

**criminals
courtesans
and
constables**

**a novel
by
gaylon kent**

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This is a novel.

*All elements are either products of the author's imagination or are used
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Anything else is a coincidence.

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Chapter 1

The Girls

One

I had just laid down on the bunk in me cell when I heard something make noise under the pillow. I was curious, as you might well have been, too, because who the hell expects to hear something under their pillow in the bloody nick? I sat up, lifted the pillow, and saw the folded paper. I opened it and there was a hand drawn picture of The Firm's logo: a fist holding a hammer. Pretty good drawing, too. Maybe not a museum piece, but not too bad, on the whole. I could hardly frame it, or get caught with it because that would raise more questions than I cared to answer, so I tore it up and flushed it down the loo.

Plainly, someone from The Firm favored me with a drawing of their, our, logo to let me know there was at least one other member of The Firm here in the nick with me. Probably a staffer, too, quite, because other cons didn't have access to me cell when I was gone and none of them mouth breathers struck me as someone capable of drawing anything more complicated than a stickman besides.

It was good to hear from The Firm, even in this directly indirect manner. I had worked for them for years and I'd done good by them since they

recruited me after I stopped running beautiful and classy young women in and out of palaces and luxury hotels. Made them, and me, an awful lot of money and I'd gotten nicked working one of me side rackets, so there was nothing to implicate them.

They weren't just saying hallo though. I was mulling it over a bit, as well as fretting over how bad dinner would probably be, when it hit me perhaps they were going to help me escape. *That* would make sense. Coincidence, too, because I'd been thinking about escape me own self.

Me first year or so here in the nick I hadn't worried about it. I know it's in the Convict Bylaws that I should be thinking about blowing the joint, but my ten year sentence wasn't going to be the hardest time in the history of confinement. I had requested and received protective custody - PC - mainly so I wouldn't have to deal with mouth breathers in general population. I still had to earn my keep, but I was never alone with other cons and the only other human contact I had was with the screws, including the women screw with the humongous funbags who obliged me to boff her occasionally. Rape, some might call it. A piece of nookie I called it. While this kind of solitude might be the bane of some, I've always been able to turn solitude into advantage. There was a telly and the library always had a book I wanted to read. Me job in the workshop got me out of the cell to stretch me legs, though I had some zero aptitude for making the furniture that went to government offices and, like most others in the nick, I was lousy at following directions.

Besides, I'd grown weary of living underground and going out in disguise, despite my expert talent at changing my appearance.

Then I started hearing - from Monica, other comrades and the screw who forced me to boff her - that the nation whose Games we'd had some fun at had gotten their knickers in a twist and were making preliminary noises about extraditing me. The exact charges appeared to still be under construction, but guilt or innocence was hardly a factor. They were hell bent on convicting somebody and they knew my whereabouts for the next nine years so they had time to work up a case. So I'd been thinking escape. I was determined not to be a guest of this country because the time there was notoriously hard.

I wasn't worried about getting by on the outside. I had ample money in a Swiss bank account. I had contacts. Importantly, too, I had papers, all legit, provided by The Firm. Not only that, I could fit in anywhere. Neither tall nor short, thin nor stout, handsome nor ugly, I could disguise myself at need to be any of those things except, perhaps, short. You can't do much about short; either your short or you're not, it's hard to fake. I also had a nice facility for languages, with fluency in English and many European languages, all unaccented, plus a high level of familiarity with the Romance languages and some Asian languages too. I was everyone and I was no one, a face in the collective human sea. I could hide in plain sight virtually anywhere except, perhaps, the Congo.

Now that I think about it, maybe The Firm was planning to bust me. My first job had been in the kitchen, which was located in another part of the prison. Then a few months I guess it was I was moved along to the carpentry shop, which was located adjacent to the admin building, which was where PC was located, on the very top floor, probably on the theory that the farther away we were from the general custody morons the better. Stupid for them in retrospect because the admin building had a front door you could just sashay out of. Employees did it every day so escape was probably doable.

