

Reparations

“Daddy, do I really have to do this?” I whined. “It’s so unfair.”

“Chrystal, for the umpteenth time, you don’t *have* to do this. You *get* to do this. It’s an opportunity.”

I sneered at him until he looked in the Cadillac’s rear view mirror and noticed me. “I hate opportunities. Every time you say something is an opportunity, it’s always an opportunity for something lame. To be bored, or uncomfortable, or frustrated, or to be surrounded by gross people. Can we give it a rest with the opportunities?”

“It’s an opportunity for *growth*, Princess. If taking the easy road and ignoring our obligations made you a stronger person, I’d turn this car around right now. But it won’t. You’re getting to be a big girl now, and you need to start learning how to handle tough situations.”

“If all this growing is so goddamn fantastic, how come Taylor doesn’t have to do it, too?” My kid sister got away with *everything*, I swear. This was like the time she got to summer in Barcelona with the Van Nuys’s all over again.

“Language, young lady!” my mother chastised me. Her only contribution to conversation, like usual.

“Because Taylor’s just child,” my father continued after smiling gratefully to his wife. “There are some responsibilities she’s ready for, and some she isn’t. Yet, anyway.”

“Oh, I’m totally willing to wait for her. I don’t mind at all.”

“I’m sure you are, Princess,” said Daddy, giving me that same patronizing smile he’d been giving me since I was a precocious six-year-old. “But I told the Andersons we’d deliver you today, so today shall you be delivered.”

“But I don’t want to do this!” I kicked the back of his seat for emphasis. “*I* never did anything wrong! I don’t care what their family did to ours or vice versa. *I’m* the innocent one in all this! You know I’ve been losing sleep all week over this? Ever since you got that stupid report. If anything, I’m the victim!”

“Oh, sweetie, I’m sorry you weren’t sleeping well,” Daddy said, disregarding the rest. “You should have said something. With the chip installed, we could have fixed that easily.”

“Did it ever occur to you that maybe I don’t like you messing around inside my head with some weird voodoo microchip? There’s a little something called privacy and free will, Daddy. They should call DCS over this bullshit.”

“Language,” said Mom.

“Freedom is entirely what you’re here to learn about, Princess. Now stiff upper lip. We’re almost there.”

I looked out the tinted windows at the squalid neighborhood. Rectangular brick buildings, stores with barred gates over the windows, boarded up houses, apartments with rusting fire escapes that promised to aid and abet any fires started in the cause of finishing off the residents within. Because of course the Andersons lived in the ghetto. What had I expected?

According to my daddy, that was the whole point of this, but to me the point was much more about him absolving himself of some bullshit guilt he had no business feeling in the first place, while conveniently not having to do any of the real work himself. Daddy would be donating to charities, engaging in philanthropy, and other second-hand measures, while I got down in the trenches and had to do it myself. He said he'd spoken to the Mrs. Anderson on the phone and that they said this one week was all they wanted, but I wouldn't put it past him to have made this arrangement all on his own. That was my daddy, though, always trying to make his children grow character. What was the point of being rich and beautiful if you were going to let people judge you by the content of your character and not the clearness of your skin?

"All right, Chrystal, here we are," said my father, pulling over to the curb and shutting off the engine. "I'll help you with your luggage."

He hopped out of the car and made for the trunk, but I stayed put. "We're going to get robbed here. I bet our car is worth more than every other one of these shitboxes on this entire block."

"Language, dear," said my mother. "And your father and I shan't be here long. I think we'll be just fine." Still, she sounded somewhat wary.

Then Daddy was at the window next to me, rapping softly. "Princess?" came his muffled voice. "Come on, sweetheart, it's time."

"I'm not doing this," I said, folding my arms. He'd have to pry me out of this car if he wanted me to do this.

He opened the door (after I failed to lock it in time to stop him) and leaned down close to me. "Chrystal, think of it as a kind of internship. Firsthand experience at life and its realities. I know this isn't what you want, but it's the right thing to do, and I think you'll see that in time."

I looked away. "If it's so right, how about *you* do it. Or Mom."

"I would if I could, but Mrs. Anderson didn't want an old man cluttering up her home. She's doing us a favor by taking you in, one which she is doubly not obligated to do." He put a gentle hand on my shoulder, but I bucked it off. "It's only for a week, Princess. It'll fly by before you know it."

"A week of *this* is like an eternity!"

"It's not either. Now come on. You're starting to embarrass yourself, and I won't have you getting off on the wrong foot with the Andersons. An even wronger foot, I should say."

“No. Way.” I clamped my hand down over the seatbelt fastener and prepared to dig in. If he was going to give me away to these strangers for half a freaking year, I sure as hell wasn’t going to make it easier on him.

“Fine,” he said casually. Too casually, in fact. It was unlike Daddy to give up so easily. Only then...

Suddenly all the hair on my arms began to stand up as a bizarre tingle went through my body. It felt like the time Taylor and I had been fighting and she’d gotten me in a pressure point before our nanny could intervene. My eyes watered. My fingers twitched once. Twice. My heart started going a thousand beats a minute, until suddenly my father and his stupid, stupid chip took even that muscle control away from me, too.

“I didn’t want to have to do it like this, but if you insist on this juvenile tantrum, you leave me no choice,” he said. “Now smile like you’re happy to be here, and you go up to the Andersons’ apartment and you do whatever they say. *Whatever* they say. You’re to be polite, accommodating, and above all to be the biggest help you can be to that woman and her children. Show a positive mental attitude – you’ll be surprised at how acting the part will help make it a reality. Understand?”

