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SPOILED IN THE CITY

She married the world's most eligible bachelor, and inherited way more than and a nasty habit for popping pills. Is something rotten in SoHo? Introducing

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHESLEY MCLAREN

No names. There are spies everywhere.

HATE EVERYONE and EVERYTHING, including Peter III. This morning, I totally got even with him for coming in at 12:23 a.m. when he PROMISED, PROMISED, PROMISED he'd be home by midnight. At the LATEST. It was a test and he failed once again. But instead of screaming, I ignored the whole thing and lay awake the entire night again, feeling like my head was going to explode, which I'm sure it is one of these days very soon. But if I tell P3 that, he'll just say, "Why don't you take some more pills?" Well, why doesn't he stop being such an ASSHOLE, and then I wouldn't have to take any more pills. As it is, some days I feel like my legs are made of rubber and it's no wonder I can barely walk across the room to answer the phone.

So this morning, when P3 got up, I pretended to be asleep. As soon as I heard the water running, I jammed a finger down my throat. Sure enough, in about one minute I felt a huge puke coming on and ran into the bathroom and vomited several times while P3 stood there in horror with shaving cream on his face. When I stood up, I was trembling and sort of stumbled against the wall, wiping my eyes.

"Are you O.K.?" he asked.

I smiled sort of mysteriously and said, "Oh, I'm O.K. now, I guess. I don't know what came over me."

"Maybe you should see a doctor," he said.

"I'm so sorry I was asleep when you came home. Did you have fun?" I asked. Then I got back into bed and he came in before he left for that STUPID office and said, "Do you think you're pregnant?"

"Oh, probably not."

"But I'm worried about you," he said.

"Then why don't you stay home and keep me company?" I said.

That was obviously the wrong thing to say because he just shook his head, patted me on the leg, and went away. Well, FUCK HIM.

Went to see Dr. Q at 1:30. He kept me waiting for three minutes and 42 seconds, which is almost four minutes, and completely unacceptable. Two-and-a-half minutes is the CUT OFF FOR ANYONE. I always tell EVERYONE I won't be kept waiting for more than two-and-a-half minutes unless I'm the one who's keeping them waiting. That's one of the reasons why I refused to be on the cover of that stupid Vogue magazine, because that idiot woman said I'll have someone call you right back and I said what do you mean by right back and she said in five minutes and she called back in 18 and I said, "Sorry, I'm not interested." Plus I have my other reasons, which are that I HATE that woman, but more about that later.

So, this is typical, the person who was before me at Dr. Q's was some 40-year-old woman wearing sweatpants. And they weren't even Calvin Klein. And she was holding a tissue.

"Well," Dr. Q said. I think he noticed I was being extremely cold and standoffish. "And how are you today, Cecilia? Do you still think that someone in the family is secretly poisoning you?"

"What on earth makes you say that?"

"Well," he said, flipping through his notebook, "that's what you said yesterday."

"I did throw up this morning."

"I see," Dr. Q said again.

"And what exactly is it that you see, Dr. Q?"

"I see that you're wearing a head scarf again."

"Your point?"

"You've been wearing a head scarf and black sunglasses for the last two weeks."

I gave him a withering smile.

"So, er, how does it make you feel when you wear a head scarf and dark sunglasses?"

"How do YOU think it makes me feel, Dr. Q?"

"Why don't you tell me?"

"NO," I said. "Why don't you tell me?"

"That would, ah, defeat the purpose of our...visits."

Ugh. Dr. Q is so THICK.

"It makes me feel safe," I said.

"From the family poisoner?"

Sometimes I want to KILL Dr. Q. I really do.

I was watching the Karen Carpenter story for something like the 57th time when DW called right at the part when Karen finally moves into her own apartment and her mother finds the box of laxatives. DW had on that syrupy voice that I hate soooooo much. "Hello, my darling," he said. "What are you doing?"

"Mmm," I said. "Karen is just about to lie to her mother and tell her that she won't take laxatives any more and her mother is actually going to believe her. Can you believe how dumb that woman is?"

