

ADRIET

A woman in silhouette stands on a beach at sunset, looking down at something in her hands. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the water and the city skyline in the background. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, and the water reflects the sun's rays. The city skyline is visible in the distance, with various skyscrapers and buildings. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

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ONE

Alone in a stairwell, a young woman climbs the steps two at a time. Sweat drips down her chest, beneath the purple corset that adorns it. The fluorescent light causes her gold hoop earrings to shine. Adrenaline coursing through her veins, her eyes are focused upward. With a quick glance backwards, her brown hair and the ends of the scarf she wears around her head bounce over her shoulder and back again.

Reaching the top, the woman kicks a boot at the door to push her way through, and slams it shut behind her.

Now she finds herself in an open hallway lined with more doors, though these ones are numbered. She moves quickly to the closest one and pulls out a narrow item wrapped in a cloth from somewhere beneath her corset. Unwrapping it reveals a metal implement, which she uses to slip into the cracks between the door and its frame. After trying for a couple of minutes with no success, she slaps the door with her right hand, then turns her back to it and slumps to the floor.

Just minutes before, from the other side of the door, a man

yells, "I don't care how you do it, just get it done! I want it dealt with before I'm back on Monday."

He slams the phone down on the receiver and starts pacing his hotel room until he finds himself punching a pillow on the bed. Then he moves over to the window and looks out at the stunning blend of greens and blues that make up Carlisle Bay. A heavy sigh escapes his mouth when his gaze is drawn down to his tie, his business shirt, and slacks, then another escapes when his attention turns to the briefcase open on the desk.

That's when the man hears a noise coming from outside his room. Suspicious, he walks over and looks out the eye piece. He can't see anything at first, until he looks down and sees a woman slapping the wood. Pulling away, the man contemplates what to do. Did she just forget what room she was in? Deciding to help, he opens the door. The woman falls backwards into the room and looks up to see him looking down at her.

That's when the man gets his first good look at her, and her outfit. Cringing, he says, "Please don't tell me Jason hired me a stripper, or a hooker, or something."

As the woman stands and gives him a death stare, he clenches his teeth, realising his words hadn't just been inside his own head. Caught up in his own embarrassment, he barely notices when the woman walks in and closes the door. She doesn't acknowledge him any further, and instead crosses the room to the window to shut the curtains before turning around.

Frozen in place, the man is left to watch her take in her surroundings. He is unable to determine where her mind is at.

“What are you doing?” the man asks, hoping her answer will tell him whether or not he should be calling hotel security.

Ignoring his question, she peeks through the curtains, and finally asks. “What is this place?”

He looks at the woman strangely, not quite understanding the question. When he doesn’t reply, she looks at him and raises her eyebrows at him to prompt an answer.

“A... hotel?” he says, wondering how she could even be in a hotel and not know where she is. The woman appears unfamiliar with this word, so he adds, “Somewhere people stay when they’re from out of town,” thinking that English must not be her first language. She does speak with an accent unfamiliar to him, though he’d guess it sounds similar to a mix of British and something European. That could also explain her funny clothes.

“Ahh, like an inn,” the woman replies. “Yes, this is just what I need.”

“You’re from out of town?” he asks stupidly, and mentally kicks himself for saying so. Of course she is. Her accent isn’t Barbadian.

“You could say that,” she replies, not looking at him. Instead she looks out at the ocean again. When she turns her attention back to the man, finally giving him a once over, in particular noting his clothes, she adds, “My sincerest apologies. I am being uncouth. My name is Jaclyn, and you are?”

“Dick,” he says automatically, still looking at her strangely. Jaclyn’s bizarre choice of words gives him the courage to consider her harmless and add, “You know, you can get your own room here. This isn’t really somewhere

you can just . . . squat. I paid for this room.”

“I respect that. You have my gratitude,” Jaclyn says before moving over to the bed and laying down on it. “May I inquire as to what your profession is?”

“Are you seriously going to lay there and make idle chitchat with me?” Dick asks, walking toward her. When he reaches the end of the bed, he folds his arms and adds, “I should’ve left here half an hour ago and you’re holding me up.”

Jaclyn looks at Dick and raises an eyebrow.

“Okay, niceties it is,” he says, realising conforming to her requests is probably the easiest way to get rid of her and get on with his life. “And I have a feeling you’re going to prefer I describe my job than give you the title of my position because it isn’t particularly descriptive. Mostly I do high stress office work. Sometimes I go away on business, like now.”

Jaclyn is looking up at the ceiling when she asks, “Do you mean that you are an officer on a ship?”

Unfolding his arms to rest his hands on the edge of the bed, Dick leans in closer to Jaclyn. “Where are you from?”

The woman changes position, sitting on the side of the bed that faces the door. “Where I am from does not look at all like this.”

“Well, Barbados is a bit of a tourist hot spot,” Dick says. “I don’t think very many people live in a place like this.”

“Barbados?” Jaclyn asks, and idly moves a hand to rest atop her right thigh.

“Yeah?” Dick replies, feeling even more confused now. Maybe he could forgive her not knowing she’s in a hotel, but how could she not know what country she’s in?

That's when Dick notices something next to her hand. A gun, stashed in the sash wrapped around her waist. Though not a gun aficionado, Dick is still able to determine that it doesn't look anything like the ones in the movies he's seen. If nothing else, the handle is carved out of wood and looks like it has a skull fashioned into the bottom. He swallows hard as he considers the possibility of it being a functional weapon. Suddenly Jaclyn does not seem so harmless, but he's not in any position to call for hotel security.

Jaclyn interrupts Dick's thoughts by asking, "I believe the question you should be asking me is *when* am I from?"

"Huh?"

"What year is this?"

"Two-thousand and eleven," Dick says automatically, before realising the absurdity of the question.

Jaclyn bolts upright and runs out the door into the open hallway to look down at the street. Thinking this might be the best opportunity to lock her out of the room, Dick quickly follows her.

Unfortunately he doesn't reach the door in time, and Jaclyn barges past him again, asking herself, "Three hundred and fifty years?"

Jaclyn is back at the window before Dick can say, "Eh?"

There's a long silence before Jaclyn looks at Dick again. "When I awoke this morning, it was sixteen sixty-one."

"Wait a minute," Dick says, observing her with a skeptical eye, "let me get this straight... you're saying you're a time-traveller?"

"I am not sure what you mean by that," Jaclyn says. "All I know is what I was doing in Bridgetown this morning, before finding myself here."

“Are you having me on?” Dick asks. “Like, are you some actor who is out here for some fan convention and you’re . . . what’s the word? Method acting?”

“Preposterous! I have never heard of women actors. That is absurd.”

“And travelling through time *isn’t*?” Dick asks.

“Yes, I concede you may have a point there. Well, you could simply decide that I am insane . . . but what if I am not?”

“If you’re telling the truth, then how exactly did you get here? A crack in time? Time machine?” He scoffs at the absurdity.

Jaclyn glances down. “I cannot tell you how I came to be here,” she says, “but perhaps I have some other proof.”

Her right hand moves toward her waist, reminding Dick of her gun. He hopes that isn’t the proof she’s talking about. Thankfully her hand reaches inside a pocket in her breeches instead of for the weapon. She pulls something out and walks over to Dick.

Holding the object up in the palm of her hand, Jaclyn asks, “Does this jewellery look like anything from your time?”

