

Bottomfeeder: Intersections and Interventions (AIRspace Remix)

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Friday night, February 16, 2007. My girlfriend Vash was off with her other lover, and I was unsure what to do with myself. Normally I would go to the Power Exchange, but I'd gone every weekend for the past few months, and nothing ever happened. The people I wanted to play with didn't want to play with me because I'm a tranny and they preferred genetic girls, and since I could never get into the cocksucking thing, all that was left for me to do was hang out. Which was fine, but I was in the mood for something a different. I wanted to dance. I decided to go to Divas, the tranny bar in the Tenderloin.

The walls of the dancefloor at Divas are mirrored, which is perfect for as narcissistic a creature as a tranny girl: we love to look at ourselves, even if we know we're a tad on the fugly side. Heaven know my own fugliness never stopped me, since feminine if aesthetically questionable is better than masculine, period. Some of the girls at Divas live for gazing at themselves all tarted up, dancing in the dim light with the mirror ball and laser lights above and fog machine occasionally obscuring their ankles. It's a release that makes everything else worth it.

I was only in it for the dancing. Studying my reflection was no longer the engrossing activity it had once been, and for that I was grateful.

I was relaxing between tours of duty on the dance floor when a familiar-looking blonde walked by and went into the restroom. Was it my friend Lilah? Naaah. But, familiar. And intriguing. I stood and edged a little closer to the restroom.

Someone else went in, and I peeked through as the door was closing. Well, no wonder, she looked like...but, no, it couldn't be. So far as anyone knew she wasn't even still alive, and if she was it was unlikely she was currently getting made up in the third-floor restroom at Divas. But still...

When she came back out, I asked: "Excuse me, are you Kelly Michaels?" She said yes, and I had one of the biggest fangirl moments of my life.

Kelly is my favorite tranny porn star. A trashy, gum-snapping bleached blonde with a serious Madonna fixation, she had a distinct persona and attitude in her movies, young and energetic and *alive*.

By all accounts she disappeared around the turn of the century, and some people told me she'd died. It seemed the rumors of her death had been greatly exaggerated, for here she was now, in the flesh. I said: "Oh my god, I'm a huge fan from way back and I am just so super-thrilled to meet you, this means so much, can I buy you a drink?"

Despite me babbling like the adrenalized mouseketeer I was, Kelly understood me. We went to the bar and she ordered a white wine. As I got money out my wallet, my hands were visibly shaking. I said: "I'm sorry, I'm having a total fangirl moment."

Kelly laughed and said: "That's okay, I don't mind at all. Say, me and some friends are going to the EndUp in a little while. You wanna come with us?"

I wanted to shout: "Oh, *fuck* yeah!" Instead, I reined myself in and said: "Sure, that sounds like fun."

Kelly took a sip of wine, then said: "Great! But first, wanna dance?"

And so I reverted into a mirror-gazer, my baseline narcissism amplified to deafening levels because, holy fucking *shit*, there we were! Kelly Michaels and Sherilyn Connelly,

dancing side by side! No picture would be taken of this historic occasion, so I burned it into my retinal memory.

Beyond the fannish aspects, I decided that meeting Kelly was a good omen. It meant that anything could happen, that I'd caught a wave. There'd been so many teases and false starts lately, and maybe the drought was finally ending.

We went downstairs after a few songs, and she talked to every girl and tranny-chaser, all of whom knew her by name. She seemed especially protective of the Motherlode Girls, the tranny prostitutes who worked the neighborhood. For all my years of wondering if Kelly was even still alive, she had been a regular at Divas. I was never there at the right time, nor had I thought to ask the right people.

I didn't get a clear look at Kelly until we were under streetlights. For someone who'd had as rough a life as hers, she was holding up quite well. She was wearing too much makeup for my tastes, but her eyes had a translucent pale blueness which crappy VHS porn tapes hinted at but couldn't do justice.

Those eyes were sparkly tonight because she was tweaking. Kelly said as much herself, then asked: "Do you get high?"

I replied: "Yes." Which was not a lie.

Bouncing, she said: "Meth?"