Suddenly, my lips moved of their own accord, and my face contorted itself into a broad, vapid smile. My hand unbuckled the seatbelt, and even as I demanded my legs stop moving, they carried me out of the car and onto the heavily littered sidewalk. I heard a wolf whistle from somewhere behind me, one of the several poor-looking people cohabitating this particular stretch of urban sidewalk.

“I understand, Daddy,” I said, my tone suddenly chipper. Someone who knew me well might have suspected me of sarcasm, but those who didn’t would fall for it.

“Good girl. Now give your old man a hug, and say goodbye to your mother.”

It was like I was a backseat passenger in my body in the same way I had been moments ago in Daddy’s Cadillac. I had no ability to control anything I was doing, and whatever in my brain was causing movement was totally unconscious. I wondered for a moment if my response would be totally literal and I’d robotically drone out a nice “goodbye to your mother,” but instead I gave him a tight hug, then said a faux fond farewell to my mom.

“Atta girl, Chrystal,” my father called out behind me as I proceeded to the front steps. “Apartment 49!”

That was a useful reminder. I don’t know what I would’ve done had he forgotten it. Door to door, maybe, until I happened to find the Anderson residence? In any event, there was no more stalling.

I looked for a buzzer to request entry into the building until I realized there wasn’t one. Of course there wasn’t. We were only blocks away from the projects. What was there here worth stealing? I took a deep breath, again tried to wipe the smile off my face and failed. In I went.

“Damn, baby,” was the greeting I was given inside the apartment building from a black man who was easily my father’s age, probably older, sitting on the second to bottom step smoking a clove cigarette. The presence of a thin haze beneath the flickering fluorescent lights suggested it was not his first. A quick glance confirmed my suspicion; the hallway stretched in either direction, and the two closest doors were numbered 04 and 06. 49 would be be four floors up. The man on the steps did nothing to make space for me, so I squeezed past and thanked my lucky stars he was content merely to look and not to touch.

I’d tried to dress down for the day, but Daddy had caught me before we left and insisted I wear “something appropriate.” I had no idea what he thought “appropriate” meant under the circumstances, but the summer dress I adopted on my second effort seemed to satisfy him. Presently, it meant the creep on the steps could – and did – take advantage of the view up my dress as I lugged my suitcase up. Delightful.

I suppose it should go without saying that I am an attractive young woman. Good genes certainly played their part, as does our family dietician/cook Donaldo, and my personal trainer Charice. Still, as my little sister amply – and I do mean *amply* – demonstrates, a young woman even with these advantages still has to work hard to keep herself fit and trim. I am, no matter what Daddy thinks, self-made, and for all the help I’ve received I have no doubt I’d have gotten this far even without it. Success is a state of mind, after all. Sure, my state of body was improved somewhat by the intervention of a nose job when I was fifteen and a boob job this past summer. (Nothing gaudy, just a little tug and lift to get the shape how it was meant to be.) Still, my state of mind was all my own.

Or it was, until Daddy and his damn chip.

As I huffed and puffed my way up four enormous flights of stairs, I was grateful at least that it kept me from pouting. It had stopped itching at the insertion site a few days ago, and with my hair hanging in thick, light brown waves hanging over it, nobody would ever see the scar unless they knew where to look. A pair of adolescents passed me on the stairs, neither of them offering to help me with my bags. I don’t know why I would have thought people of this station would have any respect for norms of chivalry. I declared chivalry officially dead as I caught them also trying to look up my dress as I rounded the corner to the final flight of stairs up to the fourth floor. Scummy little degenerates.

I suppose they might just have been wondering what I was doing there, but I doubted it.

I took a moment to catch my breath, and then, after one last mental effort to override the chip and flee the building altogether, I stepped through a door from the stairwell onto the fourth floor. Apartments were on both sides of the hall, and it was somewhat discombobulating trying to navigate. The stairs came up in the mid-point of

the hallway, but whatever system governed the numbering didn't seem to follow any logical foreplanning I could discern. Across from me was 47, to my left on the stairwell side was just plain 4 with no second number, and the door on either side of 47 had the numbers simply removed.

With no guidance, I arbitrarily picked left and started walking. I couldn't wait to get out of this hallway and into the Andersons' apartment, if only because it couldn't possibly smell as bad inside as it did out here. I frankly lacked the vocabulary to describe the odor, much less diagnose its cause, and it was probably all the better. The summer heat wasn't doing the place any favors either.

Mercifully, two doors down from 47 I reached my target, apartment 49. I suppose the door between them was for the floor's custodial team or what have you. The four was turned sideways and the nine was a little crooked, but at least they were attached. That fake, insipid grin still plastered on my face, I looked in vain for a doorbell before giving up and simply knocking.

I could see someone moving inside through the peephole, and a moment later the door opened a crack. The person on the other side was about what I expected, all things considered. He was young, around my age, dark-skinned, dreadlocks pouring out of a sideways-tilted ball cap with a completely level bill. He was wearing a sleeveless jersey of some athlete I couldn't possibly recognize (I'm more of a tennis girl than basketball, suffice to say), jeans that fit so loosely that there must be either a belt under the jersey or a crane behind the door supporting them, and a pair of sneakers that gleamed conspicuously, as if polished that way. He was eyeing me with naked suspicion. I'm sure they didn't get many people of my level of grooming in this building. Or, more likely, he simply mistrusted me because I happened to be white.

"Yeah?" was all he said.

"Hi, I'm Chrystal Wilcox. I'm looking for the Anderson residence...?" They should, after all, be expecting me.

"What you want with 'em?" he said in a deep baritone. The door didn't budge, still looking to be braced against his shoulder.

"I believe my father spoke with your mother on the phone, and arranged for me to, um, visit?" ("Visit" was a mild way of putting it.) "That is, for the reparations."

