

Dressing for a Wedding

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It is a rather pretty jumpsuit, and time is running out. My indecisiveness is once again making things hard for me. I need something fancy for Marcia's wedding, which is in only 2 days, and each of the dresses I have tried is unsuitable in some way; either the color doesn't suit me, or the shape, or too long, or the cleavage goes too deep for my taste, and so on. Finally the assistant brings over this jumpsuit. The fabric has a silky shine to it, in a rich green color that matches my eyes and sets off my red hair, so that is a big plus. On the other hand I never felt like jumpsuits are my kind of thing, and that dresses are more elegant. Still, I have to pick something, so I decide to give it a try.

"If you are not used to jumpsuits like these, I should probably help you," the assistant tells me, and without waiting for my answer enters the fitting room with me. I am a bit startled with this invasion of my privacy, but assumes she knows what she is doing, and so I swallow a possible objection. She helps me out of the latest unsuitable dress, and then says that the jumpsuit is strapless, so I should remove my bra. Still wondering why she calls it strapless, when it seems to have wide straps at the top, she apparently concludes I have no objections, and opens the clasp at the back, so I hesitantly take the bra off. Then she holds up the jumpsuit for me to step into. My feet slide easily into the smooth fabric; only at the end I need to push a little to get through the lower legs, which are apparently close-fitting.

Next she pulls it up, and holds up the openings for my arms to put through. You see - not strapless. The assistant must have been confused. But when she pulls the suit up to my chest, the shoulder straps don't go further than halfway up my upper arms. I start to pull them up to my shoulders, but the assistant stops me. "They are supposed to be on the arms. This is a Bardot jumpsuit, which is strapless, but has short sleeves, sort-of, that form a horizontal line with the chest and back." When she closes the zipper in the back, I can see the result in the mirror. It is indeed leaving my shoulders bare, and stops shortly under my armpits. At the top the fabric folds back down, reminding me of pant legs that I often have to fold up because they are too long, but upside down. At the sides the fabric folding back down is wider, and not attached to the top of the jumpsuit, creating the armholes, and what you might call short sleeves. These don't seem to be stretchy, and I already notice my upper arm movement is somewhat limited: I can no longer move them far away from my body.

"Let me see. No, this won't do. You'll need one size smaller."

"It doesn't seem that big to me," I protest, afraid that a smaller one might get uncomfortable.

"Believe me, you don't want this kind of jumpsuit to be loose at the top. Too much risk of something popping out, and I'm sure you'll not want to expose yourself like that at a wedding."

"Oh, I see what you mean. I guess it will have to be the smaller size then." She helps me out of the jumpsuit, and is back with another one after a few moments. I have to breathe out a little to get the zipper closed, but then at least the top fits closely.

"Oh yes, that looks much better on you than that last dress. You have nice collarbones, so anything with bare shoulders works well for you. And this jumpsuit works better for women who don't have very large cup sizes - which of course is a bit ironic if you think of who's name is used for this type of

clothing.¹ Well, that is a kind way of saying I only have a B size, but I have to admit she is right: the folded back material hides the curves of my breasts, causing the attention to move to my shoulders, which isn't a bad thing. The legs are not too long either - this is obviously a petite model. Gradually I become more enthusiastic about it; it really works well for my body, and I love the color. I don't have any strapless clothes, considering them a bit daring for my taste, but actually this is pretty stylish, and not trashy like some of the deep cleavages of the dresses I looked at.

"There is actually one more feature of this jumpsuit. If you look in the mirror at the back, you can see the band of fabric around the top is open at the back, to allow access to the zipper. You can wear it like that, but it detracts a bit from the lines of the jumpsuit, and so they have added 2 hidden buttons and loops on the inside, to connect the ends and make the band look continuous. Like this," the assistant explains, pulls the ends of the band together, and connects them. I immediately feel the band tighten around my arms, and once the buttons are done up, my upper arms are kept very close to my body, and I can only move my lower arms. When I mention this, the assistant simply says that looking great often requires some sacrifices, and that she is sure there will be plenty of helpful men around to help me at the wedding, if there would be anything I need help with. There will probably be lots of women anyway that are hampered by their clothes in one way or another - tight skirts forcing tiny steps, shoes constantly hurting, hats and veils limiting vision or getting in the way of any eating or drinking, and so on. Not to mention bulky bridal gowns with corsets underneath...



A jumpsuit similar to the one in the story, this one from Miss Selfridge.²

Hmm, finding a cute guy to help me out during the wedding sounds interesting; it has been a while since my previous relationship petered out. Joseph was a nice guy, but he didn't take much initiative or control, and I'm not very good at that either, so we got into a rut where nothing seemed to be

¹ The name is derived from French actress, model and singer Brigitte Bardot, who made the style very popular in the 50s, and who was known as a big-busted sex symbol.

