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~~Mitchell. Don't kill him till I get back. (She sits in the bathroom.)~~

PAUL. (Sits in chair.) Come on. Tie me up. Let's kill me.

MITCHELL. All right. What's the catch?

PAUL. (Rises.) I don't think you can do it. I don't think you have the guts. If you can, go ahead. But if you can't, then Arlene walks out of here with me, and we get a new dentist.

MITCHELL. Leave it to a used car dealer to come up with a scheme like that.

PAUL. Have we got a deal?

MITCHELL. You're on. (They shake hands.) Have a seat. (PAUL sits down again. MITCHELL takes his own tie and begins tying PAUL's hands behind his back and to the chair.)

PAUL. You know what my wife's problem is? It's those damn women's magazines she reads. They're too honest. They confuse her. They make sex look like a fun thing.

MITCHELL. (Finishes tying PAUL's hands.) Is that too tight?

PAUL. No, it's fine.

MITCHELL. I'm going to have to borrow your tie.

PAUL. Take it. I've got a dozen more just like it.

(MITCHELL removes PAUL's tie and begins tying his feet to the chair.) Maybe it's her age. You know how women are about losing their youth. It's tough on a woman when she hits thirty-eight.

MITCHELL. (Stops and reacts.) She's thirty-eight?

PAUL. Didn't she tell you?

MITCHELL. I didn't know she was thirty-eight. How do you like that. I'm two years younger than her.

PAUL. Does that mean it's all off?

MITCHELL. Of course not. But why would she lie to me?

PAUL. People lie. They lie to each other. Sometimes on the lot I even have to do it. Me, Honest Paul Miller! All life is a lie. When you're a kid they tell you there's a Santa

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Claus, that there's a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. They tell you if you work hard, you'll be a success, if you find the right woman, you'll be happy. I'm living proof that everything's a lie. Everybody shafts you. But unlike Arlene, I've learned to live with it.

MITCHELL. At times, Paul, you come off as a very bitter person.

PAUL. I'm not bitter. I'm just realistic. I know that

... (Winces in pain.) Oooooow!

MITCHELL. What's wrong?

PAUL. It's that lousy bridge you put in.

MITCHELL. (Goes to bag and gets some dental instruments.) Here, let me have a look.

PAUL. No, no. It's all right.

MITCHELL. Open wide. (Looks into PAUL's mouth.)

Have you been using your water pik?

PAUL. Who's got time?

MITCHELL. You're lucky you're going to die, Paul. You need twelve hundred dollars worth of work there.

PAUL. I wouldn't go to you if you were the last dentist on earth.

MITCHELL. Paul, for you, I am the last dentist on earth. (The bathroom door opens and ARLENE comes out wearing a floozie wig.)

ARLENE. (To PAUL, playing a sexy hooker.) Hello, big boy. You want to have some fun?

PAUL. What the hell is this?

ARLENE. It's me, Paul, Arlene.

PAUL. (Amazed.) I know it's you.

ARLENE. This is how I registered downstairs as Kitty LaTour. So that when they find your dead body, they'll connect it to this girl. (Points to herself.)

MITCHELL. You really look sexy in that wig.

PAUL. I think she looks cheap. She looks like a hooker.

ARLENE. Of course. That's what I'm supposed to be. PAUL. You would associate my death to a hooker?

MITCHELL. It's the perfect crime. You came here to meet this hooker, you had sex in the bathtub, you hit your head and you drowned.

PAUL. Sex in the bathtub? And how will you explain my being tied to a chair?

ARLENE. Grow up, Paul. There are people who have sex like that every day.

PAUL. (*Shocked.*) Every day? What a world!

MITCHELL. The bathtub's all filled with water and all we have to do is drag you in there and dump you in, face down. (*To ARLENE.*) Then you and I can go out and get something to eat.

PAUL. Why don't we order something up?

ARLENE. (*Goes to phone.*) Great idea. Ever since we thought of killing you at Howard Johnsons, I've had a taste for fried clams.

MITCHELL. Arlene, hang up.

ARLENE. You love ice cream. They have twenty-eight flavors.

MITCHELL. I had my desert. I had a Milky Way before I came up.

PAUL. A Milky Way. What a baby. (*Tanning.*) You're a baby. Little baby . . .

MITCHELL. Hang up, Arlene. We'll eat when we're finished. Maybe I'll even take you dancing.

ARLENE. (*Into phone.*) Never mind. We're going to go dancing. (*Hangs up.*)

MITCHELL. I love dancing, Paul. I just love it. (*Starts dancing.*) One two, One, two, three.

PAUL. Well, I hate it. I'm on my feet all day, all night . . . Why should I want to dance? I want to sit and relax.

ARLENE. Well, I didn't. That's what ruins marriages, Paul, more than anything else.

PAUL. What? Not dancing?

ARLENE. No, not doing things together! PAUL. Okay, so we'll do things together.

ARLENE. It's too late. You are who you are and you've gone as far as you can go. The big difference between us, Paul, is that you're tied down and I'm free. I've found myself. You didn't even go out looking.

PAUL. Arlene. I work twelve hours a day, seven days a week. I don't have time to find myself. You think I'm doing it for me? I'm doing it so I can buy you things. I don't need anything. All I need are shoes so I can continue to work to buy you those things.

ARLENE. Paul, you'll never understand. The basic fact is that I've outgrown you. I've matured. I've blossomed.

MITCHELL. That reminds me, Arlene. He said you were thirty-eight.

ARLENE. Paul, you're a very petty person.

MITCHELL. Do you think I care about age? Nobody cares about age anymore.

ARLENE. You're as young as you feel. And I feel like a spring bride. I want to go. I want to do. I'm restless. I can't be contained. I want to write. I want to paint. I want to take ballet lessons. I want to go around the world.

PAUL. (*To MITCHELL.*) Doctor Lovell, do you have any idea what that's going to cost you?

ARLENE. I've spent too many years just sitting around waiting. Waiting for something to happen. Waiting for something to begin. Waiting! Waiting! Waiting! Well, my plane's on the runway, my seat belt is fastened and I'm ready to take off.

MITCHELL. And this time you're going first class.

PAUL. (*Trying to get loose—frightened.*) Goddamn it, you really got me tied up here.

MITCHELL. That's the name of the game.

~~PAUL. Arlene, look in my safe pocket.~~

~~PAUL. Just look. When I was a boy I got to lose?~~

~~Auntie Arlene reaches into his pocket and takes out a gift wrapped box. Oh, Paul, you shouldn't have. I didn't~~