

~ The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Bathroom Fixtures, Non-Corporeal Manifestations & You

~

by Aurelia
aurelia_fan@yahoo.com.au

Disclaimers: The characters are mine. The sheets are mine. The toilet is yours...

Thanks: As always, to my own two action heroes, GreenMoon, Warrior Master-Beta, and her trusty side-kick, Brenda the Battling Beta, who let me go out and play in the sandpit while they did grownup Beta stuff.

© October 2006

The lace curtain in the attic fluttered. Two sets of pale eyes watched curiously as a silver SUV pulled up in the driveway of the house. "*She's here...*"

The sound of the lock releasing echoed through the empty house. Priory McAllister stepped over the portal of her latest acquisition. This particular piece of real estate she had claimed as her very own, a turn-of-the-century three-storey Victorian manor complete with elegant lead glass windows. She had no idea why she had the sudden urge to live in suburbia but here she was.

"Come on! I don't pay you to just stand there! Get your butt into gear." Jacey Ryder was getting a little sick and tired of her boss always putting her down. If it wasn't for that friggin' astronomical salary that the nasty heifer paid her she would have been so outta there months ago. Jacey could barely even see the house let alone where to plant her feet, her vision obscured by a large cardboard box, one of many she would be moving on her day off.

"Put it down anywhere." Her assistant started to drop the box. "Easy, will ya!"

"Yes, Ms McAllister," she muttered. Jacey had been working for this viper for a year and she still wasn't considered good enough to call her by her first name. 'Turkey Buzzard' was the nickname the office gave the woman because she was a scavenger. Priory considered herself a corporate raider. A rather good one, or so she thought. The rest of the world knew that she was nothing but a glorified guppy in a tank full of great whites.

"Well, are you waiting for the spirit to move you or what? Start moving those boxes in here!"

"Yeah well, why don't you get that ass of yours moving ..." Jacey muttered as she went outside to grab another box.

"What did you say?" came the booming reply.

"Ah, coming Ms McAllister." All her little happy plans for Halloween had gone right out the damn window when she came into work on Friday. She could have said 'no' but the look in McAllister's eyes told her she probably wouldn't be coming into work Monday. Damn it! She had bought all that candy and everything. Maybe she could just leave it by the front door for everyone. Nah, the dogs would get to it long before the kids ever did.

Juggling a couple of smaller cartons, Jacey stopped short in the doorway. There in front of her was her boss, leaning over on the staircase to pick something up, her ass stuck up in the air. *Good God! The damned woman has these long luscious legs and this simply spectacular ass... and the manners of a friggin' harpy! Now if the harpy part just keeled over everything would be perfect.*

"What?" Jacey hadn't noticed that Priory had turned around and was watching her vacant expression.

"Errr... nothing." What is there to say? *I've got the hots for you but you are such a bitch you've got no chance in hell.' Yeah, Jacey, good one. Ha, ha! Score one for the home team.*

"I've got a run in my hose or something?" Bright blue eyes dropped to the backs of her legs. Priory just couldn't put on a pair of jeans in front of her assistant. She was an executive and executives always wore power suits. Didn't they? Now that she thought about it, it was a ridiculous notion. She was gonna pay big time if she continued to go up and down these stairs in these damned heels she was wearing. Still, she was getting some interesting looks from Jacey. Why hadn't she noticed that before?

"You know, Ms McAllister, it might have been a lot quicker just to hire a mover to do all this." Jacey held her breath for the backlash.

Ah, screw it. "Call me Priory, Jacey. Since it looks like we're gonna be spending the weekend together..."

Jacey's heart skipped a beat. *Did I just hear what I thought I heard? Priory? Who are you and what have you done with my boss?*

"Help me find the box with my jeans in it, will you? Of course, if you tell anyone I even own a pair I'll deny it." It didn't feel half bad to be herself and let her hair down. Speaking of which.... She reached to the back of her head and pulled out the clasp holding it up, allowing the dark locks to cascade down over her shoulders.

Jacey gasped. It was... wow! The transformation was instantaneous and... dramatic. The woman was actually... smiling? Jacey didn't know she could do that, having only seen the constant scowl that was tattooed on her face.

"Wow..." she whispered.

Priory blinked. "Ah, thank you..." She muttered back.

"Huh? Oh God..." *Did I say that out loud?* Jacey did an about turn and ran out of the house, losing her embarrassment in the mass of packing boxes in her SUV. "I can't believe I said that..." Her blonde hair covered her reddening face as she felt her boss move up along side her.

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing..." Grabbing another box, any box, Jacey strode quickly up the path to the porch steps, wanting to put as much space between the two of them as she could.

Something had happened. Jacey wasn't quite sure what, but the dynamics between the two of them had shifted. Priory even helped a little. Maybe she was just eager to find those jeans that she didn't own.

"Found them!" Priory was becoming seriously uncomfortable in the ridiculously hot suit and the crippling high heeled shoes. "Now where are my damned tennis shoes..." She continued to rustle through the boxes until she found a suitable ensemble to wear. Her eyes slipped over to her assistant, sliding over the compact body bending and stretching with movement. *Hmmm... nice. Very nice indeed.* She toyed with the idea of coming onto the young woman but somehow that wretched morality streak surfaced, warning her not to play that game. She knew if she wanted to play it was going to have to be for real.

Priory put aside the thought and staggered up the staircase to find the bathroom to change. She had the house cleaned before the furniture was moved in. Banisters were slick and the floors shiny. All evidence of its neglect had been removed. The house had been on the market for a while, and before that possession changed hands quickly and frequently. She wondered why that was. Sure, it had all the problems any old house would have. In a moment of madness she had signed on the dotted line anyway and became the final owner in a long line of many owners. Still, it was a bit curious.

She opened a couple of doors before locating the bathroom and she felt like she had stepped back in time. Light brown terra cotta tiles covered the floor surrounded by floral tiles as a border. Under the frosted lead glass window was a claw tub, its gleaming surface glistening in the muted light.

Priory ran her hand over the clean surface, her mind enjoying the image of having a long hot bubble bath in it. Her eyes rose to the ancient porcelain taps hovering over it. The plumbing, however, will have to go. She was aware that both the plumbing and the wiring would need replacing but that didn't faze her. The architecture was a work of art and more than made up for the lack of modern facilities.

She stepped out of her shoes, a sigh escaping her lips as toes came into contact with the cool tile floor. What in the name of God had possessed her to wear high heels to a house moving? Long, tapered fingers reached behind to undo the button and zipper of the tailored form fitting skirt, allowing the material to slide sensuously down her long legs. Mmmmm....

It was turning out to be an interesting weekend. Not what she expected at all. Priory moved to the mirror, watching the woman looking back at her. All paint and polish. She stepped forward to take a closer look, taking in the small lines and indents that now marked her, remnants of a stressful business environment.

As she was staring at herself in the mirror her left cheek started to suddenly ripple, slowly running down her face to hang like dog saliva to her chin. Frantically, she tried pushing it back in place, the skin feeling soft and pliable like dough. What the hell...? As she watched, her eyebrow shifted upwards to a comical degree, twitching like a demented centipede. This was not happening. She covered her face, dropping her head towards the wash basin. "I'm going nuts... Yeah, that's it. Too much stress at work." She splashed cold water onto her tingling skin, looking up at the final result and screaming.

The sensations assaulting her face were strange, almost like someone poking her. She looked like a Picasso. Not only was her cheek dented and her eyebrow hovering up near her hairline but the strands of her hair were standing straight up on end. Her hands rose to cover her face, her mouth expelling an agonized cry.

"Hey, are you alright up there?" Jacey's muted voice rose up the staircase.

"Oh God!" she squealed.

The blonde was at the doorway in a matter of seconds, two hands clutching the doorframe for support. "What? What? What's wrong?"

"Don't look at me! It's horrible!"

"What's horrible? What's going on?" Whatever was horrible didn't include Priory's body. That spectacular ass was on full display and shot up to number one with a star on Jacey's list of pros for her boss.

"My face. Oh God, my face!"

Jacey moved over, grabbing her boss's hands. Those fingers were so warm and strong. The hands were added to her mental list as a positive. She gently pulled, increasing her pull as Priory resisted the move. "Come on, show me," she chided gently. She had never seen her boss flustered before. She liked this human side to her, becoming another addition to the positive list.

The blonde studied the face in her hands. "Now, what's wrong with your face?"

"Huh?" Priory wrenched herself away from her assistant, stepping once more in front of the

mirror. "But... but... my face was all over the place! My... my cheek was hanging off my chin!"

"Ewww, gross." Her boss had some imagination. The list came out again. On the con side she put an asterisk against harpy and added mental instability. Why was it that all the gorgeous ones were nuts?

Priory looked again, leaning forward to study each and every pore on her face. She opened the medicine cabinet sitting behind the mirror as if expecting to find the meaning of life there. The mirrored glass closed and the brunette shook her head. "Well, it has been a tough week," she muttered.

"Tell me about it..." Jacey whispered, earning her a heated glare from the woman in the mirror. "Well, it was..." What an understatement that was. One foreclosure and two takeovers, and on top of that was this move that had destroyed any possibility of a sleep in. God, sometimes she hated her job.

"What do you think you are doing?"

"Huh? You were in here screaming..."