² Pictures from: <https://en-bahrain.namshi.com/buy-miss-selfridge-bardot-belted-jumpsuit-212494.html>

happening, and finally we decided it was not working. It was a sensible, not very emotional break-up, and a wedding might offer good opportunities to meet someone new.

"I guess you are not used to strapless clothing?"

"No, I'm not."

"I can see that. You shouldn't keep tugging at the top of the jumpsuit; it will only make the fabric looser. And the tugging doesn't look confident, or appealing. There is some subtle boning in the bodice that should keep it up, and this one is the right size, so if you don't make wild movements, like bending forward too far, there should be no risk of exposing yourself. ... If you take it, you should keep it on, so you can get used to it, and make a great impression at the wedding. You *are* taking it, I assume?"

I nod; this seems the best of everything I have tried, and I have run out of time to look further.

"OK, thank you for the purchase. If you will collect your things, I'll be at the register to prepare your bill. Do you need a bag for the clothes you wore coming in?"

"No thank you; I came prepared."

Well, I guess I'm going to be wearing the jumpsuit home then. Not sure how I'll manage, but the assistant surely wouldn't advise it if it wouldn't be doable.

So, a few minutes later I am standing outside in my new jumpsuit. Luckily the weather is suitable for it, and I don't have to wear anything on top. Which actually might have been a problem anyway: with this band around my arms, I would not be able to wear a regular jacket; I guess if necessary it would have to be a cape, or a jacket draped over my shoulders. Still I think it is better to go straight home. Grocery shopping can wait until tomorrow, when I am more suitably dressed; I should still have enough leftovers for tonight. I notice several people looking at me - obviously I am quite overdressed for a walk in town, but the glances don't seem to be negative, and there is even one teenage boy who bumps into someone else because he is looking at me instead of where he is going. Perhaps the saleswoman was right; seeing the reactions makes me feel a bit more confident in my new suit. Getting into my car, I realize that I can't quite hold the wheel at the normal position, but if I put my seat a bit more forward, and grab the wheel lower, driving works pretty well.

Back home in my apartment my bladder starts making itself known, and I decide to use the opportunity to change into something more comfortable. Having several dresses with back zippers, I'm not expecting any problems undressing, but my upper arms are allowed so little movement that it is much harder to reach the top of the zipper. Then I realize that the buttons holding that band together need to be undone first, because the zipper pull is hidden underneath. But more than touch such a button with one finger I can't do, and after several minutes struggling blindly behind my back, my hand starts to cramp, and I need to take a break. It seems I need help, and I don't have that much time anymore; the bathroom visit is becoming urgent. But what were my options? Most of my friends live too far away, or will not be home yet. And asking the bride-to-be Marcia is not an option either - she surely has other things on her mind.

Then I hear some noises coming from the next-door apartment. My new neighbor must be getting her apartment set up. I met her only once until now, and she didn't have much time then, but she seemed nice. I remember she introduced herself as Carola. Quite a bit taller than me, and she seemed a real go-getter, the way I heard her handle a call on her mobile. Could I ask her for help? I

hardly know her, and she must be quite busy getting her apartment in order. But I guess I have no choice, and at least it shouldn't take much of her time.

Soon after I ring the doorbell I hear footsteps approaching, and the door opens.

"Oh, it's you. How nice of you to drop by. Please come in, and don't mind the clutter. I'm busy unpacking." When I have followed her in, she looks me over and adds, "That looks really good on you. Are you going to a party? Unless of course you have dressed up for visiting me." She gives me a wink with that last sentence.

So I explain about the wedding, and how the saleswoman advised me to keep it on to get used to it. Involuntarily I try to pull up the top again. And that I have a problem now that I can't seem to get it off myself, and that a visit to the powder room is starting to get urgent. So I conclude by asking her if she could help me open the buttons and the zip, so I can relieve myself and change into something more comfortable.

"Yes, I can see that it might be challenging to take off, and also why you need some more practice with it. If you want to look great at the wedding, you really should wear it a bit longer, you know. Build some confidence. Why don't I come with you, so you can use your own facilities, and then I help you back in. If you have time, I would also love to see your apartment; I'm still puzzling about how to set everything up, so I could use some ideas."

"Of course I can show you around; that is the least I can do in return for your help." I'm not exactly happy to be stuck in the jumpsuit longer, but if the shop assistant thought I needed practice, and now my neighbor as well, it must be true. She seems to know what she is talking about, and her whole attitude makes me feel that I can trust her. She herself is wearing something unusual too: leather overalls in a light brown color. Well, probably imitation leather. Perhaps it is the color, or the design, or the way she wears it, but it doesn't make her look like a biker chick or goth at all. Pretty elegant, really.

She sees me looking, and explains, "Yeah, I can imagine these do not look like standard wear at home either, but they are getting a bit older, and the imitation leather has cracks and bare spots in several places, so I no longer wear them when I go out. But I find overalls very convenient for chores around the house, and these have the added advantage that you can just wipe the dirt or water off. At the start it was strange for me too, but since then I have learned to appreciate them."

