

## **Turpitude & Bad Financing**

By

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John lay back on the bed and stared up at his reflection in the mirror on the ceiling. He had put on a lot of weight recently, and he felt fat. His naked body looked grotesque to him, although Sheena didn't seem to mind.

“Do you mind if I smoke?” Sheena asked.

“Go right ahead,” he replied.

She reached across his chest for her cigarettes on the night table. Her bleach-blond hair felt like straw in his face, and her breath smelled of alcohol. She had a beautiful body, but her face was awful. Her overbite made kissing a bit uncomfortable, and her makeup was always too thick.

“I had a great time,” she said. “I love the way you fuck me. I should be paying you,” she giggled, grabbing his balls and smiling. Her bucked teeth were crooked and twisted, and her lipstick was smeared across her chin.

“Thanks,” said John. He felt tired and wished he could sleep for awhile, but the room rental was only for three hours.

Her cell phone started ringing again. It rang the whole time they were having sex, but thankfully she didn't answer. She reached across him for her phone, exhaling a thick cloud of smoke in his face. “I'll be down in ten minutes. Just wait for me in the lobby,” she said, hanging up the phone. “That was my driver. We have to get going.”

They got out of bed and sorted through the pile of clothes on the floor. She squeezed into a dress at least two sizes too small. It was so short it barely covered her ass, and her breasts spilled out over the top.

“Do you like this dress? I designed it myself.”

“It's lovely,” said John. The truth was he was embarrassed being seen in public with her. She knew what he was thinking.

“It doesn't make me look too slutty?”

“These are your work clothes,” said John. “You're supposed to look sexy.”

“Yes, but I don't want to look slutty,” she said.

“You look fine,” he said, stroking her waist.

He reached into his wallet for his money. She took it and kissed him on the cheek. “The next one is on me,” she said, downing the rest of her drink. “I owe you for helping me with my phone bill. Nobody has ever done that for me before. I didn't even have to ask, you just offered.”

“You got to have a phone to make a living,” John replied. “I was happy to help.”

“You saved my ass,” she said. She stuffed the money in her purse and went into the bathroom to fix her makeup. “Listen, my birthday is coming up in two weeks. I want you to come to my party.”

“I’d love to,” John lied. He wasn’t sure about the idea of mixing business with pleasure, and thought she was kidding when she blurted out that she loved him in the middle of her third orgasm.

They headed to the elevator down the hall. A young couple in the elevator tried not to stare at her dress on the way down. The front desk was enclosed in bullet-proof glass, and a bank of video screens monitored the hallways. He slipped the room key through a slot in the wall and they headed outside. An old Chevy was waiting out front.

“That’s my ride,” she said, kissing him on the cheek. “Call me!” she said, scampering down the steps in her high-heels toward the car.

He felt so exhausted he could hardly drive home, but was happy to have been laid. He lived alone in a small apartment on the top floor of an old house. Although charming, the place had no furniture. His wife had kicked him out with no money, and since he lost his job, he barely had enough to get by. He went over to his computer and checked his e-mail. One from Belinda had just arrived, which he dreaded opening.

He read the e-mail carefully, trying to read between the lines. He had never seen her so angry. Normally she tolerated his bad behavior with such even-tempered understanding, and always responded to his vitriolic e-mails with kind words. It drove him crazy. He finally stepped over the line when he called her a whore, and she warned him not to show up at the reunion. He’d be damned if he would let her tell him what to do

on his own turf. The reunion was being held in New York this year, and she was coming from Switzerland.

*Dear Belinda,*

*I know you don't want to see me, but it's my school, too. I am going for one night to simply say hello to friends. I promise I will be a perfect gentleman, and there will be no unpleasantness between us. Perhaps you will save one dance for me.*

*Best regards,*

*John*

*P.S. My novel is finished. Please understand I didn't write it to hurt you, I wrote it to survive.*

He read through his e-mail once more before clicking the send button. “That should get her,” he thought to himself. His manuscript sat on the table next to him—600 pages of some of the most self-absorbed writing ever produced. He wrote it in just under ten months. Since he lost his job he did nothing but write. The book started out with the best of intentions—when they first broke up he just sat down and wrote out of despair.