He arched an eyebrow, and a second male voice came from behind him. "Yo, what she want?"

"She say she here for reparations," the young man at the door said, answering him before addressing me. "So what, you got, like, a check or something?"

"No, no check."

"Then what the fuck reparations you talking about?"

I held out my hands. "Me," I answered, honey sweet. A honey that was coated over my core of disgust. "I'm the reparations."

There was another attempt by the second person to get information, but this time the tough at the door was too busy staring at me. Why couldn't I have worn something less attractive? Ugh. Men were repulsive enough as a gender without sapping them of their basic courtesy.

"Perhaps I could come inside and we could discuss. Is your mother home? I'm sure she'd know all about it."

He stared a moment longer. "Naw, she not home right now, but you can come on in and wait," he said, finally opening the door for me.

I stepped inside, and was immediately disappointed to find I would not be escaping that odor. Perhaps it was simply endemic to poverty. Certainly the presence of a cat wasn't helping things any, my sculpted nose noted. The apartment itself was squalid, as one might expect. Two cheap, lumpy sofas that matched neither each other nor anything else in the living room, one of which supported a young man of the same basic age and fashion inclinations as the one who'd answered the door, though much scrawnier by comparison. His own gleaming sneakers were propped up on a coffee table and were frankly the neatest thing on it; otherwise the poor thing was covered in empty soda cans, and where it wasn't, rings warped into the wood from their predecessors. The shag carpet was dingy and bore several stains, and the adjoining dining room was littered with fast food detritus. I wondered how long it had been since these people had allowed a vegetable to pass between their lips.

"I'm Chrystal," I said, extending my hand to the boy on the couch, leaving my luggage near the door.

He looked to his friend, then back at me, as if perplexed at being invited to shake hands with me. Whether because I was a girl, or a white person, or simply a human being showing civility, I couldn't say. "Kenny," he said, finally taking it, looking bemused.

I turned to the boy who'd answered the door and repeated the process. "Darryon," he said.

"Nice to meet you, Darian."

Kenny laughed, and the other simply glowered. I couldn't tell what was wrong, but finally Kenny stopped laughing long enough to explain. "You said his name wrong – you say it like you some substitute teacher, all A-A-Ron and shit. It's not 'Darian,' he said, mimicking, or really mocking, my own lack of accent, "it's like Dairy Awn. Darryon."

"Oh. My apologies, Darryon," I said, waiting until he nodded acceptance.

"Hey, whatever. I heard it mangled worse," he said, taking a seat next to Kenny. They didn't invite me to sit but it felt awkward to continue standing, so I perched gingerly on the unoccupied sofa. My presence caused a bit of cat hair to puff into the air and drift out into the room.

“So, are you two brothers?”

They looked at one another, then back at me, and Darryon responded. “What, we look Chinese or some shit?”

Again, Kenny burst into gales of laughter. “Yo, man, she don’t mean like ‘brothas.’ She means like ‘are we brothers,’” he said, again doing what I could only assume was meant to be an imitation of some stuck-up white person. “Naw, girl. We friends is all.”

“Oh, I see. So which one of you is Mrs. Anderson’s son?”

They looked at one another for a moment, then Kenny quickly replied. “I am. Kentrell Anderson, at your service.” He snapped a sloppy salute. “So, Chrystal...?”

“Wilcox.”

“Chrystal Wilcox,” he said, and to their credit they didn’t snicker much more over hearing me say it than most white boys did, “so you say you here for reparations? Why don’t you tell us more about that.”

“Of course. Well, I... are you familiar with the concept of reparations?”

He chuckled. Darryon did not. “Yeah. Means your great great etc. grandpappy wasn’t so great after all.”

The chip suppressed my instinct to defend my family’s legacy before I could put words to it, but I at least said them in my heart. Outwardly, I was still wearing that same insipid smile. “That’s certainly one way of putting it,” I verbalized mildly. “We only recently learned that this was the case, mind you.”

“Oh yeah? What all you learn?” asked Darryon. He was yet to smile at me, and it was beginning to make me uneasy, especially given the sensitive topic under discussion.

I hadn’t planned on enumerating it in detail, but Daddy’s chip had forced me to comply, and so comply I did. “Well, when my mother was doing some genealogical research, she discovered that sometime during the 1830’s, my great-grandmother’s great-grandfather had purchased what the paperwork called a ‘house slave,’ a woman named Lucretia. He left her to his wife in his will, though his wife eventually went on to emancipate her.” I left out that she had not emancipated Lucretia’s children. No sense making an ugly thing uglier.

“That’s sweet,” said Darryon. He didn’t sound especially touched.

“Yes, well, our family reflected on this, and he – I mean we – decided that we had an obligation to heal these old wounds.” Those were Daddy’s words, of course; to the extent I’d even paid attention, prior to hearing his plan, I’d not understood why any of *us* owed any of *them* anything. Not like *we* ever owned slaves. I had no idea how doing chores for Mrs. Anderson for a week was going to fix anything for anyone.

“So yeah, I guess my dad put out some feelers, and made arrangements for his daughter – me – to, um... assist, I suppose you could say, a family that was descended from slaves. I guess there’s like a whole network of people arranging this kind of thing? I dunno.”

“So, what, you saying it’s like payback? Like you Mrs. Anderson’s – my mama’s – slave now or something?”

“Not exactly,” I said, though that was exactly how it had sounded to me as well. I tried to think of the preposterous euphemisms Daddy had used. “It’s more a case of allowing people to come together to heal, and show what we now have in common. And, I guess, to do that, I’ll be... you know. Helping around the Anderson house. Apartment. And stuff.”

“Like some kinda maid or something?” Kenny asked.