It’s a necklace. The featured ornament is an Indian elephant carved out of black onyx, and covered with gold and diamonds. It looks relatively new, but the design doesn’t look particularly modern. To Dick’s mind, that doesn’t mean anything. The fashion industry is always stealing ideas from different time periods.

“You must think I’m pretty thick,” Dick says finally. “I don’t know why you’re trying to con me this way, but it’s pretty obvious you stole that.”

When Jaclyn glares at Dick, he bites his tongue, hating his ability to run off at the mouth around some women. And why did he forget that she could just shoot him in the head for making such an accusation?

Jaclyn returns the necklace to her pocket while keeping her eyes pinned on Dick's. "You should watch your mouth," she says. "I am not some common thief."

"No, I can tell that from your outfit," Dick replies, cursing himself again.

"My what?" she asks, and looks down. She pulls her pistol from her sash and waves it around the air. "Do you mean this?"

Dick quickly assesses his chances of escaping out the door before she can shoot him. If he were the violent type, his size alone would allow him to tackle her to the floor, but he doesn't seem to be able to muster the emotional strength to attempt that. He finds he can't even gather the strength to run away.

"Are you gonna kill me?"

"With my flintlock?" Jaclyn asks, moving the pistol point blank to his chest.

"Ye-Yes," Dick says with a gulp.

"I hardly think that would be necessary," she responds, returning the weapon to its place. "And it would be an impossible feat as I am out of gunpowder."

He's not sure he believes her, but tries to change tack. "Then why are you still here? What do you want from me?"

Jaclyn turns and heads back to the window, contemplating Dick's questions. Does she need him? Could she survive in this world on her own? If Dick is unwilling, could she find

someone else?

“I am unfamiliar with your time,” she finally says, gazing at him with her best innocent look. “I need a guide.”

There is an awkward silence between them before Dick shakes his head. Not desiring to find someone else to repeat this process with, Jaclyn cocks her head to the side, and looks at him with disappointment. Her fingers take a lock of hair that falls over her corset, drawing his gaze to her chest. After all, it was a trick that worked well with the men from her own time.

“Grant me your day,” she says. “That is all I desire; all I need in order to learn to survive here on my own. I will not ask for more.”

Dick shakes himself out of the daze Jaclyn pulled him into, stands up, and walks over to the window beside her. Peeking through the curtains himself, Dick looks out at the water again. This woman has already kept him from his job for, he checks his watch, at least fifteen minutes. How much longer can he really get away with trying to humour her before they miss him at the office?

A melody announces itself on Dick’s mobile, and he figures that answers that question. He pulls the phone from his pants pocket to answer it.

“Yeah?” Dick asks into the phone, distractedly since he’s watching the curiosity build on Jaclyn’s face.

“Where are you, Dick?” asks the voice on the other end.

This would be the point of decision, Dick supposes. He starts to wonder what would be the harm in taking just a day off from work just to see where this takes him. Her accent is appealing, and despite the strange clothes, she’s

not exactly bad on his eyes. Perhaps it is time for him to take a short break from his drab life.

“Dick?” the voice asks again, snapping Dick out of his thoughts.

Dick coughs into the phone, “I’m sorry, I think I’m coming down with something.”

A day is all she wants. By the end of it, he should be able to figure out what’s going on with this woman. She clearly needs help, even if it’s just someone to take her to a mental institution. And when was the last time he took a sick day anyway?

“I’m gonna rest up. Can we postpone that meeting until tomorrow?” Dick adds.

“Can’t promise anything,” the voice says, “but I’ll see what I can do.”

Dick hangs up his phone and returns it to his pocket.

As soon as he looks up again, Jaclyn says, “And you think I might be insane. You talk to a little box that plays music.”

Dick wonders if it’s conceivable that there are any European countries that don’t use mobile phones, still hanging onto the hope that that’s the reason for some of her lack of understanding some of his vocabulary.

“You never told me where you were from,” Dick says, ignoring her last remark. “And I mean originally. I don’t care what century you say you’re from. You’re clearly not from Barbados.”

“England,” she says.

“You don’t have an English accent.”

“Neither do you.”

“I wasn’t the one claiming to be English.”

“Will you help me despite my accent?” Jaclyn asks, changing the subject back to the the topic they were on prior to the phone interruption.

For a moment Dick wonders if he doesn't just need a mental health day to recover from this experience with Jaclyn after he manages to kick her out of his room.

Then Dick asks, “So you think I'm going to help you just because you're hot?”

She seems flustered. “It is true I am hot. What else would you expect when someone has had to run in this heat? Yet I do not see what that has to do with you helping me.”

Dick shakes his head, thinking the theory that English isn't Jaclyn's first language still rings true. Surely a modern day English speaking lunatic would still understand what he intended.

Then suddenly he's asking himself, well, what if she isn't lying?

“I don't even get to enjoy the scenery when I travel for business,” Dick says to himself, accidentally aloud. “I don't take time off work, let alone use it for some crazy far-fetched adventure.”

“Please,” Jaclyn says. “Perhaps I could also teach you a little of my time?”

Her insistence causes him to wonder whether it would be that bad of an idea to play along with this game for a little while. A day of make-believe adventure could be fun; it's not like he has any kids to play pretend with, and maybe this will help inspire him at work.

Dick turns his attention back to the attractive woman in a corset. The strange woman who does not quite under-

stand him but wants him to spend time with her anyway. His eyes focus on Jaclyn's full lips. Without warning, he finds himself subconsciously removing his tie from around his neck and drops it to the ground.

"Okay," Dick says with a nod, pushing down the niggling fear. "I think... I want to do this."

Jaclyn moves in between Dick and the window, brushing her back against his body. He swallows nervously, wondering if she's suggesting she might offer more than a history lesson.

Though there's a height difference of about a foot, Dick gets a waft of her scent. It's not pretty, but if he's playing pretend, he can excuse it as a sign that she's not faking the time travel.

Presuming from the evidence presented to him that Jaclyn is most likely meant to be a pirate, he ponders the idea that pirates probably didn't wear perfume. Deodorant wouldn't have been invented yet and, heck, she had been running and worked up a fair amount of sweat.

Logically, Dick's mind reminds him that she's probably just some hippy who doesn't shower. Thinking about how attractive he finds her allows Dick to ignore the smell.

"Could I first ask a favour?" Jaclyn asks as she looks out at the ocean.

"What?" Dick asks back.

"Show me the beach? I need to feel the sand between my toes to be sure this is not a dream."

As Dick takes in her question, and her scent again, he decides that the saltwater would definitely be an improvement.

"Of course," Dick says, and leads Jaclyn to the door.

Throwing himself into her reality entirely, Dick opens the door, thinking that despite Jaclyn's profession, she is probably more accustomed to such chivalrous behaviour in her time, what with the whole feminist movement not having happened yet.

This really is not stereotypical Dick behaviour, but for some reason, Jaclyn fascinates him, and he wants to impress her. Jaclyn passes through the door without acknowledgement, and starts to casually walk back toward the stairwell. She's acting calmer now that it seems like no one has been following her.

"Wait," Dick says, just as Jaclyn puts her hand on the door to the stairwell. "We're on the sixth floor. Why would you use the stairs?"

Jaclyn is unsure how to respond, as this seems like such a nonsense question to her. "I may be fit, but I would break my bones if I jumped over that wall to get to the ground. What kind of person do you think I am?"