Planning isn't really an accurate word at this stage. I knew too little to plan anything other than utilizing me only real talents: keeping me mouth shut and me wits about me, talents whose usefulness simply cannot be underestimated. Actually, part of me wasn't entirely thrilled with this. I wanted to do my time, get out and live off my fortune, but the notes in this symphony had changed. If The Firm sprung me they would expect some return on their investment and there was some zero nothing I could do about it. You must take what nature and circumstance provide you and do your best to make a go of it.

Two

I'd always been a thief.

I was about eight or nine, I suppose, when I first started taking whatever I could get me paws on, consistent with what would fit in me pockets. First

I was stealing things from school, stores, lots of places, simply because they were there to take and no one was there to stop me. When there was someone there to stop me I made sure they didn't. I never got caught either because I had a knack for it. A lot of getting on this world is thinking you can and I always thought, knew, I could steal. What was funny is it didn't even matter if I needed what I stole or not. If I did happen to need it, thieving it was a lot more exciting than queuing up and paying for it and if I didn't need it, well, I could fence or give it away or, at need, toss it.

And that was that, really, my start in on a life outside the law. Even after thieving became familiar, after it became the life I chose to live, even after it became boring, it was more exciting than minding the law. I never thought twice about it, really. Me mum and pappy minded the law and they worked their fingers to the bone for what? To come home to their rat hole flat and their snotty kids and get started on the night's drinking and fighting. Heck, I'd drink, too, if I were them. I'd start in the morning, though, to make the monotony of today being just like yesterday easier to take. Meanwhile, I stole, kept what I wanted, sold the rest and always had money in me pocket.

A chance to diversify came when I was about 15 or so. Again, I utilized my talent for keeping an eye open and taking advantage of what popped up. What happened was I'd caught Mr Paddington delivering it to my sis. I come home one day and there were noises coming from Sis' room and even though I had yet to make those noises myself i knew what they were. I didn't care about Sis. She was old enough and if Paddington had the goods for her that was her lookout not mine.

However, I hit upon an idea and my instincts, as usual, proved trusty: it was worth something to Mr Paddington, an otherwise respectable sort, to keep me from blabbing his social calendar to anyone who would listen like, for instance, his wife. He saw my very logical point about how giving me some quid each week to keep me mouth shut could be to his advantage and how not giving me some quid each week to keep my mouth shut could be to his disadvantage. My long and quite profitable career in taking money from men so they could have a go in private was underway.

We needed the money, too, because me Pappy wasn't working as much as he used to and Mum never made much to begin with anyway. Not that I

was giving them any of it. I wasn't. I had earned it so I kept it, all of it. I couldn't really tell them how I got it, of course, but it kept me from taking theirs and I never showed it off not that they cared: they were too busy drinking and fighting and living their dreary life.

Sis found out about this, though, and demanded a cut! I am not making that up!

Bloody whore. I didn't have much choice, though. If I refused and she stopped seeing ol' Paddington I would be left making nothing, which is less than if I gave her a cut. Blimey. Like a lot of things in life, it all worked out, though, because she started getting around a bit more, which led to me having more advantage/disadvantage chats with men who should have known better. Sis can't boff all day, every day, though, and she liked the money as much as I did, so we recruited some of her friends. They'd tell me who and when and pretty soon we had a nice little racket going.

Never got caught, either. Sure, sometimes a bloke would cop an attitude, but usually they listened to reason and when they didn't I knocked them around a bit. I explained this wasn't worth making a mischief over. Pay your fees and everything is normal. Don't pay your fees and everything, really quick like, is not normal. The only real control they had was to stop boffing me sis, and Sis had the looks they demanded. It was a lesson that would serve me well, and make me rich, later.