"Well, I'm not now! Get out!" Her hands swiveled over her body, vainly trying to cover the semi-nakedness. All it managed to do was to draw Jacey's eyes over her. "Go! G'wan, scat!" Priory made a shooing motion, shuffling the small woman out the door. She returned to the mirror, again checking for any sign of her nose sliding off her face, finally shaking her head and dismissing it as a random act of madness. *You need a vacation girl...*

That was a bit immature, don't you think?

I'm just getting started...

Five minutes later, Priory stepped out of the bathroom, her business suit looped over her arm and feeling a hell of a lot better. The weight on her feet had now shifted and her toes were thanking her profusely for the relief. Hesitating at the top of the stairs, Priory watched her assistant work, now that she was leaning over to reach into one of the boxes. Hmmm... she was seriously tempted to go after the woman but her voice of reason pointed out all the reasons not to. She absently swatted her shoulder, as if squashing her little voice of reasoning's incessant blabbering.

At that precise moment, Jacey's emerald eyes caught her standing there, a gentle smile touching the young woman's lips. Why had she never noticed her before? She knew why. She was too busy playing big business to notice what was in front of her face all along. "Better?" Priory

hoped for a positive response.

"Much." The cherub-like face broke into a grin, exposing dimples that had been rarely seen.

The brunette couldn't help but smile back as she descended the stairs. Things were looking up. That little voice was still buzzing around in her head but she paid it no mind. "Let's get to work, okay?"

"Okay." Seeing her boss in soft denim and delicate cotton made her heart skip a beat. The jeans gently molded to the long legs she had come to love, showing them to good advantage. She now waited in anticipation to see that ass, a mental red marker ready to go berserk on that list of hers.

She held her breath. *Oh yeah... come on... come on....that's it....turn... just a little... oh, oh, oh...* She strained her neck as the object of her lust was coming into view. *Oh Sweet Jesus! Hallelujah! Yesssssss!* Jacey struggled to keep her whimper inside as her boss proceeded to bend over into a deep box. She looked at the little red tag still on the back pocket. *You lucky bastard...*

Her mind started singing, *Oooooooo yeah... Oooooooo yeahhhhh...* Then she suddenly became aware that blue eyes were watching her every move. Jacey could feel the blush start again. "Uhhh...", clearing her throat, "Need help there?"

"Ahh, no thanks. I'm fine".

Yes, you most certainly are. Damn.

Lustful thoughts were put aside for a while as they worked quickly and efficiently to unpack the boxes, finding somewhere to put most of the homeless knick knacks. All the heavier items had been moved in earlier in the week, so it was just a matter of cleaning out the day-to-day stuff from her apartment.

"One more trip should do it for today." She looked around the house, pleased to see touches of her life scattered around. "Yeah..." Suddenly, this seemed like a good idea. After impulsively buying the house she had some doubts about the acquisition. Now it seemed the best decision she had ever made.

Jacey looked up. Did she still have a chance of getting home for Halloween? "Will you need me after that?"

Disappointment flowed through Priory. She had hoped the woman would have wanted to stay on, but it looked like she was spending the night alone. Like always. "Can I talk you into having dinner with me... you know, for helping me out and all?"

"What?"

"I mean... You gotta eat, right?" She was back-peddling and she knew it. Rejection always made her defensive and right now she didn't want to appear lonely and needy. "Never mind. If you have plans then don't let me stop you." With those few words she turned her back, physically ending the conversation.

Jacey's mental red marker went haywire. *Damn. That ass again.* Ah God, that ass was outlined so perfectly in soft denim, swaying gently as the tall woman walked away. Why was she doing this to herself? Come Monday, the buzzard was back and she was the carcass. Before she could stop herself, she replied, "What did you have in mind?" *There the hell goes Halloween...*

Priory stopped in mid step. A gentle smile touched her lips before she swiveled to face her assistant. She looked at the other woman leaning into a large box, her collar gaping open and giving her a most enticing view of the swell of her breasts. Priory mentally slapped herself at thinking such thoughts, and knew she was changing the rules between them if things went further. Could she look at her assistant the same way come Monday?

At that moment, there was a loud gurgling sound coming from upstairs. "What the hell was that?" Priory took the steps two at a time, her long legs making short work of the staircase. "It seems to be coming from the bathroom..." her voice floated away as she moved steadily down the hallway.

Jacey stood at the bottom of the stairs, trying to make out what her boss was saying. "I think it's the plumbing..." There was silence for several moments before her boss spoke again, the volume getting steadily louder as the tall woman strode back up the hallway to the top of the stairs. "Nothing to worry about, the toilet's acting up. I knew there were some plumbing problems."

Toilet... Toilet??!! Hey! That was a damn good moan! I got her toilet right here!

Never mind, honey. Next time you'll do an even better one.

Yeah. Well.

Don't pout dear.

I don't pout...

"Now what were we talking about? Oh yeah, dinner. Would... would you have dinner with me? Here? Tonight?" Priory thought for a moment. "Oh damn, it's Halloween, isn't it? And... and you had plans..." She could see that she had hit the mark. "I'm sorry."

Jacey was stunned. First an invitation to dinner, now the woman used the word 'sorry'. She didn't think her boss knew the word. "That's okay. I just had a small arsenal of candy for the kids. I guess I'll be making dentist appointments for the next few months."

Another gurgle, this time even louder, echoed from the bathroom and down the hallway, sending a nasty shuddering rumble flowing through the entire house like flatulence. "Damned pipes. Looks like I'll have to call the plumber on Monday." Priory turned her attention back to the woman at the foot of the stairs. "No, it's fine. I can manage here. Can... are you able to help me tomorrow?" *Please... please...*

"Sure." Now why did she say that? She had the perfect opportunity to get out of it tomorrow and she just committed herself to working another day. "So... what's next?"

"Okay, so...you mind grabbing the next load from my apartment?" The brunette descended the stairs, heading straight for her purse. She extracted a set of keys and a security pass. "Here's everything to get into the apartment and the underground parking garage. If you have any problems just call me." Jacey took the keys and turned to leave, halted by long fingers wrapping around her wrist. Green eyes riveted on the hand on her and her heart beat tripled. What was this woman was doing to her?

"Thank you." The dark, deep voice of her boss flowed over her, filling every crack and niche it could find. Her boss was certainly finding a new vocabulary today, the last two words she was sure had been lobotomized from the woman's brain. But it didn't stop her responding in same. "You're welcome... boss." She accompanied the word with a smile, before walking out the front door.

Plumbing? She said... plumbing?

Sweetheart, it was a wonderful moan. I think it might have been your finest ever.

She... said... plumbing.

Plumbing can be a very dangerous thing, sweetie.

Plumbing... This means war!

Priory stepped out onto the front porch, watching the tail lights from Jacey's SUV disappear around the corner at the end of her street. She looked around her new neighborhood. It sure was different. She had never lived in suburbia before, family homes replacing the nameless doors of

her neighbors in her apartment block in the city. These were people with faces, with names and with families. She wondered if it was too late to get involved in this Halloween thing. *Maybe a quick trip to the store to grab a few bags... yeah, sounds like a pretty good idea. Certainly couldn't hurt...*

She had barely stepped back inside the house when the door slammed behind her. Reaching for the knob she tried to open it. Again it slammed shut. She held tight to the ornate knob and pulled, feeling resistance as she tried to move the door. The door opened and closed, see-sawing one way then the other in a battle of wills. "What the hell is going on?" Her deep voice rose to a high-pitched squeal. "Stop it, dammit!" With one final yank, the door swung open with a thud, letting Priory slam against the wall before sliding to the floor in a jumbled heap. She shook herself to stop the little tweety birds flying around her head. The door then slammed shut with a shudder, as if making a final statement to her.

Dylan, this is just childish.

She started it!

She could have gotten hurt!

I didn't touch her! She fell all by herself!

Dylan.

Pffftt. Not my fault she's clumsy...

Dylan.

Time went slowly as Priory arranged the house to her liking. She had moved the furniture around several times. She'd unpacked dishes and books and everything in between while she was waiting for Jacey's return. That damned toilet had acted up again, rattling every pipe in the house. Priory was getting seriously pissed off. How in the hell was she supposed to get any sleep with that obnoxious thing discussing the properties of waste management every few hours?

She's ignoring it! Like there ain't nothin' happenin' here!

Dear, maybe you should just try something else. That obviously isn't working.

Yeah! Well! I'm working all by myself here! I don't see anybody else helpin' any!

Oh... geeze... fine. Stand back. I'll handle it.

Priory carefully unwrapped a Tiffany lamp. She had bought this specifically with the house in mind, hoping to add a little touch of the Roaring Twenties to the décor. Enjoying the moment, she plugged it in and switched it on. A myriad of color burst forth from the stained glass lampshade, bringing a genuine smile to her face. It had cost her a pretty penny to buy but now she saw its value in that one shining moment.

A faint humming seemed to emit from the lamp, echoing through the house, varying in intensity and pitch. "What have I got to do to have something go right?" She had taken special pains to get it delivered, and now it was broken?

The light flickered as the power was cut off but the humming persisted. Unscrewing the warm bulb she checked the filament but nothing looked wrong. Maybe it was the power point. The last thing she needed right now was to hire another contractor besides a plumber for that damn chatty toilet.

