

Too Easy

The soft buzz of her door bell took Kerry by surprise. That bell only worked sporadically, so the fact that was functioning at all tonight was Surprise Number One. Surprise Number Two was the man with a tool box standing on her welcome mat.

Earlier, when she had called the building superintendent, Carl was clear that there would be no plumber until tomorrow.

“We ain’t on call twenty-four hours a day,” he said “Ya think you’re living at The Ritz or something?”

Kerry was pretty sure that The Ritz didn’t have roaches the size of baby gerbils. And, it probably had toilets that flushed consistently. So yes, it had occurred to her that this was not the Ritz. She bit back her usual smart ass response and played the helpless female card instead.

“Come on, Carl. I’m in a jam here. Help me out just this once. Please? I’ll make it worth your while the next time you stop by.”

Carl’s rough voice softened. “Well, I’ll see what I can do,” he said. “I’ve got family stuff all weekend, but maybe I can get one of the other guys to help out. No promises, though and it sure ain’t gonna be tonight. Just don’t flush that toilet, okay?”

Kerry could usually wheedle Carl into helping her out. He was a lonely guy, so a little sweet talk went a long way with him. Over fifty, with a big belly draping over his tool belt, Carl didn’t get much attention from pretty women. When Kerry flirted with him, he could almost believe that she meant it.

Flirting was where Kerry excelled. Her secretarial abilities weren't so hot and she stunk at waitressing, but her flirting skills were top-notch. A pragmatic survivor, she knew how to work guys to get what she needed.

Still, it would have been hard for Carl to conjure up a plumber at eight o'clock on a Saturday night. He had been pretty clear that nobody would be available until tomorrow at the earliest. Should she be suspicious of this guy at her door? No, he had a tool box. That meant he was legitimate, right? Maybe good old Carl was able to pull something off, after all.

So, Kerry opened her door and invited the guy into her apartment. She felt a surge of panic as she remembered that Carl's guys always expected a fat tip for after-hour's service.

Oh rats! How can handle this one? I haven't worked all week and I don't have enough money for a Big Mac, let alone a big tip for this guy. I'll just have to make use of what I do have.

Kerry took a steadying breath and focused her attention on the man who stood inside her apartment. She gave him a megawatt smile.

The guy blinked behind his wire-rimmed glasses. His eyes were an icy shade of bluish-green, but they seemed to soften as he gazed at Kerry. A blue work shirt fit snugly over his broad shoulders and Kerry could see the bulge of his biceps. A shock of dark hair fell attractively over his forehead.

"This shouldn't take very long," he said.

Hmm, he's pretty cute, Kerry thought. And those glasses made him look like a young Richard Gere. I've always been a sucker for that boy-next-door kind of look. Yeah, I can make him okay with not getting a tip. Or, at least not getting a cash tip, anyway.

Kerry's long blond hair swung seductively as she tossed her head. She breathed a sigh of gratitude, remembering that even though she didn't have a Saturday night date, she had washed her hair anyway. The scent of her floral shampoo lingered in the air. She flashed a come-hither smile at the man.

“Do you really need to get to work right away? How about if I get us a beer? It's Saturday night. Wouldn't it be nice to just relax a bit?”

“Sure,” the man said, smiling back at her. “But first, let me make certain your front door is securely locked. A pretty girl like you needs to be careful. That guy who hurts women is still out there, you know. They're calling him The Prime Time Strangler because he always appears early in the evening. Goofy name, huh?”

Kerry heard the click of the lock and the clink of the chain as she turned to lead the handsome young man into her kitchen. She grinned to herself.

He's going to be too easy. Aren't all men, when it comes right down to it? They just want one thing, and I've got it. This is going to be a piece of cake.

Kerry didn't see the man reach into his toolbox as he set it down on the floor. He quickly slipped a length of coiled cord into his jeans pocket before he followed her into the kitchen.

A smile twitched the corners of his mouth.

She's making it almost too easy,” he thought. *This is going to be a piece of cake.*

