

Three

It turns out that he may be Mike Hunt by name, but he is a total cunt by nature. Seb and I spend three days with Dave in his edit suite in Reigate trying to salvage something of the film. Dave does his best but all we end up with are nine scenes of people rolling around in a poorly lit room. There are some grunts and moans but no clear action at all. It's a pile of crap. My dreams of taking the industry by storm are in embarrassing tatters. Mike appears to have stitched us up good and proper.

Seb thinks he shot it badly on purpose. He pulls out when he is supposed to come in. The focus is blurred. There are legs and buttocks in the way. Seb says it smacks of dirty tricks. That Mike was making sure our project never takes off. Why would you want to help out the new guys? Give a helping hand to the new porners on the block? He wants to keep as many slices of the porn pie to himself.

And part of me thinks he may have a point. After all Mike is supposed to be a professional. He has hundreds of films to his name, half of them with him in them, pumping away with his flaccid old backside on show. How could he fuck up so spectacularly on my project? But then again I can't believe that anyone could be so malicious. I paid him nearly

three grand of my savings. I told him that it was supposed to be my wedding money. I even bought him a few pints with whisky chasers in the pub. Perhaps the camera wasn't working? Maybe he wasn't used to working in those conditions? Or the flat was too small? All I know is I shall never find out because every time I phone Mike he drops my call. I return home defeated, with nothing to show for my cash at all.

I sit around the house for a week licking my wounds. Ana keeps asking me what is going on and I think I might have to tell her. Every time we go to the pub or see Seb and Antonia, or any one of our mutual friends, someone drops some sort of unsubtle hint and then everyone sniggers and exchanges looks. It looks like none of my friends is capable of keeping their mouth shut. Everyone's got a cum-shot joke up their sleeve and news of my film failure is doing the rounds. Even though English is Ana's second language, she is more fluent and articulate than most of my friends and she is bound to work it out soon. It's far better that it comes from me rather than Chris after a bottle of red, or Antonia when she's had a few at lunch.

So I book a table and I take Ana to a restaurant around the corner. I always think it is better to break bad news in public, as there is less of an opportunity for a scene. I order a bottle of top-notch white wine and a couple of portions of expensive grilled fish and try to work out what to say. Ana's done her hair for the occasion, it's blow-dried poker-straight down to her shoulders and she is wearing a low-cut black top I haven't seen before. She looks stunning and keeps smiling at me. She clearly thinks that I am about to tell her some good news. Oh shit, here goes.

'I've got some really interesting news,' I say, smiling as hard as I can.

'Great,' she says, taking a sip of her wine.

'I am going to do this most amazing, interesting project.'

'Cool,' she smiles and leans forward enthusiastically. Her tits touch the table.

'It is so exciting and so interesting.'

'Good,' she says.

'It's going to give me so many opportunities. We are going to make a lot of money.'

'Excellent.'

'A lot of money. And I am going to be a real player. There is a chance that I could be one of the best people in the industry within a year.'

'What!' she laughs. 'Tell me!'

'We're going to make a lot of money,' I repeat. 'And I am going to be my own boss.'

'It sounds very exciting,' she grins.

'The only downside is that I'm going to be a hardcore porn director.'

She puts her glass down very slowly and looks at me. 'And I thought you were taking me out to ask me to marry you.' She raises her eyebrows.

'Oh,' I say.

'Yes, oh,' she says back. 'Silly me.'

'I won't be in them myself,' I say, hoping to swing it.

'Of course you won't,' she replies. 'No one would pay to watch you fuck.'

At that moment a waiter arrives with our food. He clears his throat with embarrassment. Ana fixes me with one of her special cold stares. God. If only I knew what she was thinking.

'Um, who's having the sea bass?' ventures the waiter.

'She is,' I reply.

'Cod?' he says.

'Him,' she says.

He puts the plates down on the table and makes the sharpest of exits.

'But you're Scandinavian,' I protest. 'You're supposed to be very level-headed about these things.' She doesn't say anything. 'You're liberated. You're always in and out of those saunas.'