He sent her the first chapter and the outline. She was instantly mesmerized with the story. He wrote well, and intended to recapture their childhood memories of when they were in boarding school together. He did so with amazing passion, and recreated his days in Switzerland with painstaking accuracy, describing in vivid detail the exclusive boarding school nestled in the Alps, overlooking the Rhone valley. Those were the happiest years of his life.

She insisted that he finish writing the story and suggested that he send her two pages a day to ensure he stuck to the discipline. She marked up his pages with careful comments and sent them back every morning. Although her suggestions were thoughtful,

his real motivation for writing the book was to win her heart, but the writing didn't have the intended effect, and it made him more and more furious. So much passion went into that book.

As the writing progressed her character began to live and breathe, and he started to realize certain things about her that made her uncomfortable. The more he dug into the writing the angrier he got. The story was becoming more realistic. Of course, he took several creative liberties, especially when it came to sex, but all-in-all he had captured so much about her perfectly, even if she didn't agree with what he portrayed.

The true test of his artistic integrity came when he let others read his work. He submitted the first two chapters to several alumni he contacted through the school's website. Everyone marveled at his craftsmanship and knew instantly who he was writing about, but the first two chapters were simply a poignant recount of boyhood longing and desire. Nonetheless, it left his readers wanting more, and he knew he was onto something big.

His moment of glory came when he sent the webmaster his first two chapters. His name was Devesh, an Indian who was a couple years older than he. He was also sponsoring the reunion. Although they had never met, Devesh insisted on posting the first two chapters on the website for all to enjoy. John forwarded her the comments people sent about the story. She was horrified.

By now she simply stopped responding, which only infuriated him more. If he were going to the reunion, there was no way he was going alone, but finding a date was near impossible. He had been unemployed for so long that he never went out and had lost touch with all his friends.

He would hire an escort. He wanted someone with class, but not too beautiful. She needed to be close to his age, if not just a couple of years younger. It would have been bad form to show up with a woman not much older than everyone's daughters. How would people react if showed up with Sheena? He laughed out loud. If nothing else he'd make a lasting impression. The better escorts could easily be found on the internet, and he went to Google to do a search for a few of the more upscale services.

A number of sites were available, most of which charged a monthly fee. He didn't need an ongoing service and finally found a site that was free—getescorts.com—an international service for professionals and clients. He did a search for the perfect date.

He found her. Her name was Marina, of Greek descent. She had class and beauty, and spoke several languages. Access to her private website was by invitation only. He sent her a polite e-mail, to which she responded the next day. Her website sported her in various positions, wearing slinky, French lingerie. She was gorgeous.

*Gentlemen, my name is Marina, but my friends call me Nina. I'm an international, traveling escort for discriminating gentlemen only. I will fulfill all your desires and make your fantasies come true.*

She did not do hourly functions, and the minimum outcall was three hours—he needed her for twenty-four. Her rates were expensive—she'd cost \$2,500.00 for the full duration, but he really wanted to make an impression. He filled out the form describing the event and sent her the link to the school's website. She even took the time to read his excerpt. Per her request, he sent along a couple of recent photos.

She agreed to go on the proviso that her fee be pre-paid in full. This was common practice among the better escorts, who took their safety seriously. The problem was raising the money. He would have to spend the last of his savings. She gave him

directions on how to make the payment: Open an e-gold account on the internet, wire the money to a bank in Canada, which would then fund the account. E-gold was a deposit account, only the funds were represented in gold, which then could be converted to any type of currency. He went down to his bank and made the arrangements.

Each bank took a percentage, and when all was said and done it cost him an extra two hundred dollars. It seemed like a lot of effort for a few hours of unbridled passion, but from all the reviews he had read about her on other websites, she was worth it.

He e-mailed Marina to tell her the transaction was complete, and she sent him a numbered account to where she wanted the money transferred, with additional instructions to note that the money was a gift from John. The money would be completely untraceable.

