

## THE EMPRESS

Steve rose as the bus slowed and made way for a young woman in a pinstripe business suit. She barely acknowledged his chivalrous gesture as she strode down to the front, her pert buttocks twitching seductively beneath the tight skirt, the long ponytail swinging confidently. He kept his eyes on the woman's buttocks, noticing not just the perfect roundness but the cut of the skirt. She was wearing a designer business skirt. He had handled similar items during the course of his duties and knew the feel of the fabric. It was soft, silky and incredibly smooth to touch, more than once he had held it to his cheek and imagined a woman's buttocks against his face, the zipper was smooth and hidden from view. It would slide down so swiftly she wouldn't even be aware she had been unzipped.

His cock was protruding at an embarrassing height as he stepped down into the street and gave the blonde a lingering look. The blouse was microfibre, a satin blend that looked and felt like satin but without the exorbitant price tag, best of all it didn't need ironing and when he took it off; in the dark he could sometimes see static electricity. The boots however were expensive, his store had that range of boots, £200 but they were down to £175 if you bought a pair of heels for £50 down from £60.

Steve slowed for the railway bridge and chanced a look over his shoulder as she headed into town, his heart longed to follow her but practicality demanded he cross the bridge, lusting after women wouldn't pay the rent. As if sensing his angst she turned and squinted in his direction and although she was probably not even seeing him, he raised his hand in salute. She didn't respond and with a sigh he turned and trotted over the bridge towards the factory outlet in the new retail park.

Fashionista had been the newest fashion outlet to open up in town, Steve had fallen into the job after his case worker at the local Jobcentre had practically bullied him into applying for a position in stock movement. He would have preferred to sit at home with his Play Station but it was either that or lose his payments and in the absence of any crippling injuries or mental illnesses, Steve had reluctantly agreed to go for the interview. No one had been as surprised as he when told he had been successful.

The digilock refused to respond to his fingers and with a sigh he rang the buzzer and leaned against the wall. In the near distance the ancient spire reached for the sky. It had been a part of the skyline for four hundred years, Steve barely gave it a second glance these days.

The door opened and he turned to the casually dressed, dark haired man. Johnny worked in loss prevention.

"Has the code changed again?"

"Yes," he replied and in answer to his look continued, "it's 5893Y, the cleaners found it out again."

"Arseholes," he muttered.

The dimly lit corridor stretched before him and he paused to sign his name and then proceeded along the faded tiles to the cloakroom. He worked the afternoon shift, it was slightly better rates but the impact on his social life wasn't worth the extra money, still at least he had weekends free.

He hung his coat up and made his way to the toilet.

Dull brown eyes stared at him as he washed his hands a few minutes later. He had once been considered model material a few years ago but poor diet and lack of motivation had caused his skin to become paler than normal and his complexion looked spotty, the result of too much fried food and chocolate.

"You're late," he turned to the source of the voice as the door opened to reveal his supervisor, "I was just about to call you."

"Slept in," he muttered.

"How can you sleep in?" Harry unzipped his pants, "you start at two thirty, it's now two thirty five, how can you manage to sleep in until then?"

Steve didn't reply for a moment but finally managed a lame 'sorry.'

"Ah, what do I care anyway," Harry wiggled his cock and slid it inside his pants, "at least you turn up, half these other sods don't even bother turning up, let alone phoning."

He stepped across to the mirror.

“But try and at least call,” he stared at him, “I can make adjustments to your shift.”

“Okay,” he finally managed.

“Good,” Harry looked relieved and Steve felt the butterflies slowing down.

“Public transport is a nightmare,” he pulled a few leaves of paper towelling from the holder.

“I know,” Harry nodded, “come and see me on your lunch break and we’ll see what we can work out, okay?”

“Okay,” he finished drying his hands.

“We’ve got a lot of red pen stock down in the basement,” he replied a moment later, “you know where you were working yesterday?”

“Yeah,” he nodded and screwed up his face, “isn’t it done yet?”

“Like I said,” Harry patted his shoulder, “at least you turn up, do that until it’s time for your break and then come and see me and I’ll move you somewhere else.”

The basement occupied twelve hundred square feet of storage space, the ground floor was double that, first floor was the shop. Clothes came in through the basement door and were sorted into size, style and category. He had been overwhelmed at first by the sheer volume of clothing that came in every week but now it had become just a way of life. The worst was womenswear, so many different sizes, at least menswear came in half a dozen sizes. Steve’s first week here had been the worst, they had assigned him the summer collection, fully expecting him to hand in his notice after a week of sorting through strapped tops that refused to untangle themselves from their neighbours. When Harry had surveyed his work at the end of the week however he had announced that Steve was a one man machine, he had managed to sort through five thousand garments and in spite of a few minor errors no one could fault him.

“Hello,” he turned to the man standing at the foot of the stairs, “you’re late,” he checked his watch, “can’t you turn up on time?”