By then we have reached my bathroom, and she opens my jumpsuit. I hold it up to not expose my chest until I close the door behind me. Finally I can empty my bladder. It is also nice to be able to move my arms normally again, and breathe deeply. So I am a bit hesitant whether I want to continue wearing it, but since I have no other clothes in the toilet, I pull it up to cover myself again before I step out.

Carola wastes no time, moves towards my back, and pulls the zipper up once more. I quickly breathe out to let her.

"Perhaps we can leave the buttons open this time?" I try.

"Are you going to wear it like that to the wedding? It doesn't look quite right that way."

"I guess not."

"Then you should probably get used to it buttoned up as well."

I shrug and let her do the buttons up too, and soon my upper arms are trapped once more.

"But what if I need to take it off again? Like when I go to bed?"

"Don't worry, I'll be home for the rest of the day, so come and ask for help whenever you want."

"Oh, that is very nice of you." What else could I say?

Then I show her around my apartment. It might not qualify for a TV show about interior decoration, but over the years I have managed to make it a place I feel very comfortable in, and like the look of. Joseph seemed to like it too, since we spent most of our time together here. Carola is also quite appreciative of what I have done, and her compliments are meaningful and sincere.

When we get to the bedroom, and she sees several pairs of shoes standing next to the wardrobe, she asks if I have already chosen which shoes I'm going to wear for the wedding. I hadn't thought about that yet, but show her the black pumps with a low heel that I usually pick - they look nice and are comfortable enough for a long day.

"I see," Carole replied, and I could feel her disapproval. "Don't you think something with a higher heel would be better?"

I show her my brown sandals, which have the highest heels I'm comfortable with.

"Nothing higher? With the close-fitting legs of the jumpsuit, higher heels would do wonders for your calves. And with your length you can easily have that. If I put on high heels, I am taller than many men, and that can make them quite uncomfortable."

What do you know - there even is an advantage to being petite! Although, I'm not sure being able to wear high heels is that big of an advantage; they are just too uncomfortable. I show her my highest heels - they were a spur of the moment purchase, because their color comes close to my hair, and they looked so nice. But ignoring the heel height is never a good idea, and I am just too wobbly on them. I don't want to risk twisting an ankle.

I explain this to Carola, but she asks me to put them on anyway, so we can see how they look. Surely I can stand them for a few minutes, so I oblige, and sit down to put them on. But the jumpsuit sleeves don't allow me to stretch my arms out far enough, and I can hardly even touch my feet. That seems a good reason to forget about the shoes, but Carola just goes on her knees and puts the shoes on my feet. Then she briefly strokes my calves, which feels quite sensual, and sends a shiver up my spine. Confused, I don't know how to react, but she quickly continues, "There you go. Now, let me help you up and see how that looks. Oh yes, that is a lot better. Look at those calves now."

Checking myself in the mirror, I have to admit that it looks great. The red of my hair mirrored at my feet, the muscle tone in my calves, the super long legs, ... This would definitely make an impression at the wedding. It makes me feel taller too, although Carola is half a head taller still. Too bad I will never be able to survive such a long day on these heels.

When I voice this to my neighbor, she asks, "Tell me about the times you tried these. How long before you took them off again? And did you try to build it up?"

"Well, I guess after about 10 minutes I was so wobbly that I worried about twisting an ankle, so I never got around to wearing them outside the house. Then I just put them away again."

"If you want to get used to them, you'll have to do more than an occasional 10 minutes. Why don't you keep them on for a while now; perhaps I can give you a few tips, and support you when you

wobble. Start a little bit of training. It will probably not be enough that you can wear them during the whole wedding, but perhaps you can make a good entrance, and then later change into something more comfortable?"

If she would have asked if I wanted to keep wearing the heels, I would probably not know what to choose. She makes good points, but with the jumpsuit already hampering me, the discomfort of the heels might be a bit much. But it is more like she is telling me, and I assume if I didn't manage to put the shoes on, I probably can't take them off without help either, so it feels like the decision is made for me.

You might think I should object to let myself be bossed around like this, but it actually feels right to have someone take control, and decide for me. I am often hesitant and don't see things through, and this kind of supportive attitude is exactly what I missed with my ex Joseph. My mother always warned me about bossy boyfriends, because they would be just using me for their own benefit, but this is different: she is helping me achieve things that are of no benefit to her. And it doesn't feel like she is forcing me; if I would seriously object I am sure she would help me out of the shoes and the jumpsuit. So I just nod demurely and continue with the tour.

"Don't be so tense. Try to relax and let your weight sink into your shoes. I'm right next to you, so I can catch you if you wobble. And you're almost hyperventilating. Take slow and deep breaths, and breathe to your stomach. That will lower your center of gravity and improve your balance. And don't tug at your jumpsuit."