He wondered if he should go through with it. After all, this was the last of his savings, and he had never even spoken to her—if she wanted to abscond with his money there was no stopping her. He had nothing to lose and completed the transaction. A day later he received an e-mail from her:

*Dear John,*

*I am really looking forward to spending the day with a handsome, young writer. I'm sure we'll have a lovely time. You'll find that I am very easy going and can fit into any social situation with ease and grace, and I'm always willing to please.*

*Kisses,*

*Marina*

John was excited, but then realized he didn't have proper clothes for the one event he really needed them—the dance where everyone would relive the weekly soirées at the school. Although broke, his credit was excellent, which, considering all he had been

through, was nothing short of a miracle. He went down to the mall and opened a credit account at a fine men's store. The perfect attire for a summer evening of dinner and dancing would be a classic, navy-blue blazer and light-grey slacks, which happened to be the colors of the school uniform.

A swarm of salesmen helped him pick out the perfect outfit, with brand-new shoes and matching tie. The clothes were custom tailored and would be ready just a few days before the event. All told he spent more than \$1,200 dollars, but he considered it money well spent. Everything was falling into place.

That night he wrote Marina an e-mail about an idea he had for a cover story about how they first met: He was in the city one fine Sunday morning, sitting at one of those charming outdoor cafes in East Village, sipping a cappuccino and working on his novel, when he struck up a conversation with a lovely young lady, who seemed interested in what he was writing. They immediately hit it off, and the rest is history.

She responded by adding that, although the chemistry was strong, they found they had a lot of common interests, and a couple days later she invited him to dinner where they spent the evening eating gourmet cooking and drinking fine wine.

After reading her e-mail, he realized what a gem he had found, and could barely wait to meet her. Marina requested that he send her a schedule of events so she could be prepared. He obliged by sending her an e-card with a poem he had written, as well as the schedule, and gave her directions on how to get to the Douglaston train station, where they agreed to meet before driving to the reunion. The reunion was being held at a cozy resort in the Catskills, which would be vaguely reminiscent of the Swiss Alps. It would be perfect.

A couple days later, Marina responded:

*Dear John,*

*First of all, please pardon me for replying late to your emails. I have been very busy and my schedule has involved a lot of travel lately, due to which I have been unable to reply. I viewed the greeting card you sent me, it was lovely, Thank you, and the anticipation seems to be growing alike on both sides \*smile\**

*I also read the beautiful poem you wrote, did you write it yourself? If yes, it was wonderful, if not, it was still wonderful.*

*I viewed the schedule and looks like we will be getting quite some time to ourselves to enjoy each other as you put it \*smile\* I would love to know what you enjoy more so time will not be wasted.*

*I could wear something elegant for the dinner; let me know what you prefer. I have a huge wardrobe that I could choose from, or maybe I could buy something special for the event.*

*Awaiting your reply,*

*Much Love,*

*Marina*

John smiled as he read her e-mail. Beyond being beautiful she expressed herself well, and he knew she'd be the perfect companion. He carefully wrote his reply:

*Marina,*

*I'm glad to hear from you. No need to apologize—I knew you were traveling. I hope your travels were good.*

*I'm glad you enjoyed the poem. It was my own. I don't write a lot of poetry. As I said, I write it to capture the essence of a larger project, or to simply capture a feeling. I also write poetry in French and Italian. I love words, but, strangely, I don't read much anymore. When I was young I read nearly a book a day. This continued all the way through college. I've had an interesting life; perhaps even as interesting as yours. I have a feeling there is so much to you; it's a shame we only have a day together.*

*What do I like? I like sexy, sophisticated, gritty and down to earth. I like a woman who is not afraid of bugs but enjoys being a girly-girl. I like strong, independent women who love to fuck. I love women in general. How do I envision our night*

*together at the soirée? I see you in contrast to my traditional blue and grey. I see you in something slinky, sexy yet ever so tasteful that accentuates your lovely curves—perhaps something in pink or chartreuse? The choice is yours. I trust your judgment as well as your taste. The best possible effect would be to capture the envy of women and the desire of men. You have the perfect body and sultriness to do just that—mix it up with your sophisticated style and we have an evening of indoor fireworks!*

