

Fruit for the Foot

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Chapter 2

Come morning a throbbing ache in the head might have been expected, but as Milly roused it was to tingling, pulsating sensitivity in her fingers and toes. Brushing her hand over the sheets stirred her to wakefulness in an instant, as she felt with surreal clarity every fiber in the wave of her blanket.

Dragging herself from bed she felt glad she hadn't suffered any worse effects from all the alcohol. She should have known better than to try to calm herself down with *wine* of all things.

Examining her digits, however, she realized that what she was experiencing weren't hangover symptoms. At least, not ones she'd ever heard of before.

The pink discoloration the nail polish had left on her skin seemed to have spread from the initial splashes around her nails the night before, and now her fingers and toes were dyed a bright, airy peach pink.

Gripping the lower extremities in her upper ones, she squeezed and rubbed both, but the discoloration wasn't coming off. Fortunately, there was no pain, to suggest a chemical burn or harmful reaction, nor was there any discomfort or other ill effects. Rather, her skin was unusually soft and supple around the polished nails, with a faint but definite lingering fragrance. She licked her lips as she breathed the perfume in.

Milly couldn't help but wonder what it would be like to slip those supple little toes into her mouth and take a taste... to caress them in her tongue and absorb that flavor.

Muscles tensed through her core, and she gasped at the rush that rose up from her loins. She was sweating, a hot, tight knot in her stomach... and below.

She moved her hands and feet back, away from her face, and it seemed to ease.

"Must still be a bit tipsy," she remarked to herself.

"And this... it's just... some reaction to the fruit juice. A temporary side-effect. Like how pineapple enzymes affect the lips and tongue.... Gotta be."

An inspection of the bottle revealed nothing to contradict that idea – the hand-printed label listed the ingredients, and they were indeed simple fruit extracts. The worst thing they could do to her would be a mild rash.

“That’s all it is,” she reminded herself, as her toes tingled against the carpet.

A quick shower later, Milly was fumbling with her clothing for the day. She was never the most coordinated in the mornings, but her fingers felt unusually clumsy that day, soft and delicate in a way that was both frustrating and distractingly sensual.

After underwear came those snug, gripping toe-stockings, followed by an A-line dress and jacket. Completing the ensemble were a pair of wooly winter gloves. They were a bit warm for spring, but the last thing she wanted was everyone in college asking why her fingers were bright pink – or Professor Parker finding out that they’d been drunkenly fooling around with his research.

Gloves made it even trickier to lace up her shoes, but she noticed that she wasn’t the only one in the hall having some trouble that morning.

All four of the girls had various hand-covers on.

“You have the... thing with your fingers and toes too?” Cora asked, looking anxious.

Milly nodded.

“Same, might have these lines of bright green,” Gabrielle chipped in. “Almost looked like a watermelon print!”

She sounded less bothered about the oddness, but then Gabrielle already had a reputation for standing out.

“Don’t worry,” Kristen piped up as she zipped up her boots, zipper gripped between both hands, “if this doesn’t wear off we can just sue the Professor and get rich!”

“Maybe we can make him our personal servant, I’d enjoy a cutie like him waiting on me hand and foot,” Gabrielle mused.

They shared a giggle at that as they set off, but Milly could see in the faces of her friends that Cora and Kristen were as concerned as she was.

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It felt strange not to take notes in their morning lectures, but Milly had to give up after the third time she dropped her pen through the sweating, wool-smothered digits of her gloved hands, and earned several pointed looks for the clattering disruptions.

They could just copy the notes of one of the other girls later, she reminded herself.

A bigger problem was the lab session up next. She was working with Cora and they had samples to test that morning.

They put it off for as long as they could, waiting for the others working in the lab to be distracted with their own projects, but in the end the girls had no choice but to strip their hands bare there in the middle of the room.

It was a relief to remove the itchy fabric from her sensitive extremities, and Milly gave a soft, surreal little moan as she peeled off the humid gloves, exposing her damp, delicate fingers to the cool air.

It gave way to a gasp as she saw her skin... all pink and shiny, all the way to her wrists.

The coloration... the corruption... was still spreading.

