



Stores were starting to close across town, but we lucked out with a formal wear shop at an outlet mall. The clerks looked a little exasperated at the last minute customers, but we were serious about buying something, and they couldn't turn away what was to be a sure sale - even as the clock slid past five.

“OK, how formal is this place?” I asked.

"Tonight, definitely black tie or tux," returned Kitty, “at least it used to be.”

"Well, I'm easy, what do you want me in?" I asked. "Mostly black with white trim or mostly white with black trim?"

“Oh, lets mix it up! How about equal parts of black and white with red trim!” she chortled while taking in the foxes tux rack.

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The rabbit clerk smiled, "I think we can manage that. I'll take out some already tailored options."

I gave her my neck width and sleeve size, asking for a fitted cut. The clerk went to the rack and began to take down some suit sets. Kitty grabbed my hand and pulled me over to another part of the store stocked with lite evening gowns cut for vixens - all with open skirts for accommodating bushy tails.

"What do you want to see me in?" she asked.

"That's a leading question," I smirked, cocking my head and putting my hand up to my chin, beginning to undress her in my mind.

She giggled and placed her hand on her hips in a provocative pose, "Oh stop it! That will not get us to this restaurant and you're the one who wants us to slow down!" She paused a moment to take in the choices, "Well, what color of the rainbow shall it be?"

"Something I can remember," I nabbed a hanging metallic gown from the set and sang as Maurice Chevalier,

"You wore a gown of gold."

She immediately returned as Hermione Gingold, "I was all in blue!"

"Am I getting old?"

"Oh no, not you!"

"Ah yes, I remember it well," I ended contemplatively.

She twinkled her eyes and smiled broadly, "We'll do better, no?"

"Yes, as long as you pick a blue dress and I can remember the lyrics," I said, holding the gold gown up against my chest.

"I wanted green!"

"How about blue green?"

"Help me find a vixen size six or four. If she finds some red trim for you, we'll make a great pair."

"I know," I added, with deeper meaning than the immediate response.

After a few minutes of looking for tags hidden in the gowns surrounding us on all sides, I found a couple of dresses with a label marked size six, and called, "Kitty!"

She came over to the rack where I was looking, reached into the stack and said, "Hey! That's the spot. Ooh, I like that one...Oh that's good too, and well, hey, let's take all of these!"

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"All! You can only wear one at a time."

"To the dressing room you silly!" she taunted me.

"You mean to try on?"

"Of course, you still hate that don't you? You're so guy...well, now it'll be fun, I promise you'll like it."

"How?"

"We'll use the same room."

"What?"

"You need to help me choose right?"

"Well, yes....." I stammered.

"What faster way to choose?"

"But..."

"Hey where are the dressing rooms?" Kitty called out to one of the clerks.

"Girls along the back wall, guys on the side wall," returned an older grey hare standing by the cash till.

The first clerk returned to hand me a set of shirts, jackets, and ties to me.

Kitty grabbed my arm in one hand and a set of dresses on hangers she pulled from the rack in the other.

"Come on, we'd better hurry!" she interjected, as she tugged me toward the back wall.

The clerk said again, "Men's over there, pointing to the side wall."

"No, it's OK, I need him with me!"

The clerks looked a little disconcerted.

"Don't worry, we're married!" she replied.

"Kitty!" I gasped with a half breath, stopping myself midway, when I realized what she wanted and happily, but anxiously, decided to go along. Crossing the store, draped hangers in tow, we entered the women's dressing rooms. Assessing the empty scene, we headed straight to the rearmost chamber, the largest of the set. I followed Kitty in, she kicking the door closed behind us.

"Now what first?" she asked, as she hung her stack of dresses on one of the hooks along the wall. She untied her belt and then reached down to the pleats of her dress, pulling it up around her torso. She

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looked at me a moment and asked, “What’s wrong?”

She lifted her hand to close my gaping jaw. I caught my senses, trying to regain my breath and put on some false air of professionalism, as the rediscovered love of my life was making ready to strip down to her undies or more.

“Na, no, no, nothing.....” I swallowed hard.

She smirked a provocative grin, as though assessing my response, and then slipped her dress over her head, letting it fall to floor around her feet.

Naked to the fur, she put her hands on her hips and asked, "What one next?"

"I couldn't answer."

"Come on, what do you want to see me in!"

“What you're wearing right now, ah, suits me, ah, just fine.”

“Kit! focus... ” she giggled while taking in my expression, seemingly reading every ripple on my face. Focusing her eyes on me, she tucked her head down and confidently suggested, “how about the red one?”

“Yeah....ah...the red one,” I again stammered, breathing deeply.

“Well, get it off the hanger for me, haven’t you ever seen a vixen in the raw before!”

“Only in figure drawing and not one I love.”

She smiled and kissed me on the cheek.

“Well, you’re going to have to get used to it. Come on, help me get this on.”

