

lightful after the choke
way. I'd call it rustic. Do

ng more than my share of
ded a lady traveling alone:
trum is the use of facilities.
risk arrest using the ladies'
ents' is not an option.

1 again for volunteering to
nding my way on my own.
been here before, with

even in this age of jet
l and I do share a happy

on while standing on the
almost monthly parties at
s can while away an after-
But what's that compared
ourselves, undisturbed, all
ng nothing short of heaven.
e closest we'll ever come.
l. All God's children are
ay not all be afforded the
me. You are not a believer?

on't you want to see us

h you younger girls born
done for you. I've gone to
y soul on the battlement,
ou. Not to toot my own
my journey. Yes, my dear
is, but they know who we
ow will take the hills with
' (*Marches into the house.*)

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date top of 11

Scene 4

Jonathon's room. Bessie leads Jonathon and his suitcases inside.

BESSIE. Welcome to the Blue Room. We call it the Blue Room because ... you feel blue in it. Believe me, you'll only remember how happy you were here. Can I help unpack?

JONATHON. I've got it.

BESSIE. Plenty of hangers. Anything you forgot, one of us has a spare.

JONATHON. You're really very kind.

BESSIE. I'm not pretty, young, or rich. So kind is what I've got. (*Stares at Jonathon's suitcase like a dog at a steak. Jonathon opens his suitcase and she practically dives in.*) That's sweet. You buy it in New York?

JONATHON. Catalogue. Thank you. I've been worried. In the magazine you're all so well-dressed.

BESSIE. Stop hinting. You can borrow this anytime. Really, child, wear what makes you happy.

JONATHON. So, it's not too plain?

BESSIE. I thought you said you read the magazine.

JONATHON. I do.

BESSIE. Not very carefully or you'd know our goal is to assimilate. The more you look as if you just stepped away from a bridge table, the higher we grade you. Passing undetected is our zenith. Did you bring something to sleep in?

JONATHON. I ... think I have ...

BESSIE. At last, I can be of service. (*Bolts out the door ... and is back with a sexy nightie.*) Nighties and negligées are almost my favorite things in the world. But unless the wife is out of town or I'm up here ... Not something I get to enjoy. But our wives are out of town and we are up here, so ...

JONATHON. I brought pajamas.

BESSIE. (*Waving them away.*) Men's clothing is the fashion equivalent of Mexican food: eight ingredients served seventy-five ways.

JONATHON. Wilde again?

BESSIE. Beguiled again. (*Holding up nightie.*) Love this?

JONATHON. But what will you wear?

DEF (WIT)

BESSIE. What won't I?

JONATHON. To have lived thinking I was the only one, and now to have found this entire world ... I'm speechless.

BESSIE. (*Lightbulb moment.*) The unscuffed shoes and stiff petticoats ... This is your first time in public, isn't it? Jesus Christ, I'm a lunkhead.

JONATHON. I have no business being here.

BESSIE. Absurd! And I know from absurd. What a weekend you have ahead. Where's your camera?

JONATHON. I didn't bring one.

BESSIE. Don't worry. I'll snap plenty and make copies of everything. I've the most discreet druggist on my corner. He develops my film without ever batting an eye, for which I'm grateful, but endlessly suspicious.

JONATHON. No photographs, please.

BESSIE. Nonsense. You will want proof. Photographs and mirrors: a narcissist's-constant companions.

JONATHON. But you wouldn't show them around.

BESSIE. To whom? Really. Who but I would care to peruse a photo of myself beveling beside a potted palm in my wife's four-fox fur?

JONATHON. Do you think of yourself...? I don't know how to ask this. Reading the magazine, everyone says they feel half male and half female. They make it sound so organized.

BESSIE. Organized? That's funny.

JONATHON. It's intimidating.

BESSIE. It's advertising. Do you eat a bowl of Wheaties and expect to win the World Series?

JONATHON. But, how do you balance the female part?

BESSIE. I'm a decorated war hero wearing a housecoat and turban. Do you really want my advice? Truthfully, I think of being a boy as my day job. Some try to make sense of it. Some don't. There are those who are comfortable calling themselves "the girl within."

JONATHON. "The girl within"? I don't know.

BESSIE. Not how you feel?

JONATHON. When I dress I'm ... excited. The clothes are soothing almost ... Cool, but then I begin to feel feverish. Is that wrong?

BESSIE. Not if it feels right.

JONATHON. Right?

BESSIE. When you look in the mirror and see a woman, does it feel right?

JONATHON. Can you feel right and terrified at the same time?

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BESSIE. Daily. Which is stronger?

JONATHON. I've tried to stop. I keep doing it.

BESSIE. There's your answer. Now, what's your name?

JONATHON. Jonathon.

BESSIE. (*Indicating dresses.*) No one named Jonathon could wear
anything that pretty.

JONATHON. Miranda.

BESSIE. Beautiful.

JONATHON. Shakespeare. *The Tempest*. My father's favorite play.

BESSIE. Makes me wish I'd paid attention in school. But in my
day we were taught that girls should be smart and boys just had to
be pretty. And now I'm off. I will impede your pursuit of Miranda
no longer. Cry out if you need help.

JONATHON. Thank you for the company.

BESSIE. Dear child, you are a member of a very exclusive club. Only
we traverse the high-wire betwixt exaltation and terror. See you at
dinner. (*Withdraws. Jonathon models the nightie in the vanity mirror.*)

Devil
inside