

PETER AND LISA: CHAPTER 96
HEN PARTY

Lisa looks at her watch, then at the station departure board. "Come on, O, where are you?"

"Is she always like this?" Sarah asks archly.

Lisa sighs, "Yes."

"And you still made her maid of honour? I'm almost offended."

"You're always almost offended, Saz. That's what makes it fun."

"Hurtful. True, but still hurtful. Are you sure it was a good idea to invite Tracy? What with..."

Lisa looks over to where Carrie's arm is around Tracy, holding her tightly, but the latter still looks downcast until she notices her looking, at which point she puts on a brave face. "No. But O had already invited her and refusing would be worse."

"My, you are learning to be polite, after all."

"Hurtful." she replies, mimicking Sarah's exaggerated vocals.

"Comedy aside, she had better get here soon or we're going to miss the train she said she'd booked."

"It will be fine. She'll be here."

"Uhhhh-huh." Sarah replies sceptically.

"She will."

"She'd bet..."

"Scuse me, 'scuse me." Ola bustles into the small area around them, dragging a small wheeled suitcase behind. "There you all are!"

"Right where you said we should be, O. For twenty minutes."

"Cut me some slack, L. The Tube was a nightmare! And some of us aren't all leg like you!"

"We..."

"Yeah, yeah, I know, I know, I know, ok! Anyway, gather round, kiddies, Auntie Olamide has your tickets." she reaches into her handbag, pulling out six orange and green tickets, and starts hurrying off to make sure she gets to the train on time.

"And you're sure you've made the right choice?"

Lisa doesn't reply, hurrying to catch up.

As the train hurtles through the countryside, Ola casts glances at the 'kiddie table', where Tracy and Carrie sit opposite each other, talking low. "Ok, L. Just when were you planning to tell me that there was trouble in paradise?"

"What..."

"I'll just..."

"Leave well enough alone." she reaches across the table and grips Ola's arm.

"But..."

"No Auntie O 'helping'. They need to work some things out on their own. Who didn't at their age?"

"But..."

"No." she replies firmly in frustration

"Ok, ok, fine, fine. Can I at least have my arm back before you leave bruises?" Lisa lets go, leaving Ola rubbing her arm through her sleeve.

"Are you ready to tell us where we're going now that we're on our way?"

Ola turns towards Tabitha, her grin widening back to shit-eating, her arm forgotten, "Nope. I want to capture the look on L's face properly so you'll just have to wait, Tabby."

"Tabitha."

"What?"

"It's Tabitha. Or Tab. I'll even accept T, as you and Lisa have this Men in Black alphabetical thing going on. But I am not Tabby."

"Ohhhh-kay. Sorry?"

"Accepted."

The countryside whistles past as things move to less heated topics.

At the station, they're met by a black people carrier and set off to their unknown destination, "This is impressive organisation, O."

"I *am* a PA, you know. It is literally my job to corral clueless execs into meetings they've forgotten about, which is all of them. I am actually..."

"Is that every exec is clueless or they've forgotten every meeting they should be attending?"

"...Yes. Anyway, as I was saying, I am fully capable of organising a simple hen outing."

"Sorry, Auntie Olamide. I should never have doubted you." Lisa says, bowing her head in insincere contrition.

"No kidding, bish. Have a little faith. This is the most important day of your life we're talking about after all. I'm not going to fuck it up."

"I thought the wedding wasn't..."

"Pssshh." she waves her hand dismissively, "I'm talking about the girlie bonding weekend. That's far more important than promising some guy a lifetime of nookie. Even if he is cute."

"OLA!!!"

Professionally, and probably very wisely, the driver ignores the chaos in the back and just drives.

The cab pulls up to a high brick wall, surrounding a regency mansion. "This is where we're going?"

"It is." Ola replies, with just a hint of a smirk, as the gravel drive crunches under the tyres as they drive through the extensive green grounds.

"It looks like a...you didn't! You did."

"Spa weekend, bitches! Two days of being absolutely pampered to shit! You're welcome."

"O, you know I..."

"Which is exactly why you need it." she slides the car door open, "Now, let's go and get pampered. And don't worry," she grins back at Lisa, "I made sure they knew it was your hen do."

"You what?!!"

Ola's phone clicks. "Gotcha."

"OLA!!"

"No violence at the relaxing spa retreat!" Sarah calls out as Lisa starts after Ola.

"Maybe one violence. As a treat. It is her hen do." Tab suggests.

"Ok. You're allowed one violence! But that is it!!"

Once they've signed in, with a bare minimum of violence and the photo unshared but also undeleted, they're shown to their double rooms, as much an upscale hotel as a spa, Carrie and Tracy together, then Sarah and Tabitha, and finally Ola and Lisa. "Are you sure that's safe?"

"It'll be fine, Sarah, Saz, Sazmeister? We were roomies for years until she found her boytoy. I know all L's weak spots. Besides, as her second bestie, you should know her bark's much worse than her bite."

"Well, that is true, but if she murders you in your sleep, I'll still give her an alibi."

"Well, duh. That's what besties do!"

"Although it will, tragically, mean we miss out on all those opportunities to share salacious stories about her..."

Ola's ever-present grin widens, "There's always time in the sauna. You're not joined at the hip to your roommate."

"I can hear you both!"