Easier said than done, but when she takes hold of my arm just below the jumpsuit sleeve, my fear of twisting or stumbling suddenly disappears, and I manage to relax. That makes a huge difference, and I start believing I can learn to do this. Again her touch feels almost electrical, and her firm grip feels very reassuring and pleasant. Of course my ankles still wobble, but being more relaxed it is easier to correct, and when we start discussing the interior design again, it quickly becomes more automatic, and takes only a little attention. Only when Carola lets go for a moment, I immediately start wobbling again. Strange; it is not like I lean on her or feel I need it when she does hold me. But I just can't manage to keep the same level of relaxation without her physical support.

My apartment is not huge, so it doesn't take too long before I have shown her everything. It seems like a logical moment to say goodbye, but I am really enjoying myself despite the physical challenges. Either Carola notices my reluctance to end our meeting, or she has the same idea, because she proposes, "You still seem to be doing OK on those heels, so it would be a pity to stop now. But it might be better if you stay near me when you are wearing them for now, in case you lose your balance. Would you like to come back to my apartment with me? I was busy unpacking in the kitchen, and I could use your advice on how to best arrange my stuff over the cabinets. Unless of course you have other things you need to do."

Quickly I reply, "Oh, there is nothing that cannot wait, and I'd love to help you. I have reordered my own cabinets several times before I was satisfied."

So I follow her back to her apartment. In the corridor she doesn't hold me - that would probably look weird if someone else saw us - but gradually I have gotten a little more confident, and even without her support I manage fairly well. We move through her living room, where we have to pick our way through stacks of boxes to reach the kitchen. There the boxes are stacked in such a way that they are not blocking the cabinets. Carola gets busy with the box she was apparently working on when I disturbed her, and I lean against the counter for support. We talk partly of how to organize the kitchen, but also about other things, and after a while I feel like I should also help her with the

boxes, so I try to pick one up that is labeled to contain pots and pans, for which we had already designated a cabinet.

"Stop!" Carola orders. "Those boxes and the contents are not guaranteed to be clean, and we wouldn't want your beautiful new jumpsuit to get dirty."

Oops, I hadn't thought of that. My face turns red and I quickly abandon my action.

"Hmm... come with me, I might have something suitable for you."

She takes my arm again and steers me to her bedroom, which only contains a few boxes, plus a stack of flattened boxes. She has obviously unpacked here already. After rummaging in her wardrobe for a moment, she pulls out something made of denim. "Here are my other overalls. They'll be big on you, so they will easily fit over your jumpsuit, and protect it from getting dirty. Please sit down on the bed; I'm not going to ask you to balance on one foot to step into the legs. At least not yet." Again a wink.

That makes sense, so I sit down, and carefully put my heeled feet one by one into the legs Carola holds up for me. Once my feet have come out the other ends, she pulls me up again. I try to reach a strap to pull over my shoulder, but again my arm reach is too limited to do that, and I look helplessly at my neighbor. She quickly takes over, pulls the straps over my shoulders, and buckles them to the bib with a firm tug. The clicks of the buckles sound loud, so near to my ears. Of course they are much too long, and the crotch almost hangs at my knees, so she starts shortening the straps until the waist of the overalls is at my waist level. By then the bib comes up all the way to my throat. Then she folds up the legs far enough that I won't step on them. She even does the side buttons up, but that doesn't do much since my waist is smaller as well. Of course the straps hold up the overalls anyway, but Carola apparently decides that they are too loose, because she grabs a wide belt from her wardrobe and buckles it around me, pulling it pretty tight.

I wonder why I just let all of this happen; it can't be normal that a woman I hardly know starts dressing me into her own clothes. So why does it feel so right? Being dressed like this reminds me of when I was young, and my mother still helped me with the overalls I often wore back then, long after I could put them on myself. On impulse I lean into her and give her a little kiss on her cheek, just like I did with my mother back then. When I realize what I did, I become bright red, and anxiously look how Carola will react to this. She does look surprised, but then gives me a smile and rubs me on the back, over the fabric of the overalls. Once more that makes me tingle.

"There, that should keep your pretty jumpsuit safe. Now we can make some serious headway in the kitchen." She grabs the fabric on the back of my overalls to give me support and starts steering me back to the kitchen. There is a mirror in the bedroom though, and I am curious how I look, so I step towards it. At first Carola's grip prevents me from moving in that direction, but then she realizes what I am trying to do, and she follows me. I look like a little girl playing dress up in her mother's overalls, but somehow it doesn't look as ridiculous as I feared.

"You look cute."

"Yeah, but hardly like a grown-up. When I was a child I liked wearing overalls, but if I would wear them now I would look so young that people wouldn't take me seriously. I would probably not even be allowed into a liquor store."

"Perhaps, but that would also depend on the fabric and design of the overalls." She gives a quick tug at the bib of her own overalls, which of course do not make her look childish at all. "And there are also occasions where looking young and cute would not be a disadvantage at all."

