

Melissa

THE HARLOT'S ROOM—A Magic Story

At four year's old I had a vision of myself as a Fairy Queen dancing and with my magic wand touching and healing all the people I knew who had anything wrong with them. My performance took place in the centre of the Church Hall and every now and then I would sit under a chair at the side and as I sat there looking at the grey, wooden boards beneath my feet, I knew that what I received under that chair in solitude was essential to me.

Sex took place at nine years old surrounded by flowing water, swans and cygnets and the knowledge of harmony, balance, equality - the feeling of being able to choose something. I knew I'd had a precious gift bestowed on me. Recently I've realised just what that gift was. It was the chance to experience something - anything - purely, unmarred by words and opinions. When I heard some people's words and opinions much later, fortunately they didn't touch on what I had experienced. So it remained something good and pure whatever the world around me might be.

At twelve year's old I had a vision of myself working as a prostitute - living a secret life in a big city, and as I saw the grey paving stones beneath my feet, I knew that was the way happiness lay - the only good and right way for me. But as quickly as it came, it disappeared deep down inside me like the earlier vision.

At twelve she was thrown off a horse and hit her head on a tree. Since then she has been just weak and exhausted. She had cravings for food which she had to fight all the time. She knew her life couldn't begin till she conquered this. Her body was too weak to call her own - too weak to do sports or lead a 'normal' life. Her face and body never stayed the same for more than a few months. Her voice became too weak to be heard properly. Her body was in varying stages of pain and discomfort, but she didn't know it was. She was also frightened of being hit by things. She became other people physically - got into their bodies - so her body never felt the same long enough to belong to her. Sex seemed the only thing that was good and safe. She didn't have the capacity to experience very much else except other people's physical pain - even if she didn't know them or had just heard about their pain.

Luckily, with all this suffering she was free of the 'worries' and emotional hurts that lots of people seem to have. The 'future' she hadn't thought of. Death always seemed near simply because she hadn't energy or money to last much longer, so she didn't feel deprived by not having things.

Music was just a noise to her. She had never known what a 'tune' was, and used to look at people wonderingly when they listened to music. She couldn't tell what 'accents' were or the direction of a sound or the different sounds of traffic or musical instruments. She took a while to hear what people said. She remembered people's words afterwards but didn't understand enough of them to reply so she hadn't much chance to communicate with words. Her voice was too soft to hear anyway.

She had always looked 'alright' to people, so they thought she was alright. This preserved her.

And now she is in London. She has been mostly with West Indian guys and Indians and Africans with languages around her far away from her own. She likes watching people's bodies and movements but doesn't know what their clothes mean. White people - her own race - seem alien to her, make her feel nervous, and some of them have a strange smell. So she doesn't notice them too much - has not taken them to be real. She has always disliked her own lightness and wanted to be as dark as possible.

She has just been given her first watch. It was a 'man's watch' but she didn't know that. She doesn't know the difference between a 'man's watch' and a 'ladies watch', she just knows it's a nice, silver colour. She doesn't know what 'right wing' and 'left wing' are either or how to put a cassette in a cassette player.

She is just starting to know the words 'producer' and 'director' in films, but doesn't know what they mean. She thinks films just exist and can't follow the plots. She likes watching the faces and shuts her eyes and blocks her ears if anyone is hurt to spare herself from their pain which can last many years.

The only thing she has ever wanted is the chance to be by herself - to live by herself. She has sometimes imagined what it must be like to wake up with no one else to her very own day. But she has never managed to get people to leave her alone. She has always been surrounded.

She thinks VD is lucky for her. Every time she has had it something nice has happened. When she had gonorrhoea she realised she didn't like alcohol and so has never wanted to drink since.

Now she has herpes and Bondini is going to teach her self-hypnosis. She answered an ad in 'Time Out' to assist a hypnotist on a cruise ship. She sucks him for a while and is fascinated by the asymmetry of his cock.

"Self-hypnosis helps us to tap the powers of our unconscious mind, which is far stranger and knows more than we ever dream" says Bondini wiping his cock and lighting a cigarette for them both. But the unconscious is guarded very well by the conscious mind and we need the trick of waylaying this watchful guard, and then all we need is there. Lie down and let's begin. Imagine a peaceful scene from nature, and it springs to life around her body. "Imagine you are in it". She can hardly feel the floor now. Everything is soft and comfy . . .

He tells her she can give herself commands in this state. She can do self-hypnosis anywhere she wants.

She goes back to where she happens to be staying and does it. It comes to her instantly. "I want to work as a prostitute, that's what I want to do". A new feeling - the feeling of wanting to do something - gives her strength.