"Actually, I..."

"And then Karen is going to get down to 78 pounds and have a heart attack after she eats Thanksgiving dinner. In other words, she is basically killed by turkey meat."

"How fabulously...charming," DW said.

"I'm really in the middle of something, so what do you want, DW?" I asked, which I knew was horribly RUDE, especially since I hadn't talked to DW for at least three months.

"What are you doing...later?"

"Oh...later?" I said carelessly. "I think I'll take a few

she bargained for: an unreformed husband, a paparazzi conspiracy, the diaries of CKB, a new serial satire from Candace Bushnell.



Xanaxes and make crank calls to P3's office. And then I'll walk the dog for the tenth time and scream at a couple of photographers. What do you think I'm doing, DW?"

"You know, you're really a funny, charming girl. That's what no one realizes about you and it's a shame. If people could only see the real you..."

"Do you think P3's having an affair?"

"Oh, come on, my dear. How could he have an affair when he's married to one of the most beautiful, sexy women in the world?" Pause. "Do you think he's having an affair?"

"Not right now," I said. "But I'm just checking to make sure I'm not crazy."

"You see?" DW said gleefully. "This is what happens when you lose touch with your old friends."

"We haven't lost touch..."

"And that's why I absolutely insist on seeing you for dinner tonight."

"I have to see," I said. "Hold on." I put the phone down and walked slowly through the living room, up the stairs to the master bath. I took off all my clothes and stepped on the scale. "Weight, 107.5 pounds. Percentage body fat, 13." Good. I'd lost half a pound from the morning. I put my clothes back on and went downstairs. I picked up the phone.

would be abuzz. It would be just like the old days."

"How is it that you've never lost your hair, DW?" I asked, lighting a cigarette.

"Oh. You're such a card. My grandfather had a full head of hair when he died."

"But don't you think...that you had less hair three months ago?"

DW looked around the restaurant and then slapped my hand. "You naughty. I did have a tiny bit of work done. But everybody does these days. You know, times have really changed. Now EVERYBODY is photographed. I mean, the AWFUL people whose photographs appear in magazines, but I don't have to tell you that. Now A., she does it the right way. Do you know that nobody, I mean NOBODY, appears in the society pages without her approval? And, of course, they have to be the right sort of person. She has the highest standards. She can spot quality a mile away."

I yawned loudly.

"Did you see that featurette they did on you last month? The one where they analyzed your hemline lengths? That's why the long skirt is so big this season."

"That was only because," I said, tapping my ash on the floor, "the hem on that skirt came unraveled and I was too lazy to have it sewn back up."

"Oh, but my dear," DW said. "Don't you see? That attitude, that insouciance, it's genius. It's like when Sharon Stone wore the Gap turtleneck to the Oscars."

"I THINK I'LL TAKE A FEW XANAXES, MAKE CRANK CALLS TO P3'S OFFICE, WALK THE DOG, AND SCREAM AT A COUPLE OF PHOTOGRAPHERS"

"DW?"

"Thank God. I thought you'd died."

"That's not funny. I'll meet you at 8:30. At the R. But only you. And DON'T TELL ANYBODY."

I wore Dolce & Gabbana workout pants, a Ralph Lauren Polo sweatshirt, and no bra, and when I walked in, I remembered that I hadn't brushed my hair for three days.

DW was sitting at the wrong table.

"Ooooooh. You look so...American. So...gorgeous. I always said you were the quintessential American girl. The American girl begins and ends with you."

"You're at the wrong table, DW. I never sit there."

"Of course not. But those pants darling. Dolce & Gabbana."

I walked to the back of the restaurant and sat down. DW followed. "You should only wear American, dear. It's soooo important. I was thinking about putting you in some Herbert."

"Herbert hasn't had a client under 60 in 50 years."

"But I'm making him hot. He's going to be hot, hot, hot again. Those young M sisters are wearing him."

I rolled my eyes. "I want a martini," I said. "You don't have any pills, do you?"

"What kind of pills? Allergy pills? I don't know..."