"I guess so. Perhaps I'll see if I can find something suitable the next time I go shopping." The extra complication of buying clothes that don't look childish, is that I'm small enough that clothes in the largest girl sizes often fit me better than those from the women's department. Once more I feel the urge to pull the jumpsuit up, but this time my hands are blocked by the bib of the overalls.

Carola noticed it, "Oh, that is a useful side-effect. Now I don't have to warn you anymore. ... OK, enough gazing in the mirror. Come, we've got work to do." Once more she takes hold of the overalls and guides me to the kitchen, where she first offers me a drink.

"I only have orange juice at the moment. It allows me to pretend I'm taking care of my vitamin intake while the kitchen is not operational yet."

"That will be fine. I don't always get around to eating enough fruit myself." At least drinking from the glass I can still manage myself, when I bend my head a little forward and down.

Then we start filling the cabinets, and together we make good progress. Every time I bend forward though, I feel the high bib of the overalls press on my throat. It serves as a gentle reminder not to do that, because I was warned that increases the risk of my boobs popping out of the strapless jumpsuit. After a while I am starting to wobble more on my heels, and my feet start to hurt. Carola notices it too, and concludes it is better to give my feet and ankles some rest, so we agree to swap my footwear. Not wanting to go out into the corridor in these ill-fitting clothes, I reach for the overalls buckles to take them off before going back to my apartment. But they were almost at the top of my shoulders, and I have trouble reaching them well enough to undo them.

"What are you doing?"

I explain that I don't want people to see me dressed like this.

"OK, why don't I save you the trip back then; if you give me the front door key I'll get the other shoes for you, and you can give your ankles some rest. Are those flats you wore before OK?"

"Yes, those will be fine." So I give her the key and find a chair in the living room to give my feet a rest. Only when she is gone I realize that it might not have been smart to give my apartment key to a near stranger. But then again, what would she do? I know where she lives, after all, and she would be the first suspect if something would be missing or otherwise wrong. And I really can't imagine Carola doing something like that anyway. She could have taken my high heels off though, and brought them back to my bedroom.

By then my neighbor already is back, and takes off my shoes. Instead of putting the flats back on my feet immediately, she starts massaging them. Oh my, that is heavenly. I lean back in the chair and can't suppress a little moan. Much too soon it is over. "That was wonderful, and so worth wearing these shoes for!"

"Well, I thought you deserved a little reward for wearing them without complaint, and helping me in the kitchen." She put the flats on my feet, and added, "I'll leave the shoes by the door, so you won't forget to take them with you when you leave. Here is your key back."

Together we make good progress in the kitchen, all the while talking about everything and nothing, and making each other laugh frequently. I feel more carefree than I have felt in years, somewhat like when I was a child. I am so used to the restriction of my upper arms by now that I compensate automatically for the most part, and when I can't reach something I just ask Carola. I don't even feel guilty about interrupting her, since she is the one keeping me this way. After a few times failing to pull the top of the jumpsuit up because of the overalls bib, I have learned to accept that I can't, and even with all my movements, my boobs are still safely inside. It is nice to stand firmly again on my trusted flats, although having Carola support me was nice too, and that foot rub... definitely worth it.

We were just finishing the last box when Carola's stomach gives a rumble. "Well, I hadn't expected to have my kitchen in order already, so I have no groceries to cook - I guess it will be takeaway once more. Shall I order for two, to repay you for all the help? How does sushi sound?"

"Isn't that raw fish? Eating that always sounded wrong to me."

"It is really good though; you should at least try before you deny. I'll order for two, and if you really don't like it I can eat the rest tomorrow. No problem."

She sounds like my mother. There are moments, like now, when I still acutely miss her, although she has been dead since I was a teenager. I manage to stop a 'Yes, Mom' before it comes out, and simply nod my consent, not trusting my voice for the moment.

Carola gets her mobile from her bib pocket, and places her order online. "Should be here within 45 minutes," she reports. "And how are your feet and ankles doing?"

"They're fine, thank you."

"Good, then we can squeeze in another training session."

"But ..."

"What?"

"Well, it's just that I thought we were done with that for today."

"It takes a little more training than that if you want to wear them for the first part of the wedding, in less than 2 days."

"Oh, OK then."

Back in my chair in the living room, I soon have my beautiful shoes with the scary heel height on again. Getting up and going to the kitchen again, I deliberately wobble a bit more than necessary, and Carola is quick to grab me again by the overalls to steady me, and guide me into the kitchen once more. There she gives me the 'I told you so' look, but doesn't say anything. We start flattening the boxes, doing a bit of cleaning, plug in the coffee machine, etc. When the kitchen is fully operational, we move to the living room and start brainstorming on how to organize the furniture. She explains she is a freelancer, often working from home, but also sometimes working on the site of the client. So she needs to set up a good working area. Carola makes me move around a lot, usually without supporting me, and I understand that I need to work on finding balance on my own, so I don't deliberately wobble again.

