
COCKTAILS

A SHORT STORY

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From a distance, I had been discreetly observing the lady in red. There was something that both intrigued and attracted me. Her wispy blonde hair, unusually pale and scarred face and irregular sized ears were a little disconcerting at first glance. But that wasn't it. There was something else.

Her blood red silky gown had a plunging neckline almost down to her navel. Very nice indeed. I slowly nodded my approval. She stood there elegantly as she interacted with some of the most astute minds in the field of chemical castration of sexual offenders. She knew I was watching. I liked that she knew.

Her champagne breasts sat perfectly; enticingly, and I imagined my fingers gliding slowly underneath the seam of the smooth red cloth. I entertained the thought that she had dressed this way specifically for me. To impress me. To tease and seduce me.

There was no doubt that from the neck down she was quite the package. I watched as she altered her stance allowing the split in her gown to slip over her right leg. It was a lovely limb, smooth, contoured to perfection and, in stark contrast to her face, tanned with a lovely shining olive glow. There was no outward sign, no ripple, no subtle line, no hint of altered shading; I decided too that she was not wearing any underwear. I needed to see more of her.

She smiled and nodded to the four black suited men that engaged and ogled her. I saw her mouth move, her full lips the colour of her gown, and her tongue, ever so slightly protruding, seemed to gently caress her teeth as she spoke. It would have been most sensual had it not been for the deep creases and multiple scars over her cheeks and around her deep blue eyes. Quite clearly she had been in a nasty

accident. If I had to guess, I would have said she was the driver in a motor vehicle and was perhaps struck from behind by another car. Facial injury was quite common in such cases.

One of the suited brigade leaned over and briefly whispered something in her deformed left ear. What was he up to? Giving her a polite invitation to meet him privately after the function? Telling her some special intimate secret? She nodded without smiling to whatever he said. I could see no wedding ring and none of the men present stood sufficiently close to her to indicate any close relationship. Clearly, she was unaccompanied. Her stance altered and her head angled to one side. I wasn't sure if I smiled outwardly, but I was nearly certain the positioning of her body was intended to send me a seductive message.

I needed to hear her voice. I moved closer, selecting a Japanese Slipper from the cocktail waiter as he paused near me. She noticed my movement. I liked that she noticed.

I was only three metres away from her, positioning myself just beyond the circle of men, but still with a direct line of vision. I sipped my cocktail. We made brief, but still significant, eye contact and I politely raised my glass. She seemed to half smile which caused a scar on her right cheek to partly buckle over and exaggerate itself. I smiled back and sipped once more.

My initial bewilderment was giving way more to a sense of mystery combined with a vague sense of familiarity. I waited with some increasing anticipation to hear her voice. I could feel the stirrings of excitement.

As for the party, it seemed like a raging success. There were at least one hundred guests milling about, many talking in groups, a handful of couples and a few solitary individuals, like myself, soaking up the atmosphere. The expansive foyer of the mansion was a mastery of pillars and marble. The bone white grand piano, silent for the moment, reflected the dancing lights from the chandelier. Waiters with cocktails and hors-d'oeuvres glided deftly between the guests.

At a rough estimate there were about three men for every woman. This seemed like a bit of an oversight by the host. Surely a wealthy drug company like Myonplus could have provided a few more ladies to keep the boys happy. As for me, the firm needed a legal representative with few scruples who could represent all those poor consumers suffering side effects from this new range of hormone restricting drugs. The invitation was mine for the taking. It was a little odd though to see so many other legal personnel in attendance, and my analytical legal brain was having trouble processing the information.

At last, the lady in red spoke. Her voice was soft and slightly husky as if requiring a little effort to push out her words.

'Vasoclonic will neutralize all sexual desire and function. Clinical trials so far show a one hundred percent success rate.'

I couldn't be sure if the voice was one I had heard before. There was a hidden depth to it that still eluded me. I had the very pleasant feeling that I was on the cusp of a wonderful discovery. The excitement had increased and I could feel a connection building between us. I was sure she could feel it too.

One thing I knew something about was Vasoclonic. This was the hot topic of discussion amongst several of the cocktail groups. It was set to revolutionise the treatment of sexual offenders. There was no doubt the drug company was well represented at the party. Perhaps my lady in red was herself a rep. She did know something of the product. I pondered this for a moment, but somehow in my wonderings I found myself entranced and fixated on the neckline and those magical breasts. She knew I was staring. I liked that she knew.

The whispering man once again leaned in to her ear with a secret utterance. I could feel a degree of annoyance. Was this feeling a hint of jealousy, or maybe I just found it all a little inappropriate given the social situation? I couldn't be sure. This time after his indiscretion he walked promptly away from the group. I was still unsure as to what dynamics were playing out.

As I sipped a little more of the Slipper I wondered about the removal of all sexual desire and function. I could quite possibly make a lot of money from this drug. But, surely those men whose lives were driven and controlled by sexual desire, would go to any lengths to get it back. They would willingly commit a crime to regain it. Hell, they might even kill for it!

It was precisely five sips later when her husky voice sent a cold shiver of déjà vu down my spine.

'Vasoclonic comes in all forms,' she said. 'It can be by given injection, taken as a tablet or administered as a clear, almost tasteless oral liquid. It works within thirty

minutes. One oral weekly dose of 200 milligrams or a monthly injection is recommended.'

Beneath the soft roughness of those words there was someone I had met before. Was it Nadine? But Nadine was dead. It couldn't be.

I inched a little closer, almost at the shoulder of a black suit. I studied her features. Her face and throat had been cut, or more likely brutally slashed and burnt. The thickened scars were clearer now. This was no traffic accident. Her ears were disfigured from the burns and there was evidence of surgical intervention. She looked directly at me and gave me that ugly half smile. My excitement was waning. I could actually feel the pressure in my groin subsiding.

She raised her glass. My Japanese Slipper was almost empty and a wave of horror swept over me. I looked at my glass again then back at her. The distorted smile was suddenly menacing and the blue eyes had become cold, penetrating and calculating.

Two people grabbed me from behind. They took a firm grip around the top of both my arms. It was the whispering man and an accomplice.

She moved forward towards me and up close to my face. I felt her breath and could smell tequila, lemon and Cointreau. A margarita. That was Nadine's favourite drink. It seemed impossible, yet she had survived. I was certain I had killed her. Nadine took the glass from my hand and put it up to her nose before telling me what I already feared.

'Odourless and tasteless. A Vasoclonic Japanese Slipper. What a grand idea.'

She paused a moment as she studied my worried face, then she spoke again; so softly; so decisively.

‘You will never rape and torture again. If there is any justice, you will never have an erection or a sexual urge for the rest of your life. I felt sure that the lure of a high class party, with both the opportunity to find your next victim and make yourself some money at the same time, would have been irresistible. We sent invites to every law firm. Then, for me, it was pretty much an identification parade.’ She turned to the black suited men.

‘Thank you my friends. Now, please get this monster out of my sight.’