Dick chuckles to himself. "Well," he says, "you do seem adventurous, but I didn't think you were that skilled. I realise this three hundred and fifty year difference is probably going to take a while for us to get used to..." Dick pauses, not quite believing those words escaped his lips, and looks down the open hall in the opposite direction. "See those metal doors down there?" he asks Jaclyn.

She walks back to his side and looks in the same direction. "What odd looking doors," she says.

"Those doors open into a small, uh, I guess sort of a room, which can then move up and down to take you to different floors in a building," Dick explains. "It's called a lift, or an elevator, depending on what part of the world

you're in."

"Which word do you use?" Jaclyn asks.

"It varies, but habitually, I use lift." Dick says, and begins to head in the direction of the lift doors.

"Why not elevator?" Jaclyn asks, following him.

"My mother is Australian. Lift is the word I heard most when I was a kid."

Dick presses the down button, and watching the red light come on around the button distracts Jaclyn from the conversation.

"Is this magic?" Jaclyn asks, running her finger over the light. "How does the light work without fire?"

The lift bell dings and the doors open. "Electricity," Dick says. "Probably a concept we should save for another time," he adds, stepping inside the lift.

Jaclyn joins Dick inside the lift. "Could I try?" she asks, watching his fingers move toward the buttons, just before he has the chance to press one.

"Uh, sure," he says. After a brief hesitation, he takes Jaclyn's right hand in his and guides it towards the button for the ground floor, then adds, "Press this one."

Dick lets go of Jaclyn's hand and she uses her index finger to press the button. She smiles to herself as she watches the 'G' light up, then turns her head around to look at him.

"It may not be magic, but it feels like it is," she says.

Dick smiles back at Jaclyn. He's still unsure what to make of the woman. For someone who looks like a pirate, she comes across as pretty innocent, a little curious, and just full of awe about the twenty-first century.

"Magic isn't real, though," says Dick.

“Perhaps you should believe in the unreal,” Jaclyn suggests. “After all, had you not met me, would you have believed in meeting a person who was born centuries before you?”

Dick ponders this thought as the lift doors open in front of them.

“No, I suppose not,” he says, not admitting to her that he still doesn’t really believe her. He exits the lift behind Jaclyn and adds, “Even if I had thought it was possible, I’d certainly not have dreamed of meeting a *pirate*.”

“I never said I was a pirate,” Jaclyn says, turning on her heel. “It is a wonder you even believe it possible of a woman.” She then raises an eyebrow at Dick and asks, “Why would you assume such a thing?”

“What else would you be, dressed like that, and carrying a flintlock?”

“So a woman cannot carry a pistol to defend herself? She must be a violent criminal?”

“You’re just going to keep making me feel stupid about everything I say in front of you, aren’t you?”

At this, Jaclyn cannot help but let a laugh escape. “My apologies,” she says. “But why would you be willing to help me if you considered me a pirate?”

“Good question.” Dick doesn’t know how to answer it. Fear that she’d kill him if he didn’t? That didn’t seem to be it. “I don’t know.”

“I intrigue you,” she answers for him, and brushes a hand across his cheek. “Do not be shy. I intrigue many men. It is why I must be able to defend myself.”

“So you’re not a pirate?”

Her only response is to smile at him, which doesn’t an-

swer his question at all.

“Fine, don’t tell the person helping you anything about who you are.”

“All in good time. I need to know I can trust you first. Now, the beach.”

Dick lowers his head in a nod, then inches it to his left, toward the sea. “This way,” he says.

Since Dick’s hotel is right on the beach, it is only a matter of seconds before they hit the sand. Jaclyn immediately removes her boots and stockings, drops them, and plants her feet in the white sand, wiggling her toes in a way that allows the sand to trickle up between them.

Still not quite satisfied, Jaclyn runs into the sea, deep enough that the bottom of her breeches hit the water. Dick follows Jaclyn, albeit at a slower pace, refusing to remove his business shoes and not wanting to get them *too* dirty. After all, he’ll be going back to work tomorrow. He stops walking when he reaches the wet sand, but far enough from the tide so his shoes don’t get wet. Jaclyn, however, has another plan for Dick. She reaches down to the water, cupping it with both hands, and before Dick realises what she’s doing, Jaclyn splashes the water into Dick’s face.

Jaclyn cracks a smile when Dick scrunches up his face and wipes the water out of his eyes.

“Happy now?” Dick asks, slightly bothered but trying not to show it.

“Yes; you have my gratitude. I am not dreaming. This,” Jaclyn indicates her surroundings, “and you are certainly real.”

She leaves the water, and as she passes Dick, his brain returns to the theory that she’s escaped from some

mental institution and genuinely believes she's a woman from the seventeenth century. Or maybe she's a habitual sleepwalker and this is the sort of thing she dreams about—being someone who travels through time, only now her dreams have become a fake reality. Still, as Dick turns around and watches Jaclyn collect her boots and stockings, then move further up the shore, he can't help being intrigued and wanting to know more, the real truth.

As Jaclyn watches the sea, Dick follows her path and sits down beside her.

"I am going to have to teach you a lot about my world," Dick says, continuing to play along.

Jaclyn doesn't respond. She's too busy looking at a tanned woman walking past them, wearing a bikini. Her gaze follows the woman down the beach until she is well out of earshot.

"Women in your time do not wear much, do they?" Jaclyn asks.

Dick shakes his head with a smile, but he's not really paying attention to the woman in the bikini. His focus has returned to Jaclyn's full lips. Those distracting lips that somehow, for some reason that Dick is unable to determine, make Dick want to believe her. Jaclyn's still too busy staring at the woman in the bikini to notice Dick staring at her.

"So do you think you would be able to get back to your own time?" Dick asks, figuring he should make some conversation.

Jaclyn sighs as she turns her attention back to Dick. "This is the unfortunate part," she says. "If there was a door I passed through to be here, I do not know where it is. I did

not notice when things began to look unfamiliar.”

“Why not?” Dick asks, wondering if he should continue to poke holes in the ridiculous notion of cracks in time.

“How much do you notice of your surroundings when you are trying to escape?”

Dick ponders the question, thinking back to the last time he ever had to worry about something like that. He was a senior in high school and had just toilet papered the quarterback, Randy’s entire front garden on the same day Randy started seeing Dick’s best friend at the time, Julie. She was the girl he’d been interested in since Freshman year and never had the guts to ask out on a date. Just as Dick had finished covering the final rose bush with toilet paper, Randy pulled into the drive in his pick-up, saw Dick, and reversed back out again. Dick had to leg it and to this day, he still has no idea how he managed to get home whilst being tailed by a douchebag in a car. The only positive thing that came out of that night was the heart to heart talk he had with his mother about feeling like he had missed his chance with Julie.

At this memory, Dick acknowledges to himself that Jaclyn does make a good point. So he changes tack, and somewhat sarcastically asks, “Okay, so, what next? Are you going to expect me to take you back to New York with me?”

“New York?” Jaclyn asks. “Where is that?”

Dick says, “Let me think what you might be familiar with... it’s near New England.”

“And you travel to *Barbados* for business?” Jaclyn asks in disbelief. “For how long do you stay here? Months?”

Dick shakes his head, “No. Usually just anywhere between a couple of days to about a week.”

Jaclyn raises her eyebrows at Dick, her disbelief obviously increasing, and says, "I would never have imagined men travelling for weeks across the sea simply for a couple of days of business, unless they are a sailor. Yet you did not suggest you were a ship's officer."

