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By the time Steven had reached Fairview Park it was just after 5 o'clock. Although the distance from his office to the park was not far, it entailed effectively crossing from one side of town to the other, in peak hour traffic. Accordingly, by the time he arrived and parked, his nerves were frazzled and he was beginning to question the whole idea of them meeting like this. The thought, in principle, had sounded enticing to him but the practicalities had intervened to dampen his enthusiasm. This was compounded by the fact that he was late and he had assumed that Frances was likely to be early.

After parking his car he wandered along the footpath, beside the slowly flowing river. The scene looked peaceful and idyllic but the experience was marred for him by the insistent noise of the peak hour traffic, which carried through from the thoroughfares nearby. He found the distant screeching and squealing jarring, as it contrasted with the serenity of the scene he had entered.

He saw Frances sitting on a park bench, overlooking the river in a secluded position. The sun was low in the western sky. Although it was now early spring, the sun was just emerging from its winter-time lethargy.

She appeared to be engrossed in her book but as he approached she instinctively looked up, saw him and waved. There was something about the scene that appealed to Steven's artistic nature. Although they were in the midst of a major city, they could have been hundreds of kilometres away. There was just the green playing field, the ring of trees, the open sky, the riverbank, the park bench and the single figure of a woman sitting on the bench.





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Nothing visually indicated that this was in a city, or in the twenty-first century.

As he got closer, Steven was taken aback by the image that Frances presented. He was used to the formally dressed businesswoman, in high heels with full makeup and a commanding presence. The woman who greeted him seemed different, very different, and it took a few seconds for him to register the reasons why.

Frances looked younger, more girlish, more alluring to Steven. She was wearing a flowing skirt and a sleeveless fine-knitted top, which made a feature of her breasts. Steven had been aware that Frances was 'generously endowed', but the shirts and jackets she normally wore allowed only an indication of her shape, whereas the top she was now wearing highlighted the fullness of her figure.

Her hair was loosely tied back in a ponytail and her makeup was more subtle than the business look he had become used to. Her flat shoes transformed her presence into someone softer and more elfin. Indeed, the more casual style of dressing impacted on her behaviour. She not only looked more relaxed and feminine but she acted as she looked — casual.

As Steven reached her, she rose and he gave her a kiss on each cheek in the European style she was now used to from him. She had learned, from both experience and observation, that this was the way he generally greeted women he felt comfortable with.

He was in work attire, but had removed his tie and there was sufficient warmth in the sun for him to also leave his jacket in the car and to roll up his sleeves to just below his elbows.

In answer to his question, Frances advised him that she'd been there for some time. As she'd had the afternoon off, she had brought her casual outfit to work, changed there and had decided to get to the park early, have a walk, read more of her book and enjoy the sunshine.





Steven was a natural compliment-giver. He had learned from an early age that most women loved receiving compliments, as long as they were credible. It was apparent to him that Frances had gone to some effort to pick out the clothes she was wearing. He had an appreciation for her ability to choose and wear clothes which made the best of her features. Her long legs and torso were features which she knew made her look sexy and she saw no reason not to accentuate them. Her overall look was smart and classy, topped off with sunglasses, which provided an exotic finish.

The immediate impression she created in most people was of someone quite a deal younger than she was, and only her face and posture provided an indication of her true age. She had the deliberate poise and dancer-like movements a woman ten years younger than her would normally have.

‘You look great,’ admired Steven. ‘And I must confess that I did not realise that your ... bust was ... is as ... imposing ... as it is.’

‘Oh, you’re being silly.’ Her demeanour indicated that his comments pleased her.

When Steven sat down on the bench it was at the opposite end from her, with space for another person between them. This was an intentional tactic by him because he did not feel at that time that it was appropriate to sit right next to her.

There were several people in the park: some children kicking a ball, people walking dogs and the sound of rowers on the river below them. However the seat, although in public view, was in a secluded position, which allowed them to observe the goings on around them without feeling that they were being observed back.

Steven spoke formally. He discussed some further ideas about the project. Frances advised him that she was going to meet a friend for dinner in nearby South Yarra at 7 o’clock. Each studiously avoided discussing Steven’s visit to her room in Ballarat the week before.