Key was I never extorted too much, strictly ability to pay and we only charged blokes what they could easily afford. Easily afford. I didn't want them worrying and I certainly didn't want them to stop boffing my sister or her friends. They might end up bringing their lunch in to work a couple days a week, but they never had to miss holiday or birthday presents or anything like that: their revels remained at whatever standard they had already set. One business owner who couldn't keep his paws off Sis - who was a bit of a looker - said he spent more on adverts than his extortion.

After a while some blokes started coming to me looking for birds. All right. I can think on my feet and if they didn't get it from me they'd get it somewhere else and soon Sis and me found some girls looking to make a little side money. The gent came to me and I made the arrangements. I found

him a nice girl and flat he could use and soon prostitution was turning out to be more profitable than extortion.

Hard quid, though. I didn't think of myself as a pimp even though that's what I was and real pimps resented me working girls in their areas. Looking back, I suppose I could have ended up dead, but I pushed back when I had to and eventually I earned me respect.

I kept extorting when I could, too. I never bothered with real work, so I was always trolling about our grimy neighborhood, seeing and being seen, talking and whatnot, doing whatever I could to find out what the dead common were up to, who was doing what to who and how I could make a fiver or tenner off it.

The one thing we never got involved with were drugs. One, I hardly favored them so I knew nothing about them. Two, the trade was dangerous. Prostitution could be dangerous, too, but I checked out our johns beforehand and eventually was doing so good I took a flat so the girls could have a familiar, clean place to work so we seldom had problems. Drugs, though, blimey. There was so much money and they were always fighting over it.

Three

I've always met the people I needed to in my life, generally when I need to meet them, and so it was with Beth. Every good thing that has happened to me, if you can call moving courtesans, collecting ransoms and getting rich good, came because I met her.

I had been running me rackets for a few years and was making some good scratch. I had gone from a boy to a young man in my early 20's and I had my own flat and one thing I liked to do was take the tube into the city and wander around the fancy hotels. They always had a hold on me. The marble and the elegance and the luxury and the people all dressed up and after a while I got up the courage to get dressed up meself and got me some proper pants and a polo shirt. I learned that while styles come and go a good pair of trousers and a polo shirt were timeless. After I got me some appropriate clothes, to include footwear, I mustered up the courage to sit at one of those fancy bars. This one, still a favorite, has a piano player. Later I would

upgrade to a suit. It wasn't Saville Row, but even if it was ready made I had it altered to fit like it was made for me.

I was wearing the suit at the bar one night when Beth came up and bought me a drink. Just like that. Hallo, I'm Beth, may I buy you a drink? Or, rather, hallo, you can either let me buy you a drink or you can let me buy you a drink. Those are your options.

Blimey, I fancied her. Blonde and about twice my age. American. Stacked. Body that wouldn't quit. Had an ease about her that got me thinking she was born in a fancy hotel bar, which probably wasn't too far off the mark cause blimey, she could drink.

She bought me a drink or two then dinner at the hotel's fancy grill. She said she visited here frequently and had seen me here before and was glad she was finally able to come say hi as if something had always prevented her in the past. I was glad, too. I stayed the night and the next day and night, when we took a limo to the only 5-star restaurant in the city.

Scared shitless I was. This was the Premier League right here. I don't get nervous too often, but I was nervous that night, a dead common younger man out for his first 5-star dining experience with a beautiful older woman. I've never regretted keeping my mouth shut, so I usually spoke only when spoken to because it's hard to make an ass of yourself keeping quiet. Beth was in her element, though, and made me feel real comfortable. Boy, we drew some heads, too, because it was plain we were not the same age and she looked beautiful and Beth said I looked dashing, which I might have don't you know. Beth said people were looking at us because they wished they were us. Fancy that. Blokes wishing they were me, as well they should because there I was looking dapper accompanying a stunning woman. Damn straight they wished they were me and anyone who thought I was paying the bill was a dolt.

Beth came to the city regularly, even though she's from the States and we saw each other several times a year. Sometimes she took me places, like Paris, and always to the most luxurious hotels and choicest restaurants. I was from a grimy industrial town, technically unemployed but as should be plain I've always been adaptable and took to the luxury life like just like I took to extorting Mr Paddington. Very soon I was in me element.