*Although I always treat a woman like a lady I am no prude. If the mood is right I will do just about anything—and anywhere! I am one of those men that really gets off on giving pleasure as much as receiving it. Throughout my travels I have found some women are just not comfortable with that. I think it's a question of social conditioning. I am not your average man—no question about it.*

*We will talk more about what I like, both sexually and otherwise. But for now, goodnight.*

*Kisses, amore mio*

He read his e-mail carefully before sending it, making sure it expressed all that he needed. But then, feeling exceptionally good about himself and the whole situation, he decided to keep writing:

*Marina.*

*Forgive me, but I am feeling inspired. There are a few other things you should know that will make our evening more enjoyable. I am a very affectionate person. I like holding hands and small kisses. I love it when a woman puts her arm in mine and presses herself against me when we are talking. There are times when a simple stroke down the small of your back is more reassuring than anything words can express.*

*This is not to say I like my women clingy, but words are just words and people usually define themselves by their actions. I like a woman who is not afraid to tell me what she wants. I love oral sex—both giving and receiving.*

*Smell is the most important thing in the world to me. If I don't like the way a woman smells I can't stand being near her, but if she is wearing the right perfume, God help us both if I manage to get her clothes off. I used to live on Sunset Cliffs in San Diego. Every summer the night-blooming jasmine would open below my window. The scent was so overpowering I could have three or four orgasms in a row without stopping. My girlfriend at the time used to call me just to ask if the jasmine was blooming.*

*As much as I hate to admit, the perfume “Angel” makes me really horny. The problem is it’s too powerful to wear in most social situations. I suggest you bring several samples and we try them out with some of your silkier lingerie. It would be a fun way to spend the afternoon. I would buy you some myself but since I haven’t actually met you it’s hard to know what is going to be good for you. Perfumes have a funny way of reacting with your skin. There is a good possibility that perfume won’t be necessary. Not all women like it, and some are even allergic.*

*I believe I am painting a fairly accurate picture of who I am and what I like. I could get more explicit if you need me too. I am not at all afraid to talk about sex, or what I want. But I do prefer to leave more to the imagination and allow the fantasy to work its magic. I love to fuck, Marina. And if it feels right I can fuck four or five times a day. I like romance and creativity. Sitting in a bathtub surrounded with candles and wine is a great prelude to a wonderful night in bed.*

*I believe that the art of romance has been lost in many ways. I believe you and I are going to have a marvelous time together.*

*Kisses,*

*John*

The part about the sex was most certainly true—Belinda had never experienced the kind of sex that he gave her, and the brief times they spent together at her second home in Ibiza were mostly marathon sessions of animal passion in bed. She complained that she had gone most of her life without knowing good sex until she met him, and he was happy knowing that he had ruined her in bed for all other men.

Despite the sex, she longed for her ex-boyfriend, a rather austere Italian aristocrat, whom she couldn’t purge from her heart, no matter how well he pleased her. She constantly compared them against each other, and John never measured up—he just wasn’t refined enough, but her ex was just too severe. She always said that that if she could only put the two of them together, she’d have the perfect man.

John knew about him going into the relationship, but he didn't care—he was in love. When she finally told him that she couldn't love him because she couldn't get her ex out of her heart, he was demolished. Now was his chance at revenge. He would show up at the reunion with a beautiful woman, on the cusp of a budding new literary career.

The final touch before the reunion was to get the right car. His raggedy, old Toyota was so beat up he wasn't sure it would make the two hour trip through the Catskills. The car couldn't be too flashy, but he didn't want to seem too set in his ways either. He decided on a luxury rental—a BMW 535i—sporty but practical. It exemplified his European exposure and good taste. He was lucky he made the reservation early; it was the last car on the lot.