She answers another ad in 'Time Out' and goes to work in a massage parlour.

"What was the first one like?" was a question much asked later.

There was no first one. Whoever he 'was' he was just part of a group - a grey, amorphous, unknown mass. She hadn't really put sex and English guys together yet. She looked at white guys from another side if she noticed them at all.

They are greyish-white with city grime, asymmetrical genitalia, torn-looking balls, pain in their faces from too much time in cars - the subtly grimy English middle-class smell. Powder on wet hairy legs, as though they don't know how to wash or dry themselves. Some have three nipples and one has webbed feet.

She chooses 'Dawn' as her working name.

She does self-hypnosis every night and a few days after the first 'flash' she gets another that she wants 'access' to her two children. She starts the necessary proceedings.

She starts little choices. She stops smoking, stops drinking tea and coffee and starts herb teas and pure fruit juices. She feels cleanliness inside and her senses become a bit alert. In her private life she tastes the difference of sex without a cigarette. She can choose and buy clothes instead of receiving ones that are given, swapped or found in dust bins.

She buys a turquoise South Sea Island wraparound skirt. As the salesman drapes it around he paws as close as possible to her cunt. She thinks it funny - before she was a prostitute she would hardly have noticed such random touching. Now she does. She avoids it, drapes the skirt herself. She looks in the mirror, taking in all the fresh new scents and smells and creates a bit of space for herself.

She meets and moves in with the black guy she'll have sex with. She gets VD for the last time and starts using rubbers at work. This is one of the first things she consciously uses to create the difference between work and having sex in her private life, till eventually they are on different planets.

It is Spring. For the first time she lets herself like the English spring a bit. In Regent's Park she lets herself notice little buds popping up here and there. She looks at the huge buildings and block stone statues of Central London and feels less weighed down by them. In the Building Society she looks at a pillar and for the first time can appreciate something of a building. She goes to health food restaurants.

At Victoria Station she focuses strongly on hands in the next 'phone booth. The owner of the hands shows her a room where, for a high rent, she can live and work by herself. It is in a part of London quite unknown to her.

In the room she polishes the mirror with Windolene then sits and focuses on her face, making it stronger and calmer. It begins to glow. She looks at it and 'she' becomes 'I' letting her 'face' become 'me'.

I'll stay here and work when I choose. I'll have no social contacts or do anything that could lead to social contacts. No one - no past or would-be friends - know where I am. Only clients will and they

won't know who I am. It's beautiful. I'll stay here till I want to have contact with people, till I am what I want to be . . . till I can be . . . myself.

So I start my nun-like retreat and work as a prostitute; 'magic' means 'transformation'. The room was magic because I became transformed through the energy I created in the room.

The room is white, quiet and gentle. I clean it completely. Nothing impure shall be here. No coffee, tea, cigarettes, alcohol, newspapers. I can choose what I consume. If a client brings a cigarette in, I let him put it out very soon.

I see clients only in the room in my chosen working hours and under the name of Dawn, my chosen working name. Instinctively I programme myself not to work outside those conditions. What I do to them is sex in a general sense while personally I am celibate. My appointment times give me an attachment to chronological time, but whenever I want to, I step out of it and move like liquid in liquid. I can feel the beginning of strength in my hands - little sparks of energy. The white flecks on my nails disappear and I like my blue eyes.

Using the room for that particular activity only creates a certain energy there. It has a purity of function like a temple - in contrast to the polluted energies of the outer world.

Almost all the clients are white and I observe my little opinions and start to know more. I leave my personal opinions I might have about them as individuals, so I have no personal reaction to them. They simply become the whole of mankind so I can fulfil my duty to be with people, which we all have, yet have personal progress through being by myself.

Untouched, unrestricted by their opinions, my personal self can start to grow. I give them no personal information about me. There is not much **personal** of me yet. I touch the only pure, good part of people. For the first time I start to feel safe. No one can come here unless I call them. If I choose to, I can make conversation with them better than ever before. I start to hear words from 'before' which I didn't understand. Food becomes less threatening. I learn about and start buying healthy food. The food cravings become bearable. I become cleaner inside. Inside the room there is cleanliness and silence I can feed on whenever I choose.

In the two months in which I arrange to see my kids, I have a series of dreams in which they catch up five years to their present ages. I start monthly visits to them in a town I have never been to before, so it cannot break my retreat. I start to be a mother at the time I choose and get on well with them.

Free of the burden of people needing and wanting to be with me, I can go out whenever I choose. At bus stops I don't let everyone get on before me and I can give money to people in the street who need it, but I don't have to be with them. I have regular check-ups and never get VD any more.

