

**Excerpt from "Rare Indulgence"**  
**Written by Bruce J. Robinson**

MARCUS

(pushing his way out the door)

You release your rivers yourself. I've gotta do the dishes.

(He leaves. As she crosses to get a beer, she makes eye-contact with Ms. Fuzzy.)

SHANNON

Fuck you, Fuzzy. Alright, maybe it didn't go as well as it might've. Maybe I came on a little too strong. One more chance, Ms. Fuzzy. If I didn't get to the boy through his pride, I'll touch the girl through her heart; and once she hears all I've been through, she'll reach out to protect us.

(There's a knock.)

Come in.

JENNY

Ready for your massage?

SHANNON

Absolutely. Like clockwork. Sure this isn't too much trouble?

JENNY

Trouble? It's a pleasure.

(She massages, as Shannon occasionally moans happily.)

SHANNON

This is great. Absolutely great.

JENNY

Good.

SHANNON

You've been so kind to me, I want you to know: I won't tell anyone about the birds. I like Marcus so much, you know; but he admitted he's the one who drove you to eat the ortolans: so why should you be punished?

JENNY

He said it was his idea?

SHANNON

Yes he did.

JENNY

Hmm.

SHANNON

Besides, I've grown very, very fond of you. All the scintillating conversation; the incomparable food. In fact, since I've been here – enjoying your home and hospitality – I'm beginning to realize that maybe some of what I was so sure of is... is...

JENNY

What?

SHANNON

I dunno. I dunno. My attitude toward pleasure. When you ate the... the...

JENNY

Ortolans.

SHANNON

Yes. Did that bring you pleasure?

JENNY

The easy answer – and the honest one - is that I always look for pleasure; and sweetie, I always find it.

SHANNON

I know you do. Look at this stunning room. These glorious paintings and vases and things. The feasts. It enraptures the senses. I've poured through the amazing DVDs; read-and-read so much of this brilliant poetry: surrounded by the pleasures available to the fortunate. Maybe someday I can make joy my guide.

JENNY

That's tough for you?

SHANNON

It's always been so hard for me to allow myself enjoyment. It's as if I agree with the world: I don't deserve pleasure.

JENNY

That's nonsense. In all ways, you're an extremely lovely young woman.

(Shannon begins to cry.)

Whatsamatter, sweetie?

SHANNON

Nobody ever... ever...

JENNY

Surely, your family and friends must tell you that all the time.

SHANNON

My only friend's Fuzzy. And as for family..?

JENNY

Right-right. Randy said you were...

SHANNON

Parent-free. From what I can gather; shortly after my birth, I was thrown into a dumpster outside a trailer park in Joplin, Missouri.

JENNY

Poor baby.

SHANNON

But soon, a band of wild dogs found their way into my rude incubator and spotted me – thinking me a bone or something good to eat. One of them dragged me out and was about to devour me when she realized that I was alive. And maybe because of that beast's innate impulse to nurture or maybe because of its pure animal kindness or maybe because of the extraordinary amount of facial hair I had at the time, those dogs made me one of their own. Maybe that's why I've always been dedicated to the well-being of non-human animals. I still dream of running with them: the sniffing, the licking,

(subtly raising leg to pee)

the territory marking. One evening – I was 7 at the time, in dog years: 1 in human years - I was grabbed by a dog catcher. I became involved with men. Even now, I'm not sure which is the beast and which the real human being.

JENNY

I know what you mean. And you never were adopted?

SHANNON

No. Oh, no. Maybe it was 'cause I was a little wild, maybe 'cause I was a little old, maybe 'cause of the extraordinary amount of facial hair I had at the time. Strange, I never was able to give up my canine ways entirely. To this day, I can still scratch behind my ear with my foot. Wanna see?

JENNY

Maybe later.

SHANNON

I lived in a series of foster homes. 1,273. It wasn't a stable environment. My early years, of course, were nightmarish because of my serious learning disability.

JENNY

ADD?

SHANNON

ELR.

JENNY

ELR?

SHANNON

Elizabethan Letter Reversal. It's extremely rare. Where others see and pronounce the letter "s," we ELR sufferers see and pronounce the letter "f." Here's an example. It's very hard for me to say (and please bear with me. This takes a lot of concentration...) "she sells seashells by the sea shore." It's natural and easy for me to say "Fhe fellf feafhellf by the fea fhore." Fee? Uh, see?

JENNY

Extraordinary.

SHANNON

You can imagine the embarrassment in school. When we sang the National Anthem for the first time and they heard me sing "Oh fay can you fee..." well, it was just a matter of time before they starting calling me "Buckwheat" – which had a special sting because I was gluten-intolerant.

JENNY

But you succeeded in school well-enough to graduate college.

SHANNON

Yes, but it wasn't easy. Nothing is.

JENNY

And you were able to become a teacher; and, if Randy's to be believed, a terrific one.

SHANNON

Yes.

JENNY

Well, that's something that should make you very happy.

SHANNON

Yes. It should. But it's only since I've come here – feeling the warmth of your nurturing, your healing hands – that I've begun to loosen up, you know? Getting a little "jiggy" with it all. And it's all because of you. Jenny, I owe you so much.

JENNY

Nonsense. But you do look far more relaxed.

SHANNON

(slowly closing on Jenny)

Really?

JENNY

Pleasantly rounder.

SHANNON

Fat? I'm fat?

JENNY

Voluptuous. Toothsome.

Really? SHANNON

Fresh. JENNY

Fresh? SHANNON

And hair-free. JENNY  
(indicating her face)

I shed at 17. SHANNON

(Shannon kisses Jenny, who doesn't pull back. But suddenly...)

JENNY  
(heading for the door)  
I've gotta start on dinner. Heavy labor. [Buh-BAH-koh] Babáco fritters.

SHANNON  
I have no idea what that is...yet I want it.  
(stopping Jenny's leaving)  
Jenny?

Yes? JENNY

You can make me seafood. SHANNON

Great. JENNY

Or fish. SHANNON

Fine. JENNY  
(exiting)

SHANNON

(calling after)

Or duck or even pork or beef! Beef!!! Beef.

(grabbing Ms. Fuzzy)

See, Ms. Fuzzy? Just one more step, and we're safe. Promise. Everything's fine. Fine. Or will be. Jenny's curious. Me, too. Nothing wrong with that. Wanna drink?

(crossing to beer)

Suit yourself. Pleasure can be good, Fuzzy. You know, you've always been slightly cold for a supposed cuddly toy. I could always count on you to loosen my always tenuous hold on self-worth; to diminish all my honors, to mock my accomplishments; to make savage fun of my physicality and wardrobe.

(She holds Fuzzy aloft.)

You were like a mother to me.

(As she cradles and kissed Ms. Fuzzy, fade to BLACK.)