“Uh, I guess? I mean, I’m here to help.”

“Damn, and here I was worried my mama had signed us up for our very own little white slave bitch,” Kenny said, grinning. “Oh, I’m sorry, I mean... Caucasian indentured servant madame.” Both boys got a chuckle out of that.

This was not a good place to be. Not only because I so very much did not want to be here or doing this, but because of the way these boys were looking at me. I kept smiling – Daddy had said to be polite – but I think they sensed I was uneasy from the way my eyes were darting around. “Aw, take it easy, baby girl, I’m just playing with ya. Tell you what, why don’t you start off by tidying up? My mama gets so busy and all, we could sure use a woman’s touch.”

“We sure could,” added Darryon.

I stood up, intending to run out of there, but instead the chip asserted itself and instead, made me begin by cleaning the room. The two boys kicked back, returning their attention to some video game they’d been playing before my arrival, while I ascertained the location of the garbage and set about disposing of the seemingly omnipresent quantity the Andersons had allowed to compile.

Of course, the screen only held so much of their attention. I was soon all too cognizant that there was no way to comply with their request without a good deal of bending over. It left me only two options – bending while facing them, showing them more cleavage than I’d ever intended to allow them to, or bending while facing away and drawing their eyes to the brevity of my dress. It simply wasn’t designed for this, even without an audience.

(It had, in fact, been designed by French couturier Jean Patrice Omenné, and probably cost half as much as their rent.)

“Do you know where I’ll be staying?” I asked only part way through the slog of throwing out the kitchen trash. “I was thinking I might change clothes, get into something better suited for housework.”

“Aw, no way, Chrystal,” Kenny sulked. “You look fly as hell in that gitup! For a white girl, anyway. Don’t she, D?”

“She a’ight.” He was staring right at my chest.

“Come on, do a little twirl for us, like you on the runway, baby,” said Kenny.

What I was shrieking for my legs to do right then was march over to this little punk, slap his punk mouth, and then march out of this apartment and never return. It was the least he deserved. Instead, the chip heard an order, and I was chilled that it even interpreted such untoward orders as these under the auspices of good behavior, however Daddy had programmed it. I strutted, heel-toe, into their living room, and spunt to one side, turned, spun three quarters the other way, and back into the kitchen.

“Daaaayum!” exclaimed Kenny. “I don’t think she wearing no panties under there, D! You see any panties? I sure didn’t.”

“I saw them, yeah.”

Unlike his friend, Kenny was all smiles. “Oh really? What kind she got on? Naw, don’t tell me. She look like she wear those full-size off-white granny panties, you know? Like those ‘saving myself for Jesus’ panties.”

“Actually,” I rebutted, literally as politely as I could, “we’re Jewish.” My mother was, anyway; Daddy’s side was a line of Wasps that ran back to... well, to slavers, evidently.

“Is that right? Hmm. So you ain’t waiting for no Jesus to deflower you then, so... yeah, I know what you got. You got them lacey kind, those ones that like straight horizontal across the butt, you know? That give up the whole bottom of your ass cheeks. I bet they almost as white as the rest of you, too.”

“I... I’m not sure we should be discussing...” I trailed off. The chip wouldn’t let me tell them to shut up, to protest, to demand they change the topic along with their attitudes.

“It’s all right, baby! You don’t gotta be shy. Just tell me, how close am I?”

Far too close to me for comfort, I thought. “You’re way off,” I said.

“I think she lying to me, D. What you think? Come on, girl, you say I’m wrong – how about you scoot that tight white booty over here and *show* me I’m wrong. Eh?” He cackled like he’d made some great joke; even the far more serious Darryon cracked a smile at his antics.

As for me, I was starting to panic. How far was the chip going to let them go? It sure wasn’t letting me run away. It wasn’t making me do as he suggested, but... “Are... are you serious?” I heard myself say.

Are you serious?! That’s the best you could do, chip?!

“Hell yeah, I’m serious,” Kenny said, still laughing. “Come on, Reparations Wilcox, flip up that skirt and show your boys that skinny white ass of yours.”

“Um, all right,” I said, my voice as meek as it had ever been. My hands not quite trembling, I slowly turned away from them, bent forward and leaned against the kitchen wall with one hand while the other betrayed everything in my nature by obeying this ruffian’s demand. I had no doubt he didn’t realize – yet – the power he had over me, that he was simply acting on his baser instincts, flirting far too crudely and aggressively.

Still, as I obediently pulled my dress over my bottom, it was hard not begin forming a very serious grudge.

Kenny sputtered in disbelief. “Holy...! Look at that! White shawty letting it *all* hang out! I woulda done never figured you for a g-string kinda girl!” I could hear, but not see, the boys slapping their knees in excitement, just as I could feel but not cringe from their eyes on my bare skin.

“It’s actually a thong,” I said in a tone even I could hardly believe could be kept so civil. “G-strings have less material.”

“Look at this, baby giving us a show and a lesson all at the same time! You believe this, D?”

“I’m seeing it, all right.”

“I’m a take a closer look,” said Kenny. A moment later, he was behind me. Right behind me. I could feel the warmth of him, even in the sultry air of the un-air-conditioned apartment. “This part of your reparations, Chrystal? Huh?”

“Um, I guess so?” I said. Apparently it was. Evidently my father’s investigations didn’t extend to whether or not Mrs. Anderson’s son was some sort of thug, so his chip was still holding me to my civility and obedience.

“You must feel for sure sorry, eh baby,” he said. Kenny put a hand on my right buttock then, squeezing it confidently. Then he seized the left. No – that was Darryon. He didn’t stop at mere fondling; he had to give me a few little slaps.

“She don’t jiggle much, do she, Kenny.” A few more.