'That's the Swedes,' says Ana. 'I'm Norwegian. It's a little different.'

'I know you're Norwegian, darling!' I lean across the table and take her hand. Amazingly she doesn't snatch it away. 'We're going to have our own company. I am going to be a boss.'

'It's just a shame it's a boss of hardcore pornography. It's not really an ambition, is it? It's not something I dreamed of.'

'We're going to make lots of money.'

'In porn?'

'I'm going to become a serious player in a very short space of time.'

'What makes you think you know anything about the subject?' she asks. 'Actually, of course you know about the subject. You're a bloody super-fan.'

'I know I can be good at it.' I am practically pleading now. I give her my special cute smile. I stroke the back of her hand. 'I promise you. I love you. My heart. My soul. I need you on-board. What more can I say?'

'My parents will never find out?' she asks.

'Never,' I say, zipping my lips.

'Yours?'

'Never.'

'Not even your dad?'

'Most especially my dad,' I say. 'I've got just as much to lose as you.'

'OK then,' she says.

'OK then?'

'OK then,' she smiles. 'Are you really going to make lots of money?'

Well, that was so much easier than I had thought. I'd expected tears, tantrums, tearing of hair, a lecture about morals and a hundred and one questions about whether I was going to mix business with pleasure. But she took it all in her stride. Amazing. That's one of the very many reasons why I love her.

We carry on with our dinner and I omit to tell her that I have already lost about ten grand of our savings and made the worst porn film ever. Instead I fill the conversation with my plans and tell Ana about my ideas for expansion and porn domination. She is sweet and kind and supportive. I just hope she stays that way.

The first time I test Ana's patience is when I tell her Toby is moving in. Toby is an old fuckwit friend of mine who drinks too much and takes too many drugs to be employable in the real world. However, he is brilliant with computers and very cheap, so he is perfect for mine. He's just spent two weeks drying out in hospital when I pick him up outside St Mary's in Paddington. I am hoping he might be capable of concentrating for a couple of weeks on my website.

'Thanks for this, mate,' he says, as he gets into the car and throws a suspiciously large suitcase on to the back seat. 'I had nowhere else to go.'

I tell him not to tell Ana what he's just shared with me. I tell him he is staying with me to help me set up the website, to get Spring Meadow's show on the road, and the business up and running.

Ana is not best pleased when Toby walks through the door. He is unshaven and his hair is matted and unwashed.

He looks more like an eco-protester than the primary asset of an up and coming porn business. Fortunately he is incredibly charming, with the impeccable manners of an expensive education, and soon has Ana wrapped around his little finger.

I practically lock him in the spare room. I delete his coke dealer's number from his mobile and give him strict instructions that he is not allowed out until he's set up the site.

Meanwhile, on Toby's advice, I set about getting some content. I spend a couple of days scrolling through footage of my film – *Sex and the City of London* – trying to work out if I can salvage some clips that punters might want to download. There are a couple of shots of Helga being taken from behind by the big red dildo that someone might pay something for. But the best footage is of Camilla and Olga in the flat in Chelsea. It is good, fun stuff and Camilla actually looks like she is enjoying it. I get out my folder and go through all the paperwork, the ID and the STD certificates, before rootling out her number. She gave it to me as she left, saying if ever I wanted to use her again there was no point in going through the agency. It's a wonder that any of those places make any money because she wasn't the only one to offer direct bookings. Anyway, I give her a call. I have an idea she might be interested in.

Four days later we're in Hyde Park hiding behind a bush. Camilla has tears running down her face as she is laughing so much. She has just been busted with her fanny out in the grass by an off-roading jogger. And I was being so careful. We'd arrived in the park at 11 a.m., which we had hoped would be early enough to miss the nannies and too late for joggers. But apparently not. I was just leaning in for a close-up of her open legs in the long grass when this symphony of yellow and black Lycra tripped over us both. He was so

shocked, he couldn't say anything. He looked from me to Camilla and back again. I'm not sure what he thought. All I know is that he got out of there like a rat up a drain.