A laugh accidentally escapes Dick's lips when he opens his mouth to reply, but he quickly conceals it and says, "Actually, I fly."

Jaclyn giggles to herself at the thought, then lies back in the sand and closes her eyes. Speaking to herself, but loud enough for Dick to hear her, she says, "Never in my life have I imagined people flying." Then, in the straightest expression possible, she turns to Dick and asks, "Where are your wings? Did you copulate with faeries?"

Dick wonders if Jaclyn has finally blown her cover. He might be able to barely buy the time travel thing, but there's no way he could believe faeries actually existed. He stares directly into Jaclyn's eyes to determine how serious she is, until she cracks a smile.

"I jest," she says. "You do not have to worry about my sanity. I do not believe in faeries." She pauses to ponder Dick's words further, and then adds, "Were you being truthful with regards to flying?"

Dick nods. "Early last century, the Wright brothers invented a machine we now call a plane. Aircraft... er, they're vessels that can carry a lot of passengers through the air, travel long distances in a short period of time."

"You have certainly piqued my curiosity," Jaclyn says. "Flying may indeed be fascinating for me."

Dick isn't really sure what to make of this plan. Is he going to have to adopt her? He still doesn't even know if

he can trust her. And how difficult would it be to get her a passport if he did choose to go along with it? Those things aren't exactly easy to forge. Then he wonders why he's even contemplating such ridiculous things. He'll leave the woman in Barbados when he leaves unless she already has a passport. He doesn't want to have to deal with that process. In the meantime, he at least needs to get to know her well enough to trust that she's not a wanted fugitive in the present, just looking for a way to skip out of Barbados.

Lying back in the sand next to Jaclyn, Dick looks up at the clear blue sky with her, and says, "Can I ask you something?"

"You may," Jaclyn responds.

"What will you miss most about where you're from, if you have to stay here?"

Her answer is immediate. "Nothing."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Care to elaborate?"

Silence falls between them as Jaclyn contemplates her answer. "I lost everything that meant anything to me." She rolls onto her side to face him and changes the subject by asking, "So when are you going to fly me to this 'New York'?" The confidence she exudes with the presumption means Dick can't tell whether she's asking because she genuinely believes he'll take her there, or if she just wants to avoid explaining things further.

"I thought you only needed me for the day?"

"That was before you told me people fly now. Do you think I can discover how to do that on my own?"

"The thing is," Dick says, "there's a lot of security

measures in place that you have to pass before you can fly. The most important of these is getting you a passport—passenger identification. It includes your picture, date of birth, place of birth. . . that sort of thing. I just don't know how to organise that for you."

"Why ever not? You must have a passport of your own."

"Sure, I know how to get a legitimate one, but I don't think we can go that route for you. They're not going to accept a passport that says you were born in sixteen thirty-one."

"Please. Sixteen thirty-four. Do not overestimate my year of birth. It causes me offence."

Dick smirks a little, and says to himself, "Some things never change." Then, louder and to Jaelyn, he says, "I'm sorry. Sixteen thirty-four. In any case, they're not easy to forge."

Jaelyn shakes her head. "You are speaking with one resourceful woman. Help me with the picture, and leave the rest to me. I shall find someone who can forge me a passport."

Whether Dick believes Jaelyn is actually capable of this or not, he doesn't let his thoughts show on his face. Instead, his mind is drawn to the idea of photographing her, capturing the image of this strange woman, and the possibilities of what he might do with the results.

"I can do that," Dick says. He stands back up in the sand and reaches down to Jaelyn, taking both of her hands in his and pulling her up, too. Then he adds, "But we need to go back to my room."

Inside the hotel room, Dick digs out a camera bag from his

suitcase. When he looks back up, he finds Jaclyn sitting comfortably with her legs crossed on the bed. Dick's eyes are again drawn to Jaclyn's lips, but he shakes his head out of the momentary trance so he can put the bag on the bed and remove a DSLR from it.

As Dick fiddles with some of the buttons on the camera, Jaclyn asks, "That thing can take an instant portrait of me?"

"Yeah," replies Dick, not looking up.

"This will be my first portrait. Not even once has an artist painted a picture of me," Jaclyn says with an air of sadness.

This draws Dick's attention away from the camera and back up to Jaclyn's face. He examines the way her hair falls over her bare shoulders, despite the scarf that is wrapped around her head. Her strong jawline, and the cute freckles that sprinkle the bridge of her nose. Then there's a hint of something in her blue eyes that overpowers him to pull in his gaze. He can't figure out what she is thinking, but he wishes he could.

Dick has to pry his eyes away from them to scan the rest of her body, and the way her clothes fit her form so perfectly without being tramp-like. He admires her hips and her shape, acknowledging to himself the appeal of a woman who isn't model-thin. After his eyes work their way down Jaclyn's thighs, knees, and the top of her calves where her breeches meet her skin, he notices the light hair that covers it. Jaclyn's still bare feet look tight and weather-worn, suggesting that she rarely wears shoes.

Realising he is taking a long time to respond, Dick is unable to meet Jaclyn's eyes again. Instead he focuses his attention back on the camera and replies, "An attractive

woman like you deserves to be shown off. Why wouldn't someone paint you?"

"I am not royalty," Jaclyn smirks. "Perhaps if I were the captain of a ship," she adds, more seriously, "or had not departed London for a life in the West Indies, though it is hard to say if that might have helped."

At this point, Dick feels like his lack of historical knowledge is showing and thus, despite his wanting to ask her to explain further, he decides to change the topic back to something he is actually familiar with.

"You know, I always bring this camera with me on these trips, but I never use it," he says. Then, so as not to seem like he's changing the topic entirely, he adds, "But... even if I didn't need to do this for your passport, I would want to photograph you."

Jaclyn shifts her body so that she's kneeling now, and looks directly at Dick to ask, "Would you?"

Without missing a beat, but still focused on his camera, Dick says, "I would."

Crawling on her knees, Jaclyn moves toward Dick at the end of the bed. "No," she says, using an index finger to raise his chin so that his eyes meet hers. "I mean, will you?" She searches his eyes and considers that it might help to be a little more polite. "Please?"

The small gap between their faces flusters Dick. He blinks a couple of times, and swallows hard, before asking for clarification. "Take other photos?"

Jaclyn nods. He takes Jaclyn's wrist, moving her finger away from his chin and letting it drop to her side. It's just photos, Dick reminds himself; it's not like she's propositioning him. Why is he acting like this? He swallows again,

trying not to think about how many years it's been since he even dated a woman, let alone slept with one. Is she flirting with him? He can't tell. Women don't flirt with him as far as he knows. Why would Jaclyn? Well... what if she is? Dick looks around the room, realising that—hey—they're essentially in a *bedroom*. What if the photography could lead to *sex*?

After swallowing again, Dick asks, "Here? Now?"

A shrug from Jaclyn causes Dick to think she's pretty casual about life and—well, maybe he's not wrong about that sex thing. Even if women in the past were more conservative in their private lives, that doesn't mean Jaclyn is.

He smiles at this train of thought until Jaclyn gets back off the bed and says, "I am rather famished right now. Could we find some food first?"

Dick shakes himself out of his fantasy. The mention of food causes his stomach to grumble so he promptly agrees.

He puts his camera down and finds the room service menu since this is the first time he's stayed in The Sky Hotel. Usually he ends up at the Frigatebird Towers. When he sees the prices, his eyes sort of bulge a bit. "If only room service was also covered by work," he says to himself.