“Face like that, attitude like that, she don’t gotta,” said Kenny appreciatively.

Evidently they took my continuing to stand there with my ass hanging out, being fondled like a common street walker, as permission to proceed, because then they were taking down my thong, discarding it at my feet.

“Come on now,” said Kenny, stroking my pussy with one finger. At least I think it was Kenny. I was too horrified to look. “Tell us why y’all really came up here. Honest, now.”

Oh no. Oh no! I think he expected, or at least desired, to hear me say that I some tramp who was looking to have sex with a black guy. Instead, the truth spilled out before I could even offer the chip a compromise. “My daddy arranged for me to pay off his debt – as he sees it – so he put a compliance chip inside my head and programmed it to make me go to the Andersons’ and do whatever they say for one week. I am to be polite, obedient, and give my best effort.”

This seemed to stun even the two barbarians who had so easily thwarted my moat. Then one of them was lifting my hair out of the way, and I could feel fingers near the insertion sight. Unless I shaved my head, the scar would never be seen by anyone unless they did exactly what these boys were doing now.

“Aw, shit dawg! She ain’t fooling! It’s one of them chips like on *60 Minutes*! See, look, you can... yeah, right there,” said Darryon.

“Since when does your dumb ass watch *60 Minutes*?”

“Don’t hate, man. They gave my daddy one when he got out, so I checked it out. I know what I’m talking about with this shit. She got that thing for real.” Oh good, I was dealing with a second generation criminal.

Kenny leaned down in front of me. “You not lying?”

“I couldn’t even if I wanted to. It wouldn’t be polite.”

“*Whatever* you told?”

“It wouldn’t be reparations if I could set limits, would it?” I said, laughing like I was being charming, ass still on display. Ugh!

His eyes narrowed. “Stand up straight.”

I did. My skirt mercifully fell back down into place, though I could still feel my thong on the exposed part of my ankles.

“On one foot.”

This was trickier, but I did my best. Luckily they didn’t make me do it long.

“Slap your titty.”

“Which one?”

He suddenly let loose a cackle of delight. “You pick, girl, damn.”

Without being sure why, I aimed for the left, giving it a nice smart smack with an open palm. It stung more than a little, but my smile never wavered.

“Say, ‘I’m a dumb white bitch and y’all own my narrow ass,’” said Kenny.

My eyes widened, and for just a moment, the grin faltered. For just a moment.

“I’m a dumb white bitch, and y’all own my narrow ass!” I chirped pleasantly.

Then there was a brief celebration on their part, thumping chests and whooping triumphantly. You’d have thought they’d done something to earn this. They hadn’t, though, no more than I’d done something to deserve it. But I let them have their moment, pondering just what Daddy was going to have to buy me to make up for what was doubtless about to happen.

Maybe a yacht.

“Get nekked, Chrystal,” said Kenny, rubbing his hands together eagerly.

Maybe a fleet.

“Naw, not like that, bitch. Slow-like. Do it sexy. Like a stripper. One of them expensive ones.”

I couldn’t begin to imagine what an “expensive stripper” behaved like, but I did my best. What else could I do? As I began swaying my hips, Kenny found some music to guide my movements, something with a lot of cheesy saxophone and a heavy beat. At one point I got a glance at his phone and saw he’d simply googled “stripper music” and played the first video that popped up.

The chip couldn't control my emotions, so I was blushing beet red from head to toe by the time I was fully undressed – save for my shoes, which Darryon said to keep on. I had a small cramp in one leg from the exertions, doubly rough since I knew it would be a full week before Charice could help me work it out.

“Oh, I got to get me a piece of this bitch,” said Kenny as I came to a stop, but he'd only begun unfastening his belt before Darryon stepped between us.

“I want her first,” he said. I stood there, like a salesgirl contentedly waiting on an indecisive customer, as they fought over who would get to deflower me first. I did feel compelled, via the chip, to correct their assumption that I was a virgin, though that didn't seem to quell their appetites. Finally, they decided that Kenny could go first, if only because he was an Anderson. In exchange, he promised to only use my mouth.

For now.

Kenny lead me down the hall to what was evidently his bedroom, a grungy little pit that I could already imagine myself having to clean like his personal maid later in the week. I had never performed oral sex before – or, as Kenny put it, “sucked a fatty” – but I have to say, there didn't seem to be much skill required. He laid down on his bed, I crawled into position, then sucked and licked. He gave pointers, and I obeyed. Avoid using my teeth. Lots of energy. Make it loud and slurpy. Plenty of eye contact. It got a little trickier when he told me to play with myself, but he didn't tell me I had to get off from it, so all that was technically required was to stick a finger inside my pussy and move it around a little.

“Why don't you thank me, girl?” he said at one point.

“Oh, it's nothing personal,” I assured him, after letting his thick ebony rod slip out from between my lips with a loud wet *pop*. “I don't really enjoy performing oral sex is all. But I'm a fast learner!”

He laughed, though less boisterously than his usual. “No, baby, I mean, I want to hear you thank me for letting your skank ass put my dick in her mouth.”

I gave a few more licks before complying. “Oh! Ha, sorry about that. Misunderstood you. Of course, I'm very grateful you're letting me put your dick in my skanky mouth, Kenny,” I assured him.

He came then and there. I don't know why it surprised me that it was as pearlescent in color as my ex-boyfriend's had been, and smelled about the same. It surprised me even more that it shot out so *far*, spattering my face several times before I could take him back into my mouth to swallow what remained.

I wasn't a veteran cocksucker, but even I knew that swallowing was the courteous way to go.