When the time approaches that the food should arrive, we settle down and just talk some more. I finally ask her directly what prompted her to move here, which she seemed to have skirted around earlier.

"Well, when I broke up with my girlfriend a few weeks ago, I decided it was time for a change of scene. The times I visited this town, or even drove through it, it struck me as a friendly place. And one of the companies I regularly work for is here."

I hardly hear the latter part of her answer, for my thoughts start racing when she mentions 'girlfriend'. She is gay? Has she been hitting on me? But I like men! She is wonderful though, and I feel very at ease with her. And when she touches me ... Am I bi, perhaps? Does it matter? Or should I just follow my feelings and see where that takes me?

"Hello ... are you still there, Eliza?"

"Oh, yes ... sorry, my thoughts just drifted for a moment."

"Did I make you uncomfortable when I mentioned I had a girlfriend?"

"No ... Yes ... Oh, this is confusing. I mean I don't mind if you are gay. But I am not. At least, I only had boyfriends. But you make me feel good. And now I feel uncertain what I am or what I want."

"I understand. Don't worry about it. I enjoy your company too, so let's just leave it at that for now, and if anything more happens, we'll deal with it then."

I sigh from relief that my hesitation hasn't upset her, and give her a tentative smile and a nod that I'll try to follow her suggestion, which is not that far away from the direction my thoughts were taking me, anyway.

The sudden doorbell startles me, and makes my heart skip a beat. But it also disrupts the awkward situation, and Carola quickly gets up. As expected it is the food, and she brings back a large plastic plateau with those characteristic filled rice rolls, and several other things I don't recognize.

"Come, let's wash our hands." This time she holds the back of my overalls again, as if she thinks I might otherwise skip on cleaning myself up. She brings 2 small plates back into the living room, and puts the plateau on a large box between our chairs. She picks up a pair of chopsticks and starts loading her plate with a selection. I'm impressed with how handy she is with them - she has obviously done this before. Hesitantly I pick up a package with chopsticks as well, but Carola says, "If you want, you can just eat with your hands. It's probably a bit much to learn how to use chopsticks today, especially if you are unsure you even like sushi." She picks up the other plate, and makes a small selection for me too, explaining what they are called and which ingredients are in them.

Tentatively I first try a small roll that is only filled with cucumber. Hmm, not bad. Then comes the big test, and I try another small roll that had something reddish brown inside, that Carola explained was tuna. Knowing that is going to taste bad, I can't resist pulling a face, and try to get it down as quickly as possible. Then I decide this is just no food for me, and put my plate down.

"You're not giving it a fair chance!" Carola accuses. She disappears into her bedroom and comes back with a scarf. "Let's do a blind test, where you don't know whether it is fish or not, and you can only taste if you like it or not." After waiting only a brief moment to see if I would protest, she ties the scarf over my eyes. I don't feel scared or even uncertain; I know she is doing it for my own good.

The only thing I wonder about is whether she might take the opportunity to kiss me, but I'm not sure how I would feel about that.

I hear her take the plate, and then feel it touch my chest, where she is apparently holding it right below my mouth. "Open up" A roll is being put into my mouth, and I can feel her fingers holding it. Not chopsticks then. I fold my lips around the fingers to remove any crumbs when she pulls them back. When I am sure they are gone, I start chewing. Oh, she starts me off easy - it is another cucumber roll. While I am chewing, I hear her move her chair, and then the plate comes back, and our shoulders touch. Again the contact is a bit exciting, and it also feels good to know she is there when I can't see her.

"Are you ready for the next one? You probably need to bite it off, since it is a bit big to fit in your mouth."

Carefully I bite down, worried about biting the hand that feeds me. But Carola was careful. Hmm, cucumber again? But there is more. Something smooth. Didn't she mention something about avocado? Could be. And then there is something a bit sturdier, and fishy? Also a bit sweet. When I share my experiences with Carola, she confirms it is a California roll, with cucumber, avocado, and surimi - fish, but processed into sticks to resemble crab. Not raw then. It is actually pretty good, and the second half I enjoy too.

While she puts the next one in my mouth, she asks, "Is it OK with the blindfold? No too tight?"

"No, it is fine."

In the meanwhile I am chewing on the roll, which was small enough again to fit into my mouth in one piece. Of course there is the rice again, and the firm leaf-like thing that seems to be wrapped around many of them. The filling this time is meaty, somewhat like very tender steak, but also slightly salty. I can't quite decide what it can be, but it is really enjoyable; probably the best one until now.

When I tell her I don't recognize it, but it is very good, she has to laugh and tells me it was raw tuna - the very same I so disliked without the blindfold.

"No, it can't be! You're kidding me. It was totally different." But Carola takes off my blindfold, and her look convinces me that she is being serious.