That evening he wrote Marina to finalize all the details. She didn't respond. In fact, he didn't hear from her for several days. Where could she be? The reunion was only three days away. He went up to her website, but nothing seemed amiss. He went back to getescorts.com to see if her ad was still there. He nearly choked on his corn muffin when he read the post on the message board: A well-known escort had been busted recently in Rhode Island in a hotel room with her date. He was sure it was Marina. He sent a private message to the escort who made the post:

*Hi,*

*I'm not sure how to ask about this, but I had a date with Marina this Wednesday, and I haven't heard from her in several days. I'm hoping she's alright.*

*Best regards,*

*John*

She wrote back with her picture attached, in a sultry pose leaning against the wall in lacy, black lingerie. She was even more beautiful than Marina, although half her age.

*Hi John,*

*Well, this isn't your lucky day. In fact, it was Marina who was busted. Apparently she had been seeing the same guy for months, and his wife had him tailed. The poor girl was hauled off to jail, but the cops don't have anything on her.*

*They've taken over her website and computer, so I'd be careful about sending any e-mails, because they are probably monitoring them too.*

*Sorry to break it to you,*

*Miriam*

John was floored. All his plans just went out the window, and he sat in front of his computer not knowing what to do. It was doubtful she'd keep the appointment, and even if she did he wasn't sure it was such a good idea. He sat at his computer and stared into space. He was angry at Belinda for not responding to any of his e-mails, and he was outraged that he had been screwed once again.

"She's not getting away with this," he blurted out loud. In a fit of rage he pounded out a nasty e-mail to her ex-boyfriend, including an excerpt from the last chapter of his novel, depicting a lurid love scene between him and Belinda, with some very choice dialogue where she trashes the poor man for being a mediocre lover.

It was late at night when he wrote it, which meant his unsuspecting victim read it sometime mid morning. When he received his reply, he immediately regretted what he had done.

*And who are you Mr. Smith? Do I know you?*

John didn't know what to do. Obviously he hadn't read the excerpt yet, and he hoped with all his heart he simply deleted the e-mail, thinking it was just the ranting of some lunatic from afar. Out of sheer panic he whipped off another e-mail, telling him that he was a friend of Belinda's, and that if he had any brains he'd ask her properly to marry

him, even if he thought he was a major dickhead, but that there was no explaining love. Furthermore, if he ever told Belinda about any of this he'd fly to Italy and beat the shit out of him. A few minutes later he received his response:

*By the way Mr. Smith, I read your story. It was very well written, with all the right introspective glimpses in all the right places, apart from a blatant sex complex. You should give up hate-mail—and booze, so it seems—and begin a serious writing career.*

John was flattered at first, until he noticed that he also copied Belinda on the e-mail. Now he was so flustered he was beside himself. He expected Belinda to jump into the fray shortly, but she never even responded. Apologies were useless; he had gone too far and was falling hopelessly over the edge of decency and sanity. At this point he knew going to the reunion was out of the question.

The morning of the reunion he ran into his landlady, a friendly old woman who treated him as if he were a son. She was sitting on her veranda reading the newspaper when John came out the door.

“John! Today is the reunion. When are you leaving?”

“I'm not going,” he replied.

“What do you mean you're not going? Of course you're going. You've been planning this for weeks.”

“I don't think it's such a good idea,” he said.

“Nonsense! Go to the reunion and see your old friends. Don't worry about Belinda. She's out of your life.”

“I don't know if I want to subject myself to all that pain,” John replied.

“Go to the reunion and stand on your own. You're an author, and people will respect you.”

“If only she knew,” John thought to himself, but suddenly he got the idea he should go just to face the music. What he had done was so reprehensible he needed to be punished. It was time to step up and take his medicine like a man.

“Maybe you’re right,” he said. “I want to see what’s become of those people.”

“That’s the spirit,” she replied, giving him a warm hug.

Devesh insisted that he read an excerpt from his novel after dinner, and John had agreed. He packed his clothes along with his manuscript in the back of the car. Everyone expected him to show up with his girlfriend, but that was not a big deal. Nonetheless, he waited at the train station to see if Marina was on the train. When the train came and went he realized she wasn’t coming, and headed upstate into the Catskill Mountains to face his retribution.