'That was so fucking funny,' hoots Camilla, picking her pants up off the grass. 'I wish we'd got it on film!'

It strikes me that Camilla is probably the sort of girl who finds almost everything amusing and most things unshocking. When I collected her this morning from Victoria train station, she wouldn't stop talking about the fetish shoots she'd been doing that week.

'Honestly, you wouldn't believe it,' she said. 'I've been dressed up in stockings, I've been smoking. I've been in stockings AND smoking. I've been spanked. Worn a police-woman's outfit and fireman's outfit for some site that specialises in uniforms. And someone's filmed me pissing. Water sports are massive, you know.' She turned to look at me and smiled. 'You should have peeing in all your films.'

Naturally, my idea of having her dress up like a naughty schoolgirl and show her bits in the long grass in Hyde Park was something she took very much in her stride. Even when I made her pose totally naked behind the police station she remained unruffled.

'Christ!' she laughed, as she pushed her parted buttocks towards the lens. 'We used to do this stuff all the time at boarding school.'

The results of the shoot are fantastic. Camilla looks gorgeous and naughty and provocative, and the close-ups are in focus. I'm pleased and Toby is delighted. Something to put on the website at last.

In fact the website seems to be coming on great guns. My house stinks of fags and there are red wine stains all over the spare room's carpet but Toby has really put in the hours. He has set up a domain name called SexyPornFlics.com and a

PayPal account so that punters can pay for vibrators on the site.

'But what you're really after is members,' he explains, taking a drag of his fag and flicking the ash on my cream carpet.

'OK,' I nod, looking at the screen.

'Yes, well, you see, most people come in from the pub, they're pissed, they feel horny; they find a website, become a member for twenty-four dollars a month, fall asleep and forget they have joined. And they continue to pay for months and months before they realise the error of their ways. Smart people join when they are pissed, download what they want and then cancel it when they are still pissed.' He smiles.

'Right,' I say. 'Rather like becoming a member of the gym?'

'Yeah, except once people join the gym they very rarely cancel it because they are always kidding themselves they will use it one day. If they cancel, they have really given up.'

'I see.'

'So with this system you have a few months' grace.'

'That sounds great,' I say. 'But we are ripping them off a bit, aren't we?'

'Not really,' he shrugs. 'If they're too pissed to remember what they've joined, it is hardly your fault. And anyway it is much better than the bad old days of porn when you'd join a site, it would go bust and you'd find yourself still paying out to Red Hot Orgies on the monthly basis. You'd try to cancel. There was no one to cancel with and the credit card companies would refuse to stop your direct debit because they couldn't get in touch with the supplier. In the end the only way out was to cut up and cancel your credit card. So at least with PayPal acting as an intermediary for you, taking the money and billing the customer, both you and your punters are relatively protected.'

'That's true,' I nod.

'Yeah,' he says. 'But also you have to remember that the bastards who complain the most about security on porn sites are also the same bastards who leave their cards behind bars, shove them in any hole in the wall and drive off without them altogether from a petrol station.'

The more I hang out with Toby and the more red wine we drink, the more I realise he knows what he is talking about. During one night session he tells me that to get members on to a website is all about 'traffic'. We have to get as many people as we can to log on as often as we can and then I might have some sort of viable business. We need hundreds of thousands of hits in order to generate money. He says the statistics are not in my favour. A hundred thousand hits, he explains, will get me between ten and fifteen members. And at twenty-four dollars a pop that sort of cash is hardly going to make it into the bank, let alone sort out my dwindling balance. The big sites like Private, he says, have an extraordinary amount of traffic and are taking half a million members a month, at thirty dollars each.

'But you need to update every day,' he says. 'Updating is key.'