Then Dick looks at Jaclyn and ponders whether she can get away with looking like that in public. The beach wasn't a big deal, but the street? A restaurant? And what will people think of him if he's with her? Surely they'll assume she's a hooker, too. Or maybe a gypsy. If only he had a crystal ball on him, he could bring that with them and pretend she's telling him his fortune.

In the end, Dick decides he doesn't care. "Put your boots back on," he says. "We're going out to eat."

When the pair reach the street, it's the first time Jaclyn truly notices her surroundings. She looks at the asphalt and comments, "The street is so... smooth. And black." Then she notices the cars driving past. "What is that?" she asks, pointing to a red sedan.

"Am I going to have to explain everything that has been invented since the seventeenth century to you?" Dick asks, a little frustrated. "Because you're starting to sound a little bit like *The Little Mermaid*."

Jaclyn shifts her weight a little awkwardly. "Little mermaid?" she asks. "I thought you did not believe in such fantasy?"

"I don't. It's a story." Dick says, and adds with a bit of an eye-roll, "Which I, unfortunately, know more about than I'd like because I work for a toy manufacturer. Researching our competitors' products and so forth." When he realises that much of what he has just said has gone completely over Jaclyn's head, he adds, "Maybe I'll have to explain consumerism to you sometime, too."

They begin crossing over a bridge.

"If you do not wish to teach me the way of your world, I am more than willing to find someone who is," Jaclyn says, and for the first time Dick feels like she's genuinely giving him the chance to walk away from this bizarre situation she's landed him in. As he starts to process the idea of having an out, she adds, "I am sure I would also be able to find another photographer if I am not worth any more of your time."

Dick thinks back to the camera he never uses and the sex he never gets and how sticking around at least a little longer could solve at least one, maybe both of those prob-

lems. “Okay,” he agrees, “but can you at least pretend that everything looks normal for now and ask me what things are in private?”

“I shall attempt your request,” she replies, and adds a slow blink of her eyes, furthering her confirmation.

They only walk a few hundred metres along the wharf on the other side of the bridge before Jaclyn stops outside a store selling swimwear. She focuses immediately on a floral patterned bikini, picks it up off the rack, holds it to her body and looks at Dick with a giant smile on her face.

“What do you think?” she asks. “Should I not wear something that helps me look as others do when I leave the inn?”

Dick feels like his mouth has dropped so far, he must be a cartoon character. He just doesn’t know what to say.

“And would it not be an appropriate consideration to look like a twenty-first century woman for your photos?” Jaclyn continues. Dick is still speechless, so Jaclyn prompts him further, “Well?”

“Sorry. Pinch me. I think I’m the one who’s dreaming now,” Dick manages to mumble.

Despite his request, he doesn’t actually expect Jaclyn to follow through. And yet she does, with a hard pinch to his cheek—so hard that he wouldn’t be surprised if it drew blood. He can’t avoid letting out a high-pitched yelp. Dick rubs his cheek and then checks his hand for any sign of bleeding, but thankfully there is none.

“Okay, I’m not dreaming,” Dick concludes. Then he kind of wishes that he wasn’t the kind of man who has to be honest and admit, “I would love to photograph you in that, but I should probably mention that outfit is beach-

wear. You'll stand out less in what you're wearing now in most public places."

Jaclyn looks at the bikini in her hand, a somewhat defeated expression crosses her face. A disappointed "Oh" is all that escapes her lips. Then she looks up at Dick, and if he hadn't seen it for himself, he probably never would have believed that someone from the seventeenth century would have known how to attempt the "sad puppy dog" look, let alone perfect it. It reminds him a lot of the face his ex, Georgia, used to pull a few times when he tried to tell her no.

"Would you be ever so kind as to purchase it for me, despite the limited functionality?" Jaclyn asks, helping Dick to brush aside any further thoughts of Georgia. Quickly, Dick ticks the puppy dog look off as another point in favour of Jaclyn not being honest about the time travel.

As Dick considers Jaclyn's request, he is torn. On one hand, it occurs to him that the only woman who has shown any sort of interest in him in the last few years, is doing nothing more than trying to manipulate him. On the other hand, he loves the idea of seeing her in a bikini, and specifically her breasts having more of an impact than where they are, hidden beneath her corset. He starts to wonder if this is the kind of scenario that would be so much easier to handle if he were a woman. Surely a woman would be much more decisive? Or would a woman feel just as charmed? A slight smirk crosses his face as he imagines Jaclyn charming a woman into bed with her. Then he shakes his head, wiping the image from his mind. It's enough of a fantasy to have *one* woman interested in him. He doesn't need to think about an unlikely threesome

scenario. There's no way a strong-willed woman like Jaclyn would go for anything like that.

His mind focuses back on the image of Jaclyn in the bikini, and his imagination scans down her body. When it reaches her legs, his mind reminds him of the difference between women he's used to in the twenty-first century, and this one. . . . "Yikes," he thinks, feeling a little grossed out at the thought of the hair on her thighs. This could be a sign that he should run from her manipulative eyes. He tries to think of the best way to avoid actually purchasing the bikini.

"Will you use them aside from for the photos?" Dick asks, amused that he sounds so much like his father did when he was ten. Especially considering he never wanted children. He never even knew he could lay on the condescending tone so thick.

There's a long pause while he hopes Jaclyn will walk away from him and leave him alone because there's no way she could possibly put up with being spoken to like a child. Yet, she doesn't walk, nor does she answer. Is this some other form of manipulation to get Dick to say something nicer? Because if so, it works.

He switches his tone to say something that sounds like he's not actually condescending, and just clarifying, like, "Would you like to go for a swim as well? I don't have any swimming trunks myself, but I could buy some at the same time so I can join you."

"Swimming trunks?" Jaclyn asks.

The curiosity causes Dick to wonder if Jaclyn is imagining an elephant, so he quickly scans the store and finds some board shorts. He speeds over to them and takes a

pair off their rack, and holds them up to himself.

“That is what men wear in the sea?” Jaclyn asks, joining Dick at his side, still holding the bikini she wants.

“Well, it’s that,” Dick pulls some speedos off the rack above the shorts and holds them at his front, and adds with a slight smirk, “or these.”

Jaclyn shudders, recoiling into herself. “I can swim alone,” she says.

At this point, Dick wonders how Jaclyn managed to flip the tables on him. Wasn’t he the one trying to avoid buying stuff? Wasn’t he the one not wanting to see her hairy legs? So why is he the one feeling a little defeated?

After a moment’s thought, it occurs to him that if this woman isn’t interested in seeing him in swimwear, then chances are, she doesn’t want to see him naked, either. Which means no sex. Well, it’s not like his hand isn’t used to that idea. Yet he wonders if that possibility is still salvageable. And what better way to a woman’s heart than by buying her something?

At the very least, Dick thinks, if he can get her into a bikini, perhaps he can get her to have a bath, or a shower, and teach her how women of his century groom themselves. Any way to get rid of her stench. Plus, the bikini would make it less awkward than asking a woman who probably doesn’t want to expose herself to strip naked for him to show her the way of the world.

Dick takes the bikini from Jaclyn’s hands and says, “Wait outside.”

As Jaclyn walks back to the front of the store, Dick takes the bikini, board shorts and speedos to the counter to pay for them. He doesn’t want to risk being naked for the lesson

either.