She bent her ear towards the ground to listen. *Nope. Dammit!* Straightening her long frame, Priory stared at the lamp. The noise was getting louder and weirder, rising to match her frustration. *Where the hell is Jacey? Now, that woman would find the problem in a flat minute. After all, that's what I paid the woman such a high salary for, wasn't it? To take care of me... errrr, to take care of things for me? Yeah!*

There she stood in the kitchen doorway, her balled fists planted on her hips. The noise was really starting to piss her off. Was it the gas? A mouse caught under the fridge? Her own imagination springing a leak?

Suddenly the pipes started shuddering upstairs, traveling down to the kitchen and leaving through the tap with a loud pop. The fridge immediately answered back with a high squeal. "I friggin' don't believe this!"

Opening the fridge door, she peered inside hoping that the action would solve the problem. Not knowing whether to be happy or not, she finally settled on the 'not'. "Grrr...Damned fridge..." she snorted, slamming the door before stomping back to the front room and her unpacking. *Where is Jacey? Shouldn't she be back by now?*

Fridge?

Refrigerator, Rhea. You know, the icebox.

Ahhh. A refrigerator? I should be insulted. Phfft.

Uh huh. Now will you let me take care of this?

Oh, please. Be my guest. Hmm, nice lamp.

The problems just seemed to be piling up beyond Priory's realm of control. For the tenth time she looked at her watch. *Where is that damned woman?* She needed her and she needed her now. Suddenly the house seemed too big for just one person. *It needs the sounds of life like kids... or a partner, not like it's going to happen any time soon. Maybe some goldfish?* Why was her life not as rosy as it had been this morning?

Still seething over the conversation taking place between the toilet and the fridge, Priory thought it safe enough to unpack some magazines. Unpacking anything breakable at this point would be just that... breakable. The way her day had gone thus far had made her a bit tense. A massage would be nice. Yeah, like that was gonna happen either.

She laid the glossy publications on the stylish coffee table, arranging them in a neat pile. Nervously, she grabbed the top copy and sat down to flip through the color pages. This was no good. Work was what she needed to pass the time. She leaned over to replace the magazine and stopped. She had put them in a neat pile, didn't she? Tidying up, she turned away to sort through a box of knick knacks, taking out a small antique cigarette box and turned back to place it also on the table top.

Okay now. What the hell? The magazine pile was again scattered over the table. She was sure this time that she had stacked them. Suspiciously, she looked around the room for the culprit. What was she expecting? Jacey to jump out and scare the crap out of her?

As she stood there staring, the pages of the magazines began to flip as if blown by a light zephyr that couldn't possibly be there. Priory slowly placed her hand on the publication, closing it and replacing it on the pile.

She turned her back on it, but the sound of shifting paper made her turn around. Wide eyes looked around. "Okay, that's not funny. Who's there?" Not that she was expecting an answer. "What's going on?"

"Get outta my house!" came the booming reply.

Your house?

Well sugar, you know what I meant. Our house, okay?

Uh huh. So, did you think that is going to send her running and screaming out of here?

It worked before.

Uh huh.

Priory collapsed into the large wing-backed chair, the color slowly draining from her face. Her eyes darted back and forth as white-knuckled fingers grasped the arms of the chair. The ensuing silence grated on her nerves like fingernails on a chalkboard. She had to get out of here. Ever so slowly, she found her feet, moving carefully across the wooden floor to the door, panicked eyes flickering around in anticipation of the unknown.

Just when she thought she was home free the front door flung open, slamming against the door frame, rattling its hinges. Priory cringed as the glass door made contact with the wall, expecting the glass to shatter. Storm clouds slowly began brewing in her eyes at the blatant disregard for her property. "Hey! Just hold the hell on here! You almost broke my goddamned door!" She examined the wall for a dent. "Who the hell do you think you are? I paid good money for this house and no one or no... THING... is gonna kick me out of it..." She screamed at the ceiling. "You listening to me? This house is **mine!**"

So much for that.

Just.. just... never mind. On to Plan B. Yeah, Plan B!

Plan B?

Yeah. Plan B.

Why do I think Plan B isn't going to be pretty?

Huh?

Nothing Honey.

The battle lines had been drawn. Priory thought long and hard about what she was going to do. A ghost in the house... in HER house... was most certainly not in her plans. The situation needed rectifying immediately. And she was just the girl to do it! Her eyes widened in delight as an absurdly ridiculous idea popped into her head. Grabbing a sugar bowl, she took off out the back door.

Well, that was easy. See! No need for Plan B now. Ha!

Ya think so huh?

Sure!

You don't think you're being a little optimistic dear?

Look! She just took off, right out the back door!

And she's running away... with a... a sugar bowl?

Yeah. So she's weird?

Pffftt. Oh dear...

Huh?

I said, yes dear.

Half an hour later Priory returned, the sugar bowl filled to the brim with water. When she left the house she had given no thought about getting back in if the ghost decided to lock her out. To her surprise, the door opened easily. Tentatively she stepped inside, carefully balancing the sugar bowl full of water. Immediately she looked up for a bucket of water hovering over the doorway. Now if it was her, the house would be booby trapped. Oops... She better not give it any ideas...

Looking quickly to the left, then the right, a slow grin began to appear. She strutted forward a bit, a devilish gleam touching her smiling eyes. "Now, smart ass, your keister is mine..."

Why didn't you just lock her out?

Where's the fun in that?

Ah, so we're having fun?

Well, sure. Besides, I want to see what she's up to.

Ah, I see now. You want to beat her!

I'm gonna beat her! Cuz I'm better than she is!

Better.... at.... what exactly sweetheart?

Just... just... BETTER.

Okay. Dylan?

Yeah?

You are better. To me.

The corporate executive was pacing the upstairs hallway armed with her grandmother's old family bible, a small cross attached to rosary beads and the sugar bowl of water. Firmly clutching the bible to balance the sugar bowl, she began flicking the water around the hall, splashing liberally onto the walls and floor.

"En the num ov gud leev thif hus!" The rosary beads tumbled from her mouth to land in a puddle of water on the floor. "Shit.....ahhh... I mean crap."

What is she doing?

I think... God, I think she's trying to exorcise us.

What? That's crazy. What do we need exercise for?

No, no... watch. I think she is trying to EXORCISE us, you know, like a priest would get rid of a pesky demon.

A PESKY DEMON?! Where?! We have a pesky demon?!

OR... a ghost or something like that.

Ohhhhh, okay. Don't scare me like that! Hmm. Well, she ain't doing it right. And I don't think a padre would say shit either!

"What..... ahhh... what are you doing?" Bright blue eyes opened to see Jacey standing at the top of the stairs. "What is all... this?" Jacey's mental list had a bright red mark over the mental instability. She changed it to downright nuts.

"I'm exorcising the ghost in this house!"

"Ghost? There's a ghost in the house? Heyyyy, you know, this is an old house. There are bound to be a few creaks here and there."

"A few creaks?! Yeah! Add the demon possessed toilet and the wailing refrigerator! And the two of them getting together for a party!"

"Wailing refrig....? Okay... wait... hold up a minute. The refrigerator. What happened to the refrigerator?"

"I'm plugging the light in, then there it goes! WHHHAAAWWW! WHHHEEEEEEE!
WHHHHAAAWWW...."

"Okay, okay! The light is making.....sounds?"

"No! The fridge!"

"Okayyyyyyy."

"Then the fridge and that goddamn toilet start going at it! Together!"

"When did all this happen?"

"After the magazines were all going pfft pfft pfft pfft..." Priory's hands spun in an animated fashion. Jacey thought it looked like her boss's thinking.

"I get the picture."

"And of course the front door opened and closed, opened and closed, opened and..."

"I hate to tell you boss, but that's what a door does."

"Don't be a smart ass, Jacey. It did it by itself."

"Okay, what exactly is your proof positive that this place is haunted?"

"Well I think the 'GET OUTTA MY HOUSE' was a pretty good sign."

"So what is in that...that sugar bowl...that you are flicking around everywhere?"

"Holy water."

"On no, you didn't."

"I sure did." Priory beamed with pride. She had done good.

"You mean to tell me you went down the street, knocked on the door of the church and said, 'Hi, I'm a new neighbor. Can I borrow a... a sugar bowl... of holy water?' " The smile slowly faded on her boss's face. Yep, that was precisely what she had done.

Jacey was flummoxed, without a doubt. Her boss was normally so level-headed, a bitch, yes...but a level-headed bitch. And yet... and yet, here she was trying to exorcise the hallway, or whatever. Mumbling or maybe talking to herself, while flicking water everywhere, rather flicking HOLY WATER everywhere. Flicking Holy Water from a SUGAR BOWL. Where had things gone so wrong?

"There really is a ghost, you know."

"Ahhh....yeah. Right." And she had some prime vacation real estate in the Everglades she'd like to sell the woman. "Come on, let's get some coffee. Okay?" Anything to get her out of the hallway.

"I know you don't believe me." Priory could see that Jacey thought her marble bag had begun to unravel.

"Noooo. I mean yeah! " *Oh yeah.*

The executive reluctantly left the bible and rosary beads on the top step with a deep sigh, carrying the bowl back to the kitchen. She sat at the table while Jacey made them coffee. "Ahhhh, well.... have you thought any more about dinner?" Maybe a change of topic was in order.