“Fuck, shawty,” he panted, coming down from his climax, every bit as sweaty from laying there getting sucked off as I had been from actively doing the sucking. “You gonna get a lot of practice doing that this week. I don't even mind giving up that snatch.”

“Well I hope I perform up to your expectations. I’m just glad I didn’t bungle it my first time out!” I laughed, then scooped a blob out of my eye and, seeing no (polite) alternative, shoving it into my mouth.

Oh *GOD*. I put his... *cum!* In my *mouth!*

“Naw, you did just good. Now get your tight white ass back out the living room before Darryon comes in here and whoop my ass for being greedy.”

“You got it, Kenny. Hey, thanks again.” I patted his knee – what the hell kind of gesture is that, chip? – and excused myself; my second expression of gratitude had him getting hard again before I even left the room. I even found myself sway my hips a little extra, as if the chip were figuring out that I was a sex puppet and adapting my behavior to my owners’ preference.

Owners. There was the word, right on the tip of my subconscious. Oh hell no.

Darryon was waiting where I’d last seen him, relaxing on one of the sofas, his video game controller immediately forgotten as I sauntered naked in the room. “Hi there, Darryon,” I said pleasantly.

“Bitch, you got Kenny’s fucking cum all over your face,” he said, face twisting in disgust. Yes, because it’s *he* who ought to be repulsed by *me*.

But what I said was, “Ope! Sorry, must’ve missed some. I’ll freshen up for you and be right back, OK?”

So I scampered down the hall to the bathroom. The chip even allowed me to take an extra minute to calm my nerves, because after having my face plugged by Kenny Anderson’s black cock, I was pretty close to losing it. Doubly so, considering the bargain he’d struck with Darryon. I suppose I couldn’t call it rape, since I was consenting, but it was certainly a violation of some sort.

I’d only had sex twice before, and neither time had I really enjoyed it. Some of my friends chided me for years that I put it off so long, saying that once it happened, I’d lose my mind over it, but... maybe there was something wrong with me, or maybe they were just sluts. The first time had hurt a little, and the second time had just sort of been awkward and not altogether satisfying. I’m pretty sure I hadn’t had an orgasm. Either way, I hadn’t enjoyed it enough to give it a third try.

I splashed some water on my face and used a little bit of toothpaste to mute the lingering taste of Kenny’s cum in my mouth, and then I was back in the living room.

“How’s this?” I asked Darryon, presenting myself like the dessert platter at my favorite French restaurant. “All better?”

“Yeah, you a’ight now,” he said.

He didn’t move, however. Or really do much of anything. I was having a much harder time reading him than with his friend. Kenny was pure simplicity. I was a hot girl and he was a horny guy. Plain and simple. Darryon seldom cracked a smile, or otherwise

displayed any outward sign that he was pleased to have, effectively, his own sex slave for the rest of the week.

Sex slave. Of course. First I realized I had an owner, and now...

“So... still in the mood for me, or did you change your mind?” I prompted when he still said nothing. “I’m up for whatever.”

“Yeah, uh, I’m still in the mood,” he said after a moment. “Help me get it out, girl.”

I didn’t have to ask what “it” was. His erection was visible even through his baggy pants, a noticeable tube down part of his leg. With no choice but to obey, I knelt in front of him and worked at his belt, his zipper, then removed his pants and underwear.

When I realized I had made a mistake.

Darryon was not, in fact, erect. His cock was simply so huge that I hadn’t been able to tell the difference until I saw it flaccid. Huge barely covered it. He was easily as big soft as my then-boyfriend had been hard. To date, I had only ever seen three cocks with my own eyes, but this... this was...

“You’re so *big*,” I said, for once in genuine awe.

“You like that, huh,” he said, smirking. At least it was a reaction.

“I’m... wow. Just wow!” I gushed. How much of this was the chip? It had to be its doing. I didn’t know enough about penises to be so swept away by the mere sight of one. Unless there was something hard-wired into the girl parts of my brain to make me go ga-ga over the sight of a massive cock.

I lost track of time for a moment, twisting my head and staring at it from every angle. Eventually he snapped his fingers in my face, prompting me to look up. “Oh, sorry – I guess I got a little... fixated. It’s just that you’re so... I mean, *so*...!”

But he was frowning again. Or blank-faced, or whatever that default expression meant. “Don’t seem right, you only doing this ‘cause some chip,” he said.

I agreed, of course, though the chip was still in effect. “I hear you, totally. Though, I guess for what it’s worth, I really am impressed. That’s one hell of a, um, cock, you have there.”

“See, that’s what I mean. It make you go all stupid. I don’t want to fuck some stupid bitch don’t wanna be fucked,” he said firmly.

I frowned. Oh god, I hadn’t realized how much all that smiling had hurt until I got the opportunity to stop. I suppose I hadn’t been smiling while blowing Kenny, but that hadn’t really helped relax me any. “May I ask why not? Did I do something wrong?”

“You ain’t done nothing period. You not some trick – you don’t belong here. Ain’t right.” He sighed, his head leaning back to stare up at the ceiling. “I tried to psych myself up, but... naw. This wrong. You don’t belong here,” he repeated.

The chip was quick to reassert my mission, though. “Perhaps, but... given what I know about my ancestry, wouldn’t this make us even?”

He folded his arms across his broad chest. “You don’t wanna be here, you don’t wanna do this. You find out your great-great-great-great-granddaddy Wilcox was a piece of shit slaver, so you come down here to make yourself feel better about it. But see, I stick it in you when you don’t want it, that don’t make us ‘even’ or some shit. It only mean I ain’t no better than old man Wilcox.”

It was quiet for a moment. Then, right as I was beginning to think I might get out of this, the chip tried a new tactic. “Well then, maybe you ought to use my chip to see if I might actually want to do it. You’re not taking advantage if I really want it, are you?”