The world was different now. She handed me the hanger, with the red dress, and I began to fumble the delicate cloth out of its holding clasps. I nervously brushed at the fabric, trying to set it in order, but my focus was on her. I finally ordered the gown top to bottom and lifted it over her head.

“You’re a sweetie.” She tucked her arms into the skirt pleats and slipped it on down over her head and torso. She then brushed the folds into place and looked into the mirror, focusing more on my reflection than her own. “What do you think?”

“The lady in red,” I growled wolfishly.

“Maybe a little over the top, perhaps for valentines day.”

“Or a tango competition!”

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"We've got to try that! You know mambo?"

"I haven't danced since..."

"Since high school....you dear, we've got change all that!"

"Yeah, I stammered as my every wish came true."

"Can you see me in red?"

"Oh yeah."

"Can you remember it?"

"It doesn't match the lyrics, but I know I'll be OK."

"Hey lover-boy," she grabbed my swooning face, "focus!"

She kissed me again, this time on the nose, "It's time to make dreams come true, what dress have you imagined me in on that dream date you wanted with me for the last ten years?" she asked.

I tried to remember. "Blue, turquoise, maybe something kind of cerulean, I don't know, its always different!"

"You're on! Hand me that blue green one you found first."

She pulled the straps on the red dress and let it fall into a second heap about her again naked form. How many times I had imagined undressing her on almost every night of every day since we parted. Now she was here in front of me, in arms reach, dropping her clothes before me as though we had been with each other a lifetime! I was in love, I never had been not in love...with her, it was Kitty...my Kitty! My Kitty was back with me....it was all I ever wanted! Only this time around, she seemed to crave everything I did.

I fumbled with the dress stack again, this time trying to bring forward the lovely blue green gown, the one I knew I would always remember with the song from *Gigi*. It really was fun, she was right! Wrapping your favorite being, the prettiest thing in all the whole wide world in every available color of the rainbow! I got the blue green gown in order. She took it from me and held it up to look it over. Then she put it up over her head and let it slip down atop her. Next, she turned about and asked, "What do you think?"

My jaw was one the floor again, "I..I..I love you!"

"I know, you always have,...lets take this one...now your turn."

"You mean?"

"Yeah, your tuxes."

"I ah..."

"Come on, try on that white shirt and black vest."

I was a second shy...a last hint of all the reservations of so long ago. I then came to my senses, knowing what she was expecting in this whole new world of us, the new world of being in love with each other and no reservations.

I reached for the uppermost button on my shirt, then the next, then the next. Soon enough, all was undone. I looked at my love in her new gown, her arms folded and eyes fixed on me. It was all too clear what she expected next. I took a breath, then I shuddered my shoulders, and my clothes slipped away, every last shred. I couldn't help but puff up my chest. She smiled in a most approving and comforting way, taking in a deep breath. Her eyes took me in head to toe several times, a silence ensuing as she lingered.

"I think your going to need that fitted shirt," she said with a breathless grin.

"Yeah, I'll take the fitted."

She handed the shirt with the biggest shoulders and tightest waist to me. I slipped it on and began buttoning the front under her close observation. Next on was the vest, all seemed well, it fit my form to a perfect "T."

She held her arms up before her, placing her clasped hands aside her cheeks, "Perfect! Now the tie."

She handed me a bright red little bow tie. I took it and placed it about my neck, beginning to struggle with a knot I had never before attempted.

"Let me do that!" she insisted.

She stepped up to me and took the knot from my hands. Focusing on the task, she began to form the cloth into a bow with a set of sure but caring hand motions.

"How did you know how...?"

"Daddy had me tie some of his a long time ago, he thought it was something every girl should know."

She lovingly finished and adjusted the knot, taking in every moment, like it was the first time for something she was going to do a lot between now and eternity.

When she finished, she kissed me again on the tip of my nose, and stood back.

"Oh my, it's my knight in a shining tux!"

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She always knew how to make me feel good, now she seemed to go out of her way to make sure she did so at every turn. I wanted to hug her to my chest then and there. She would have let me, I'm sure, but it was not a moment for crinkling perfectly set seams. I placed my hands on her shoulders and gently kissed her in return.

“Thank you my most lovely princess,” I said.

“You're welcome, let's go make a memory Mr. Charming,” she giggled.

“I think we already have.”

I went to take down the other dresses left waiting on the hangers.

“Leave those to the clerks, we'd better get a move on!” She grabbed up her discarded dress and my shirt from our earlier dance.

Freshly dressed to the nines, we went up to the clerks counting out at the front till. Kitty pulled out a credit card before I could reach for my wallet and said, “Put it on this!” I opened my mouth to protest, but she said, “No,” holding up her hand a giving me a, “shh! We're in this together now, like it always should have been. I'll let you get the restaurant, but only if you want.”

I took in what she said, and chose not to argue...there was no point, there was nothing to prove now. I guess that's what it's like to be grown up.