Was she game to have dinner with a crazy woman? Jacey looked into those azure eyes but could see no madness there. The woman truly believed there was a ghost in the house. But there was something else too. Something that was drawing her to answer.

"Delivery?"

The sound in Jacey's voice bolstered Priory's hopes. "Ahh..Sure! I don't have much here to cook with. What are you in the mood for?"

"Well, it's All Hallow's Eve. Anything goes!"

"Hallow's Eve? Oh damn, I forgot!"

"Forgot what?"

"I was gonna go get some candy..." She could see the look of smirking disbelief on her young assistant. "Don't laugh. I figured since I've got to live in the neighborhood I better do something. Looks like I'm too late." Jacey stood and left the kitchen, making her way to the front door. "Was it something I said?" Priory yelled to the empty house.

Several moments later Jacey returned, a large plastic bowl filled with little plastic pumpkin bags in her hands. She deposited it in the middle of the table. "Ta da!"

"So? Is this going to be twenty questions?"

"Go ahead. Look."

Priory shrugged. She was just too emotionally worn out to play games, so she did as she was asked. "I stopped by my apartment and picked up my supplies." Jacey answered before she was asked. "There was no point in letting it all go to waste... or to MY waist for that matter!"

"So you were going to stay all along."

"Well..." Pale green eyes looked down shyly at the seated woman. "I wasn't going to but... well... I changed my mind."

"Changed your mind, huh?"

Jacey continued to make the coffee, placing one of the mugs in front of her boss before taking a seat opposite her. Anything she said at this point was going to get her in trouble, so she said nothing at all.

"Thank you." The two words touched her, hanging gently in the air as if floating.

"You're welcome... Priory." Jacey waited for the woman to respond but got nothing. "Priory... hmmm."

"What? You don't like my name?" The thought that Jacey disliked her name kind of concerned her.

"No, it's not that at all. It's just so unusual. How did you get it?" She saw her boss hesitate.

"Sorry, it's none of my business..."

"No... no, that's alright. My mom and dad were in England on vacation. Just touring around the countryside. Mom went into premature labor. I was actually born in a Catholic Priory. It's my mom's idea of a joke."

"So you're BRITISH?"

"Nooooo, just born there. I've lived here all my life." Priory hesitated. "If... if you'd rather, you can call me by my nickname."

She has a nickname? That surprised Jacey. Priory didn't strike her as a woman with a nickname. "What is it?"

"Abbey."

"Abbey?" What's the connection?

"You know. Priory. Abbey. Both are a convent. Kind of stupid, huh? My mother... the comedian."

"Two names for two different people."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

"Priory for the boss. Abbey for the woman who doesn't own blue jeans. I like it." Jacey showed her dimples again, expressing her happiness.

Awww, that's so cute.

Ahhhhh Nooooo! Don't start, Rhea. You do this every time. They're squatters! We do not like the squatters!

But Dylan...

Don't 'but Dylan' me. They've gotta go.

Okay.

Yeah. Squatters go. We stay. That's how it is!

If you say so, dear.

As expected, the only choices they had out here in Great Suburbia were either pizza or Chinese. Opting for Chinese, they dined on two mismatched plates with plastic forks that came with the delivery. Priory was almost embarrassed about the current state of affairs of her new household. No candlesticks or romantic music, just chipped plates, a couple of mismatched coffee mugs and plastic utensils. She sat back in her chair watching her assistant finish off her meal, chatting away at most everything. Her assistant? No, it was becoming clear... even to her... that that title was changing, and there was no way she could stop it. And she didn't think she wanted to stop it even if she could.

"Come on..." Priory hadn't even realized that Jacey was now standing in front of her, her hand extended in invitation.

"Where are we going?"

"For a little walk to meet your neighbors."

"Oh.... No, no, no. I don't think I'm ready for that."

"This is the easiest time... my friend. Halloween makes everyone happy."

"Happy? I've never celebrated it before."

"And I suppose Christmas is 'bah humbug'."

"See? You do know me." She laughed at the comment. Jacey was proving to be an eye opener indeed.

"Anyway, I need to walk off all this food before it takes up residence on my hips." Jacey extended her hand once again to the seated woman, hauling her to her feet.

Priory looked at the area in question, wondering what on earth the woman had to worry about. "It must have passed by that piece of anatomy quite well in the past because I don't see anything wrong."

That was as about as close to a physical compliment as the corporate executive had ever made to her assistant. "No?" Doe-green eyes looked up hopefully.

"Ahhh.... Errr... no." What could she say? Jacey's hips were beautiful, just like the rest of her, not that she was gonna blurt that out anytime soon. "Now... what was this about a walk?" Anything to get off this particular conversation.

Jacey relented. It was about as much as her boss was going to confess at this time. "Come on then..."

The last of the sun's rays touched the tiny community, bathing the street in an orange glow. Priory and Jacey strolled along the sidewalk slowly, looking at the gaily decorated houses in the neighborhood. Outlandish jack-o-lanterns were everywhere, each neighbor trying to outdo the next. Cardboard skeletons were taped to doors in goofy poses while styrofoam graveyards adorned front yards. Energetic children eager for the evening to start ran helter skelter in and out of their houses in various states of dress, hopefully burning off some of that excess chocolate energy.

They said 'hello' often, meeting friendly faces and generous hearts, until Priory mentioned where she lived. There was a lot of head shaking and one old woman patted her arm saying, "I'm so sorry dear."

As they walked away, Priory mumbled, "That's not promising."

"Ah, what do they know." Jacey tried to be optimistic.

"An awful lot, by the sounds of it." Today was a day of mixed blessings. "Well, I'm just going to have to do something about it, that's all."

"Like what? Who you gonna call? Ghostbusters?"

"Hmmm, I wonder if they're in the phone book."

"They don't exist, Abbey!" A dark eyebrow rose in question. "It's a movie! They're not real."

"Of course they're real. You see 'em on TV all the time. We've just got to find them. That's a job for you on Monday."

What could Jacey say? "You're the boss." *Oh dear Lord...*

The night started off very quiet. The sounds of excited children could be heard up and down the block but not one came to the door. If the kids didn't come to them then Jacey would go to the kids. She stood outside the door, a bowl loaded with candy in her hands, enticing the kids to come and get their bootie. Most were hesitant, one small child flat out refusing to come, left standing there crying because she couldn't get her candy.

Slowly Jacey lured them to the door, finally able to close it and allow them to ring the doorbell. "Trick or treat!" The voices were shaking. They knew the stories of this house. They had been told them since they were able to walk. Spooky things lived here, and yet the young woman standing there smiling didn't look too spooky.

"Are you a witch or sum'thin?" A miniscule Frankenstein looked up the woman holding the bowl.

"No honey, why do you say that?"

"Creepy things live here. Ghosts and witches and ax murderers and stuff." There was a chorus of agreement.

"Well, we moved in today and I haven't seen anything."

"But... but it's Halloween. They're... they're in there."

"I'll protect you, don't worry." Jacey couldn't help but laugh at the frightened faces. What were these people teaching their children?

"You can't potect us. They'll eat off your heads." The little fairy snatched at the offered sweets and ran away.

"What's going on?" Priory rambled up to stand beside Jacey, watching as the kids escaped.

"Just some nonsense about monsters. You know, Halloween stuff."

They turned around to find two figures covered in sheets standing at the bottom of the staircase. "Hey! You shouldn't come in here unless you're asked to." Two shrouded heads turned to each other. "Come on. Out you go!" The figures approached. "Hold out your hands." Priory put a handful of candy in each covered hand. There was silence.

"Well, what do you say?"

"Thank you..." came two muffled replies.

"Now, off you go..." She ushered them out of the house, closing the door with a slam. "Some kids have got some nerve..."

There was a knock at the door. "Now what?"

"Stay calm. This is normal for Halloween."

Priory opened the door to see the same two ghosts standing there, the candy still sitting in their hands. "You're being a bit greedy, aren't you? I've already given you some."

While Priory was admonishing the sheets, Jacey looked down and gasped. She blinked once, then again. She even rubbed her eyes. The sheets had no feet. Jacey looked up, trying to get past the hacked holes that were the eyes but could see nothing. "Come in," she murmured.

"What are you doing?"

"Thank you," came the quiet reply from the smaller sheet.

"You're welcome." Jacey looked really hard into those absent eyes, trying to express her feelings at the moment. She really didn't believe in ghosts but here she was, face to face with one. And it was exhilarating.

The two sheets continued their journey up the staircase, heading for the attic. "Just where do you think you are going? Hey, get back down here!"

"Abbey...look..." She pointed to where the feet should be.

"What? Wha.....Damn! Why did you let them back in? Here was our chance to get rid of them."

"It's not that simple, Abbey. They can easily come back in. Besides, they live here too."

"They DO NOT!" Priory admonished. Great, now they had Jacey on their side.

"They've been living here longer than you have by quite a margin."

She knew she wasn't going to win this particular argument. The woman had simply stated the truth and she couldn't take it. So, she lashed out as only she could. Yelling at the top of her voice, she sent her words up the staircase. "Hey! That's cheating! I want my candy back!"

That was weird. Why did she do that?

The short blonde gets it.

Well, I don't like it. We've been perfectly fine the way we are.

Have we?

What kinda crack is that?

