

Should you ever be allowed to feel this good?

by Lillian Ann Slugocki

I've always loved the the virgin. She's so easy to perform. The text is so secure. It is unchanging. Predictable. But its rare when I play the whore. You ask yourself; should you ever be allowed to feel this good? You'd think the choice would be easy, but it's not. It's not an easy choice.

It's not easy dressing up in high heels and waiting for your lover.

It's not easy pacing around your small New York apartment, candles guttering in every room. It's not easy knowing that tonight is the night--- the mask of Lilith, like a shadow on the bed.

I picked it up. I put it down. I tried it on. I took it off. I fixed my make-up. I put on music. I avoided the bedroom, the mask, *the other*, but not for long. When the buzzer rang at 10:00 p.m., I swept the mask off my bed, and put it on. Done. My heart was pounding. When he walked in the door he said, *Turn around*. And so I did. He said, *Turn around again*. And so I did, but more slowly; more grace, more panache, more *sex*. It was starting. It was beginning and I couldn't stop it--- the roller coaster before it begins its fatal drop. He smelled like cotton candy, like sweat, like aftershave. Lilith appeared, and I fell in love all over again.

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I didn't notice or care that I was stripped down to just high heels, that he had placed a mirror next to the bed. I just wondered who we were looking at. I wondered if we were voyeurs; a side-show for ourselves. I saw calves and thighs, tangled up with black boots and blond hair. I saw us dangling at the top of a carnival ride, complete with screaming woman, gaudy lighting, and a man desperate for orgasm. Dante finally meets Beatrice, but alas she is a witch.

We came at the same time.

He jumped out of bed, threw open the bedroom window, his chest heaving, "*Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ*" --- his naked body covered in sweat. And me? I was a dream of a girl. I was a girl inside of a girl. I was no one. I was nothing but black sky and blue stars. The shoes had flown off, but was that still my smile in the mirror? He blew out the candles, jumped back into bed, and we both passed out. The next morning, I only knew one thing: *Do not look at your body.*

He got up to shower. Even when I was alone, I still did not look. I lay hidden beneath the sheets. I knew I was wounded. He knew this, too--- *don't look*. He knew this because after his shower, he threw on his clothes, kissed my cheek and left. I heard my door close. I heard his footsteps in the hall, down the stairs, out the door, then onto the street.

When he was gone, I finally looked at myself-- saw that my legs were tattooed up and down with bite marks. As if a rabid dog or a wolf had gotten control of me, sunk his incisors deep into my flesh, and wouldn't let go. I needed a rabies shot, antibiotics, and cold compresses. I needed to see a doctor, a shrink, a priest. A shaman. I needed to call my mother but she was dead.

I couldn't walk for a week. He never called. I washed the sheets, put away the mask, and threw out the candles. Life went back to normal except for this: I know she'll be back.

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Yes.

Image: Original "Barbie." Lilli by doll designer, Max Weissbrodt.