I find myself nodding along in agreement, wondering what on earth all this updating will entail and if this is possibly a simple ruse for him to move into my flat permanently. I spare Ana my worries about Toby's increasingly less temporary status in our lives and set about thinking up ways to get traffic going through SexyPornFlics. I think about making the trips to Hyde Park with Camilla more of a regular event. People would log on all the time to see her posh pussy in variously dangerous outdoor venues. Then again I think Ana might be less than liberal about me seeing so much of one porn star. And at £250 a session, there is the

expense of booking her week after week. It could become quite a profligate way of getting six more people to part with twenty-four dollars a month. But then Toby tells me something quite interesting. Mind you, I did have to wait until 3.15 a.m. to hear it. Text sells, apparently. Titillate the punter with text and you might have people logging on week after week.

‘A bit like Dickens,’ he slurs. ‘Except with tits and knobs.’

With Toby’s advice ringing in my wine-soaked ears, I set about trying to turn the sex surfer on. I think about the adventures of a porn star, then realise it is probably a little too weird an idea. I moot the idea of a man who always gets lucky. But then who wants to read about a man who is more successful at shagging than they are? So I come up with the premise of the horny secretary who is gagging for it all the time. She shags in lifts, under desks, in the back of cabs, with anyone and anything. She is called Bridget Bones and works in the City. I have not worked out exactly what firm she works for yet, but I am pretty sure that’s not the sort of detail the punters are after. Toby thinks it is a great idea. He even suggests that we get an advertising firm on-board to start an email campaign where one of her supposed conquests emails his mate about the horny secretary who is always up for it. We’ll include some stills or possibly some footage and see if it gets passed around the City.

‘It is a very cheap, easy way of getting word of mouth going,’ says Toby. ‘And that’s half the battle.’

I spend the next week or so trying to write like a sexed-up secretary and I can safely say it is a lot harder than I thought it was going to be. By the time Ana comes home at night I am so exhausted by my imaginary sex life I can’t get it up at all. Writing about sex is more difficult than having the stuff

and writing like a well-fucked woman doesn't come easily to me at all. The only thing that keeps me going and amused is that anyone who pisses me off during the week goes in the column as some hard-nosed pervert. Mike Hunt is in there. He now has a fetish for putting office equipment up Bridget's fanny. I can't wait until the whole site actually goes live.

I am busy writing about putting bottles of correction fluid up my arse over my boss's desk when Andrew calls from the bank.

'Good morning,' he says, sounding breezy and efficient. 'Andrew here, I was just giving you a three-month call to check to see how the business is going?'

'Three months?' I say.

'Yes,' he replies. 'That's when you set up Spring Meadow.'

'Oh,' I say.

'I know,' he laughs. 'Doesn't time fly when you are having fun?'

'Doesn't it just.'

'So,' he inhales. I can hear the metaphorical rubbing of his hands. 'What have you been up to?'

'Oh, right. Hang on there a second.' I save the stationery sex on my screen and try to concentrate. 'You know, this and that. I have made a film.'

'Good!' enthuses Andrew. 'I'd like to see it.'

'You would?' Maybe he is more than a one-porn-tape bloke after all.

'Yes,' he says. 'And so would a couple of my colleagues.'

'Oh, right, good, the porn's in the post then,' I joke weakly.

'Better not,' he replies quickly. 'That's illegal.'

'Of course it is.'

'You should come down to the office,' he suggests. 'Bring it with you.'

'Good idea!' I say, thinking anything but.

'Excellent,' says Andrew. 'I shall look forward to that. In the meantime your account . . .'

'Yes?'

'There doesn't seem to be much movement?'

'Ah, yes.'

'Well, there is movement,' he corrects. 'Just all of it is in one direction. Out.'

'Oh, yes,' I say. 'It is mainly outgoings at the moment.'

'Yes. I have noticed. Quite a lot of outgoings.'

'Yes.'

'Yes,' he repeats. 'Do you have any plans?'

'Well, the website is about to launch.' I try and sound optimistic. He says nothing. 'It's full of interesting things.'

'Money-making things?'

'Absolutely. And I am making a new film,' I announce to myself as well as Andrew.

'That's sounds great,' says Andrew. 'When?'

'Soon?'

'How soon?'

'Next month.'

'I shall look forward to that,' he says. 'Do come into the office and have a chat. And bring a few films with you.'