It's just the two of us in this big ol' dusty old house. Sometimes... sometimes I'd just like someone else to be here, to make me forget why we're here, you know, Dylan?

Pfft... Just wait until the tall one realizes that it's her sheets that we cut up.

Finally Halloween was over and Priory collapsed into the stuffed chair with a sigh. "Is it like that every year?"

"Worse. Half the kids wouldn't come to the front door this time. Next year they'll be here in droves." Jacey knew that if the ghost problem didn't get solved there may not be a next year.

"Well, I'm bushed. Let's get the spare bed made up for you and we'll call it a night."

"It has been a long day." For Jacey it had been as wearing emotionally as it had been physically, leaving her wondering what tomorrow would bring.

Priory dragged herself up the stairs towards the linen closet to find some sheets and blankets. If it took as much effort to climb the stairs as she used just then, then this whole staircase thing was going to be a drag real soon. "Now where are those sheets..."

Jacey spared a moment to just sit, enjoying the peace and quiet that now reigned.

"Arrggghhh!!!!" The yell made her sit upright, her eyes riveted to the stairs. "I'm gonna kill those two!"

"What's wrong?" she yelled back, not yet able to summon the energy to run up the stairs.

Priory walked out holding her sheets, fingers poking through the ragged holes cut in them.

"Damn it! My other sheets are still back at the apartment." Vivid blue eyes rose to the ceiling.

"Leave my damned things alone! You hear me?" Her voice was rough with anger, willing the words through plaster and wood to the attic above. "No more Miss Congeniality. You got me?"

So much for the peace and quiet. "Look, I'll just go home. I'll detour to your apartment in the morning and bring a load with me."

"Oh..." Priory couldn't help the crestfallen look on her face, disappointed that Jacey wasn't staying. "I was kinda hoping..."

"Hoping what?" Jacey's interest was piqued.

"Errrr.... Hoping... I mean.... Oh God, I just wanted you to stay, alright?" A blush crawled up her face, refusing to stop at the hairline.

Jacey made her legs move, climbing the staircase quickly and standing in front of her boss. "You did?" she whispered, barely a foot away from her. "Why?"

"Why? Why... why... I don't know why. I just do." She knew she wasn't making sense. The whole day didn't make sense, so why would this be any different? Priory considered herself a woman of the world in all things but Jacey was making her feel like a goofy teenager. So much had changed today, her address, her attitude and her life. Someone who had been little more than her assistant was now becoming... someone special and she wasn't sure how to proceed.

"Yeah?" Jacey took a step forward, invading Priory's personal space. She looked into those azure eyes, trying to find the secrets of the universe and all matters pertaining to her. "Really?" She hadn't realized that her voice had become soft and enticing, at least not until she saw those eyes darken.

Jacey felt the push in the back which landed her in Priory's arms, and remembered afterwards to send a secret thank you for the effort. It was like a magnetic attraction. Now mere inches apart, lips were drawn together for the first time. The first touch was just that. Jacey drew back to see Priory's reaction. Intense eyes drew her back in for a longer touch that slowly melted into some slow, careful exploration.

Priory felt the rush in her veins as blood pumped from her racing heart. It was... it was quite unlike anything she had ever experienced before, sending tingles all over her body and making her dizzy. She pulled back finally, sucking air into her lungs as if her life depended on it. "Wow!"

"Yeah..." Jacey was stunned. She was not particularly fond of this woman up until this morning, and now she was kissing her.

"Why did you do that?"

"I got pushed..."

"That explains why you were in my arms not why you kissed me."

Now it was Jacey's turn to be flustered. "I... err... I couldn't help myself, okay? You were there and all and... and I just did it."

"What have I got to do to make you do it again?"

"You just did it..." This time wandering hands joined in the foray as the two women discovered one another for the first time. While clothes remained firmly in place, that didn't stop busy fingers feeling for the soft flesh underneath.

Priory pulled back shaking her head. "No."

"No?" Disappointment spiked through Jacey like an electrical shock. "Why?" She was desperately holding onto the tears, not wanting to show what she felt to the other woman.

"Because this is not right."

"Not right?" Jacey felt like she had been slapped in the face.

"No. If this goes any further things could get awfully sticky at work."

"Work.... Ahhh." She was right. Monday would rear its ugly head and Priory would be gone to

be replaced with Ms McAllister. "Fine." It was all so close and yet not close enough. Jacey walked past the brunette, taking refuge in the bathroom. The tears that she had held at bay began to fall. The toilet gurgled in response and she was not amused. "Awww, shut the hell up!"

Did she just tell me to shut-the-hell-up?!

Dylan, show some sensitivity here.

I don't do... sensitive... you know that.

Yes, you most certainly do too! You're just being a bonehead! And don't pout.

I'm not pou...

Dylan!

Grumptft.

"Aw, shit! I'm an idiot. God." Priory muttered. Things had been going so well and she just had to bring up work. She could have had the woman halfway to the bed by now if she had just shut the hell up. The plumbing pipes rattled in response. "Yeah, yeah. I hear ya. I suck."

She approached the door, hesitating a moment before knocking. "Jacey?" Still nothing but the gurgling toilet and its little friends the pipes were talking to her. "Jacey? Look, I'm sorry about what I said. If I could let it go any further I would. You are great, God knows, but the reality is that come Monday I'm your boss and we have to deal with that." *Why was this so goddamn hard?* "Look, please take my bed and I'll sleep in the spare room."

Jacey waited a few minutes for the house to return to silence. Quietly she opened the bathroom door and made her way to the master bedroom. Not bothering to go to her car to get her overnight bag, she pulled back the covers and crawled in her T-shirt and undies, desperately seeking peace in slumber.

Morning came and she felt no better. Alone in a bed that was more than big enough for two, Jacey lay in silence. A gentle snoring could be heard from the guest bedroom, bringing a wry smile to her face. *Damn it!* She got out of bed, quickly dressing and leaving the house before she had time to think. She had plenty of time for that during the long trip to Priory's apartment, and it would just be easier all around if she wasn't there when her boss woke up.

It was almost noon by the time Jacey's SUV pulled up into the driveway. The early morning start made the day already seem long. She was already exhausted and she hadn't even had breakfast yet. Detouring into the kitchen, Jacey found a bucket of fried chicken. Priory had been shopping by the looks of it.

Grabbing a leg, she munched on the cooked meat, wandering back into the hallway to find her boss. "Abb... Pri... err... boss?" Somehow, the first names didn't seem appropriate any more. She had been put in her place and there she would stay. There was a steady rattling in the living room. "Boss? That's not a snake, is it?" *Oh God, I hate snakes.*

There was a steady moaning, groaning and mumbling accompanying the rattle. Had the woman been bitten? The phone. She had to find the phone. "Abbey. Talk to me! Are you in the living room? Are you alright? Where's the phone?" Frantically she fumbled through her boss's handbag on the dining room table for her cellphone. She ran back towards the living room, punching in 911 as she went. "Oh God... oh God... oh God..."

Finally she looked up at the scene, her jaw dropping as quickly as the phone. "Whaaaa...?"

"911, what is your emergency? Hello... are you there? This is 911... can you speak?" It took several moments for the voice on the other end to register. Jacey picked up the cell and spoke. "Never mind... my mistake...ahhh, I'm really sorry...everything's...ahhh fine. Seriously. Really. Thank you." Disconnecting the call, she threw the cell onto the sofa.

"What in THE hell are you doing?" She knew what she was doing, or what it LOOKED like she was doing, but it was just so... so... goddamn stupid it was incomprehensible.

"If at first you don't succeed..." Priory laughed maniacally. "You know what they did to me this morning? Huh? Huh? Yeah? They short-sheeted me. Well, if I had any goddamn sheets to begin with! It took me twenty minutes to get out of that hellish cocoon they wrapped me up in!"

"Can you just let it go? It's getting a little... out of hand, huh?"

"They started it!" Jacey tried hard not to smile. The woman sounded like she did when she herself had been eight years old.

Priory might have not gone over that proverbial edge just yet, but she was definitely enjoying the view. The woman looked like a cross between a demented bag lady and something from a National Geographic special. Her mass of dark hair was secured on top of her head by a large multicolored scarf, her dark locks cascading down around her head like a water fountain. Woven into her hair was what looked like a... pink feather boa... haphazardly sticking out in all directions. *Pink feather boa? Hmmm, think about that one later.*

To complete her ensemble, Priory was dressed like Clive of India, complete with cargo shorts and a bit of a shirt tied off tightly just under her breasts, multi-colored necklaces dangling around her neck, clanking together, hanging in her cleavage. And... Jacey tilted her head just a bit, as if

it would focus her eyesight better... Priory has... war paint... on her face. *Yep, that's lipstick all right.*

As her boss leaned over, Jacey's little demon ass voice commented. *Oh yeah, a bit further baby. Ahhh, look at all that skin.*

Stop that, this woman is in need of some serious help.

But... but that ass. I gotta see more. Lean over...yessss... just a little bit more.

No. Help now, ass later.

Ah God, now I'm arguing with myself! Jacey prayed that Priory's insanity wasn't contagious.