Noticing a girl frozen in place, gawping at her own fingers, a boy at the table ahead of her turned to look.

"Woah, you're like... all pink. You okay, Milly?"

She flushed, her cheeks turning the same tone as her palms.

"T-totally fine, Brad, thank you."

"Cora's all red too, what's up with that?"

Milly's ears were as red as her smaller friend's exposed fingers, but all she could think to do was stuff her hands haphazardly into the latex gloves provided.

They turned pink in turn, as the intense coloration showed through.

"Like, what's the deal with your skin?" asked the girl one table over, "you have some sort of... disease?"

"Obviously not," Cora answered, "if you'd paid attention to the labs this month, Tiffany, you'd know that we just got done with the organic dyes. We just spilled some on our hands, that's all. It's totally harmless."

"Sure you did," the other shot back, looking wholly unconvinced.

Fortunately, Tiffany turned back to her own work after that, with only a suspicious murmur or two more. That gave the two friends had a chance to breathe, and try to make sense of the changes in their hands.

"This can't be real," Cora muttered to her.

Milly was scanning the room. All four of the sorority sisters had latex gloves on now, and each was revealing all too clearly the bold colorations that had spread over their hands, visible through the stretched white latex. Everywhere she looked there were the eyes of other students, glancing over, then flicking away as they were caught.

She wanted to leave, to slip out of the lab and run home, but the delicate tension she felt in both feet suggested that such exertions would be rather uncomfortable, even if she was able to abandon her labwork – which she wasn't.

Under the pretense of tying the 'laces' on her heels, Cora bent over, and looked under the hem of her dress.

The girl stiffened as she straightened up, a pale, sickly look on her face.

"It's spread over our feet too," she murmured, as she pretended to show Milly her clipboard.

"It has to just be staining wicking up the skin. A minor side effect from the fruit extracts," she replied. "Let's just finish up here and worry about it later...."

Milly mimed pointing to something as she spoke, as if pointing out a line in the notes, but as she did so she noticed that her fingers felt different somehow. It could have been her imagination, but that morning it felt hard not to wonder.

Her index finger didn't stand out quite as far as it should.

Gabrielle and Kristen, on their other side, looked concerned too, at least in their own way. Both seemed very aware of the attention they were getting, and the latter in particular was blushing furiously as she struggled with her pen.

Her other hand was hidden under the table, but that seemed especially odd once Milly tried her own at taking some notes, and realized how much harder it was one-handed.

It was tricky enough to focus on the exacting but dry experimental process they were following, but as she tried to grip a ballpoint between her digits it kept slipping away, or jumping out of her grasp, even without the layer of wool in the way. They weren't just sensitive – her fingers really did feel slightly shorter, as well as a whole lot clumsier.

More eyes were on her, each time the implement escaped her grip, and she felt her blushes deepening and her chest thumping as she was forced to steady the tool with her free hand.

She felt absurd, like a child only just learning to use their hands and feet, but as humiliating as all those stares were, what made it so much worse was the flutter in her chest. That little tremor of what could only be called excitement, as Milly realized over the course of the lab session that she could no longer use her hands the way she wanted to.

That feeling made her toes curl, in their individual wrappings, and the girl shivered and rubbed them together in her shoes as the heat rose in her loins from the potent sensations.

"I told you, there's something weird about those four," Tiffany was muttering somewhere to one side.

"She's so clumsy, and she keeps rubbing her hands... do you think she's on something?" another girl mock-whispered.

It was so messed up, so weird, yet there she was, getting horny right in the middle of the lab. In front of all those people. That was many times more humiliating than just being bizarrely clumsy.

Rubbing her thighs together, she bit her lip, sweat running down her back as she tried not to think about it, not to let on, or let anyone see how... excited she was.

Chimes of awful, resonating destruction erupted at her side, as a large erlenmeyer flask burst apart against the floor between the girls' tables.

Milly started, as did Cora.

Kristen was just standing there, frozen, hands still outstretched over the expensive ruin of glassware, face red, lip shaking.

"S-sorry," she said, a little too loudly, "I just... couldn't hold it. It slipped right through my fingers...."