'Will do,' I reply. 'In the next few days.'

I hang up and stare at the computer. Shit. That's it. I am as good as fucked. There is nothing for it. We have one more shot at getting into this industry and we'd better make it good. There has got to be nothing amateur about the next film. It has to work and it has to work well. It has to be hardcore porn with nothing polite or stammering or middle class about it at all. I have to throw everything at it. I can't keep chucking money away. I've already wasted £10k. I think I've got enough money for one more go. And that's it. Or I return

to my dwindling career as a session musician and the long and dull road of increasingly miserable venues with decreasingly attractive returns.

I am sitting racking my brains working out what to do next when it dawns on me. Seb told me some gossip last week in the pub about a very old, very distant friend who might be able to help. And unlike Seb he has proper form. A news cameraman who cut his teeth on 'Local MP Opens Fête' news stories, Kent has since graduated to shift-work on a rolling news channel and has been shooting porn on the side for while. I met him about fifteen years ago when we were both young and hard-drinking and used to stay up late in clubs. I haven't seen him in about a decade. But there's no need to stand on ceremony – from what I remember Kent is a wild kind of bloke who'll either embrace an idea by the balls or tell you to fuck off. So Seb gives me his number and I make the call.

He is neither shocked nor surprised by my telephoning. In fact it is quite hard to work out his reaction at all. He is so monosyllabic and hungover I am surprised he remembers the conversation at all, let alone turns up in the pub on time. Yet he does. Two days later he wanders into the Winged Spur in Clapham dressed like some overgrown schoolboy, in a pair of socks, sandals and shorts. He is six foot four, weighs about twenty stone and is covered in hair. His beard and chest seem to merge into one hirsute mess, and he looks like a yeti.

'All right there,' he sniffs, his long arm extending towards me as he looks over my shoulder. 'Long time no see.'

'Great to see you again,' I say. 'Let me buy you a drink.'

He orders a double vodka shot, no ice, and a packet of pork scratchings, before perching on a stool near the bar. His huge hairy legs unfurl in front of him.

'Sorry I couldn't meet you earlier,' he says, tearing open the packet of pork skin. 'I have been knee-deep in pussy all week.'

'So you're busy?' I say.

'It's more than I can handle, mate,' he says. 'I am shooting and editing back to back. I have the boys from Relish trying to book, Private, everyone always on the blower. Back to back. Shoot. Shoot.' He spins around on his chair, an imaginary camera on his shoulder, taking close-ups of the seven or so other people in the pub. 'I am fucking knackered,' he adds, popping a large piece of crackling into his mouth.

'Right,' I say. 'That's a shame, because I was rather hoping you might come and work for me.'

'Oh,' says Kent, sitting up a bit straighter and wiping his hands down the front of his khaki shorts. 'Well, there's always room for one more.'

'Really? But you're not too busy.'

'Yeah, well, when I say busy, I have a few windows.'

'That's great news.'

'It depends how long you take to shoot and edit,' he says. 'I mean, it takes me a few days to turn things around in the suite.'

'You have an edit suite?'

'Yeah.' He knocks back his vodka in one. 'D'you want another drink?'

Kent and I prop up the bar in his local boozer for the rest of the afternoon. In between the drinks and the pork scratchings and the anecdotes about his last shoot where he worked with some German porn star called Klaus who had 'fucked forty-seven women in a month', I try to persuade Kent to join Touch Wood Films.

'So you're a professional outfit?' he asks, shifting on his chair.

'That's right.'

'How many films have you made?'

'A few,' I say.

'Cool,' he says. 'Any of them any good?'

'Yeah.' My voice squeaks suddenly.

'Good,' he says, taking another swig of his warm vodka.

'There's nothing worse than a poorly shot film.'

'I agree.'

'Well, what's your plan?'

By the time Kent and I stagger out of the pub three hours later we have agreed some sort of business plan. I am to phone as soon as I have booked the girls and the venue and he will film and edit the project on the proviso that I deal with the British Board of Film Classification. Otherwise known as the censor, they view and categorise any film made or shown in the UK, rating it from U to PG, through to 18 or, in the case of hardcore porn, 'Restricted', or R18.