It's only a couple more blocks until Dick and Jaclyn reach the nearest food outlet—a KFC. As they enter the establishment, Dick begins to really notice everyone's eyes staring at Jaclyn.

“Go find somewhere to sit,” Dick tells her, “I'll order us something.”

Jaclyn raises an eyebrow, suggesting that this is not how she would expect things should be done, but as she had promised not to ask any questions to avoid drawing attention to herself, she does as she's told. Dick watches her walk with much confidence to a booth, clearly ignoring or not even noticing the way people are watching her.

“Going to a fancy dress party?” the cashier kid asks Dick when he reaches the counter.

“Something like that,” Dick responds, primarily because it's easier than trying to offer any other explanation.

Once his order is served to him, Dick joins Jaclyn in the booth, sitting opposite her.

Jaclyn looks cautiously at the wrapped chicken burgers and fries, then takes a fry to examine it more closely.

“This is food?” she asks.

Dick frowns. It may not have been the closest or cheapest restaurant to his hotel, but he had chosen KFC for a specific reason.

“I wanted to get you something I damn well knew you couldn't have tried before,” he says.

Then Dick unwraps a Zinger burger and uses both his hands to pass it to Jaclyn. She takes the burger tentatively.

With her first bite, she tries to pretend to enjoy the taste

and texture, despite the strained expression on her face.

After Jaclyn swallows, she places the burger back down on the wrapper and says, “I think not that I can eat any more.”

Too busy eating to notice Jaclyn’s distaste, Dick responds, “Wow... I didn’t expect one bite to fill you up. Don’t you eat much?”

Jaclyn analyses Dick’s face in an effort to determine his sanity, but doesn’t reply.

While Dick continues to eat, Jaclyn asks, “What is the name of this establishment?” primarily because she wants to remember to avoid it in the future, should she be staying in Barbados long.

“KFC,” Dick says, “It’s a fast food chain. They’re all over the world.”

This knowledge informs Jaclyn that her question was even more pertinent, but she doesn’t comment on that.

“If they had a McDonald’s here, I’d have preferred to take you there.”

Jaclyn reflects, “I had a captain by the name of McDonald for much of my time in the West Indies.”

“Captain, you say?”

A slip of the tongue, Jaclyn realises. She hadn’t meant to say anything that helped confirm Dick’s piracy assumption. “Aye,” she says, thinking she may as well answer in a way a sailor would.

“On what kind of ship?”

Jaclyn smirks at the obvious lack of a sailor’s tongue. “It was not a ship,” she says. “Captain McDonald’s vessel was a brig.”

“That’s not what I meant,” Dick says. “Women didn’t

work much in your time, did they? So what were you doing with a captain?"

Side-stepping the truth no longer seems like an option, and Jaclyn refuses to lie to hide it. "Your assumption about me was correct. I was a pirate."

Dick puts his food down and furrows his brow. "Was, but not any more?"

"It is a little difficult to engage in piracy without a crew, is it not? Do you see me here with anyone else?"

Crossing his arms, Dick leans backwards, analysing Jaclyn again. "Would it kill you to give me a straight answer for once? That doesn't tell me if you were still engaging in piracy this morning, before you got here."

"Answering that is a little more complicated than you might think." It would require Jaclyn asking herself what makes a pirate.

Does she still consider herself one? Can someone really stop being a pirate? She has heard of some being given letters of marque, their charges dropped in favour of working for the Crown. Yet, there is little difference between their actions beyond a legal document.

Not having been issued such letters herself, she cannot make that claim. It is true that she no longer has a crew with which she sailed, even that morning, but after her years in the West Indies, piracy is in her blood now. She questions if it's even possible to run from that life. Could 350 years make that difference?

"I'll make it easier for you," Dick says, interrupting her thoughts. "If you hadn't travelled in time, would you still be part of a pirate crew?"

"No," she says simply.

“Then by your own admission, you’re no longer a pirate.” He picks up his burger and starts eating again.

Figuring that answer will make it easier for Dick to keep her around, she chooses not to argue with him. Whether she’s a pirate or not should be up to her own mind, anyway, not someone she’s just met.

Jaclyn decides to abruptly change their activity by asking, “Would it be possible for you to make those pictures of me now?”

Dick slowly wobbles his head from side to side, then nods tentatively. Jaclyn can sense nervousness, but she’s not sure why.

He takes another couple of bites of his burger before depositing it on the table. Standing up to leave, Jaclyn doesn’t even think to comment on Dick’s lack of discarding the leftover food. They are both too distracted by thoughts of photography.

Back at the hotel, Dick retrieves the bikini he bought for Jaclyn from a plastic shopping bag. Before handing it to her, he says, “I’ll give you some privacy while you change into this, but let me know if you need any help, okay?”

“Where?” Jaclyn asks, taking the bikini.

“Oh!” Dick laughs to himself for a moment, then shows her to the bathroom. “I suppose I should explain these things, too, huh?” he says, looking again at the astonishment on Jaclyn’s face. “We have something called indoor plumbing now. Which means water is freely accessible in any building.”

Dick turns on the tap for the sink to demonstrate, and takes Jaclyn’s hand, placing it under the running water.

“I’m afraid I’m a little embarrassed about this, but, I should probably explain modern hygiene to you, too,” Dick confesses, switching off the tap. “This water is for washing your hands after you use the toilet,” he says, indicating the toilet. “Which is, uh, where we... how do I put this in terms I think you’ll understand? I don’t even know what you would’ve used back in your time.”

He contemplates his phrasing while Jaclyn moves over to the toilet and lifts the lid to look inside.

“What is the water for?” she asks.

“Uh,” he says, trying to speed himself up. “Well, it’s where we do our business, you know, discard our human waste... urine, faeces... the water helps carry the waste out of the building.”

“That is so much more convenient than a chamber pot,” Jaclyn says. “How do you make it do that?”

Dick presses the flush button on the top of the cistern, and Jaclyn watches the old water disappear before new water refills the bowl.

“You have my gratitude,” Jaclyn says. “Is that all?”

“Well, no,” says Dick, “but I’m going to give you some privacy to change first before I say anything else.”

Dick returns to the bedroom part of his room, closing the door behind him, and notices a light flashing on the room phone. He picks up the receiver and dials the number to listen to the messages he received while he was out with Jaclyn. Hearing the toilet flush distracts him from actually listening to the second message, though, and he chuckles to himself at the thought of Jaclyn’s amazement when properly using the toilet for the first time.

He doesn’t get to replay the message because Jaclyn

exits the bathroom, wearing the bikini bottoms just fine, but holding the top part to her chest. He looks lower, then, at her naked stomach, and notices a couple of scars that look like they could have come from sword fights. Then there's another that looks to be from a bullet wound. Nothing that looks terribly recent, though. The scars are the first real visible sign that allow him to really open his mind to the idea of Jaclyn being a legitimate time travelling pirate.

"This is more complicated than I might have expected," Jaclyn says. "And I wear corsets."

Dick returns the phone to the receiver and walks over to Jaclyn to help tie the strings behind her back and neck.

"It's been a long time since I've done anything like this," he says. Jaclyn doesn't respond, so he continues, "My ex-fiancée, Georgia, used to have me tie her bikini for her because she said it helped her feel close to me. It's a kind of intimacy I haven't had for about six years."

Jaclyn struggles with Dick's vocabulary. "What is an 'ex-fiancée'?" she asks.

"Ah," says Dick, "That just means I used to be engaged to marry her."