"Can I get off on them?"

"Oh my dear, what has happened to you? You're turning into a little Courtney Love. I sooooo wish you'd become friends with those darling M sisters. They adore you—and think of the parties you could throw together. *Tout* New York

I fixed DW with an evil eye. I'd been trying to get rid of him for two years, but every now and again I had this AWFUL feeling that DW was never going to go away, that people like DW didn't go away, especially when you knew them the way DW and I had known each other.

"I threw up this morning," I said casually. "And I still think someone is trying to poison me."

DW laughed meanly. "Is that so my dear? But let's be sure we understand each other. You are not pregnant. You never have been and you never will be, not with your body fat hovering at 13 percent. P3 may be stupid enough to buy that rap, but I'm not."

"How DARE you?"

DW looked around the restaurant. "Keep your voice down. Unless you want to see yet another item in 'Page Six'—Cecilia Kelly Bennett engaged in a lover's spat with the older man with whom she's secretly having an affair."

"You're a psychopath, DW. And people are starting to figure it out."

"And you don't think they haven't figured out the same thing about you?" DW motioned for another round of martinis. "CKB. Maybe the most hated married woman in America."

"Fuck you, DW. Nobody talks to me like that."

"Take a deep breath, my dear." DW patted my hand. He had horrible fingers that narrowed to little points. "Maybe not the most hated. But certainly it must have occurred to you by now that all of those horrendous photographs are not a mistake."

I lit another cigarette. "So?"

"So there's a little game they play in the offices of photo editors across the country. Let's publish the worst possible photograph of CKB. I believe they have a pool going, and the photographers are in on it, too. The pot may be up to \$10,000 now."

"Shut up. Just shut up." I closed my eyes. And then I did what I trained myself to do years ago when I was a kid. I started to cry.

DW laughed harshly. "First of all, my dear, I've seen that act before. And secondly, you don't deserve an ounce of my sympathy. I've never seen anyone given so much, fuck up so spectacularly. Get yourself together. Take a Xanax or something."

"I'm going home now. And I'm going to forget we ever had this conversation."

"I wouldn't do that, my dear," DW said, gripping my hand. I'd forgotten how strong DW could be, even though he was a queen.

"You're hurting me," I said.

"That's absolutely nothing, my dear, compared to the amount of pain I can inflict upon you and am perfectly prepared to do so."

I sat back down. Lit ANOTHER cigarette. GOD. I have to quit smoking one of these days. When I get pregnant. "What do you want, DW?" I asked, although I thought I had a pretty good idea.

"Are you aware," DW said, "that there's a CKB tell-all book in the works? The writer is a very, very good friend of mine, but I have to say he's quite an excellent investigative journalist. The book would be...well, let's just say that embarrassing would be the least of it."

"Are you aware," I said, "that I have now been married for over two years so therefore whatever you want to say about me makes absolutely no difference?"

"Are you aware," DW said, "that your marriage sucks and that your husband is constantly considering filing for divorce?"

"My husband is madly in love with me. He won't let me out of his sight."

"And where is he tonight?"

"You know my philosophy, DW. I always bite the hand that feeds me."

"Is that so? Well, take a good look at yourself, dear. You're a mess," DW said. "I hardly think you can afford to have your name raked through the mud. Think about it. The photographers camped outside your door again, people going through your garbage, your face on the cover of the tabloids. Just think of the...schaudenfreude."

"I...think...I...need...a...Xanax," I whispered.

"Oh, you'll need much more than a Xanax by the time they're through with you. I should think you'll be on Librium by then, which, incidentally, is what they give to schizophrenics. Just in case you're not up on your pharmaceuticals."

I slumped in my chair.

"It's not that bad," DW said. "After all, all I'm asking is for you to attend a few parties and a tea every now and then. Chair a couple of committees. Wear some designer dresses. Maybe a fur. You're not against fur, are you? And then maybe host a trip to India—but by the time we arrange it, India might be passé, so maybe some place like Ethiopia. We'll do some photo shoots, get you signed on as a con-

tributing editor at Vogue. It's only the sort of life that every woman in America dreams of."

