and cuddling with guys, and willing to show some “mild nudity”. (He assured him that was a done deal, and as long as the nudity wasn’t full frontal, he was sure he could handle it.) He needed to be able to leave for England by the end of the week and be there for at least four months, during which time he couldn’t have any electronic contact with the outside world. (If the network was forking out for the ticket, absolutely.) He’d get paid scale, but his room and board would be covered, as it sounded like the show was a weird cross between Big Brother and The Bachelor, but gay. Again, sounded too good to be true.

He had to get a passport, which was a longer and more expensive prospect than he anticipated, and then had to do a live reading of some “sides” in Graham’s hotel room, which he sent via webcam back to the show creator in England. Gabe was kind of expecting to go to his room and get roofied, maybe hit on in a big way, so he was careful not to drink anything and keep a distance whenever possible, but Graham was a total professional. He asked him to take his shirt off while reading from the script he was given, but having a nice chest was a pre-requisite for the job, and he made no advances. In fact, Gabe got a feeling he was straight and only flirted with him at the party because he thought he’d be good for the show. But he wasn’t that devious ... was he?

Gabe’s chest must have been nice enough, because he got the job. He ended up reading the show “bible” on the flight to England. Oh, it called itself a reality show, but everybody knew these things were scripted, and Gabe could tell they were making his character a dumb, oversexed American. Graham had told him if he was uncomfortable with anything he didn’t have to do it, and he figured he’d let him know he was toning down the dumb. A little was fine, and frankly honest, since he wasn’t the brightest guy in the world, but it was so cliché.

Did any of it strike him as fishy? All the time, but he ignored it. The idea of getting a paying gig was too tempting. Okay, yeah, he never wanted to be one of those talent-less fame whores who spun being obnoxious into being a celebrity, but starving actors could hardly be choosers. Besides, Graham said they wanted to hire some actors, because they wanted “artsy” types in the house. He had no idea why exactly, but Gabe found it reassuring at the time. Now he wasn’t so sure.

He was picked up at the airport by a guy who claimed to know nothing about the show, and said he was “only the driver”. That made him suspicious too, especially considering the sheer length of the drive. It was almost two hours long, taking him from a well populated city to a beautiful and yet oddly deserted countryside. Admittedly, the guy drove him to a mansion that looked like it might have been part of an old castle, and it sounded by the pounding music like there was a party inside, but still it seemed weird.

He went in to find a party in full swing, with loud house music and hot guys in various states of undress sprinkled around stiff, sober looking guy in suits. It almost seemed like a brothel, with the guys in suits picking out the boys they liked, but what else was a casting call, right? One of those hot guys gave him a glass of champagne, which most of them seemed to be drinking, and he took it, because what the hell?

And that was his last clear memory. Then he woke up here, in what appeared to be a closet, stripped to his underwear and inexplicably handcuffed. Sometimes he thought he heard creaks in the floor and the ceiling, but not close. House settling noises, perhaps, or people in other rooms.

His head was swimming, not precisely aching, but foggy, like maybe he was coming down with a cold. The drink must have been dosed with something, and he was a fool to have downed it without a thought.

If they were sex slavers or something, this was a rather elaborate trap. Still, was that the deal? Were they selling him to some Russian businessman or something? Had he already been sold? He was such an idiot.

Beyond the closet door, he heard footsteps. He wasn't sure if he should call out for help or play unconscious. It turned out he had no choice, as the doorknob rattled before the door was pulled back, and he had to squint against the sudden light. A huge man was taking up the doorway. Gabe's brief thought about fighting the guy died almost instantaneously.

“Oh, there you are,” the man said brightly. “I was afraid you might have wandered out to the roof.” He had an adorable British accent.

Gabe's eyes adjusted to the light, and soon he realized he was looking at a broad shouldered man, whose bare torso revealed he was not only pretty cut, but he didn't shave his chest; he had a nice bit of light brown fuzz, as well as gleaming gold ring on his left nipple. His face wasn't bad either, kind of handsome, with a light mustache and beard combo that probably tagged him as some kind of bear. A light bear. (Polar bear?)

“Umm, what?”

“Don’t you remember? Man, I knew you got wasted last night, but I had no idea.”

Gabe was now deeply confused. He held up his cuffed hands, and asked, “What about these?”

He looked at them with scrunched eyebrows. “Those look like Duncan’s.” He turned and shouted, “Hey Dunc, bring your bloody cuff keys!”

The guy helped him stand up, and Gabe realized his legs ached and he really needed to take a piss. “I’m lan,” the guy said.

“Gabe,” he said, looking beyond one of lan’s shoulders. He was in the closet of a rather opulent bedroom, nicer than any he’d ever been in before, with high ceilings and lots of light. It looked kind of like a high class porn set. “What happened to me last night?”

“You don’t remember?”

He didn’t, although he had some vague flashes of memory. Nothing concrete, but he wouldn’t have been surprised to find out he had danced on a table. According to lan, it was more like a strip tease. lan was oddly kind, suggesting maybe jet lag had gotten to him, and Gabe wanted to believe that was true. He really didn’t really know. All he knew was he’d managed to make a goddamn fool of himself.

Duncan came in, and he was a surprisingly hot looking young guy wearing nothing but what appeared to be a metallic silver swimsuit. He filled it out very well. “Oh, so that’s where those went,” the guy who must have been Duncan said. He had a Scottish accent, which was different, but still kind of hot.

He unlocked his cuffs easily, and after Gabe slipped them off, Duncan took them and said, “Next time you wanna play with my chains, love, let me know first. I might join ya.” He threw him a wink before turning to leave the room, his perfect little butt moving under the silver fabric in a very enticing way, like two kittens snuggling beneath a blanket.

As soon as he was gone, Gabe realized he could hear noises in the broader house, voices and the sounds of stuff being shifted about. “What’s going on?”

“They’re doing lighting and wardrobe tests today.”

“We have a wardrobe?”

Ian gave him a smirky half smile. “In a manner of speaking. They’re seeing how skimpy they can get our outfits before we start showing stuff we shouldn’t be showing.” He paused briefly. “Well, not until the un-rated DVD, at any rate.”

Gabe sat on the edge of the king sized bed, and considered all of this. “So there really is a show being filmed, and this isn’t a sex slavery front?”

“No.” Ian then gave him a mischievous smile. “But we can pretend it is, if you want to.”

Okay, so, he wasn’t a cliché, which was a relief. But more than that, Gabe was suddenly glad he was here.

He was really going to enjoy this gig.

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