I said: "Um, no. Not that. But just about anything else." Okay, *that* was a lie, in addition to being stupid. If someone offered me heroin, I wouldn't do that, either. But what was I going to tell her? The truth? "I've always wanted to try cocaine, but even though I've worked in the porn industry for a couple of years—okay, it's just a desk job for a gay porn website, but still, it's the porn industry--and I've been to industry parties

where people are totally doing coke, but nobody's ever offered it to me, and I'm beginning to take it personally." Yeah, that wouldn't do.

Kelly introduced me to Geena, a beautiful Motherlode Girl who was going to be joining us on the eventual EndUp expedition. The three of us walked the neighborhood, Kelly checking in with every working girl. She also turned the occasional trick herself, in and out of the car in about ten minutes.

The bars were closing, and the streets were packed with cars, slow-driving men seeking out that nightcap blowjob. Some of the hardier tricks were on foot. Nobody said a word to me, though. Did I look too new, or like a cop, or was it just *that* obvious I wasn't on the job? Geena was very much on the job, saying "Wanna date?" to every passing car or pedestrian.

We caught up with Kelly, who was talking to a well-dressed, pleasant-looking gay man. He offered to take us to his place in North Beach.

He eventually drifted away, and before long Kelly disappeared as well, not to return. By a quarter to three, it was just Geena and I. Well, shoot. This wasn't how it supposed to have gone at all. I liked Geena well enough, but Kelly and I were supposed to be hanging out, and we were going to go to the EndUp, and we were going to have adventures, and...well, I didn't know what, exactly, but that was the point. And now, nothing. Even the streets were empty.

A few paces away, a man was propositioning Geena. I was quietly pouting to myself when he turned to me and said: "Can you please tell her not to?"

I replied: "Tell her not to what?"

Geena said: "I'm trying to get a lift to The Power Exchange."

The man implored me: “Tell her not to go there. It isn't safe.”

Damn. I'd heard a lot of people talk a lot of shit over the years about the years about The Power Exchange, moreso in recent months since I'd become a regular, but this was the best one yet: dude was telling a streetwalker that the goddamned *Power Exchange* was unsafe, more so than getting into a stranger's car in the middle of the night. In recent years there'd been a spate of Motherlode Girls found murdered on the side of the road, and while there's no way to know exactly what happened, odds were they hadn't gotten picked up at The Power Exchange.

Laughing, I said: “I go there all the time. I'm a regular. I love it. If I wasn't standing here right now, that's where I'd be.”

“But it's not safe!”

“It's perfectly safe there. It's safer than out here, at least.”

“No, it isn't. Bad things happen there.”

Unable to refute such rock-solid logic, I offered Geena a lift to The Power Exchange. She agreed, and the guy threw his hands up in frustration.

I brought the car around and picked up Geena. Her would-be savior was gone, no doubt off to warn someone about the dangers of fluoridation. Geena remained on the job as we drove off, saying “Wanna date? Wanna date? Wanna date?” to everyone she saw out the window. The fact that her window was rolled up didn't stop her. The men on the sidewalk *might* have heard her, but I had a hunch that the guy driving the truck ahead of us did not. Still, she was faithful to her mantra.

As we drove down Van Ness, Geena said: “I need a bump. Ooh, there's Sammy! Pull over!” Forgetting that I had every right to draw the line at picking up a stranger off

the street at three in the morning, I pulled over. Geena opened the door and Sammy climbed in back.

My heart pounding, I drove off and tried to keep my cool about the fucking *drug dealer* in my car. Hey, I'd hoped the evening would be an adventure. I was getting my wish in a big way.

I kept an eye on my bag, which I'd casually tossed onto the backseat when I got into the car a few minutes earlier. Scenarios worse than losing my stuff went through my head--Sammy pointing a gun and telling me to get out, or to drive somewhere in particular, or pulling the trigger—

None of which happened, of course, and Sammy didn't want to be in my car any longer than I wanted him to. He wanted to complete the transaction and get out and conduct other transactions. I was merely assisting in his job. Besides, I didn't look like a trick or a Norm. I was a tranny, and for all he knew I was a Motherlode Girl. At least being with Geena counted for something. I hoped. Sammy and Geena did their business, I dropped him off, and that was that.

