

## OVERHEARD IN THE BAR

I was sitting at the bar like always.

This chap was staring at me and I gave him the eye right back. I let him buy me a drink or two. One thing led to another and before I knew it he was escorting me out of the door – well carrying me more like. And we didn't walk anywhere. Not he. He held up his arm and a cab pulled up just like that.

I fancied him alright but I've also got to earn my living. We went back to his home. And what a place he had. I've never seen anything like that apartment of his. It was more like a house. So many rooms. Pictures on every wall. Beautiful damask curtains and brocades. The carpets were so thick I was almost too scared to walk for fear of spoiling them with me shoes.

And then this guy, Edward was his name, drew me a bath. Steaming hot fragrant water. Flowers everywhere. Even in the bathroom. Oh and such fluffy white towels.

And the bed. Such fine sheets. You know I could've fallen asleep straight away but of course I had to thank him first didn't I for his hospitality.

Then this morning his manservant – well of course he would have one wouldn't he – made me coffee and served me the most delicious, freshest croissants I have ever tasted.

Then Ed dropped a bombshell. He told me he was an artist. I didn't know what he meant at first. He paints pictures, he said and he would like to paint mine. He told me he had this idea that he'd been playing around with for some time. He wanted to paint the portraits of a group of friends sitting on the grass. But he wanted this picture to be different from all the normal portraits. Everyone, he said, was going to be dressed except for one. Me. He wanted me to be in his picture and he wanted me to be naked! I thought he was joking at first. I want to defy convention he said. I want to shock people. And this picture, he said, would hang in the finest galleries in France and all over the world.

Will you do it for me, he said. Well, after all he'd done for me, how could I say no?

And I did it. We all went to the park at lunchtime with a picnic. I undressed and sat there quite calmly with my feet in his friend's lap.

By way of a thank you Edward said he's going to treat me to dinner out every Saturday night for a year. I could hardly say no to that, could I?

Ed said he's going to work on the painting in his studio over the next few weeks. I'm happy to play along though I can't see anyone else ever wanting to see it – can you?