'I just can't bear all the chatting and the toing and froing,' he says, weaving up the street towards his basement flat. 'It does my head in. I am a creative. I can't be doing with fucking detail and I don't understand the rules. I mean, who cares if you wank while pissing when you've just filmed a cock going up someone's arse? How can it be more offensive to fiddle and piss at the same time?'

I have to say that since *Sex and the City of London* was such a total failure I have only had the briefest of dealings with the BBFC. I called them up to ask about whether it was OK to have some spanking in the G-G scene and I found them to be perfectly helpful and polite. It turns out that spanking is fine just so long as it does not verge on abusive and it was consensual in the first place. If the woman doesn't shout out in pain and looks like she is enjoying it and

she is not constrained, so that she can withdraw her consent at any time, then the girls can whack away as hard as they like, hairbrushes included. I suppose it is because the BBFC is a government-funded organisation that they are so user-friendly. They have targets, guidelines and systems just like every other institution. How else are they to differentiate efficiently between an 18, an R18 and a banned film?

Back at the flat and Ana is in a filthy mood. Toby's gone out to buy more cigarettes, or at least that's what he told her, and he hasn't returned in over an hour. So Ana went to give his room an air and has found three empty wine bottles under the bed and a large burn in the carpet.

'And there is porn everywhere!' she screams, her blonde hair flying and her face going red.

'Well, what do you expect?' I say. 'That's the business we're in.'

'The business you're in,' she shouts back. 'I don't want to see the stuff in the house. I want to be able to bring friends home,' she says. 'I want to be able to look under the table, to reach for a magazine without finding some naked woman with her legs apart. This is not fair,' she says. 'This is not what I signed up for when I said that you could go into the business.'

I have to agree she is right. There is quite a lot of porn seepage coming from Toby's room. What was supposed to be the office and the headquarters of the website and Touch Wood Films is now spilling over into the sitting room. My younger brother James came over the other day and saw the photos of Camilla in the park that were lying in a folder on the table in the sitting room. I could tell he was shocked. He stuttered and his cheeks flushed pink. I told him they were Toby's and that he wasn't staying long. James didn't think that improved things much.

'How can you have this sort of stuff in the house?' he asked. 'It's degrading to women.'

I told him a cunt is a cunt is a cunt, whatever way it is photographed or filmed, and I didn't see anything too shocking in that. He didn't seem convinced. He shifted about in his suit and didn't stay long. His flying visit was cut even shorter. We don't see each other much. He is quite a lot younger than me. Ten years makes a big difference when growing up. We have always been cut from entirely different cloth. He works in insurance at the moment. I wouldn't be too surprised if, like Dad, he decided to join the Church.

I manage to calm Ana down and promise to tidy the place up a bit. I have to keep her onside. She has been such a star about the whole venture so far. I don't mind getting the Hoover out and spraying some Pledge around if it keeps her happy. The last thing I need is for her to go all crazy and unsupportive just when my plans are beginning to come back together.

After a while Toby falls through the front door, a bottle of champagne in his hand.

'Where have you been?' demands Ana, more jaded than annoyed. Not even she can remain cross for more than a couple of hours.

'We're going live tonight,' announces Toby. 'So I thought I'd stock up to celebrate.' He waves the half-drunk bottle of champagne at both of us and raises up a heavy-looking carrier from Oddbins. 'Go on,' he grins. 'Because you're worth it!'

'What do you mean we are going live tonight?' asks Ana.

'Launching the website,' says Toby.

'Shouldn't we be doing press and things?' she asks.

'Press?' Toby looks extremely confused.

'Yes, you know, telling people we are out there,' says Ana.

'We?' I ask.

'I mean you,' she says.

'It's porn,' says Toby. 'It doesn't need advertising. People will find you, us.'

'Oh,' says Ana, sounding rather disappointed.

'We will start advertising,' adds Toby, trying to keep her interested. 'But we don't have the cash at the moment. Later, when the vibrator sales go through the roof and we have money to burn, we can advertise on the Hun.'