As I parked across from the Power Exchange, I marveled at how all roads seemed to lead here. I hadn't intended to show up tonight, and of course I didn't have to go inside if I didn't want to, but I figured I what the hell. Besides, it was almost half past three, so it's not like it was my usual Power Exchange allnighter.

Before we got out of the car, Geena said: "I need that bump *now*. Do you want some?"

"Maybe. What is it?"

"Meth."

Whooboy. Twice in one night. I'll admit, I was briefly tempted, regarding it as part of the evening's rollicking adventure. But not only was doing meth a bad idea by any standard, it would be my first time taking speed, and I had no idea how my body or brain would react.

I mean, I didn't think my heart would explode or that I'd begin a *Trainspotting*-esque spiral, but going into even as familiar an environment as the Power Exchange while fucked up didn't sound fun at all, especially since I'd have to hide the my state of fuckedup-ness. Not to mention the high probability that I'd forget to move my car before street cleaning later that morning, and there was no way it was worth the forty dollar ticket. So I declined, and Geena helped herself.

We went inside the Power Exchange, and Geena went off on her own. I went down downstairs to the Dungeon where my friend Marc was finishing up one of his rare bottoming scenes. He introduced me to the top, a short, black-haired girl named Isis. She wasn't really my type, but that wasn't the point, either.

Since Marc was ample evidence that Isis was one of the few tops around who did not limit themselves to tiny genetic girls, I told her I'd been looking for a robe bondage top. She replied: "Do you want me to tie you up right now?"

Once again, I expressed sheer enthusiasm in the most laconic way possible: "If you'd like, sure."

Isis said: "Okay. Marc, do you have any rope?"

He replied: "Yeah, in my bag. There aren't any long ones, though. It's all in six-inch pieces."

My heart sank. *A bunch of six-inch pieces?* What good was that? I was American Zen most of the time, easy come easy go *que sera sera* and all that, but, damnit, why did things always end before they started? Vash didn't care about me anymore and Kelly had disappeared, and now there was this girl who seemed as though she might actually pay attention to me, well, that wasn't going to work, either. Just another dead end.

Isis took a handful of rope-bits out of the bag and said: "No problem. I can work with this."

My heart bobbed back up. Was this going to happen?

When Isis finished the rope concatenation, I leaned against the Cross in my usual position. Isis readjusted my body the way she wanted it, spreading out my legs more and moving my hands more towards the center of the board. Then she started with the rope, over the neck and around the torso, taking her time. As each new part of my body was bound to the Cross, I would try to pull away, flexing my muscles, testing the constriction, enjoying it moreso because it was Isis. I could tell the difference between the male and the female touch, the presence, the aura. There was something so much more intimate and affectionate to it than the standard hang-on-and-get-whomped action with Marc.

Not that there wasn't whomping. There was plenty, as well as flogging and paddling and scratching, and I wasn't sure if she was empirically more intense than Marc or if it just felt that way because of the extra elements of the rope constriction and the occasional feel of her hand and sound of her voice, of *her*, and I'd been hearing a lot lately about how I shouldn't get hung up in such petty details as her being a girl, that San Francisco was such a proudly genderqueer anti-binary town which was above mainstream concepts as male and female, even though in the truth the bias towards masculinity was so

overwhelming and those of us who rejected it were forever suspect and at the bottom of the ladder much like the tranny-filled Power Exchange itself, and maybe none of that accounted for how difficult it was for me to find what I wanted, except that I was finding it right now, and with every sting or whap on my back I went a little closer to regaining what had been ripped away from me that time with Coma White when everything changed, awash in the potential my body possessed had but seldom revealed, a little closer to where none of it mattered—

My reverie was interrupted by the feel of Isis's hand on my shoulder, steady and unmoving. I opened my eyes and saw her on the other side of the Cross. She studied my eyes for a moment and said: "Oh, yeah. You're done."

She untied me, which was much faster than the tying process, and led me to the unoccupied couch. I lay down, still hovering between subspace and whatever passed for reality at the moment. Isis told me I'd been on the cross for an hour. For *that* long? And, was *that* all?

I didn't ask if I could see her again. I knew there was no point. Like most things, it was a singular moment, not to be repeated. I was just grateful it had happened at all.



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