Finally, Jacey moved her eyes from Priory to the rest of the scenario. Laid out before her was this improvised... voodoo... ceremonial type altar thingie. The sound that had sent her into a panic was a baby rattle... a tiny pink baby rattle. *Oh Lord. Well, it matches the feather boa.* The brunette was kneeling in front of a lit candle and a couple of incense sticks. As she watched, Priory picked up her car keys, shaking them vigorously over the... what? Was that what she thought it was? On a platter in front of her was a whole chicken which looked like it had been defrosted in the microwave. A whole dead raw chicken.

Priory's hand hovered over the bird with a large kitchen knife that she was going to use for her little ritual. Two little ghosts made from....oh yeah, there's a roll of toilet paper right there beside her. By the looks of things, Jacey figured she must have been at this most of the morning. Those two upstairs had certainly done a number on the poor woman. *Don't laugh at her Jacey, don't laugh. No snickering either!*

"And, ah, what is that?" Jacey pointed at the pathetic offering.

"That's my sacrifice."

"Sacrifice?" *Good Lord.*

"Oh, and you're eating my alternate sacrifice there." Priory commented, pointing at the half-eaten fried chicken leg in Jacey's hand.

"Huh?"

"The fried chicken was a standby if the fresh chicken didn't work."

"My, my...you have certainly been busy this morning. Ah, you know, this may work better with a live chicken though."

"I had to improvise."

"And this?" Jacey picked up the Scrabble box.

"I couldn't find a Ouija board." The young blonde thought her boss's internal Scrabble board was missing a few 'e's and 't's... and the occasional 'a' and 's'. She shook her head in dismay. Priory had some wild imagination.

Just when Jacey thought she could not have been more surprised.... straight up off the platter jumped that pathetic naked chicken!

Balancing on its little footless legs, the chicken proceeded to march right off the plate heading for the kitchen, leaving a wet trail on the carpet as it went. Suddenly it came to a halt, did an about-face and marched back to Priory, snatching the knife from her hand and tucking it under its little wing before stomping off to the kitchen again in complete disgust.

"Veerrrry funny!" The brunette yelled at the top of her lungs. "You wanna piece of me?" There was silence. "Well, do you? Come on then. You and your lousy chicken!"

Jacey wasn't quite sure what to feel. Her wide eyes raised her pale eyebrows to her hairline. This is all so absolutely insane... absurdly funny... and it was all a little bit sad too. Jacey just shook her head, moving into the foyer she took a seat on the stairs where she sat watching Priory stomping around on the carpet, her face turned upwards to the ceiling, yelling and screaming into the air. "Oh boy..." It was like watching a cartoon. The situation had gone from mild annoyance to an all-out war of wills. What next? And her boss....geeze, the woman's losin' it. Come Monday she wasn't sure if she was going to have to call the nice men in the white coats instead of that damn plumber.

She ran her hands through her blonde locks, burying her fingers into the hair on the back of her head. Dipping her head to the floor, she sighed deeply. "This is ridiculous...and it's gotten out of hand."

"Yes... *and* yes." came a whispered reply. "*It sure is...and it sure has.*"

Jacey sat straight up. "Who said that?" She darted her eyes around, seeing nothing, but she suspected.

"*I did.*" A young woman slowly materialized next to her on the step, slowly coming into focus like a figure appearing through a fog. "*Don't be afraid...*" she whispered.

"I'm not. Glad to finally meet you."

"*You are a strange one indeed...*"

"Jacey."

"*Ah... Jacey. My name is...*"

"Rhea Whitman."

"Rhea... how did you know that?"

"I did a little poking around. Yesterday when I was away I called someone to do some quick research on this house. He got back to me this morning."

"Oh..."

"Don't be sad Rhea. It's okay." Jacey studied the woman shimmering in the air.

Rhea was a lovely young woman in her mid-twenties of average height and a cute pixie-like face. She was dressed in a slim beige woolen skirt that hugged her hips before gracefully streaming down to her mid-calf. Her short-sleeved shirt was a deep red with a sailor collar edged in white and tucked into the wide waistband of her skirt. Her low-heeled cream shoes with a dainty strap held delicate feet covered in those rayon stockings with the seam up the back like you always see in the movies. Finally, her blonde hair was gathered at the nape of her neck by a clasp, the riot of curls flaring out to touch her shoulders. Rhea looked very much a Thirties woman.

"Hang on a minute. I'll go get it. Don't, ah... go anywhere!" She jumped up and ran out to her truck to snatch the pieces of paper that had been emailed to her.

"Hmmm..." Jacey quickly scanned the sheets, trying to absorb all that was in them. Jacey now wanted to know this woman's sad tale. She had quickly glanced over them when she printed them off but now she attempted to find the fine detail in the articles. The blonde stumbled back into the house, looking up to see the small spirit hovering over the bottom of the steps. In all this absurdity it was sort of... sad.

"Don't make me come up there!" Priory was prancing around, her fists bunched at her sides.

Jacey cringed. "We have got to get this settled soon or it's going to turn into the fight of the century." Jacey ran frustrated fingers through her hair.

"Now that would be interesting." Rhea was tempted to let it go just to see what would happen. It would certainly liven up the place.

"That's it! You've been warned!" The brunette stomped across the carpet to the stairs, necklaces clanking, feathers flying, walking straight through Rhea seated ever so poised on the bottom steps.

"Ouch!" Jacey mumbled. "That's gotta hurt!"

Rhea shook herself, as if shaking out the wrinkles Priory's passing caused. *"Brrrrrrr..."* Ghostly eyes watched the woman ascend the stairs and down the hallway.

"This weekend just keeps getting weirder and weirder."

"You can say that again."

"This weekend..." Jacey looked at the wry smile on the small woman. "Sorry, I just couldn't help myself." It certainly had been one hell of a ride that was for sure. She climbed the stairs, the sounds of conversation getting louder and louder. "What is she...?"

She stopped at the bathroom, gently pushing the door aside to see her boss perched on the bathtub talking to the toilet. "Now listen, this is **my** house. You got me? **Mine!**"

Astonished eyes turned to the small ghost hovering next to her. *"What is she doing?"* A taller ghost materialized next to her. *"Yeah, what's she doing?"*

"I think she's talking to the toilet."

"Okayyy. Why?" The tall specter seemed amused at the antics of the brunette.

"I think she thinks it's... you."

"Ha! I can fix that..."

"Don't you dare! It's gonna takes years of therapy as it is to fix all this." And Jacey knew who was going to have to pick up the pieces later on. She studied the second ghost with a keen intrigue.

Much taller than her counterpart, Dylan was dressed... as a man. Interesting. From the articles Jacey had already learned that Dylan was a female. But this was a bit of a surprise. And Dylan was a very striking woman at that... with collar length dark hair peeking out from under the sharp felt fedora perched rakishly on her head. Oh, there was little doubt that she was a woman. Besides her obvious female facial features, Dylan was built like a brick shithouse. She wore a brown double-breasted suit with a wide burgundy tie peeking out from the lapels. The pinch-pleated pants hung loosely on her legs, as was the fashion of the day, with the wide cuffs touching her two-toned brown and white welts.

What a... spiffy dandy. Jacey almost giggled. *So this was Dylan...huh.* She tried to remember the surname.

"You're Dylan, right?"

The taller ghost looked to its smaller counterpart in inquiry. *"It wasn't me. She found out all by herself."*

"Dylan what?"

"Just Dylan."

"Like Cher, huh?"

"I'm not gonna share, so don't ask." Dylan was getting annoyed at the nosey woman.

"No, Cher."

"I told you, I'm not gonna share."

The toilet erupted, a huge bubbled floating to the surface and breaking. "Now hang on, I'm not finished yet...hear me out." Priory was still trying to reason with the bathroom fixtures.

"This has gone on long enough." Jacey moved to stop Priory when Dylan interrupted.

"No, no, no, let her continue..."

"Why let this go on?"

"Cuz it's really, really funny?" Dylan laughed. She would nearly put up with this woman just for the laughs.

"You've got to stop all these practical jokes, okay?" A large burp rose from the toilet. "What was that?" Priory moved closer, kneeling on the floor looking into the bowl. "Can you say that again?" The cistern rumbled as water backed up from the tap. "Well, I'll think about it."

"Look! See what your practical jokes have done. You've broken your toilet."

"My toilet?" Dylan looked down at her small friend. *"So it's **our** house, but it's **my** toilet when it's broken?"*

"Of course. You broke it, you own it."

"Now stop it you two. Don't you think I have enough problems here with this... **with her**?!"

"Oh, no no. I want to hear this." The tall specter had a feeling this was the tip of the iceberg.
"Come on, spit it out!"

"It's nothing."

"No. Here's your chance Rhea. I want to hear it."

"Alright. You do this every time. You push, you prod and you send them packing."

"Hey! We're ghosts! That's what we do!"

"Who says? C'mon who says?"

"But... well... errr... I dunno. You just do. Everyone knows that."

"And what's gonna happen if we don't?"

"They'll stay?"

"And...?"

"And what?" She just couldn't get the point.

"And what's so bad about that?"

"Screaming kids, yapping mutts, whining cats, yelling and arguing. That's what!"

"Hello!" Jacey tried to intervene. "Pot to kettle! What do you think you're doing now?"

"Shut up!" they both demanded, eager to continue the argument.

"You know," Rhea began, "Sometimes I'd like to hear more than just the sound of creaking floorboards and the wind whistling down the hallways."