Beth was also responsible for my first trip to the States. She flew me over because she wanted to see me and she wouldn't be able to cross the pond for a while. She flew me into New York City, first class, too, which meant free champagne and all I could drink, which is a lot. When the flight attendant asked if I would like a drink I advised her to just watch.

New York City was as grimy as my hometown and had too many people besides. Everything in New York City was a dump, Well, not all of it. Our hired car and luxury hotel were splendid, of course. Too bad for the people living in the streets and there was no shortage of them, either, don't kid yourself. We spent a couple of days in New York, which was mere waiting for Beth taking me to Las Vegas.

Vegas was hardly the size it is now. It was still rather small with a completely different feel, small enough so you could actually park your car within a shout of your room. Or suite, in our case. We stayed at a hotel Beth had plainly stayed at many times in the past. She was greeted by name by everyone from the valet to the bellman to the desk clerk to most everyone else. I was treated with the deference you'd expect the lad of a lady of Beth's stature to be treated with. Plainly, I was banging her like a gong or she wouldn't be wasting her money or time on me.

We spent a week in Vegas. We saw shows and while Las Vegas then didn't have the number of luxurious hotels and restaurants it does now, Beth still managed to produce a first-class time.

The only problem was I didn't really take a fancy to gambling. This wasn't a surprise, really, because there's never a shortage of gambling in the grimy hood I grew up in and I never bothered. Beth, however, liked her blackjack and because she was paying I pretended to like me blackjack, too, though it bored me. I'm sufficiently smart to play pretty well, but I have some zero competitive instincts and could not have cared less about winning or losing, though if I remember, I was able to show Beth a modest profit because while most gamblers played with their hearts and wallets, I played with me brains.

What I didn't know about Beth would make a good biography. I presume she was married, but I didn't know for sure. I presumed she lived on the east coast - it would make hopping over the pond easier - but I didn't know for

sure there, either. If she had kids or if anybody missed her while she with me I don't know because the only phone calls she ever made were to room service.

No matter. I was later able to run classy young women in and out of luxury hotels, and then palaces, because of the lessons Beth taught me, enabling me and some girls to make an awful lot of money. Eventually, though, Beth stopped coming to the city. I never knew why and never bothered to find out, even when she popped back into my life, briefly, years later.

Four

Then I got lucky.

Real lucky. The break that opened every door, whether it led to good or bad, for me. What you search for over a life with no guarantee it would ever happen.

A bird I was seeing turned out to be comfortable in 5-star environs. Actually, I was seeing her mum first, get a load of that. Met dear mummy one night and we went out for a few months.

Her daughter, about 20, was stunning. Long red hair. Knockers like her mum. A body that men would fight over and pay for. Her mum and I ran our course but I could not get the daughter out of my head.

Look, I'm really not a stalker - merely an aggregator of information - but I'd knocked around their flat enough to know when the daughter would be in residence while mummy would be out.

Of course I was right: the daughter had the day off from her job at the chippy and mum, of course, was out when I rang the flat one afternoon. She sounded glad to hear from me - not a surprise, we hit it off well - and she said sure, she wouldn't violently object to doing something right now, also not a bulletin because she was, as she liked to say, always up for whatever.

We were going at it within the hour and we kept going at it. Her mum wasn't too keen on us, but she had her shot at me and passed. Her daughter, named Rachel by the way, accepted my first fine dining invitation as if she routinely fielded such queries and acted as if she'd been going to these places

regularly. She would later say she was rather nervous, but she knew she was stunning enough to belong and besides, she was certain I wouldn't let her fail.

Of course I wouldn't. I never would, either. I wanted, no needed, her to want to come back because between Beth and my own excursions I really liked the luxury life.

After a year or so I had created a fine dining monster. Rachel was utterly in her element.

Five

I traveled in a variety of circles back then.