What was even happening? The circularity of it was dizzying. The chip, using my own inner thoughts to persuade him to use the chip to get at my inner thoughts...? It was too much.

“A’ight, yeah. Drop the act. Be straight with me. Any part of you up for this, or you just doin’ it to make your white bitch conscience feel better? Talk for yourself, not some bullshit chip.”

I knelt there for a long moment, until, rather stupidly, it came to me that the chip wasn’t going to do my talking for me this time. I’d been on autopilot for almost two hours now, and suddenly I had to steer. I couldn’t try to run off or anything, still, but I could talk! “First off, quit calling me a bitch. You don’t know the first thing about me. I didn’t meet you and start hurling epithets in your direction, and I dare say you and Kenny merited it more than I have.”

“Damn, you use words like you got your own dictionary or something,” he said, but he looked less displeased than before. The sincerity seemed to be more interesting to him than the facade. “A’ight, go on then. Second off.”

“Well. To your question... no, I didn’t think I’d be coming up here today to engage in sex acts with anyone. That said...” I glanced down. “I’d be lying if I didn’t say I weren’t at least a little curious.” I said it so fast that it was all practically one word, mumbled into the carpet.

“Say what? Talk right, Chrystal.”

I took a deep breath and looked him in the eyes. “I said, I’d be lying if I said I wasn’t... curious.”

“Curious? What you mean, curious? You said you ain’t no virgin.”

I chewed my lip, a bit embarrassed, in spite of everything. “Compared to what I’ve had before, I may as well be next to *that*. I mean, I don’t know much about, um, cocks. I’m not crazy, right? That is huge, right?”

A soft grin crept over his features. “What, you think us dudes just sit around whipping our dicks out and comparing?”

“I don’t know. I mean, I’ve compared breasts with some of my friends.” Something I didn’t think I’d ever have shared with a guy, but... now that I had my freedom of voice back, I found it easier to use.

“I bet they come up short. You a skinny little thing, but I ain’t gonna lie. Those is some fine-ass titties.”

I found myself smiling again. The chip? “Thanks. That’s some fine-ass cock.”

For the first time since I’d gotten his pants off, I saw it move. Not a lot, but it suddenly twitched, creeping up his thigh an inch or two. “Is that... did I... did I do that?”

“Well it sure wasn’t Kenny,” he said, and we both laughed.

“Can...” Was I really asking this?! “Can I see... all of it? Like, all the way hard?”

“If you think you can make it hard, sure,” he said.

What was even happening? I leaned forward and gave it a lick. A long, long lick. Licking a cock this big wasn’t a thing that happened like blinking or snapping my fingers; there was a component of time involved that could be measured. There was a duration from the time my tongue touched the base of his shaft to the moment it reached the tip and slipped back into my mouth. And boy did it react. Darryon didn’t stop me from taking it in my hand and continuing; there was so much bulging out beyond my grip that that portion alone was as big as Kenny’s had been.

I no longer knew what was me and what was the chip as I sucked him to hardness. As well as I could, at least; the more he grew, the more difficult it was to fit him in my mouth. Soon I didn’t trust myself to keep my teeth clear, and so I was left to simply slurp and suck along the sides. Finally, after several minutes, it looked to be as hard as it was going to get, and as I reared back to get a look, I nearly went cross-eyed. It was most of the length of my forearm! It had to be going on three inches in diameter alone – how could a woman ever fit this inside her?!

What would it feel like to try?

I tried. He didn’t resist, and so help me, I climbed into his lap and, with one hand guiding it, lowered myself onto it.

“OH MY HOLY FREAKING GOD!” I wailed, then bit down on my knuckles to silence myself.

It was ripping me open – only in a good way. I had to slide down an inch at a time as my pussy spread, stretched, reinvented itself to accommodate him. For his part, Darryon looked to be enjoying it as well, my pussy wrapped around him like a second, gushing wet skin. Every step of the way it felt like there couldn’t possibly be more to take in, but there was. Inch after divine inch, until finally, finally, my butt grazed his thighs. I bottomed out exactly at the point where I couldn’t possibly take any more. Like my pussy was made for this cock in particular.

I was trembling. I had barely moved, and my breath was coming in heaves and groans. My body pressed itself against his, and there I whispered into his ear.

“Call me a white bitch again.”

I worried for a moment he would laugh at me, laugh at the weak-willed, cock-starved little girl who’d thought she’d known so much and had been disabused of

the notion so completely. But instead, two strong, dark hands gripped my hips, and I heard his voice say, commandingly, "Ride me, you sexy ass white bitch."

I didn't need the chip any more. That cock scrambled my brain such that I was pretty sure it short-circuited. Whatever. Darryon could melt my brain all he wanted so long as he kept melting my pussy with his black, but white-hot, dick. His hands and mouth were all over my breasts, letting me take care of the work of the actual fucking, but I was only pleased that the work I'd had done on them was so thoroughly appreciated. This was why I'd remade myself, I realized. Suddenly, I understood what my slutty friends had been raving about. Only they couldn't possibly have known bliss like this. I had to take it slow because of the sheer girth of him, but every gradual up and down was like feeling his fingers thrumming along the cords of my pleasure centers.

Somewhere one of the neighbors yelled for us to keep it down, but I didn't care. I was in a world of owners and slaves, and until I was told by someone with the authority to command me, fucking that cock was the beginning and end of my lot in life.

It was a week later, a week that passed in a rapturous blur of fucking Darryon every moment I could get him hard, or flitting around the apartment wearing nothing or next to nothing to get him hard again. I pretended it was the chip, but privately I confided in Darryon that it was surprisingly fun to simply cut loose and be wild for a week. Kenny understood after that first day that I was no longer his, and let Darryon and I have our fun. He still got treated to the view of me prancing around for him, after all, so there were no complaints on his end, and none on ours.