"Really? This is... is not enough?" Dylan could feel the stab where her heart should be. Was her company not enough?

Fascinated, Jacey watched the interaction, feeling a keening sadness for the two lonely souls. What would she do in their position? Wander through eternity forever together? "It doesn't have to be, you know."

"Now listen, we can't... What?" Ghostly eyes turned to the small woman, trying to read her mind.

Priory was frustrated. The toilet refused to answer her questions and she really needed to end the conversation before her bladder burst. She looked up to see three people. God, Jacey. Another problem to deal with. And two others. Two others who were transparent and dressed like they just walked out of an old black and white movie. The way they stood together made it quite clear that they were a couple. *Hmm, why she dressed like a guy?*

"Excuse me! I've got to do something about this thing! Now!" Priory's voice steadily rose as her urgency increased.

"What are you saying here?" Rhea had an inkling of what Jacey was suggesting, but the final decision would be with the crazy lady in the bathroom.

"Hey! Are you listening to me? Don't ignore me!" Priory didn't like being ignored. "I'm talking to you three. What's the deal?!"

Jacey could barely think with all the noise coming from the bathroom. She walked to the door and closed it, effectively muffling the ravings of her boss. "Why are you here?"

"I think you know." Rhea could see that Jacey was not stupid. A gentle nod confirmed her suspicions. *"We were... murdered... here. Upstairs... in the attic."*

"But the police never found you." That was the mystery. The two women just... disappeared. The police had suspected foul play but no bodies were ever found.

"No... no, they didn't. We're..." Rhea took a useless deep breath, more for effect than need. *"We're in the wall upstairs."*

"That... that is so terribly wrong. But why? What on earth did you two ever do to deserve that?"

"Falling in love with the wrong person would do it." Dylan looked lovingly over at her small companion. *"Especially when one of our old boyfriends was a mean ass wannabe mobster."*

The bathroom door swung open, an angry brunette filling the doorway. "Just what the hell do you think you are doing?"

"I'm talking here boss."

"Now, wait a minute..."

"All this noise would give me a headache if I could have one..."

"I told you so... this is what it'll be like."

Four different voices all spoke at once, the words melding together into one big mess, sounding like a lousy out of tune orchestra trying to warm up. A house rattling belch sounded off from the toilet bowl. Frustration boiled over, forcing the four heads to snap towards the bathroom to lash out. "SHUT UP!!!"

Complete silence. "I can't believe I just told a toilet to shut up..." Jacey had forgotten that she had already done that once before.

"Hold that thought..." Priory made a mad dash into the bathroom, pulling the door behind her. Moments later there was a flush, telling everyone what she had been doing.

The door, not having caught, creaked open to reveal Priory, arms propped on the toilet seat, chatting away. "...and I tell ya, they're fighting like cats and dogs." Priory's attention turned to those in the hall. It finally registered that she was being watched. "What?"

"Who were you talking to?"

"The toilet." The statement was made with conviction, as if it was a confirmed fact.

"And it was answering back?"

"Well, yeah. Of course."

"I think you should go and lie down boss."

"I'm fine. What do I need to go lie down for?"

"Because there was no one there." Jacey looked seriously at the woman kneeling on the floor.

"Who did you think was there?"

"Her." Priory pointed to the taller specter, the truth finally dawning on her. "Oh..." She stood up.

"Maybe I will lie down."

Jacey halted her boss, pushing her back into the bathroom. "C'mere. You can't go to bed looking like that."

"Like what?" She was pushed in front of the mirror and she saw herself. "Ohhh... I'm really losing it here, aren't I?"

Jacey's heart broke at the pathetic human being standing in front of her. Priory's hair was lopsided, the feathery boa hanging out of the disheveled hair. The lipstick all over her face was smeared and runny. It was not a pretty sight.

Priory sat on the now closed toilet seat, her head dipping in exhaustion and defeat. Jacey found a washcloth and soaped it up, carrying it and a towel over to her boss. Gently, she lowered herself to her knees and proceeded to wash off the lipstick. As she did so, Priory watched carefully.

"Why are you doing this?"

"Because I want to."

"You do?" Watery eyes looked at her. "I would have thought that after everything that has happened, you'd be running for the hills by now."

"Now, what sort of assistant would I be if I did that?" Soft lips curved into a shy smile as she plucked bit of feathers from her hair.

"An honest one?" But Priory didn't stop Jacey's ministrations. She may be losing her mind but she wasn't stupid.

"Here you go..." Jacey handed over the towel to her boss, while she rinsed out the washcloth. She watched the woman in the mirror, noting the slow, lazy movement of the towel over her face. Turning, she removed the scarf and what was left of the boa, letting the locks scatter messily over slumped shoulders. "You look tired."

"I feel tired," Priory admitted. "You're right, I should go lie down." Her eyes touched Jacey's, softening at the look residing in them. "Thank you..."

"You're welcome..." Jacey whispered back.

The others followed them to Priory's bedroom, surrounding the bed as the woman lay on top of the covers. "I am capable of putting myself to bed, you know."

"We need to sort this out... now."

"Can't it wait?"

"No, it really can't wait." Jacey wanted this all to end, and quick. She couldn't stand the thought of the soap opera taking place in her boss's house spilling over to the office.

"There's nothing to discuss. I live here now. They've got to leave."

"That's not possible, boss."

"And why not? They need boxes or a U-haul or something?"

"They're kind of bound to this house. They have to stay here. Their remains are here...in the house."

Priory's eyes widened, "Did you just say...their 'remains' are *in* my house?"

"Upstairs. In the attic wall. They were...murdered there." Jacey didn't know why it was so painful to tell her. Maybe she saw a little of themselves in these two ghosts. It could so easily have been them back then.

"They've got nowhere else to go Abbey." Jacey looked at her boss sadly.

"Awww, Jace, don't look at me like that..." Priory knew she was going to give in. Those eyes just melted her. "Shit!" She flung an arm over her eyes in frustration. "I don't know what I think anymore." She blew out a breath. "You know, on Friday everything was so clear in my life. In a matter of less than two days I've lost myself."

"On the contrary, Abbey." Jacey let that one slip. "I think you've found yourself. At least one I would have called a friend."

"Would have?"

"I think you made it very clear last night exactly what it was you wanted. Boss and employee?"

"That was a mistake." A gentle clearing of a throat stopped the conversation. "What?"

"What about us?"

"Now listen here... Droolin, Doolan, Dallen... whatever your name is. Not everything is about **you**. It's about **me**. **My** house, **my** attic..." A thought crossed her mind. "...and **my** ghosts."

"Your point?"

"It's my house and therefore my ghosts. Don't you have to do what I say?"

"And where the hell does it say that in the rulebook?" If Priory said black, she just had to say white.

"In **my** rulebook. Since little Miss Executive Assistant here has convinced me to let you stay, here's the rules." She looked over to the wide smile of Jacey. *Awww, hell, that damned smile again...* "No more practical jokes, hauntings or rude wakeup calls, you got me? Oh, and leave the utilities the hell alone too! No parties between the bathroom fixtures and the appliances!"

"Of course, what she means... if you want to stay, that is. Here is your chance to pass over if you want it."

Rhea and Dylan looked at one another, obviously holding a conversation that only they could hear, about what to do. It took only moments to reach a decision. *"We're not quite ready to go yet, now that we've found... new friends."* Jacey could hear the sweet hopefulness in Rhea's voice. And she could also see the endless love in Dylan's eyes for Rhea, knowing she would do just about anything Rhea asked of her.

"While the boss here rests, I'll come up to the attic and clean up." Jacey ushered out the two tenants towards their now official home, muttering as she went. "I wonder if I can talk her into getting you guys a TV..."

"What's a TV?"

Priory's mind was running amok. This weekend she had gained a house and two ghosts. It wasn't exactly what she had in mind, but what the hey. Maybe she could talk them into being her security system. They never slept anyway.

Late in the afternoon Priory awoke, her mouth feeling like the bottom of a birdcage. She went in search of Jacey, finding her busily dusting in the attic. It was quite a large room, lit by numerous lead glass windows. It was rather a nice room actually, still a little dusty despite the open windows. "Hmmm... not bad." Her voice attracted the attention of Jacey who was lost in the manual labor. "Not bad at all."

"Actually it would make a really nice bedroom... if it wasn't taken already."

"So, where are our two... boarders?"

"They're staying out of the way while I clean up."

"And where..." she visibly swallowed, "...where are they?" Jacey pointed to the far wall. "Ohhh..." Priory walked to the said wall and touched it, drawing her hand back quickly as if burned. It was strange. A moment ago under her hand was the remains of two people and it was creepy. Not that she would say that aloud. All random mutterings would now have to be edited. *Great. Roommates, complete with sound and monitoring systems. Hmm, maybe I should start having business meetings at home?*

The weekend was rapidly coming to a close and she was no closer to rectifying her mistake of last night. Dinner had gone quietly and Jacey was about to leave the house... leave her. She had been afraid of the consequences of getting involved with the blonde. Now... now she was afraid if she didn't get involved with Jacey she would lose her. She didn't think she could bear that.

"Well, I'm off. I, ah... I suppose I'll see you tomorrow."

"You're not staying?" Priory tried to stay nonchalant, but her insides were like jelly.

