

LUNCH WITH FRANCESCA

After the confusion of Orientation Week, I started sorting out my fellow journalist students. A statuesque dark girl, Francesca, impressed me right from the word go. She was quiet and flamboyant at the same time. She made me think Monique Whatsername, the French tennis player with the power serve. Like her, Francesca was tall, athletic and broad-shouldered, with a strong face, except Francesca's was beautiful. When she talked, arms waving, teeth flashing, her long, curly, black hair swished like a horse's tail on a hot day. She was usually dressed in clingy, black tights and brightly coloured tops. Let me sum her up by saying this. If I saw Francesca walking down Broadway, wearing high cowboy boots and leather gear, and leading a fucking great big black panther on a heavy chain, I would say: Yup, that's Francesca to a tee. Not that I ever did see her do that.

Francesca and I became real good friends. She had a whacky way of doing assignments that always got high marks from our Dr. Emma. I had a whacky way of doing them too, but mine didn't get me high marks. In fact, I was up shit creek with this latest one, a newspaper article based on an interview, due next Friday.

I talked it over with the others. "What are you guys doing for Emma's assignment? Mine's bugged up badly and I've only got this week to fix it up."

"What's the problem?" Tim asked.

"I'm interviewing this old guy and like he's spilling all this fantastic stuff from his past, but there's no way I can get it into shape by Friday. No way. How are you guys handling it?"

Francesca was interviewing a bunch of girls about their sexual behaviour, wouldn't you know. She'd got a sex-worker, a lesbian, that rare commodity a teen-age virgin, an undergrad nonvirgin, and a staff member. Short, snappy little interviews. "Like a collage, montage type of thing, made from words."

Alan looked at Tim and Tim at Alan. I could see what they were thinking: Francesca's off with the fairies again. Yet Francesca managed super-good marks with her off-the-wall arty-farty approach. I could relate to that, 'cause that was kind of what I was trying to do, but somehow she succeeded and I was not, not, not.

After half an hour of everyone banging on about the bloody assignment, each saying something different, I was more confused than ever. "I give up. Thanks guys, but I'd better move it. See ya."

As I stood to leave, Francesca tugged my hand.

"You and I are working along the same lines, Cathie. Let's work on it together. I'll walk back with you." She let her fingers run off my hand, leaving a soft tingling trail. We walked off together.

"Sure! When'd suit? Right now I'm seeing Emma to ask for an extension."

"How about next Wednesday arvo? My place, we won't be disturbed there."

“Okay. How do I get ...”

“Hey, why not come for lunch?” she interrupted. She seemed pretty keen to help. Suited me.

“Here.” She ripped a sheet out of her notebook, wrote her address, scrawled a map, and pushed it into my hand. Gurgling her sexy laugh, her long fingers again tingled off my hand. They then reformed as a bunch of cute little snakes, wagging farewell between two huge eyes. “See you. Twelve thirty?”

“Great. And thanks a lot.”

I went to Emma’s office. She heard me out, sitting there, staring at me with those skew-whiff chestnut eyes of hers, her white oval face expressionless. I was getting more and more nervous as I stammered on. I stopped. I waited.

She sighed. “Cathie, do you know what the most important part of being a journalist is?”

I got it. “Meeting deadlines?”

“Meeting deadlines.” Finally, she smiled. “Sorry. I hear what you’re saying, but handing me a top job by Friday’s deadline is what it’s all about, Cathie. Do it.”

She stood as I turned to go out the door and came up behind me. She squeezed my left bicep gently. Her lips were close to my ear. “You *can* do it, Cathie. You’re one of my best students.”

Harassment! And if I don’t get a good mark, Dr. Emma, you’re dead meat. Just kidding. What it really meant was that my problem was now very sharply defined.

Friday it had to be.

Francesca opened the door. She was wearing a long purple angora sweater with a zip-up front. The sweater was so long it served as a miniskirt as well. With her purple top and long legs she looked like a sexy agapanthus in flower. It suited her. Fact is I’d never seen her wear anything that didn’t suit her. Even the garish, plastic sling-backs that left her feet bare. Her hair was piled up on top and stuck with an elaborate pin. First time I’d seen it like that. It drew attention to her strong face, long nose and those huge eyes of hers.

“Hi. Glad you can spare the time. I’ve brought the print out and a floppy. You using PC?”

“Yep, not a problem. Come in. Shall we eat first?”

“No, if you don’t mind. I’ll show you what I’ve got then I want to pick your brains.”

“Pick away, Baby.” She took me into a large office. Only one of the two desks had a computer and printer on it. The other was empty, and so were the shelves beside it. Looked like she was sharing at one stage. She saw me staring around.

“Yeah. My flatmate Heidi left only last week. We had a bit of a row. Sit over there. Let’s have a look.” She indicated the empty desk.

I sat. She dragged her computer chair over and sat beside me. I talked her through my material from the beginning, how I’d met this old guy called Peter who’d lived through the Swinging Sixties. A

mistake. She was fascinated by the bottle-spinning parties and wanted to know all about his shagging around.

“Look, we haven’t time to go through all the juicy details. I’ve got all this stuff and there’s no way I can get it into shape by Friday. No way. How did you do it, with all your interviews?”

“Simple. And not a verbal montage – I said that was to confuse the fellers. All my interviewees were lesbian, including Rosetta the sex-worker, and they knew each other. Look, let’s eat and I’ll tell you over lunch.”

We went to the kitchen where she threw a salad together and poured two orange juices. “Yeah, as I was saying I was after personal perspectives from girls in a relationship and girls not in one.”

“Sounds complicated. How’s Emma going to like all this?”