"We'll stay behind to clean this up!" Gabrielle said hurriedly, as the stony-faced lab technician loomed towards them.

Milly was watching her friend's expression, however, and the way that Kristen's knees seemed to rub together, around a tiny dark spot in the denim on the front of her crotch.

It was a relief to see the other students filing out, to head to lunch.

Actually cleaning up the glass was the last thing on their minds, however.

"Look at this," Cora moaned, revealing her wrists.

The red discoloration had just passed her designer watch, the discolored line creeping up her thin forearms, while the skin of her hands themselves had a slick gleam she had never achieved before, no matter how many lotions and creams she applied.

All four were the same.

Holding her hand up under the magnifying lenses, Milly couldn't see even a trace of the proper texture of skin. All the creases and wrinkles had smoothed out, the hair falling away, to leave their hands surreally soft and shiny, and ridiculously colorful.

Her fingers were definitely shorter too. Everyone's were.

Milly could feel it when she tried to use her hands, that slight shortening of her reach compounding with her inexplicable clumsiness, making every action a challenge. The sensations were all wrong too, so vivid and intense that her softening fingers and toes felt like an entirely... different part of her anatomy.

"What's happening to us?" Gabrielle asked, as she stroked her thumbs along her index fingers.

They had blotchy bands of light and dark green now, and as the farm girl rubbed them, she raised one to her lips unthinkingly, and licked along its length.

"Gods, they even... taste of watermelon...."

Milly glanced towards the professor's office. "Should we talk to Parker? I mean... his polish did this, right?"

"I guess we could show him, see what he thinks," Gabrielle said, nodding slowly.

"Are you crazy? I don't wanna get failed on the course," Cora hissed, "besides, you said it yourself, this is probably just... a temporary side effect."

"That's right," Milly cut back in, "I-I mean it's weird, but I looked at the ingredients, they *can't* do any real harm! And... just imagine what girls like Tiffany would say if they knew about this... it would be so humiliating...."

Cora nodded vigorously. "And my family would kill me if this gets around!"

"We'd totally blow our chances with the prof, too," Kristen murmured, with a husky, taught tone about her voice.

"Girls?"

As one the quartet jumped, hands stuffed into pockets or behind backs as they turned.

The handsome young man striding towards them from the office looked troubled, but made no remark as he brushed a hand through his short black hair, smoothing the product that kept it so charmingly styled.

Professor Oliver Parker looked them up and down, then glanced at the glass still on the floor.

"Is everything alright?"

That buttery-smooth voice almost made Milly answer, but Cora shook her head before she could say anything stupid.

"J-just cleaning up this mess... sorry about that, Professor!"

“Hm? Oh the glass. Well, not to worry about that. I’ll get it, you can go to lunch.”

His brows were furrowed, a troubled expression lingering under a sheen of perspiration on his youthful features.

“Is... everything alright with *you*, prof?” Gabrielle asked.

“What’s that? Oh! Gabrielle!”

As if noticing her for the first time, he transfixed her, gaze suddenly intent.

Milly’s heart was in her throat as she pushed her hands deeper into her pockets.

Watermelon stripes were showing on Gabrielle’s ankles, and Cora’s wrist was peeping red and rosy from her pocket.

“I’ve got to cancel the trial I asked you to do. With those toenail polish samples. They’re, uh... not quite ready yet. A few more tweaks... can you bring back the vials I gave you?”

“Oh, of course, I’ll... give you them tomorrow, Professor.”

His intense expression did not ease.

Milly felt his eyes on her, as if he were looking right through her sleeves, at those strange, sensitive, shameful parts of her she was trying so hard to hide.

“No-one actually... *used* them, did they? After all, it would take days to plan a trial....”

“No, nobody! We, uh... have them at home still.”

“Good! That’s... good. I just... it would make the product look bad if anyone tried it and had any... minor side effects. Skin irritation, discoloration, that sort of thing.”

The sorority sisters exchanged looks, but the professor’s mind seemed to already be elsewhere again.

“I was sure that the formula was right this time,” he muttered, as he stalked back to his office.

The girls fled before he could notice anything awry.