The Hun is one of the largest porn search engines around. Even someone as computer illiterate as me has used it in the pursuit of internet porn. Covered in thousands of small thumbnail photos of various different types of porn, the idea is that you click through to the website advertised and join it. The Hun gets half the money and the porn site itself gets the rest. It is a good shop window in a crowded high street. An even better, but more expensive, way of alerting punters of our existence is to advertise directly on the site, rather than simply post up a thumbnail. However, when Toby enquired the other day, it cost a thousand dollars a month for something that flashes up on the site every couple of seconds. For the moment we don't have the cash flow or indeed the product at the other end of it to justify that sort of expense. When we have more films to sell and more clips to download on SexyPornFlics.com, then it is just the sort of marketing I shall be interested in. In the meantime the fact that we have a website at all and that we are about to launch it on the internet is exciting enough. Even if Ana doesn't quite buy it.

'So,' says Toby, grinning and stumbling towards his bedroom. 'We have about half an hour to go before we launch. Drink?'

'Great idea,' I say, following him into his room. 'Ana?' I turn around. 'Are you going to join us?'

I can tell this is not the sort of glamorous evening that she had in mind, sitting at the end of the bed in the spare room, a warm glass of Lanson in her hand, staring at a screen. But she shrugs and goes into the kitchen to get some glasses.

Half an hour later the three of us are sitting in a darkened room staring at the computer, waiting for something to happen. SexyPornflics.com is up and running. The bright pink logo is flashing away. There are a couple of clips from *Sex and the City of London* for you to download. There are photos of Camilla in suspenders and nothing else posing in the grass. She is also totally nude behind a bush, up against a tree and if you look carefully there is a police sign visible in the background. I have some vibrators for sale. They are pink and made of a soft jelly rubber and are sitting in a box underneath the table in the hall. Toby managed to find a wholesale supplier of these new 'Just Perfect' dildos from California Exotics, so we bought a hundred of them for five hundred quid and we are flogging them for £34.99 a pop. We are hoping to make a killing. My 'Bridget Bones's Diary' looks good, laid out with a few racy secretary poses that I asked Camilla to do as a favour. In fact, as I sit here sipping my champagne, I have to say I am feeling a little proud of myself and Toby. I may have messed up the movie but the website looks great. All we need now is for someone to join.

Ana shifts on the end of the bed. 'How long do you think?' she asks Toby.

'How long is a piece of string,' he replies helpfully.

'But normally?' she asks.

'This is the first porn site I have done,' he says. Now he tells me, I think, squeezing the stem of my champagne glass. 'But it shouldn't be long,' he says. 'The domain name alone will get traffic.'

'Really?' I ask, trying not to sound too desperate.

'Trust me,' he winks. 'SexyPornFlics is a brilliant name. I surf for porn all the time.'

'Let's hope so,' I say, draining my glass, our life savings disappearing before my eyes.

'There!' screams Toby, pointing at the screen. 'You have a hit!'

'A hit? Where?' I lean in.

'There! Look! The figure one at the bottom of the screen!'

'Where?' asks Ana, squinting in the dark.

'There!' Toby leaps off the bed and jabs away at the bottom of the screen. 'One, one! Can you see it?'

'Who is it?' I ask. 'Can you tell?'

'Actually I can,' says Toby, slipping in behind the keyboard. 'I can back-trace it. As it is just one person.' He fiddles and types away on the keyboard for a minute. 'There you go,' he says, sitting back. 'He's called Hard Dick,' he announces. 'From Alabama.'

'Hard Dick from Alabama,' I repeat.

'Well,' says Ana, getting off the bed. 'He sounds nice.'

Ana leaves in a cloud of repulsed annoyance. Her goodwill towards me is wearing thin. This site has to make money and quickly if our relationship is going to last through to the end of the summer. I think about following her out of the room and having some sort of consolatory conversation with her. Something along the lines of the worst being over, that Toby is leaving soon and that we shall start seeing dividends very shortly. But as I get off the bed Toby shouts, 'There's another', at the top of his voice. So I sit back down again and join him.