“I don’t think Emma’s going to have a problem with it. Believe me.”

“Ah.” So I hadn’t misjudged our Dr. Emma.

“Now for the interesting bit. I learned from one of the interviewees that Heidi, my flat-mate, was cheating on me. That’s why she’s now my exflat-mate. I faced her with it, we had a huge shitty and I told her to piss off. You were sitting at her desk a moment ago.”

Well, well. She was making no bones about it. Fine, as long as she left me out of balancing her now unbalanced equation. “Sorry to hear it. But it doesn’t answer my question. How did you cut through all that detail? Specially when you were so personally involved.”

“I didn’t go into much detail. I made the offended party – me, that is to say – a fictitious person. That distanced me. Then I drew some generalisations about lesbian and gay relationships and that took me to the required three thousand words.”

“I’m on ten thousand and rising.”

“You can’t tell the whole story. Ya gotta be *ruthless* with your material. Come.” She stood and held out her hand. “I’ll show you the flat.”

I was thinking I wanted to start being ruthless with my material, not to see over her place, but somehow Francesca was not a person you argued with.

The bathroom. Wash basin, loo, shower. Terrific. A morning full of surprises. Bedroom. Only one? It would seem so. It was a two-bed flat and the other bedroom was their study. I got the picture.

The bedroom was biggish, light, airy and arty modern, the sun streaming through brilliantly coloured designs on the curtains. A large waterbed occupied pride of place.

“Ever tried one of those? Lie down. They’re fantastic.”

I lay on it, sank and found myself rolling. Hey, super comfy.

She stretched out beside me. “You know, Cathie, you and I’ve got a lot in common. We’re second generation. Our straight, traditional parents just don’t get it. They don’t get that we kids are not little Italians or little Chinese. We’re Australians.”

I turned to face her. “That’s my problem.” One of my many problems.

“Hang on”. She got up and went to the dressing table and opened a drawer. She pulled out a tin, opened it and took out a joint. She lit up. “Ah,” she inhaled, puffing out her chest. She lay down beside me again and handed me the joint.

I took a heavy drag and held it while she rabbitied on. “You know why I dress like a hornbag? It’s like my disguise. Papa and my brothers believe that someone who looks like me is bait for a nice, straight Italian boy. And as I don’t have a boy friend right now it means I’m being a good girl studying hard. Family, kids? Yeah, I will, one day I guess, but meantime that’s not what where I’m at. You know?”

Yes, I did know but by now I didn’t care. I was feeling pretty good, relaxed. We were lying facing each other.

“Cathie, shut your eyes.”

I shut my eyes.

“Now imagine you are being kissed by the most attractive guy you can think of.”

I imagined what one of Francesca’s brothers might look like. Big, athletic, awesomely handsome. Hands cradled my face, soft sensuous lips touched mine. A tongue slipped between them. It felt good.

“Now, could you tell that that wasn’t a guy?”

Easy. And a tad disturbing. “The lips were too soft. Most guys kiss hard, like to prove their testosterone level. Hey, but Francesca!” I sat up, eyes wide open now. Stoned she might have been, but little Cathie here was getting worried.

“Yes?”

“Listen up. I’m straight, right?”

“I know that. You’ll be right. Trust me.”

She knelt upright. She took the tag of the long zipper in the front of her sweater in her fingers and drew it downwards from the collar to the hem. She shrugged off the sweater and flung it aside with uplifted arms, revealing a lot of armpit hair. Like a lot. Her breasts were small but with large nipples. Like large. She moved over, kneeling astride me. Wow! I didn’t know girls got to get as hairy as that.

“Hey, keep your eyes shut! Now, back to this guy who turns you on.”

I admit it. I was getting excited, especially when she unzipped my jeans and pulled them down. Fingers explored inside my pants, gently, curiously. I felt my shirt being unbuttoned, my bra removed.

And there I was on Francesca’s bed, as naked as she was.

And there was this guy, Francesca’s brother say, lying on top of me, his nipples rubbing against mine, kissing me, tonguing me. His tongue slid between my breasts, lips closed on my left nipple, my right nipple. A tongue travelled like a warm snail, slowly, wetly, down into my navel, lower. Oh my God! I was getting the best head I’d ever had!

I couldn’t stop my moaning and groaning. I was getting there. Cathie, do yourself a favour, I shouted to myself, for *God’s sake*, keep your eyes closed! This is a *guy* here, right? Don’t you forget that.

There was a humming sound. A great, throbbing cock found me and buzzed right up to my throat it felt like. I was being fucked, like I mean *fucked*. Something like the most sensitive finger in the world, buzzing tenderness, found my clit. I couldn't take any more of this. I tried to pull away, writhe, wriggle, squirm, groan, shout, scream.

And then the most incredible orgasm I'd ever had.

I was crying, sobbing, shrieking, laughing, sitting up, hugging Francesca. We fell over, locked together, surfing the waterbed in rolling waves. I found myself kissing her passionately. Yes, it was Francesca, I knew it. I was kissing her, and I *wanted* to. I tongued her mouth, her breasts, those nipples, bloody big rock cakes now, and dare I? I pushed my face lower. No. I couldn't bring myself to go further.

"Sorry."

She understood. I was willing to lay bets she'd been through this scenario dozens of times.

"Here." She put the vibrator in my hand, a penis look-alike with a trigger thing on the end to tickle the clit. Why weren't men equipped with a little hook like that? God slipped up there. He should've been She.

I owed Francesca one but I didn't want to look. I stared into her enormous, laughing eyes as my hand put the vibrator where God Herself intended it should go.

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