Frances ceremoniously asserted herself. ‘Why don’t you move





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up and sit a little closer to me? We must look like an estranged married couple who cannot bear each other.'

Steven agreed that they were being unnecessarily formal with each other. He moved up and sat closer to her, consciously relaxing his body. The thought at the back of his mind was that this was clearly an illicit meeting of sorts. This, together with the tension of driving through the traffic to get to the park and the uncertainty of how he was going to behave, had resulted in him becoming tense and awkward.

As the sun shone on his face, he focused on clearing his mind of the day's thoughts and to settle into the moment. Looking at Frances, it seemed as if he was looking at a different person from the Frances he knew. She exuded a sense of gaiety and lightness and seemed to express an old fashioned *come hither* look, directed at him. She was not hiding the fact that she wanted to see him; she wanted him to find her feminine and attractive, and had looked forward to being with him in a neutral, appealing environment.

As they chatted, he looked at her face and he inhaled her perfume, which was mingled with her natural female scent. He admired the languid way in which she spoke, the gracefulness of her neck. Her body and face were not catwalk-model perfect but what, to most close observers, would be blemishes or defects had become to him, elements of additional attraction. The mild creases under her eyes and around her mouth, the mole on her cheek. It was as if they were placed there by nature, to send a secret signal to him — an indication of uniqueness, a confirmation that she was indeed a real person, with a real body. He was not attracted to a notion of perfect womanhood but to her as she really was.

Observing the rise and fall of her breasts as she spoke and moved, Steven thought of silly descriptions from bygone eras. *Her heaving bosom. The fullness of her womanhood. The twin objects of his desire.*





He wanted her to chatter on aimlessly. His mind was not on her words as much as on observing her. He nodded and provided little *ohs*, *hmms* and *reallys*, to encourage her to continue.

Whilst he was facing her, he began to imagine her seated there, without her top on. He visualised what sort of bra she would be wearing. The image he had retained in his mind of her black lacy knickers led him to imagine her in a matching bra. Probably black, semi see-through. He imagined running his fingers over her knitted top, feeling her full breasts beneath. The image quickly formed in his mind of her lowering her bra straps, and of her beckoning him to cup her right breast in his hand. She flung her head backwards, thrusting her breasts higher. He uncontrollably descended on them with his mouth, his tongue licking and licking, then greedily sucking her nipples ...

All of this conjecture took mere seconds but the images were there in his mind. Almost spontaneously the pleasantness of the scene merged with his unfolding desire.

As Frances chattered on like a sparrow in a nest about topics he was now only vaguely aware of, he reached over and touched her cheek with his fingers.

Frances ceased talking and looked at him. She could see from the expression on his face and the look in his eyes that he was not fully following her discussion, but was focusing on her.

To continue talking would have been a sacrilege. Like talking in a cathedral during the funeral for a king. Time for Frances froze. A second became a minute. She allowed Steven to touch one cheek and then the other. Her eyes were laser-guided to his. His touch conveyed an electric charge of high intensity. He moved his fingers from her cheek to her lips and then ran his fingers slowly around her lips, which she parted slightly, an enigmatic Mona Lisa smile on her face.

Steven slipped his index finger into her mouth and he felt her





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tongue greet it, lick it, encouraging it to go in further, deeper. Her look became teasing and enticing. *Enter me*, it said. *Let me pleasure you. I am yours. This is just a foretaste.*

He could feel the insistent sucking on his finger and wanted more.

He teased her by slipping his finger out slowly and allowing her to draw it back in again with her tongue. His body was reacting. The parallels had become clear. Slip out, slip in, slip out, slip in. Slightly faster — in, out, in, out. Frances opened her mouth wider and he inserted his whole finger. Her tongue spoke eloquently to him in response.

The sun had now gone down behind the trees and they were in early twilight. There were still some late walkers around.

Frances felt a desire to be alone with Steven. 'Let's go back to your car,' she whispered to him urgently.

He leaned over and kissed her on the cheek and then softly responded to her, in her ear. 'Great idea.' He was immediately aware of the banality and inadequacy of his words.

They arose. Steven pulled her roughly and urgently toward him and hugged her. A repeat of the Ballarat hotel room. She responded warmly and with equal urgency. She then drew away and, taking his hand, led him along the path and back to the car park.