I was the grimy small town pimp and extortionist. I was also a familiar, if not beloved face, at the bars in the finest hotels in the big city. I knew, and could talk with, everyone from a guy getting off his factory shift looking for a little, to the wealthy, the ones who owned the factories that worker toiled at.

Let me tell you something, the workers weren't the only ones looking to get a little; I knew a wealthy gentleman or two that would not dismiss out of hand the prospect of the company of a beautiful young woman who knew how to behave. One gent pulled me aside over brandy and cigars at one function and allowed how his marriage was hardly sending the poets scurrying to their notebooks: he was open to something on the side.

Rachel, I thought, would be perfect. By now, for a while, actually, she had become completely comfortable in the luxury circles this gentleman lived in. She had the looks and body he would demand, and pay for, and she could oral you cross-eyed and ride your tallywacker till it snapped off. She was funny and a good listener. And while we were certainly having fun, I wasn't looking for a wife and she wasn't looking for a husband. Or, more accurately, she wasn't looking at me as the shining example of potential husband material. She liked the odd luxury night out, of course, but I never told her how I really made my money and she didn't believe me when she said I'd inherited it.

We were playing out the string, each of us wondering who would leave whom first, when I asked Rachel if she would like to make some money. Since Rachel had little of it herself and utterly lacked the prospect of making any at the chippy she worked at, of course she said yes. Didn't even blink, really. Said yes immediately, I suppose she suspected.

The only question was would she like it and the only way to find out was to give it a go. I refuse to go chasing money, so I demanded and got payment up front. A good fee, too. What a successful gentleman would expect to pay for company for a beautiful younger woman and maybe a little more, now that I think about it. I split it 50/50 with Rachel since neither would be making this dough without the other. Fair's fair. I was sitting at a table in the bar when they met, a practice I kept to the end. Rachel strutted in looking stunning, with a bearing that said every swinging dick in the place *must* look at her *right now*. She greeted the client as if they saw each other regularly and not as if she was earning a fee to be with him. When it became apparent the client wasn't going to take out a knife and filet Rachel, I finished my brandy and left.

When I saw Rachel the following week she seemed content with her weekend's labors. All she really did was go away for a weekend with a chap and she had a year's wages to show for it. I talked to the client and Lord knows he was pleased. Rachel did her work - which was mainly making him feel like she had waited her entire life to see him - supremely well, pleased with her performance in and out of the sack. A modest shopping spree was enjoyed by both of them because older gents love - a word I do not throw around willy-nilly - mindlessly blowing quid on beautiful younger women. It's the way the world is built, a circumstance I put to work for me and which made me very rich.

Six

Word of mouth is important for any business, especially a call girl operation where you can hardly buy a billboard or a radio advert. (Hi, I'm Rachel!). It took a while, but soon Rachel was working as often as she wanted and after about a year two big things happened.

The first was obtaining an heir apparent as a client.

Both of us were at the palace for a state affair. I was with a wealthy woman I knew and Rachel was with a client, and I noticed the prince could not take his eyes off Rachel and soon enough he was chatting her up. I made my way over and Rachel said hi, making it plain to the prince we knew each other. This was one way we drummed up trade. Rachel excused herself, leaving the prince with his tongue hanging out and I could have asked for the crown jewels and gotten them. As it was, I advised the prince I could arrange some quality for him with Rachel whenever and wherever it was convenient for him. He grinned slightly and scratched his nose summoning an aide over, telling him I would explain to him what it was about, and to make it happen, the sooner the better.

I told the aide, Sir Someone or Another, that the prince had the highest possible level of interest in seeing the lady with the red hair and I was able to make that happen. Sir Someone or Another stroked his chin and turned, motioning that I should follow him. We went down a small hall and through an anteroom before he opened a door and there we were, the holy of holies, the Throne Room.