“Harry’s going to reorganise my shift,” he muttered, “public transport isn’t what it used to be,” he stepped onto the first rung, “I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Fine by me.”

He hated Bruce. The man had no respect for property. He was known to wheel a rail of clothing with ties dragging on the dusty concrete floor, not caring that the clothes were getting damaged. Steve had complained once but received a dressing down from the surly Yorkshireman, he had considered going to Harry about it, but that was grassing and Steve wasn’t a grass.

The red pen stock had been coming in for the last three weeks, mountains of clothes from a bulging warehouse down at Peterborough. He had been given the task of stripping the plastic bags from the sets and sorting the garments onto different rails.

The first set was evening gowns, black silky gowns with pleated bodices. He slid his fingers through the pleats and felt his cock hardening, imagining the blonde woman wearing this. He could picture her lying back on his couch while he undid the six buttons to reveal her breasts. The material felt smooth against his cheek and he sighed and put the garments onto rails and turned to the next set. More evening gowns, size twelves followed by tens, eights, fourteens, then there were the red gowns in the same style.

She would walk into his bedsit wearing the red one, her pert buttocks twitching beneath the silky weave and bend over to give him a look beneath her bodice. His cock was bursting now and he stopped and blinked. Focus, focus, he undid a few buttons on a garment and stared, trying to imagine what it must feel like.

Two hours later he had managed to arrange a dozen rails of gowns, blouses and tops. He loved the satin tops with their collar ties, he could imagine undoing those ties with his teeth.

Two women came down the stairs chattering incessantly as they selected a pre-stacked rail and began wheeling it to the elevator. One shot a look over her shoulder and gave him a wan smile, Steve rolled his eyes and kept working.

Satin, lace, silk, the materials felt so good against his cheek. He flicked through a row of garments and selected a satin blouse, it should fit, he held it out and mentally measured it. A moment later he

moved to another rail and selected a mini skirt. He had done the mini skirts last night. Size fourteen would fit just perfectly and he moved on to the lingerie section and eventually alighted on the frilly silk panties.

He hesitated and looked around for the cameras. They had CCTV in every section, except for, he turned and stared at the plant room. The key was hanging up by the door, a minor security precaution.

His stride lengthened as he made his way past gowns, blouses, skirts and trousers until he stopped at the door. Trembling fingers took the key down from the hook and inserted it into the lock. It would only take a minute, he would be out of here soon enough.

The emergency lighting was on and he closed the door and hung the garments on the door handle. He had been here several times in the last two months, each visit furtive but the feel of the clothes against his skin was almost worth the risk if he was caught. He closed his eyes and fondled the material, his cock was rock hard and he rubbed the blouse against his cock and squeezed his balls. He was floating in a dreamlike state, halfway between this world and his imaginary world where the women were all glamorous and available, begging to be fucked.

He opened his eyes and swallowed, normally he masturbated through his pants lest he soil the clothes but today he felt different. Today was the day he would strip himself of the shallow disguise that announced to the world he was a man.

He pulled his tee shirt off and unbuttoned the blouse his breathing became shallower and his cock got noticeably harder as he parted the blouse and slid his arms through the sleeves. God it felt good against his bare skin.

He closed his eyes and buttoned the blouse. The feeling was electric, she would lie back in his bed and let him part the blouse, he would buy this for her and give it to her on Valentines day. His cock was hard and his balls were aching to release their load. He tugged at his jeans and parting them, let them fall to the floor and stepped out of them.

The panties enfolded his cock and he whimpered as he massaged his cock.

A few moments later he stepped into the panties and pulling them up, reached for the skirt and pulled it over his hips. The zipper was difficult and at first he thought he had taken the wrong size but then he felt it sliding up and smiled. Two minutes ago he had been a feeler, now he was the empress. He opened his eyes and looked down as he felt himself through the clothes. Memories came to him of similar episodes in his flat. The clothes he bought were for his girlfriend, so he explained to the girls. Tall, shapely, and beautiful, she haunted his dreams. Now she had come of age, he had come of age. He felt the power flowing through his body, the surge in his loins and when he turned around the door handle was moving downwards. He heard the roaring in his ears and then Harry was standing staring at him, a security officer at his back.

“Steve?” Harry swallowed, “are you?” he looked away and Steve felt a surge of compassion, if only he could feel the same rush from womens’s clothing.

“Steve?” Harry’s eyes implored but Steve was suddenly stepping forward his hips swinging seductively as he looked down at them.

“Steve? Who’s Steve?”

He traced a line seductively down the front of the blouse.

“I am the empress, there is no Steve.”

He had no memory of being escorted from the store by a security guard his garments clutched pitifully in his hands, they had let him keep them, more of out of a desire to be rid of him than any form of pity. And as he stepped into the sunshine a smile drifted across his face as he stared at the church steeple. Fifty yards beyond it was the Jobcentre.

His redemption was at hand.

Written by Alastair Rosie © February 2007