A client wants a darned needle stuck in his balls and I get the idea that I don't have to feel everyone's physical pain. Outside I feel my feet stronger on the ground: I become other people's bodies less. And at work, as many shaped bodies pass through my thighs, I feel my own change less, become more stable.

On my first tele I twiddle the knobs and look at eyes and a mouth. Funny! He's one of the greyish, more or less rectangular men, probably suffering from too much contact with a greyish car. Before I was working I would never have considered them as human. I was hardly aware of them. Now I can look at his face and see lots of humanity and curves. The Programme is 'The News'.

To touch their clothes is to touch the accoutrements of their lives - who they 'are'. To touch them the way I do, I touch something universal in them. When necessary I create a 'boyfriend' for them and a few things they can accept so they don't touch me. This protects my present virgin life. Any books I might read are never exposed to them. I keep 'Cosmopolitan' on display. It gently dawns on me that at last I am safe. I have some chance to live.

On silky sheets my mouth covers rubbered pricks and as my fingers trace spine after spine after spine I start to consider 'before'. I touch people from 'before' from different angles.

I start with Z. There wasn't much of Z, so I move on to Y. Their words I start to understand 'Constructive' I remember from four years ago. K used it. 'Independent', 'dependence', 'involved' are starting to come alive. Now I hear and understand people from 'before' when I was solely with sex. Now I know what I could and should have said when all I could give was in silence. I marvel at the gifts I can bestow on myself.

They hand over the notes purposefully, happily, unbelievably, coyly, nervously, importantly, flirtatiously. And varying degrees of themselves are attached to the notes. I make the money and the owner's world disappear to where it can be scented and flavoured with honey, cinammon and herb teas.

Evenings get lighter and whiter. It is Spring but not my Spring yet. And sometimes the eyes try to merge with mine, and I shut my eyes to preserve my life from them. Sometimes I see what I now would think of them if I was in the world outside. I train myself and float into another realm. The last guy I was living with said he wanted to know what my tastes and opinions were. I hoped he wouldn't find out I didn't have any.

On my first radio I start to understand words and opinions and the people of 'before' and why - start to feel my feelings for them - to know for whom I felt. And now it's not just physical, I can become their minds and see through their many eyes.

Every Sunday I fast from food and rest and watch the curves of the room. My silky working sheets are in the wardrobe. From the cocoon of my blue nylon sleeping bag I look through the curtain at the intricate patterns of the tree outside. I float with them into my past life and make it into a pattern. The tree is hard and delicate against the sky. From my own branch - my own address - I look at when I was on other people's branches and see my own patterns. The shape of my life 'before' changes. Events which I believed big, shrink so I can hardly see them. What I thought small enlarges to its full size. What I never saw I now experience.

On a client I contemplate a sexagon of my thighs and the beautiful mantelpiece and delve into S of 'before'.

On the phone I can hear my voice becoming stronger, can start to control it, hear the different accents, backgrounds, make my voice sound older, more middle class. Feel it in my chest vibrating and breathing.

Myriads of eyes focus on me as I'm caressed, stretched, cuddled on silk. I enclose them in rainbow-coloured rubbers. It dawns on me that I can rest whenever I need to. Not forced to do anything. No fear of collapsing with exhaustion and weakness like 'before'.

I go for some anonymity to my new vegetarian restaurant. Feel respect coming from people. I like them. I look at a wholemeal apple pie.

Memory of a girl I knew making an apple pie. I sat and watched her looking as if she had done the same thing so many times before and she was used to it. I envied her being used to something. For me everything was unexpected. I get grape juice and set it down. The juice tastes as if I have never had it before. Everything is new to me.

"Cheer up luv. It may never 'appen".

I stand with groups of men looking into watch shops. I want to find the most beautiful watch. And when I've found it, I don't need to buy it. I can remember it so I already own it.

I enjoy the look of pretty, expensive cigarette packets. 'Before' I could never see them because I could never afford them. Now I can just enjoy looking at them because I don't want cigarettes.

*Clients say
"You're sweet"
"You're lovely"
"It must be degrading"
"You must be scared"
"It must be boring"
"You must be lonely"
"You must have been forced into it"*

And I wash and cream my hands and brush my hair after each one.

*"I'd like to see you again"
"Yes, fine"
"I mean, I'd like to take you out to dinner. Surely you'd like that. Then there's be no rush. We could enjoy ourselves".*

I'm amazed. How could I do anything like that? How could I have such intimacy with him? I couldn't even walk down the road with him, let alone eat with him. I couldn't be with them more than the allotted time.