"So she was your betrothed?" Jaclyn turns around and asks him, "What became of her?"

"Long story short, she wanted children and I didn't, so I broke off the engagement."

Jaclyn looks interested in knowing more detail, but Dick is not remotely interested in sharing it right now. He doesn't think he should have to offer much about his life if she is not willing to do the same.

"Now," he says, injecting himself with a boost of confidence, "I'm going to teach you something else women do

these days. It's something I think it important that we do before I take photos of you."

Back in the bathroom, Dick starts filling the tub, emptying the entire contents of the hotel supplied bath gel in the bottom, figuring more bubbles are better.

"Perhaps I should mention that I do know how to bathe," Jaclyn says as she watches the tub fill.

"How often do you?" Dick asks, curiously. He might be slowly becoming accustomed to her stench, but he still notices it.

"I confess, not as often as I might like to. It is not so easy when you live a life of piracy," Jaclyn admits.

"Well, anyway, that's not what I wanted to teach you," Dick adds. "You just have to promise to trust me, okay? I'm not going to try anything inappropriate. That's why I wanted you wearing that when we do this."

Jaclyn nods in agreement, and then she sits down on the lid of the toilet, watching the water flow from the tap. Meanwhile, Dick exits the bathroom to change into his board shorts for the occasion. When he returns, he switches off the tap, satisfied with the water level. He indicates with his hand for Jaclyn to step into the tub.

"Mmm," Jaclyn mumbles, delighted at the temperature of the water as she steps in, closing her eyes to enjoy it further as she lowers herself to sit.

Dick reaches into his toiletries bag and pulls out a disposable shaver. It's one marketed for men, but it's the only one he's got and he figures it's essentially the same thing. He then joins her in the bath on the opposite end, facing her and kneeling.

There are a few nerves before Dick starts, butterflies

in his stomach, but he shakes them out by stretching his arms. Then he reaches for Jaclyn's right leg with his hands, and she flinches, pulling it back.

"Please just trust me," Dick says. "I know what I'm doing. I used to do this for Georgia." Yet Dick still senses some apprehension on her part, so he changes tack. "Look, if I do anything you're not happy with, you can take my camera, sell it to a pawn broker... you'll probably get at least five hundred dollars for it."

Dick wonders if the fact inflation has developed at a rate of knots since Jaclyn's time makes it sound like his camera is worth a fortune. He doesn't think too hard about it, though, because Jaclyn then stretches her leg out for him again, placing it in his left hand.

With a deep breath, Dick rinses his shaver in the bathwater, and starts running it down the length of her thigh. Jaclyn watches each stroke intently as her hair begins to disappear.

"This is a common activity?" Jaclyn asks.

Dick nods, continuing the process of removing her hair. "Yeah, especially for models of swimwear. People tend to consider women unattractive if they go around unshaven."

"I have seen far more unsightly things than hair on women's legs."

"Such as?" he asks, noticing another sword scar on the outside of her thigh as he shaves over it, wondering if that's what she might be referring to.

"Pock scars covering one's face."

Dick laughs a little at the thought. "Yeah, that does sound pretty bad. At least you don't have those."

"There are things in life of more importance than

beauty,” Jaclyn offers, clearly thinking of something in particular.

“Oh, sure there are, but much of the world today is obsessed with just that. Sometimes it seems like every second product marketed at women is meant to make them look or feel better about themselves.” Dick finishes up Jaclyn’s right leg and moves onto the left. “It’s a load of horse shit, of course, but that’s advertising.”

“I am not sure I understand.”

Dick pauses from the shaving while he figures out the best way to discuss this topic.

“Okay,” he says. “Let me try to explain using the field I’m most familiar with...” Dick goes back to the shaving as he speaks. “I mentioned earlier that I work for a toy manufacturer. I’m not sure whether children had toys in your time, but what that essentially means is the company I work for makes things for children to play with, for mass consumption. We try to sell our toys to as many parents of children around the world as possible, and to do that, we employ advertising agencies.

“Now, while we try to come up with really good products, sometimes we just pull ideas out of our own asses and let the advertising make consumers think even the poor products are something they have to have.

“I can give you a specific example, too. About eight years ago, a colleague of mine came up with an idea to make a toy that was essentially badly scented play-dough that looked like a pile of poo, on the back of a remote control hermit crab. I have no idea how this ended up passing production approval, but it did. The product was atrocious, but it became a year-long fad because the advert-

ising convinced kids that all their friends had one, and having one was the only way to be popular.”

Dick finishes his explanation just as he finishes shaving. He looks up at Jaclyn, hoping she understands, since he can't think of any simpler way to explain such advertising.

There is a long pause while Jaclyn processes all of this information.

“So,” Jaclyn says, “if I am to understand this correctly... advertising has convinced the world that only shaved women are attractive?”

Dick blinks a couple of times in disbelief. Not only has she understood, but has applied it to their present activity in a way he hadn't previously thought about it himself. He starts thinking about the morality of that, and how he has possibly been brainwashed his whole life about what constitutes beauty. Then he decides he doesn't really like that thought, and pushes it from his mind.

“Well,” Dick says, “not all advertising is evil. I happen to agree with that one.” He pauses to take hold of one of Jaclyn's hands then adds, “Here's why.”

Dick places Jaclyn's hand on her leg and runs it down from the top of her thigh to her ankle.

“Smooth as silk,” Jaclyn concedes.

“And besides, the toy designs I come up with are worth marketing. I'm not an idiot like the crab guy.”

When Jaclyn doesn't respond, Dick figures she's heard enough about that. He watches her continue to feel her own legs for a few moments before saying anything else.

“So...” Dick says, “there's still one more thing to shave.”

This time Dick exits the bath, being careful to hide the

erection that has formed beneath his shorts, and scoots Jaclyn forward so he can get in behind her. She jumps a little at the touch of his naked chest on her bare back. At least Dick hopes that's what she feels, because he's trying to be careful to avoid letting anything lower than his chest touch her.

Dick's cheek brushes past her hair and he notes how dry it feels. He raises his right hand to feel it better and notices how tangled and full of salt it is, even though he hadn't noticed that when she had been wearing the scarf over her head. Quickly glancing around the bathroom, Dick finds the hotel supplied shampoo and conditioner so he can do something about that, too.

"Do you still trust me?" Dick asks, talking in almost a whisper. It's not intended to sound sexy so much as it is his nerves getting the better of him.

Jaclyn clasps Dick's left fingers in hers and wraps his arm around her stomach. She closes her eyes and breathes in calmly. Dick is so moved by this gesture that he thinks she's melting in his arms as she breathes out.

"Yes," she says.

Dick uses his free hand to grab the bar of soap, wets it, and runs it up Jaclyn's right side until he reaches her armpit. Then he continues it up her arm, making sure she keeps it in the air. He notices a few more scars covering her arms, and quietly wonders to himself if the shirtless sleeves she was wearing earlier are worn primarily to hide the scars.

After lathering the soap further into her armpit, Dick gently runs the shaver over her hair. Jaclyn relaxes deeper into Dick's arms with each stroke.

“I have not been cared for like this for some time,” Jaclyn confesses.

“No, I’d guess not,” says Dick, “What with you being a pirate. Can’t have much love out there on the seas.”

“You may be surprised,” Jaclyn replies.

Dick wants to ask her more, but he senses that it is too personal to question right now. He may have gained her physical trust, but emotionally, he knows she is still very closed off. Instead, he makes a mental note to inquire further when the time is right.