"DW," I said, "society...is...dead."

"Nonsense, my dear," he said. "You and I are going to revive it. We'll both have our place in the annals of New York society."

I just stared at him.

"Come, come," DW said. "You've had a nice long rest for two years and now it's time to go back to work." He leaned forward. "Now, here's what I want you to do. Tomorrow, I'm sending over a lovely young girl who just graduated from Miss Porter's. You remember Miss Porter's, don't you? The girl's parents are friends of mine. Lovely people. The S's. You'll hire her as your social secretary. And then I want you to start putting on a happy face. Happy, happy, happy. The next time PJ asks you to go with him on his flying lesson, you go, and we'll get you a chic little aviator cap and sunglasses and a fab leather aviator jacket. Maybe we'll have MJ stitch one up just for you with the LV logo—he's going to be the toast of New York this season, don't you think?—and then we'll get one or two photographers—the best of course, RL or BC—to take a few pickies..."

"Pickies?"

"...and then maybe some lessons—cooking or Italian, because everyone's going to be summering in Tuscany next year—and then we'll get you hooked up with a very special charity...something with children I think...maybe encephalitic babies...oh, and some new spiritual trend thing...like druids. Druids could be very, very big...and you look like someone who could worship trees and get away with it."

DW held up his martini glass. "To you, my dear. We're going to turn you into...into America's very own Princess Di. What do you think?"

"I think I feel a huge puke coming on," I said. I picked up my napkin and threw up into it.

TO BE CONTINUED...





Davis Factor, Stephen Saban, Whitney Scott, Thomas Card, Candace Bushnell, Robert Fleischauer, Nitin Vadukul

Davis Factor has worked as the staff photographer for the U.S. Ski Team and Elite Models. Now one of L.A.'s leading fashion shutterbugs, Factor has shot for *Playboy*, *Vanity Fair*, and *L'Uomo Vogue*. He is also the creative director of SmashBox Studio. In this issue, Factor photographed Claire Forlani for our cover.

Stephen Saban was the founding editor, in 1982, of the original *Details* magazine, where he wrote an "unwieldy" monthly column about nightlife. For this issue, Saban spoke with actress Claire Forlani—who, he says, almost punched him when he asked if she was a Scientologist.

Whitney Scott is an art critic for *The New York Post*. A former reporter for *New York* magazine, she has written about art for *ArtNews*, *Tatler*, and *Detour*. In this issue, she chats with photographer Nan Goldin about life after the Whitney.

Thomas Card's work has been featured in *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue Gioiello*, *Mirabella*, and the *New York Times Magazine*. For this issue, Card shot "Tis the Season to Be Spoiled," a playfully decadent assortment of the city's most sought-after gifts. "I love still life," he says. "The obsession with detail, the mastery of light that goes into elevating an object to the level of perfection."

Candace Bushnell is the author of *Sex and the City*, an uproariously funny book about the lives—and loves—of jaded New York jet-setters. This fall, HBO turned the book into a successful TV series—and now, with the launch of her new monthly column, "Spoiled in the City," Bushnell introduces a new set of colorful characters to the readers of *Manhattan File*.

Robert Fleischauer is an L.A. photographer whose work has appeared in *Mademoiselle*, *French Elle*, *Tatler*, *Surface*, and *Paper*. For this issue, he captured the seductive beauty of cover girl Claire Forlani, who stars opposite Brad Pitt in this month's *Meet Joe Black*.

Nitin Vadukul was born in Kenya, educated in England, lived in Paris for two years, and now divides his time between London and New York—a peripatetic lifestyle that may account for his eclectic touch in the dark room. Vadukul's photographs have appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Premiere*, *The Source*, and *Details*. For this issue, he shot three of Gotham's hottest new men—Duncan Sheik, Liev Schreiber, and Ian Stellan— in this fall's coolest men's fashion.

Correction: In our September/October issue, Wolford's Waist Sock was incorrectly identified. We regret any confusion.