"Here, try one more if you don't believe how your mind can interfere with your taste."

Even though I could have done it myself now, she puts one into my mouth again. I don't mind at all; actually I am almost disappointed that the blindfold is off again, because she'll probably stop feeding me now. She's right though, now that I have accepted it might not be yucky, it isn't, and the tuna melts on my tongue again. When I have swallowed it, I get an idea.

"OK, so I like raw tuna, but what about the other sorts of raw fish? Perhaps I should try them blind as well, just to be sure?"

A faint smile on Carola's face showed that she realizes what I am doing, but nonetheless she ties the scarf around my eyes once more.

"This one is a bit big, but hard to bite off, so let's try to do it whole."

It is, which makes it hard to chew at first. Then I notice something crunchy inside. I make a surprised 'hmm'; it is a nice variation. Because of the size, it takes a while to have analyzed what I taste, but it

seems something like a shrimp with a breadcrumb crust. Carola confirms, and compliments me on my acute sense of taste.

The next one is also different, in that it isn't like a roll with the filling in the middle, but a block of rice at the bottom, and something else on top. It is somewhat similar to the tuna, but slightly more fishy. Also a very luxurious taste, which reminds me of something, but I can't quite place it. My new neighbor explains it is a salmon nigiri, and then adds, "Congratulations, you are now officially declared cured of your aversion to raw fish." Suddenly I feel something against my lips again, and start opening them in the expectation that my reward is yet another piece of sushi. Then I recognize it are her lips, giving me a kiss on my lips. It doesn't last long, but I feel it intensely. Still I am unsure if this is what I should be doing, and so I stay passive. Then she removes the blindfold. I have the feeling she looks closely at me to see how I react to the kiss, but I can't determine what she makes of it. After a few moments she just sits down, and we continue eating.

After we finished, Carola lets me put the remainder in the fridge, and bring the dirty dishes to the kitchen as well. By now I get a little tired of the constant restriction of my arms, and the shoes already start to be uncomfortable again, too. So I propose her to drink coffee at my place, where I can change out of them. Without Carola supporting me, it is not nearly as much fun to balance on these heels. She accepts, but wants to discuss a few more options for the living room first. Again she makes sure I move around a lot, but gradually I get more wobbly, and then I actually stumble, and only just manage to support myself on a stack of boxes.

"Are you OK?" Carola immediately asks, concerned.

For a moment I rotate the ankle, but it doesn't hurt. "It's fine. I guess my ankles are just getting tired."

"I'm sorry. I've been pushing you too much. Why don't you sit down, and I'll swap them for your flats."

"Really, don't feel bad about it; without you I would never have gotten this far."

When my high heels are off, she suggests, "You know, I think we have done enough here for today anyway. Let me take your overalls off, and then we'll make ourselves comfortable at your apartment."

So I stand up on my bare feet, and let her first unbuckle the belt, and then undo the clips on my shoulders. I get the impression that she tries to do it business-like, but can't fully prevent doing it a little bit in a sexy way. Whatever it is, I can notice its effect on me; I feel a bit flushed and my breathing gets slightly faster. The bib sliding down over my nipples doesn't help - they are erect and the two layers of the jumpsuit are not enough to stop the feeling, especially since the shop lady removed my bra. Once both clips are open, the large overalls drop to the floor, and I step out of them. Then I pick them up and thank her for borrowing them. Seeing my jumpsuit uncovered once more, I decide I made the right choice; it looks really nice. Carola pulls it a bit here and there to straighten it, although I didn't notice anything that needed straightening. Then she helps me into my flats again.

Back at my apartment, Carola takes no steps to help me out of my jumpsuit, and since she has just removed the overalls and the high heels, I don't want to ask for too much at once, so I struggle on with my restricted arms, although making the coffee is a bit of a challenge.

After the coffee I need another toilet visit, and Carola once again goes with me to the bathroom door, and helps me back in as soon as I come out.

We move on to wine, and that gives me enough courage to ask her why she broke up with her girlfriend.

"I think it boils down to her feeling I was too controlling. I was only trying to help her improve though, and there were definitely some areas she could do with improving. But I guess not everyone appreciates my help."

"And now I'm your next project ..." I blurt out.

This has an unexpected effect on Carola: she suddenly moves both hands to her mouth, and responds in a shocked voice, "Oh my God, you are right. I'm just continuing in the same way as with her. I am horrible! You never even asked for me to help you learn to cope with the jumpsuit, the shoes, or the sushi. We hardly even know each other and I have already started 3 projects with you."

"But I didn't mean it like that! I love how you have helped me today." I go sit right next to her on the couch, wanting to put my arm around her to comfort her. But the jumpsuit won't let me, and I can do no better than put my hand on her thigh. "I'm useless at making things happen, am too scared to take risks, and I give up too easily. My previous boyfriend was no help, and after a while nothing happened anymore, so we decided to stop. Without you those shoes probably would have stayed in the closet forever, and I would never have discovered that raw fish can actually be quite good."

