

NYOTAIMORI
by Paul Watson and Ms Tiger to You

“And now, ladies and gentlemen,” he looks around the small living room, “ok, just gentlemen, I present, for your edification and amusement, the justly world-famous tip over trunk!” he gestures across the room, before going over to help pull the trunk across the pile carpet. Slightly red in the face, he gestures to the blonde across the other side of the trunk. She pouts, arms folded across the white, glitter-bedecked bathing suit, one foot slowly tapping on the carpet as he tips the trunk over, showing it completely devoid of occupants, and rather threadbare of lining. He pulls the trunk back upright and dramatically gestures over it. She clambers over the sides with a sigh. She smiles insincerely to the small audience clustering on an assortment of chairs in the middle of her living room and ducks behind the walls of the trunk. He continues the line of patter, nearly as threadbare as the trunk itself, as he closes the lid. With a grunt of effort, and a squeak of uncoiled hinges, he tips the trunk forward, revealing it as threadbare, and empty, as when it started. “Ta-da!” The audience shows its amazement and appreciation with a brief burst of half-hearted applause.

After a dramatic pause that lasts just a little too long, he struggles the trunk back upright and manfully manhandles it to the side.

A muted “I thought that outfit looked a bit too small on her” emerges from the audience.

“It’s a good thing Sandra’s not here to hear that, Mike.”

“Oh, not this again, George.” someone groans, “We know she’s in the box.”

George smiles in response.

A few semi-convincing card tricks later, “...and that concludes our meeting for this month. So we can get to the reason you deadbeats show up.”

“The food!”

“Right.” He pauses, “Come on, guys, we do this every month, move the chairs back and give me a hand, huh?”

With the requisite amount of grumbling, the chairs are grudgingly pulled to the edge of the room, and four trestles are equally grudgingly dragged into their place. George brings in a pair of boards, about 3 feet on one side and 4 on the other. Both have a pair of holes bored through, one about halfway down and the other almost at the edge, both about a foot from the short edges. The table is soon assembled, the holes lining up, one pair at one end. At least until George, in high dudgeon, flips it around so the holes are nearer the other board.

“So you’re not going to cut Sandra up this month?”

George tries to smile enigmatically. He gets as far as a smirk before leaving for the kitchen, returning with a once white tablecloth.

With a well-prepared, if not well-executed, flourish, he hurls the cloth out, letting it settle over something about three feet over the makeshift table and dangerously close to the ceiling.

“How is he doing that? We were just under there!” one plaintive voice asks, but the others shush it as they watch the display.

Slowly the cloth and whoever may be under it slowly descend at George’s frantic motions until they both settle on the table with a couple of very quiet clicks. With another “Ta-da!” George whips the cloth away, almost having someone’s eye out, as he reveals Sandra lying lengthwise on the table, shackled down by the smooth wooden stocks across her chest and hips that, sadly, also preserve her modesty since nothing else does. George retrieves, and then fusses over, the food, carefully placing fondue pots onto the stocks and less carefully scattering the dipping foods over Sandra’s torso.

Meanwhile, Sandra spends her time quelling the audience’s enthusiasm for their dining surface, gesturing to the small sign beside her ‘Do not fiddle with ANYTHING as being beaten to death with your spleen may offend.’ No one tests whether the warning is metaphorical. George clatters the plates around her, the wooden skewers plinking onto the china.

“We’ve got your cheese here, broth over there and choc down there. Dig in, guys!”

“**Carefully!!**”

They dig in. Carefully.

With barely any spillages, and only minimal threats of bodily harm, they make short work of the meal, and slightly longer work of clearing up the fondue pots. "That was good, George."

"What there was of it."

"What's for dessert?"

A slight hint of panic creeps into George's eye as he races for the kitchen.

After much clattering, and many dangerous glances at the kitchen door from Sandra, he emerges triumphant, a silvery box, a black handle on the top, no base and large cutouts at each end. "What on Earth are you up to?"

"George, if you're thinking even close to what I think you thinking, you are in **biig** trouble, mister!"

George smiles, damping his forehead as he lowers the box between the stocks.

"GEORGE!! You quit this right now and I promise not to divorce you!"

"George, what's this got to do with dessert?"

"And why's Sandra screaming more than usual?" the speaker promptly tries to hide as Sandra's baleful glare leaves George's back for a moment and tries to settle on him.

George takes a firm hold of the handle, and yanks the box away. "Ta-da!"

Sandra screams!

The audience gasps!

Between the stocks, in place of Sandra's crumb-strewn middle, sits a cheesecake.

"George! I'm warning you..."

George smiles, slightly nervously, "Dig in, boys!"

"GEORGE!!!!!"