It was a very long room, at the near end of which were two chairs up a couple of steps. We walked toward them in silence and the next thing I knew we were hopping up the steps and sitting on the throne just as if we were sitting down somewhere else, anywhere else, for tea. (Later, Rachel would share how she had earned part of a fee on the throne and even Monica and I would later have a go of it there.) Amiably but directly, he asked how I could make that happen as if he didn't know. I explained Rachel's availability and I reached into a pocket, removed a folder and took a card from it. It had a phone number on it and quoted the fee, our regular high-end fee with a healthy royalty supplement. Sir Someone or Another looked at it and put it in his pocket and said brilliant and there we sat on the throne, rulers of nothing in particular, except how we spent the 24 hours each of us has every day. He spent his 24 hours ensuring royalty was organized and taken care of and I ran Rachel out of luxury hotels and, soon enough, palaces. In time, I would get used to throne rooms.

I had a call the following morning with an order to make Rachel available for an evening whenever it was convenient for her. The prince could make anything work. Rachel reported the prince turned out to be a lousy lay, not that she cared, but like everyone else he paid coin of the realm in advance and now we had entree to royalty. Over the next few years she would spend enough time in palaces I joked she should have her own tiara.

The second piece of good fortune was finding Monica. Rachel met her while on one her treasured ski getaways with one of her favourite clients. They had hit it off and Rachel thought Monica would flourish as a courtesan and when Rachel told her how she earned her living Monica was intrigued.

When I met her it was plain Monica was cut out for the courtesan life like few others. She had gotten a degree in something or another at some American university so she could provide for herself if she must, a prospect which bored her to tears. All she really wanted to do was snowboard and be treated like a queen. And get busy. She had a very independent streak, too, which helps in this trade.

Monica was of Dutch and Brazilian ancestry of all things and spoke English, Dutch and Portuguese. She was tall and tanned with long brown hair that was somewhat, though not completely, frizzy or whatever girls call it and a small part of her hair on the right side had a blonde streak. Monica enjoyed good food in the same abundance that she enjoyed throwing down in the sack; she was odd for the high priced call girl in that she wasn't too thin. She wasn't fat, but she did have some curves to compliment the really large fun bags that older men are prepared to pay for. Her smile was the prettiest I'd ever seen, too, which is saying something because Rachel issues some wattage in that department, too. Later, when Monica was operational, she would beam her smile at her first meeting with a client and he was in the palm of her hand because Monica had that rare and great gift of making a man feel she had spent her entire life waiting to meet him. I had felt that when Rachel had first introduced us.

So I took Monica away for a job interview. It was more than business, though it was also pleasure because Monica was funny and I was funny and we liked each other. We went to a first-class resort I knew in the Alps where I introduced to her the luxury life and what would be expected. I tested her

out in the sack, too. I told her some guys would just want to fuck while some would completely lose their mind and want to sprinkle the magic fairy dust and be in love for their time together. I told her she must be open to both, and anything in between, and I did both to her. In character, we exchanged I love yous, the last time we would do that for many years.

I really enjoyed sprinkling the fairy dust and pretending to be in love. We were standing on The Strip in front of a grand hotel that had fountains out front. I told her to take the fairy dust out of her purse and put it in me hand and she pretended to do that and I pretended to sprinkle it on her hair and then I took her face in both my hands and kissed her gently and tenderly and maybe even lovingly as if I know anything about love.

I emphasized she was paid for straight sex and oral, that was all. Anything that would hurt her or even cause her discomfort was out of bounds. I told the clients this, too. It wasn't even negotiable. You're paying to have a beautiful, classy young woman on your arm and in your bed. There were others who could tie you up and smack you around. Not my girls. I told Monica if that really interested her she could do it in her own bed on her own time. I knew Rachel didn't really like it.