"I think I'd better deal with that. See you later, gossip-buddy." she pushes the door open.

"I'm going to have to keep you two apart, aren't I?"

"Only if you don't want me spilling allllll your secrets, L. You'll just have to keep me busy. So, we've got saunas, and pools, and facials, and manicures, and pedicures, and half a dozen different types of massage, and those exfoliating fishes and..."

"I get it."

"And if you aren't participating, who knows what I might let slip..."

"I get it, O, I get it. Have fun or else."
"Exactly. Now, let's go. Mama needs pampering!"

Shortly, the four of them lie back in recliners, their faces covered in healing mud, cucumbers over the eyes to draw out toxins, their hands and feet being attended to by skilled mani- or pedicurists, while Carrie and Tracy are elsewhere sampling the pool, "Ahhhhh, this is the life."

"She's right. I could get used to this."
"Mmmm." Tab agrees, "Not that I can afford it as a solicitor."
"Even you have to admit it's nice."
"I am not responding to being ganged up on like this."
"That's fine, you stay your usual grumpy self, Princess Chopped Liver. We'll enjoy it for you."
"Princess what?"
"Thanks, Saz. 'Preciate it.'"
"Come on, there's a story there. Tell Auntie Olamide all."
"What else would we call our favourite warrior princess?"
"That explains the princess part..."
"And someone was being grouchy about being ignored...and it's stuck because she keeps getting grumpy when we use it."
"Not listening. I am in a zen bubble where none of your many insults can affect me."
"See? This place is doing her good already."
"Yes, yes, you're a genius. Now be quiet and get pampered."
"Zen state, huh?"
"Ommmmmmmmmm."

The sauna, later, steam rising around them, sweat running out of their pores and over the white towels preserving their modesty. "So, Tab, it was Tab you wanted, right? How did you get mixed up in L's crazy life?"

Tabitha glances through the steam. "She beat up my boyfriend."
"She what?"
"As I recall, you were the one who did most of the beating."
"Semantics."
"Rewind! She what?! You what?!"
"It wasn't as dramatic as it sounds, O."
"Yeah, sure. So, details. I want, no, I neeeeeed details."
Another glance, Sarah gives a nod while Ola is looking to Lisa for answers. "I was...working as a magician's assistant..."
"You too?! L, am I literally the only person you know who doesn't do magic?!"
"Yes." she deadpans, "You're my connection to reality."
"Well, ok, I'll accept I'm that important to you. Continue."
"He was a creep. A controlling creep."
"Yeah, I can see where this is going. Boudica* here barged right in..." (*=Famous in Britain. Celtic/Iceni tribal leader who fought the Romans, burned down a town or two and is most famous for riding around with scythe blades sticking out from her chariot wheels, for which there is no evidence but that kind of thing sticks with a kid)
"...and broke me free."
"...and then you broke one of his ribs, I think. I'd've loved to have seen it."
"Loved to? Why didn't you?"
"I was...unconscious."
"You were what?! You got beat up?"
"No, not that. Just...I passed out. Too much adrenaline and too little food that day or something. Just collapsed while Tab was beating the shitead up. How many guys did it take to pull you off?"
"Two. But one of them was Thor, so he counts double."
"Thor...?"

“Halloween shenanigans.”

“Oh, that makes more sense than you being dragged off by one of the Hemsworths.”

“And now you know.”

“And knowing is half the battle...”

That afternoon, Lisa finds herself lying down on a proper padded massage table, her head resting on her arms, Tabitha across the room from her in similar position as the masseuse press the heels of her hands into her back, her skin glistening with oil, a small white towel across her hips, another under her chest. She sinks into relaxation as the skilled hands ease her knotted muscles. Until there's a gasp from the masseuse. She opens an eye lazily, and feels the hands deep inside her, her body losing its rigidity as she relaxes a little too much. “Shit.”

“Ma'am? Are you all right? I'm so...”

Tabitha looks up. She starts to raise her head.

“It's ok.” Lisa says reassuringly, “It's all ok. This is all normal. Just continue. It's all fine.”

“I'm sorry, ma'am. I just thought...I don't know what I thought.”

Tabitha lowers her head as the masseuse stammers her apology. Whatever it was seems to be in hand, and her own masseur is finding just the spot to work on her tension.

“It's ok.” she repeats, trying to keep control when her body knows that a massage means she's being squeezed and manipulated into a tennis ball sized blob at her largest. She feels her heartbeat thumping against the relaxation. But the relaxation is winning, pulling her deeper into herself. She lets out a breath and lets go, her body becoming ever more pliable under the masseur's hands. She tries to keep enough control to make it all seem normal but it's tough to hold onto a thought as her body collapses under the kneading hands.

Lisa lets out a little breathy moan, a coherent thought forming, her nipples sinking into her skin, her sex sealing over before her body surrenders completely, allowing itself to be squished and squeezed and compacted, the masseuse's hands slipping under the towel, all under the alleged guise of 'normal'.

Tabitha relaxes into her own massage, no more crises arising until their time's up and, with a little confusion on her face, the masseuse hands her a small, slightly squishy ball of pale skin. Tabitha looks at it, then around for Lisa to explain, and only when she can't see any trace of her puts two and two together.

“Well, fuck.” she mutters, taking her clothes, Lisa's, and what's left of Lisa herself, with her as she goes to get dressed.