She is not crying, but I can see some wetness in her eyes. "You're just saying that to make me feel better."

"No really, this has been the best day in quite a while for me. You make things happen, and are caring and considerate doing it. I might not be that assertive, but if I wouldn't have liked it, sooner or later I would have said something, or just left and found someone else to release me."

"Promise me you will always let me know if I go too far?"

"I will, I promise."

This would be a good opportunity to get out of my jumpsuit; she would definitely not refuse me at this moment. But do I really want to? Now the shoes are off and the meal is over, this is the last active project, and once she helps me out she might decide there is no real reason to stay any longer. She might even take it as a suggestion from my side that it is enough for today. So I don't say anything.

"So you still want to try and wear the shoes for the first part of the wedding?"

If I show doubt now, she might be hesitant to keep pushing me, so I try to answer confidently, "Yes, I agree with you that they look great. And all the training today would be wasted if I wouldn't go through with it now." Inwardly I am still scared that I might twist an ankle or embarrass myself though.

"All the training? You're just starting. You have not even practiced walking outside on them, on uneven pavement with cracks between the tiles. We should really practice that tomorrow."

Obviously the crisis is over, and Carola is back to her normal controlling self. I feel myself relax, no longer needing to force myself to act confident. "Well, if you say so, I guess I could come by again tomorrow after work."

"That sounds like a good idea. You need to feel confident on them at the wedding."

Me, confident? The best I can hope for is somewhat comfortable. It would be easier if I would have someone with me for support. Wait a minute, the wedding invitation had a 'plus one', and when I accepted I still was with Joseph, so they expect two persons. I had forgotten letting them know I would come alone, but perhaps I don't have to now? But wouldn't it look weird to show up with another woman? The alcohol makes me braver though, and I say, "I would feel more confident at the wedding if you were there to support me. I am expected to bring someone, anyway. But of course it is very short day, so you probably have other plans already."

"Oh, I would love to come with you. I don't know many people yet around here, and it would be a great opportunity to meet a few. And someone needs to make sure you don't chicken out and wear the jumpsuit with the buttons undone, or take off the shoes at the first opportunity." She winked at me when she said it, making sure I knew she would not push me harder than I could cope with.

I hadn't realized it, but when she consented I felt much relief that I could count on her support on that challenging day. With a big smile, and a squeeze on her leg, where my hand still lay, I let her know how grateful I was.

Apparently she decides this was a good moment to call it a day, because she gets up and tells me, "Come, let me help you out of the jumpsuit. It's getting late, and we have a busy day tomorrow."

I feel a bit disappointed that she's leaving, but knowing we will practice again tomorrow, and be together for the whole day of the wedding gives me something to look forward to, and I *am* getting tired. In the bedroom she helps me out of my jumpsuit, and I change into the onesie I am currently wearing for the night; a cotton one with short arms and legs, with horizontal stripes like a prison suit. I once bought it in the hope of triggering a more dominant reaction from Joseph, but he just ignored it.

Then I accompany her to my front door, and we say our goodbyes. Just before Carola leaves, she warns me, "Will you behave? You have certain privileges in your regime now, but you could easily lose them!" Of course she is joking in reference to my 'prison costume'. This was exactly the reaction that I had hoped for from Joseph, and I feel a shudder down my spine, and an excited reaction from my body. I bat my eyelashes at her, and demurely respond, "But I am always behaving well, aren't I?". Carola just raises her eyebrows and leaves with a last wave.

For a while I am too excited to go to sleep, but after a bit of reading I feel it is really getting time for bed. Thinking over the events of the day, I feel my body react again, and I start playing with myself. The moments where Carola resolutely rebuttons the band of my jumpsuit, clicks the straps of the borrowed overalls to the bib, her steering me holding the back of those overalls, and her last remark are foremost in my mind while I climax. After that I quickly fall asleep.

When I wake Carola is loosening the straps that hold me to the bed, and she dresses me in the jumpsuit and the high heels. The band around my arms seems to have been altered, because it now goes down to halfway my lower arms, giving me very little arm movement indeed. Then she buckles my collar around my neck, and attaches the leash. She leads me to the wedding, where everybody seems to know her, and welcomes us. I get lots of compliments about my attire, and no one seems

to find anything strange about the leash. We have a great time, and Carola makes sure I have all I need.

Then I wake up back in my own bed, and I realize it has been a dream. Thinking back about it, I realize it was quite weird, but it didn't feel like a nightmare; instead I felt safe and well taken care of. Of course in real life I could do without those weird restrictions like the collar and leash. ... at least in public... I guess I just have to accept that I'm falling in love with a woman this time, whatever I considered to be my sexual orientation. I'm already looking forward to next evening, when we'll do more high heel training. Would she insist I wear the jumpsuit again? I hope so...