

A Mystic Land was late. When she arrived I had already done the walk up and down Chiltern Street checking window displays of shoes, instruments, wedding dresses, cosmetics. Construction works at the end. Opposite a coffee shop. This was new. We grabbed two empty stools from the already occupied table outside. We dragged them into the first bit of warm spring sun. Almost immediately our coffees arrived on a tray handled by a young handsome baristo. The hand over of the tray was slightly confusing since we only had our laps or the pavement. Another stool was handed to me by one of the men sitting at the table behind us. He suggested a mini table. The tone was firm. Almost demanding. A man in charge. I picked up the little red square next to my cup of coffee. A designer M written on the front. On the other side a to-the-point power phrase followed by the name of the company. Monocle. I tucked into my worn silver handbag. Salmon colored pages. I turned the newspaper over. There on the back Editor-in-chief of Monocle magazine. Tyler Brûlé. I looked over my shoulder. Two men. Travelling in Asia. Same time. Different locations with a possibility of meeting up in Tokyo. The man on the right gets out his leather diary. The gentleman on the left. In profile. Neat grey hair. Smart suit. Open shirt. Arms folded on the table in front of his long finished double espresso. A replica of the image in my lap except for the slightly bushier beard and distinctive glasses. I am smitten by A Mystic Land's sudden laugh. Her voluptuous black curls sway in the slight wind. Red nails. Red lips. Our brief encounter before her journeys back to Glasgow. Sleeping carriage. Mega bus. Affordable uncomfortable. We had met up on Chiltern Street to buy a pair of oversized ladies shoes. It had been a year since I had purchased my last pair. They were by now seriously knackered. Far too many ventures across dance floors soaked in sweat and shit. A cum stain had burned a permanent mark in the suede leather.

The coffee was gushing though the stove top espresso maker. I was at the tower block in Kilburn. Temporary accommodation waiting for demolition. I read the Last Words in Financial Times. Tyler Brûlé answering inevitably enjoyable FAQ's. "... It's not as if your son has told you he wants to work in finance but would like to wear a dress to work every day and have you pay for a decade's worth of gender re-assignment surgery." I ate the chocolate wrapped in red. A forgotten treat in my pocket. Downed the espresso. Made a quick playlist with S.O.S Band's 9min version of *Just Be Good To Me* and The Duncan Sisters *Boys Will Be Boys*. I dipped into a steaming bath. "People always talk about reputation. I don't care about your other girls. Just be good to me. Friends are always telling me. You're a user. I don't care what you do to them. Just be good to me." I had a shave. Pinned up my hair with the wig. Dipped my lips in red. I squeezed into my brand new replica snake-skin-patterned high heels. Stepped out of the concrete block into tormenting winds. Ready for the kill. Ready for the burn. "They can hurt you. Boys can hurt you. They can really hurt you." Be good to me.