We sit there most of the night like a couple of schoolgirls at a boy band concert, squealing with delight at every hit we see. They come thick and fast between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. and after that they trail off a bit. It develops into some sort

of drinking game where every time the site takes a hit we have to take a swig of champagne. Then we move on to vodka and finally at four in the morning some Lithuanian spirits that I brought back from a stag weekend. I end up sleeping next to Toby fully clothed, in my shoes. We don't wake up until lunchtime the next day.

By the time Toby and I surface, I find a short note from Ana demanding that I clear up. She has already gone to work. I am worried that I might have pushed it too far, although unfortunately I am not really capable of dealing with it. But I try my best. I grovel and grunt a few apologies down the line to her answerphone. She is dropping my calls, of course. And then I concentrate on eating as many bacon sandwiches as I can in order to soak up the acid and alcohol in my stomach. Toby can't even be bothered to do that. Like a true alcoholic he proposes to smoke through his hangover and contemplates a hair of the dog can of lager at around two in the afternoon.

While Toby's head is in the fridge, slowly making the decision between a can of Stella and San Miguel, I check up on the website. I try and call it up on the computer and it refuses to appear. I try again and the thing crashes.

'Toby!' I shout, my heart beating faster, my hangover hurting, my hands sweating. I can't cope with this venture failing as well. 'Toby! Toby! Get your arse in here.' He must have heard the panic in my voice because he arrives in the room at a trot.

'What?' he asks, cracking open his can of Stella.

'It's crashed. The site is down,' I say. 'Look! I can't get it up on the screen.'

'Don't panic,' he says, taking a sip

'But it's fucked. The site has crashed. Something's wrong.'

'What time is it?' he asks. Toby is not the sort of man to wear a watch.

'Um, two,' I say looking at mine.

'Don't worry,' he shrugs. 'It's all the Yanks coming online.'

'I don't understand?' I say.

'You don't have enough bandwidth,' he says. 'They've slowed it right down.'

Toby goes on to explain that American porn habits are a little different from ours. In the UK most punters download porn after they have come home from the pub. So the busiest amount of traffic on the internet in the UK is between 11 p.m. and about 2 a.m., when they usually pass out. The weekends are quiet because that is when punters are playing with their kids, however there is a surge on Saturday nights. In the US, they download porn as soon as they come in to work. They hang up their coats, get themselves a latte, check their emails and then log on to TeenVirginSluts.com.

'It's quite interesting,' opines Toby, taking another sip from his beer. 'With a bandwidth as narrow as yours, you'll be able to see what happens when each state comes in to work. You'll get an East Coast and then West Coast surge. Then it will quieten down until the Brits get home from work. The entire plant is looking at dirty pictures the whole time,' he smiles. 'Welcome to the world of twenty-four-hour porn.'

And as the day progresses Toby is proved right. The early surge at 2 p.m. makes way for a greater one between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. when the Angelinos get into work. Then the system frees itself up for a few hours until the drunk Brits start to come on-board. It is fascinating to watch. However, it is not particularly lucrative. Toby and I watch the website for a whole weekend. We watch the peaks and troughs and the traffic going through it. And by Sunday night we have had just fewer than half a million visitors and no members at all. We have not shifted one dildo. Not one membership.

'It's early days,' says Toby, sucking a fag and flicking the ash on the floor. 'What you need is content. I mean, why would I join when all you are offering so far are a few fanny shots and some ropy old anal?'

There is nothing for it. I have to empty the bank account, call in some really big favours and make another film as soon as I can, otherwise I am going under and I am taking Ana and the flat with me.

So I pour myself a shot of vodka, pull out my old address book and ring up my very old mate Simon. He owns a gin palace of a house in Oxfordshire. It's big. It's swish. It's very upmarket. And amazingly, after ten minutes of begging on the telephone, he actually agrees to let us film there. I call up Kent.

'Get your cameras together,' I say. 'We're on.'