Darryon seldom seemed to get tired of me, either. Not from the sex, yes, but also from my presence. Once we'd gotten past that first, awkward wrongness of why I was here, it all seemed pretty all right to both of us. I wasn't treated as a slave, nor did I treat him as a master, excepting that whenever he wanted to fuck me, I gratified his desire, and as I learned the pleasure of pleasing him, I sought out more and varied ways of doing so.

Mrs. Anderson never did come home, and with me there, Darryon never left. I asked them once when they expected her, and was only told that she showed up when she felt like it, which wasn't too often, and not to worry myself about it. I didn't need the chip to make me be glad she was blowing us off.

But it was indeed a week later, and sure enough, Daddy had been right about one thing. It had indeed flown by. A buzz on my phone turned out to be a text from him. *Be there in ten minutes, Princess. I can't wait to hear about how it all went!*

k, I replied.

The boys helped me find my clothes, scattered all over the apartment by that point. I was a little disappointed – but only a little – that the place was still such a mess, but it bothered me less. It would have lessened Darryon to do such menial chores, in the same way it would lessen me. Still, part of me despaired a little when I had to put my dress back on, ready to go downstairs and meet Daddy.

Darryon and I had nothing left to say to one another; we'd already had our big talk the night before, privately. So as I lingered in the open doorway to the apartment, the space where I'd first seen my Darryon, not yet able to make myself go downstairs and end this bizarre little episode in my life, it was Kenny who spoke up.

“So, hey, Chrystal, I'm gonna miss your fine ass around here.”

I rolled my eyes. By now, the chip had made its peace that I could be myself without being perceived as disrespectful. “I'll bet you are.”

“And, um, hey. There's one other thing I should probably tell you, too, and, uh... man, you gonna laugh...”

“Yeah...?”

“I... Well. You see, my name's not Kenny Anderson,” he said, looking bashfully at the carpet.

My head went cockeyed. “What? Oh, you mean, like, you have a different name from your mother?” That wasn’t especially uncommon, even in my world. Divorces were a fact of life for rich and poor, black and white.

“Ha, well yeah, actually, but no... you see...” He stepped close to me and touched the numbers on the door. His index finger hooked inside the loop on the 9 and pivoted it about half of a turn.

After a moment, comprehension dawned on me. “This... this is apartment 46. But...”

He nodded. “Uh, yeah. Numbers just twist like that. Us and the Andersons getting each other’s mail, pizzas, whatever, all the time.”

“I... see.”

“Come on, Chrystal, don’t be mad girl. We just saw your fine ass there in the doorway, and you was talking reparations like you had something for us, and... sorry, I should’ve said something sooner, but I saw how you two was getting on and I didn’t wanna fuck things up for y’all.”

I took a step towards him, so close my breasts were brushing his chest. “Thank you,” I said.

“Thank me? I tell you I lied to you, and you thanking me?”

“If you’d spoken up sooner, the chip would’ve probably made me leave and go do... I don’t know, whatever petty bullshit Mrs. Anderson and Daddy had cooked up for me.” I leaned in and gave him a soft kiss on the cheek. “So thank you. This week would’ve been horrible if not for you.”

He grinned, for once shyly. “Damn, Chrystal. Your ancestors may have been shit, but your people got halfway cool somewhere along the line. Darryon, you fuck some of your coolness into this girl or what?”

Darryon nodded. “She cool.”

I said goodbye to Kenny, then Darryon and I took a moment for one last round of making out in the doorway. I was tempted not to go down. My phone buzzed four times before I finally relented and let him help me by carrying my luggage back down the stairs. It was the first time we’d left the apartment since my arrival. That same man was sitting on the bottom step again – still? – but he didn’t dare ogle me with Darryon at my side. I glared him down as I descended the stairs and forgot him the moment we were past.

Daddy was waiting on the sidewalk, and I could tell immediately something was up. “Chrystal! I just called Mrs. Anderson to ask if you were coming down, and she tells me you never arrived in the first place!” He pointedly ignored the man at my side as he thundered on.

“Hello to you, too, Daddy,” I said coolly.

“Now darnit, Princess, the whole point of this week was for you to learn to appreciate other cultures! Our family has benefited from a legacy of...” He glanced to Darryon. “Of certain deeds, and you don’t seem to show the least regard for the unearned privilege that has bestowed upon you. I am so disappointed in you right now. I don’t know how you got around that chip, either, but we are going to get to the bottom of this, you rest assured.”

Darryon wordlessly loaded my suitcases into the trunk as I approached my father. “I learned a lot this week, Daddy. About slaves, and about masters. More than you’ll ever understand. Oh, and this is Darryon, by the way.”

“Uh, hello Darian,” said my father.

I gritted my teeth. “It’s *Darryon*,” I corrected him. “We’ve spent the past week together, learning all kinds of things. You see, I accidentally wound up at the wrong apartment, and your precious chip made me completely under his power.” My father eyed Darryon as if seeing him for the first time. “Completely.”

“I... Princess, I... That’s... That can’t be...”

“That’s right, Daddy. You let that sink in, what you did. But don’t you worry. Since you’re so concerned about our ancestors taking black babies away from their parents, I’ll help you out. We’ll make our own black babies, and you can spoil them all to hell.”

Daddy’s jaw dropped. I took Darryon’s hand and put it on my ass as we strode past the Cadillac and on down the sidewalk. “See you at home, Daddy. And don’t feel too bad about selling your oldest daughter into slavery. I’ll let you pay me back.”