I took her to a nice restaurant at the resort and instructed her in how to behave. Do not speak too much because he is not paying to hear you yap. Laugh at his stupid jokes. Make him feel like your entire life was spent in anticipation of being with him but don't overdo it for Christ's sake. I introduced her to assorted wines and translated the French on the menu for her. She passed the first test, so I took her to Las Vegas for a 5-star final exam. It was long, tedious travel across the Atlantic and most of a continent, but I had to see if she was up for that, too. She was. She aced the entire trip, beautiful and gracious the whole way. Monica would make a splendid courtesan.

As usual, I was in the bar of the Paris hotel where she met her first client. I had met him in his suite earlier where I collected our fee and again went over the ground rules. Then I went to my room and paid Monica and let her know everything was a go and that I would be in the bar because that is what I liked to do. Actually, it was to be on hand in case either one of them

declined to go through with it. This never happened, but I had to be prepared.

Monica walked in like she owned the place: she was beautiful and confident, looking like she had been meeting older gents in the bars of luxury hotels for years. I couldn't hear what they were saying, but it was plain they were hitting it off and in a few minutes they appeared to have been together for years. By chance I was still in town when the client left, a bit earlier than planned, and Monica and I had dinner at a casual bistro. She was radiant, I think more because her first courtesan weekend was over than any joy she had for the job, but she said she enjoyed it immensely. She was not born poor she said, but boy, she got used almost immediately to the 5-star life and wanted more of it, and if accepting money for her company was how she got it, well, OK. I liked Monica so much I was her client from time to time so I could sprinkle the fairy dust, but we had a bond and afterwards she stopped taking my money.

There was plenty of work for both of them. Rachel had built a good name for me. I produced beautiful, younger women who knew how to behave in the finest restaurants, hotels and beds on the planet. Discretion was assured. On our end, at least. You would be surprised how brazen men got with Rachel or Monica on their arm doing everything but taking them home to meet the family. It was their job to ensure they did not end up in the papers. We did our part. I never notified the media.

What was really funny was after a while you couldn't turn on the telly without seeing at least one, usually a couple-three and sometimes even a few of our clients on the news. We generally took August off and we were all sitting in the cottage I'd bought, for me mainly, but for the girls, too, at need. Rachel was a splendid cook and was making dinner and the telly in the kitchen was on as Monica opened some champagne and between an MP and the heir apparent and the Canadian PM it seems our entire Rolodex was on the newsmaker line.

Both seemed happy. Any qualms they had about accepting money for their company was mitigated by the fact they were getting rich and living fabulously luxurious lives. Rachel in particular enjoyed her ski weekends with favoured clients and Monica enjoyed going to exotic places, which

explains how she ended up being probably the only courtesan in the long history of the trade ever taken on safari.

One of my jobs as CEO was long term planning. The girls were as busy as they wanted and while I wasn't turning anybody down that time was coming. I needed another girl and I was counting on my usual luck in running into the right person at the right time because without a break finding a courtesan could be tough because not every young woman was cut out for this life and, as noted, you could hardly run an advert in the paper.

One, of course, they had to have the looks. Royalty and wealth do not pay our fees to go out with cows. Sorry. This is not an equal opportunity trade. Fortunately I had a knack for knowing the looks men would pay to spend time with. It's ineffable. Yes, you need looks, but not just any looks, but good luck describing them. I knew them when I saw them, though.

Two, even if they had the looks the girl had to either have manners or be willing and able to learn manners because things are done a certain way in world class places, just like they are done certain ways in the grimy armpit working class neighborhood I grew up in.

Third, they must be at home at world's finest hotels and restaurants. Not every girl with looks men would pay to have on their arm do, even if they knew a snifter from a tulip glass and which fork to use.

And even if you found a girl with these qualities, they had to be able to handle getting paid to have sex because courtesan, of course, is merely a word tossed around throne rooms for whore.

Monica suggested we go to the resorts they were usually taken to, so we went to a resort in the Alps on a weekend they had both decided to take off and could not have had worse luck had we set up a recruiting booth at a priory. We spent an awful lot of time out being seen and spending money because you want to be noticed and got nothing. Not even a curt nod, much less a prospect to get rejected by.