"No."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Ah, first off, I... don't live here. Secondly, I think you made it quite clear last night that we... you and I... are the *boss*... and the *employee*. And the 'employee' is going home.

"Well, now I'm changing that."

"That's not good enough." What was the woman trying to say? Yesterday she wasn't good enough and now she was?

"Come on, Jacey. What do you want me to say? I'm sorry. Alright, I'm *really* sorry."

"And a few words are going to make me fall at your feet. Is that what you think?"

"I don't know. What do you want to hear?"

"The truth! I want to hear the truth."

"I'm an idiot. And... I'm scared. There, damnit! I said it! Okay? I'm scared of what you make me feel." Priory just couldn't look into those intense eyes studying her. Desperately trying to gain back *some* composure, "Now, are we all over this nonsense?"

"Nonsense? I hate to tell you but you were the one who said 'no'."

"And now I'm saying 'yes'."

"Well, I'm sorry. I'm not going to just drop everything because you say 'yes'." Jacey turned to walk away. She had to keep a shred of dignity out of this weekend even if it killed her.

"Please! Jacey, please don't go!" The blonde could hear the fear in that voice. "Please. If I have ever wanted anything in my life, I want you... to stay. Please don't go. I don't want you to ever go."

"Why didn't you say that in the first place...?" She smiled at the brunette, seeing that same fear in those eyes. "...Abbey," she whispered.

"I can be a real jackass, huh?"

"Yes, you can be." But the words were tempered with a smile. "But an endearing jackass."

Priory dropped to her knees in front of Jacey, pulling the small woman to her. Strong arms wrapped around the small waist, holding onto her for dear life, feeling such strong emotion for the first time. Maybe she had always known that Jacey was the one. After all, the woman's salary was astronomical for her position. Did she make it impossible for Jacey to leave?

Jacey's fingers combed through her boss's hair, feeling long dark tendrils slip through them as gravity drew them away from her. Soft, strong, dark and endearing. Just like its owner. She looked down at the bowed head, wondering what the future held. It was going to be a rocky road, of that she was sure, but a road that they would both travel together.

"Come on..." the blonde murmured, offering her hand to help up the kneeling woman.

"We're okay?" Priory asked hopefully.

"Yeah, we're okay." The toilet gurgled in agreement. "Hey! No peeking!"

Where's the fun in that?

Now, Dylan. We have reached an agreement. Let them have their privacy.

Don't you wanna remember what it's like?

I've never forgotten, my love. You don't easily forget that.

I wonder if we'll ever experience that again.

I do every time I look into your eyes.

I love you, you know. Forever.

Yes, I know. Now leave them alone.

Awwwwwww....honey.

After what you have put them through, they need a little fun. Let them be.

Ohhhh yeahhhh! Now I remember! It was fun...a lot of fun!

You're such a cad.

Grrrrrrrrrr.

Phhfft.

The door closed behind the two women, effectively telling the other two that they were no longer privy to what was about to happen. "So..." Jacey's word was cut short as eager lips swooped down to capture her own. As she pulled away she whispered, "Okay, I get it. No more talk."

"Ahh, now we're on the same page." Priory's fingers were already at work, finding hems and buttons and zippers. "More work, less talk I say." The older woman didn't realize how much she had been looking forward to this until she looked at her shaking hands. Delicate hands covered her own gently. "Sorry... I'm a little nervous."

Jacey tried very hard not to cry at the sentiment. So, it meant a lot more to her boss than she thought. She lifted her chin with soft fingertips, looking into those bright blue eyes that told her everything. "Me too." The words slowly registered on that face, curvaceous lips slowly shaping into a huge grin.

Jacey pushed Priory to the bed, causing the woman to fall clumsily to the mattress. The blonde stepped back and began to undress slowly, drawing out the agony she could see on her boss's face. She had her complete and utter attention and she liked it. Piece by piece the clothing disappeared, revealing soft pale skin to the watcher whose mind was already fleeing in numerous directions at once.

Down to her underwear, Jacey hesitated, smiling at the agonized groan from the woman seated on the bed. "Oh Jace, please, don't stop there."

She had no intention of stopping but she did enjoy the power she had. When the final piece of

clothing disappeared with a toss over her shoulder, silence reigned. Did she like what she saw? Internally Jacey was screaming for the woman to say something but all she got was a stare, a long, hard, lust-filled stare.

Priory stared at Jacey and her heart stopped beating for a second. She had never seen such a beautiful woman in all her life. She was... perfect. A steady pounding ache began to build inside her, fueled by the woman standing in front of her. "C'mere," she murmured, her hands already reaching for what she wanted.

Jacey had barely taken two steps when long fingers circled her waist and pulled her the rest of the way. The cool air was forgotten as lips and tongue covered her, leaving moist trails in their wake. She could barely stand with the onslaught of sensation, Priory giving her no chance to reciprocate or demand.

"Hey, no fair." Her voice had dropped to its lowest register, reflecting the riot of sensation flowing through her. Darkening eyes looked up at her, questioning her. "Your turn." But was it wise? The state she was in the sight of Priory's naked ass might just kill her, but she just had to see. Breathing be damned.

"Your wish is my command." How true was that? Jacey had her wrapped around her little finger. Wasn't it only moments ago she was begging her to stay? Priory was just eager to be out of her clothes, ready to get down to some serious loving business.

Finally naked, the older woman reached for Jacey. "Hang on. Wait."

"What? Is something wrong? Are..." *Oh God.* "... are you having second thoughts?" If the answer was yes then she was gonna just open up a vein!

"Turn around." The roughened voice made Priory look up, shocked to see the look of such utter hedonism on the woman's face. "Now." The deep voice commanded her without her permission and she was bound to answer.

Jacey was right. She could now die a happy woman. That ass was the ninth wonder of the natural world. No woman should own such a perfect ass as that. She threw away her mental red marker and whipped out the gold stars, plastering them all over that Priory Page in her head.

"What's wrong?" The question was superfluous because she heard the shaky breath released in a sigh. *So. Hmm. Jacey was an ass woman?* Priory stepped backwards, moving her butt closer to the small woman. She tried not to flinch when she felt hands and lips latch onto her, touching, fondling, caressing, kissing, licking and occasionally nipping her rear end. The bed was calling but it felt too good to move just yet.

"Can we take this to bed? I'm about to fall down." Looking over her shoulder, Priory looked down to Jacey, eyes meeting and all that was about to take place passed between them in a moment.

For a second they thought they heard clapping. "I thought I said no watching!" But Priory couldn't help but feel sorry for her two tenants. Seventy years was way too long to go without this.

They took a moment to just look into each other's eyes, allowing the emotion to sink in. This was it. From now on all things changed. But those thoughts were for another time. Now was the time to consummate what had probably begun the moment they had met.

"You are so beautiful.... ass woman." Priory smiled sweetly.

"Ass woman?"

"Your secret is out Jace."

"Not all asses, Abs, just yours."

"Abs?"

"Yeah.... Abs."

The brunette sighed deeply. "Oh boy. Just not around the office, huh?" She could just imagine what havoc that would cause. "Now, c'mere." Gently pulling, Priory coaxed Jacey towards her, closing the gap between them. Lips touched, teasing and tasting what was now becoming a familiar obsession.

Raggedly Jacey moaned, "Awww God... Abbey... I... I... iy... yi... yi... I... need... you..." She was fast losing her senses to the woman loving her. The dark head moved down the willing body, discovering everything she had kept hidden all these years. "Ohhhhhh... right there..." Jacey could barely breathe under the careful attention, her mind swept away on a tide of pure pleasure.

Priory had never felt quite like this. She was feeling everything that Jacey was. Agonized cries were as her own, revealing the fervor of their passion. She could love this woman day after day until they were old and gray and each day would seem like the first time. In that moment, it was like coming home.

From Priory's very first touch, Jacey realized that this was meant to be. It was passionate and yet there was something more... something that told her that this was right. She abandoned herself to the pleasure, riding the tidal wave that Priory had created. Slowly and deliberately the woman teased and taunted her, demanding her acquiescence to her passion. And she would willingly do so, climbing to the stratosphere before crashing to earth like a speeding comet, shattering into pieces as her completion overcame her.

Jacey just floated, unable and unwilling to move. She had been taken to heaven and back and she was spent. Struggling to lift her head, Jacey's green eyes sought out Priory's blue eyes. No words were spoken, for all that was said was held in a glance. The blonde tried to move, she really did,

but all her emotional and physical strength was gone.

Priory could see Jacey was struggling and knew that this would have to continue another time. She kissed her way up the lithe body underneath her, finally settling into the curve of Jacey's arms. She drew a blanket over them both, nuzzling into the soft skin below her.

"But..." Jacey felt guilty leaving things as they were but she doubted she could express what she felt right now.

"No buts... Time for some sleep."

"But..."

"Tomorrow."

"There will be a tomorrow?"

"Many, many tomorrows. Good night, baby."

"Good night, lover."

As the silence settled within the house, two ghostly voices echoed, "*Good night...*"

THE END.

A loud belch emanated from the bathroom toilet, reverberating down the hallway.

Tch! See! I told you that you broke your toilet!

My toilet again, huh!? What is it with you and toilets?

Well, you were playing with it and now it's broken. You broke it, you own it.

So, it's gonna be like that, huh?

Yep.

[Aurelia's Scrolls](#)
[Main Page](#)