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She'd tried her hand

by Zoe Carroll

She'd tried her hand at most things, but drew the line at honesty. Nobody would believe the truth anyway. She suffered the consequences of honesty once and wasn't going to be that fool again. Men were such simple creatures that they didn't deserve honesty anyway. Lucia knew that the men who came into her circles were not the honest sort, and she had seen enough to recognise them. It was almost too easy.

She took pleasure in being more and more audacious in her deceitfulness and it was paying off handsomely. She would be able to retire from the game soon and play no more fools for gold. She had enough, and she could leave without a trace at any moment, the simplicity of her life was the joy of it but she longed to finally put down roots and stay in one place for the rest of her days. She was almost ready to fly. One more lie. One more sorrowful falseness and she would be the winner.

She checked her appearance in the mirror. She was getting too old for this game. Her looks had lasted but her once lithe body was showing signs of wear, and no amount of yoga and tai chi were going to change that. She was lucky to be in one of the few professions where your earnings went up with your age, because your more mature clients were interested in experience and companionship. The cheaper ones still chased skirts and wanted to feel younger than their years but the good ones, her steady clients, they appreciated her expertise and the way she made them feel.

They usually had someone who should be making them feel like she did, but she was their escape from the everyday drudgery and she made it so easy for them. No demands, just the fee. She wasn't cheap, she didn't need to be. They could all pay. The ones who tried to be clever saw her wrath and the cost of her bribe not to tell the lady of the house where they had been. They thought she didn't know you see, but she had her ways. Men were such simple creatures. It was sport really.

She took a breath and steeled herself. This last one, this would need to be her finest treachery, her finest hour. She moistened her lips, looking herself in the eye.

"You can do this," she whispered to her reflection before joining him on the penthouse balcony. Slipping her arms around him and gently kissing his neck she felt him relax. She turned him to her and looking soulfully into his eyes.

"They've confirmed it's Cancer," she took a breath as if catching herself, "I'll need surgery. It would be much quicker if I could go private but I can't afford that," she trailed off, looking down and loosening her embrace.

"I'll pay, it doesn't matter how much, I need you Lucia, and Penny need never know."

She smiled, her quarry was trapped, it was just a case of him signing the cheque and she would be free, forever. Her angels had been right about this one.