The resort was empty when he arrived. Everyone was off on a promenade at some lake for the day. He went to his room and went through his manuscript, trying to find something appropriate for his reading. Almost every page contained some reference to Belinda, and he didn’t want to read something that might embarrass her further—he was in enough trouble.

Later that afternoon he went downstairs to look at the aquatic facilities and saw Belinda sitting in the hot tub by herself. She stood straight up when she saw him. She wore a light-blue bathing suit that accentuated her perfect curves. She had lost some weight since he saw her last, and she looked even more beautiful than when he remembered.

“Hi, Belinda,” he said meekly. A wave of pain shot through his body when she looked straight into his eyes with such anger and hurt that he knew she wanted to rip his head off. Instead, she walked right by him and dove into the pool.

He watched her swim for a moment, not knowing what to do. He knew talking to her was useless, so he went back inside where he saw some of his old classmates. They were all faces he recognized, but he wasn't friends with any of them, and he realized what a mistake he made by coming. He tried to make small talk, but he felt like an idiot, and he couldn't control the pain he was feeling.

Dinner would be in less than an hour, and everyone was going to meet at the bar for cocktails beforehand. John went back to the room and changed carefully into his new clothes. He gathered up his manuscript and carried it downstairs as if he were carrying the Dead Sea Scrolls. He placed it at the end of the bar for all to browse. A woman he never saw before approached him. She was attractive and slim and spoke with a southern accent. “You're John Smith. Hi! My name is Carolyn. I read your excerpt and really liked it. I want to read more.”

He began to feel a bit better about himself. “Thank you. I've just finished it, and I'm looking for an agent.”

“That's wonderful! It's about time somebody wrote about those days in Switzerland. You really recaptured those times so well.”

“Thank you,” said John, realizing she didn't know who he was writing about.

Belinda walked into the room. Her long, dark hair—now streaked with gray—fell past her shoulders. She wore a simple, summer dress, and looked so elegant and beautiful he couldn't help but wince when he saw her. She ignored him and talked with her friends.

Everyone chatted about old times when they were just kids in this marvelous boarding school. John moped around the lounge, trying his best to look cheerful and happy.

Dinner was called, and John sat a table as far from Belinda as possible. Every so often she glanced over at him, her chocolate-brown eyes wide with hurt and anger, wondering what drove him to do something so awful. He tried to be casual, but he knew how much damage had been done.

During dinner a slideshow displayed pictures of everyone when they were kids. John's picture was near the end. He was sixteen years old, sitting in the grass with a couple of friends, drinking a bottle of beer. He remembered how he felt back then and realized things hadn't changed; he was still a hurt, little kid inside. And then he became deeply sorry for hurting the woman he loved.

After dinner, people stood up and told amusing anecdotes about their times in Switzerland. Finally it was John's turn to speak. He went to the bar, brought in his manuscript and shuffled through it nervously, looking for his excerpt. During one of the soirées, he and a bunch of other students went behind the school and got stoned out of their minds on hashish.

As he read, he saw the horrified faces of some of the people in the audience. Devesh got up to hold the door shut so the children couldn't hear about what drug addicts their parents were. Some of these people were either running for public office or had aspirations to do so.

After the reading, he told everyone that it was a true story, and that he had just finished the novel and was looking for a publisher. People's reaction was lukewarm at best, and then Belinda simply got up and left the room. At that moment, John realized

that most everyone knew what was happening, and that retribution had been served. He didn't see her the rest of the night.

He got up early the next morning for breakfast. People gave him dirty looks. One of the alumni simply told him that his book didn't sound like anything anyone would want to read and walked away. John knew it wasn't true, but he understood why he would say something like that. Belinda came to breakfast just as he finished eating, and he realized she had changed. He no longer existed for her, and he felt like a ghost. He left the hotel quickly without a word.

That night Sheena agreed to meet him at the hotel bar. She was never on time, and he had already finished his third rum and Coke when she showed up with her bad teeth and crooked smile. She wore a tight red dress with holes down the front that made her look like a giant Swiss cheese.

“Did you miss me?” she asked, giving him a big, wet kiss.

John smiled. At least his hooker still loved him.

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