When Dick is silent too long, Jaclyn moves to compliment him, “I admire your gentleness.”

“Thank you,” says Dick. He may not be the best at relating to women, but he at least knows how to receive a compliment.

“You may guess that it is not what I am accustomed to from men.”

“Mmm,” Dick says with a nod, half-wondering if that grants points in his favour, but still thinking he doesn’t really have a chance.

When Dick switches arms, Jaclyn automatically raises her left one for him.

“Not all men in this century are as chivalrous as this, either,” Dick says softly, hoping to gain more favour.

“Then I have been fortunate to meet you before them.”

They finish up the rest of the shaving in silence.

“Wait here,” Dick says, quickly exiting the tub to grab the required hair products, and a mug, also provided by the hotel for the free tea and coffee service, before returning to his position behind Jaclyn. “I’m going to fix your hair, too,” he adds.

“Now this is something I know I need,” Jaclyn says with a giant grin resonating in her voice.

“Close your eyes,” says Dick, and she does.

Dick uses the mug to pour water over her hair, and she moans a little as he runs his hand from the top of her forehead, backwards down her hair. In his mind, Dick tells his body to be quiet because the moaning isn’t necessarily a sign he’ll be getting any bedroom action out of this.

The moans continue to get a little stronger as the shampooing and conditioning processes take place, and when everything is rinsed off, Jaclyn runs her own hands through her hair.

“I cannot even recall the last time my hair has felt this smooth,” she says.

“You’re welcome,” says Dick, even though it hadn’t been a proper thank you.

Then Dick exits the bath first, grabbing a towel and holding it open for Jaclyn to step into before drying himself off.

Jaclyn smiles at Dick, which reminds him of her very yellow teeth. She really should see a dentist, but that is far too complex to organise at this particular juncture.

“Remember how I said we have different hygiene practices now?” Dick asks, rummaging through his toiletries bag again. “There’s something else I forgot to mention.”

He pulls out a fresh toothbrush, thanking his overzealous organisation trait that packs such items just in case of emergencies. A number of years earlier, Dick had accidentally dropped the only one he had in the toilet bowl and he didn’t want to be stuck in that sort of situation without a toothbrush again. That was the first time he wondered if

perhaps women were right to put the toilet seat down after using it. His focus is drawn back to the fresh toothbrush, and he squeezes toothpaste onto the bristles.

“Hold this,” Dick says, handing Jaclyn the toothbrush. “I’m going to teach you how to clean your teeth.”

Then Dick pulls out his own toothbrush, and demonstrates with toothpaste just how it’s supposed to be done.

Jaclyn watches at first, then says, “That certainly explains why your teeth look better than my own.”

It’s not long before Jaclyn masters the craft of teeth-brushing. She becomes so skilled, in fact, that Dick thinks if she could go back to her time, she could make a living from teaching people how it’s done. And selling her people toothbrushes and toothpaste. He suspects this is not, however, what she would want to do.

Jaclyn’s gums bleed a lot whilst brushing, what with them never having been brushed before, which Dick notices is a little revolting when he watches. At least her teeth look a lot better after she spits the blood and toothpaste out.

With Jaclyn now clean, shaved, and smelling fresh, Dick is comfortable enough to return to the beach with her for their photography session.

A lot of Jaclyn’s poses, kneeling on a towel on the sand and such, start out stilted. Dick tries to get her to lighten up a bit, but his lack of professional experience as a photographer means this actual skill eludes him.

Eventually Dick decides to go the way of advice for people who have trouble speaking in public.

“Imagine me naked,” he says. “But not in a sexual way.

Imagine I'm the lone person on this beach who is naked, amongst hundreds of others, all gawking. These people aren't paying attention to you because all they see is me. It makes it easier to be yourself. Maybe you spot someone in the crowd who appeals to you and you want to attract their attention, make eye contact."

Jaclyn starts cracking up with laughter, which is not quite the response he wanted, but he snaps as many pictures as he can of her laughing.

As her laughter dies down, he says, "Okay, why don't you start walking into the sea?"

She does as he instructs, and he snaps more photos as she walks, admiring the sun beginning to set in the distance behind her.

When Jaclyn turns around, Dick says, "Okay, let's ignore the nudity now. Just imagine I'm someone you find attractive and you want to get my attention, but you can't use words because we don't speak the same language."

This time Jaclyn is much looser, perhaps because he had made her laugh. Whatever it is, she relaxes into Dick's advice, and he manages to capture plenty of photos with various camera settings.

When he's satisfied with the number, he calls Jaclyn back out of the sea, and they sit together on the towel. Putting the camera in playback mode, Dick previews the photos on the LCD screen, working backwards, showing them to Jaclyn.

"You have remarkable talent," Jaclyn says, admiring the pictures. "If I did not know otherwise, I would think this were your profession."

He may have been able to accept Jaclyn's earlier com-

pliment, but this is a subject he does not agree with, so he finds it harder this time. He places his camera in his lap and says, "That's probably because you haven't seen professional photos. I honestly don't have the experience to do this professionally."

"I disagree," Jaclyn says. "You do not need experience when you have talent and interest. You are capable of doing whatever you believe you can."

"Sounds like something my mother would say," Dick says, and then the thought of his mother begins to choke him up, so he expels that thought from his mind.

It's easier for Dick to do when Jaclyn looks Dick directly in the eye, holds his gaze, and says, "I am serious." Then she looks away, at the sunset and adds, "I live it. You should know, there are very few female pirates."

"I can do anything?" Dick asks.

Jaclyn looks Dick in the eye again. "Anything," she says.

The eye contact is what Dick senses as encouragement to take things with Jaclyn further, so he leans in to kiss her. Unfortunately she places her hand on his lips before he gets the chance.

"That," she says, "would be the exception. My apologies, Dick. You may take me to New York, but the odds of you achieving that favour are incredibly low."

"Why?" Dick's response is automatic. He kicks himself every time he asks a question where he knows the answer will hurt him, but he still does it.

Jaclyn looks around the beach for a moment until she sets her eyes on an attractive, redheaded woman in a purple bikini.

"Because I am more attracted to her than I am you," she

says.

Dick follows Jaclyn's gaze and sighs. He agrees that the redhead is indeed attractive, but curses a little in his head that this woman he thought might be into him is actually a lesbian. Just another sign that he really has no idea how to read women.

Thank You

This has been a preview for *Adrift* by Dominica Malcolm. If you would like to read the rest of the book, please purchase a copy. Details can be found at:

<http://dominica.malcolm.id.au/writing/adrift/>.

You can also add the book to your Goodreads list:

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18168978-adrift>.

Additionally, you can find the author on Facebook (<http://www.fb.com/DominicaMalcolm>) and Twitter (@dommalcolm).

About the Author

Dominica Malcolm was born to American parents in Western Australia in 1983. She has been living in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with her husband and two children since 2008.

Finding humour to be an important aspect of life in her teen years, she got into writing and performing stand-up comedy at only 16. After taking a break from performing to focus on university, she then travelled the world for seven months, only to return home to Australia to study screenwriting and filmmaking.

You can find many of her short films, comedy music videos, and some of her stand-up comedy, on her YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/DominicaMalcolm>).

Her Web site at <http://dominica.malcolm.id.au> contains further details about her background as a writer, filmmaker, comedian, and travel addict. She also blogs at the same address.