*"You should have a car"
"You should have a color tele".*

And I dissuade the ones who want to come too regularly so no one can be familiar in my life. They must all be equal. Time flows smoothly

and my hair is brushed and my hands washed and creamed after each. In the mirror I like my lightness, my complete body.

Leaves and light outside. I enjoy light on leaves, light on people's skins. More people are beautiful to me than I ever believed . . . I stop hating London and start to love . . .

In 'Spare Rib' I learn the laws on prostitution. What I'm doing is quite legal. If another girl was working with me, it wouldn't be. That's lovely. I only want to work alone. If a guy was living with me where I work, he would be done for 'living off immoral earnings'. My dream has come true and the law is protecting my wish for privacy. Soliciting in the street is illegal. I couldn't do that anyway because outside I couldn't be Dawn. Outside I have no name yet. When I come out of my retreat I shall give myself a new name.

A client becomes ill. I take him to hospital and am thrown prematurely into the outer world. It is a North-West London world of white, middle-class people. They talk of Tarot readings, rates demands, astrology, therapies, healing, politics, relationships and 'spiritual' things. The intimate vibrations as I let them call me **Melissa**, my personal name.

"This Hampstead. It's magic. You can make eye contact with people here" says Donnie Dalmation, the first boyfriend.

I let our eyes touch, let him be naked inside me. I've come here from a two-year time capsule. 'Before' sex was a misty, soft blur, just like me. Now we are sharp and strong.

It is the first time in my private life that I have had sex in my own body. 'Before' I became the other bodies.

And now I am touched deeply by people, become more and more sensitive to life. Their words touch me now. Having been in the vastness of the ocean I can now see the light shining through each tiny drop. For the first time I can be with one individual.

The world of these people is dirty compared to the room. It is full of grime, nicotine, dope, alcohol, people's needs and the things they are chained by. The ice in their drinks is always melting: so they are never satisfied.

Donnie practices some osteopathy on me and I feel like an object for the first time and tell him so. In a taxi with him, I notice there was more of me than when I would take a taxi by myself during my 'retreat'.

In the room I regain myself and am nourished by it. I notice that adjusting a bra strap is too intimate an act to do in front of a client.

In the outer world people in 'good' jobs, potters and architects, have to compromise themselves in their jobs and do things against their 'principles'. They have a lot of clutter around them to do their jobs. I support myself on liquid ecstasy. What I do for work and the possibilities in my new personal life are planets apart. Yet in this world people have muddy boundaries.

Women in professional jobs have to dress in a certain way and are generally on display without much choice in the matter. At work I've always worn what I wanted and have my privacy.

I feel myself weakened by the outer world. The eating cravings become stronger and I know I have a self. The eating cravings are the only chains holding me. And now they stand out since everything else in me is stronger.

I disappear from this world surrounded this time by the sound of heavy machinery and traffic. The noise is torture, but I can tell all the different sounds of traffic.

In a dream I am told to go to the Aetherius Society. They are spiritual healers.

I have supper with one of the healers. Donnie Dalmation has given me lots of plastic lenses to pay back money I lent him. Through them a simple light becomes multiple rainbows. I show her them. They remind her of Kirlian photography.

In a Kirlian aura diagnosis I feel sparks in my hands. I am told "you have the power to become a healer but you must do meditation first".

On a meditation course we are taught the way I behaved with clients. Through detached love I can know the preciousness of individual love, being able to choose in friendships and relationships.

A quick series of events follows and ends with me having a glucose tolerance test.

A hideous machine is coming along the road towards my flat. Fire is coming out of it. I can hear every single sound of it.

For the first time I put a cassette in a cassette player. I sit in the lotus position and the sound touches a Chakra. **AT LAST I CAN HEAR MUSIC.** A violin and flute have different sounds. Outside I can hear the vibrations of all the voices and where they come from. I can hear in stereo. I notice background music on the tele. Now I know anything can happen.

The next day I start writing my book "**When I was quite little I had a vision . . .**"

The day after I get the glucose tolerance test. The eating cravings and general physical weakness are caused by hypoglycaemia - the result of the accident. I am told the way to eat for it. It is like the way I ate in the room. I never have the cravings again. I feel myself becoming warmer and stronger. Each day I experience more health. I read two pages of Symptoms of Hypoglycaemia and become free of them.

"You sell your body" says Ned Nebulus who calls himself a 'Marxist' and a 'Feminist'. I look along my arm at my body which I now own.

They tell us it is the worst winter which ever was since the last time they told us that. I feel very warm. Black refuse bags pile high against the snow.

In Regents Park the snow is golden with sunlight. Can't see the buds but I know they're there. I run through the glowing snow and jump into Spring. **My Spring.**
