

Front of House

(EXCERPT)

by

Christina K. Caralis

INT. THE ATRIUM BAR AND RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A SERIES OF SHOTS - INT. HOSTESS STAND

Acrylic nails click rhythmically on the marble counter.

EVIE V.O

The first time a took a man's money  
I was 19.

INT. MAIN DINING ROOM - SAME

Patrons make ambient chatter. Sleek heels strut on the cold marble floor.

EVIE V.O

It wasn't for sex.

INT. BAR AND COCKTAIL AREA - SAME

Men count wads of hundred dollar bills. Designer bags, shoes, jewelry flash everywhere.

EVIE V.O

Or drugs.

ENTER EVIE (19), CASSIE (18), and ALEXA (22). Each girl strides in their "little black dress" uniform, iPad in hand.

INSERT Evie on the company phone scheduling reservations and handling in-person clients.

EVIE V.O

But the second I took that money - -

INT. MAIN DINING ROOM

CASSIE is seating a very stuck up couple, while accepting the mans subtle slip of money to her.

ALEXA checks bar for clients, skillfully avoids lewd hands.

INT. HOSTESS STAND - SAME

EVIE V.O

- - it was my life.

A champagne bottle POPS! EVIE looks up from her iPad, stares into the camera.

ACT 1

INT. EVIE FAMILY HOME - SUNROOM - DAY - SEVERAL WEEKS EARLIER

A Champagne bottle POPS! Foams fizzes out, DR. ESTELLE RODRIGUEZ (49,F), tips the bottle away from the crowd.

DR.RODRIGUEZ

To Genevieve! May your days ahead  
be as fulfilling as mine behind.

EVIE

Thanks Mom.

Another champagne bottle POPS. The crowd cheers, servers pass d'Oeuvres, buttery light fills the room, the crowd quiets.

DR.RODRIGUEZ

I want to thank everyone again for  
taking the time to celebrate my  
darling girl who has brought so  
much light into our lives.

Dr.Rodriguez wears a pale blue pants suit, EVIE is in a white graduation dress, her hair curled.

DR.RODRIGUEZ

Genevieve and I have been lucky--  
No, fortunate to have had the  
opportunity to make our own way in  
the world. And although she is just  
beginning, I have always been proud  
to show her what it takes to be a  
success. So with that, let's have  
some cake!

Dr.YELLEN (63,M) stands in the corner of the room, claps. A White cake is rolled in. It reads: Good luck at KPU!

Older guest begin to mingle once more. ADAM (18, M) pushes through, grabs Evie's elbow.

ADAM

Seeee- quick, painless, a bandaid  
analogy would be too strong!

EVIE

Yeah, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ADAM

Plus there is no one here who I actually know beyond you, the horrors of online school. Though I see she totally managed to keep that guest list under lock and key--

EVIE

I don't think that was solely for you Adam.

ADAM

-- bet she didn't want me talking off the ear of another journalist. Can I help it if I like to mingle? This is great by the way. Very classy...but also, is it even my fault that that's all she surrounds herself with? I thought they had to ask "On or off the record" before they repeat what you say! My dad is still pissed by the way, they had to force Marko out.

EVIE

That's a myth, actually it's a very common misconception. Take Steinem or any modern "inside source" today. Hear it once and it's basically fact. That's why we have spin doctors - as mom likes to call them.

ADAM

God- you are cooked. Is your mom still not over your slight veer into a more stylized choice of major? My PR Princess, my media Maiden, my blog baroness, my mistress of meta-

EVIE

Please, enough!

Evie's cheeks burn. Dr.Rodriguez and Dr. Yellen stand together. Dr.Rodriguez gestures Evie over.

DR.RODRIGUEZ

Genevieve darling, I know we have all spoken over the phone but I wanted to introduce you to Dr.Yellen.

Evie shakes his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EVIE

Hi Dr.Yellen. Thank you for coming today.

DR.RODRIGUEZ

Yes, we hope it wasn't out of your way. While you are here though, I wanted to ask your opinion for Evie as she prepares for her time at Key Pointe.

DR.YELLEN

Oh?

EVIE

Mom..

DR.RODRIGUEZ

I know you were apart of the board who approved her merit award and I wanted to get Evie here in front of you to have you talk through what kind of career, longterm she can expect as a writer that verses say, a more substantial form of academic writing or even investigative work?

DR.YELLEN

Well that depends on your daughters major.

EVIE

I chose commutations, with a focus on public relations.

DR.RODRIGUEZ

Yes! If you can remember Evie's writing samples, for her scholarship, the little, what was it? The fluff blog pieces she submitted.

DR.YELLEN

Yes, the media and unique angles led to a compelling piece. It was very different from our usual submissions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DR.RODRIGUEZ

I keep telling her, that if she had led with something that was not self published, something with more gravitas it would have led to a larger financial contribution from K.P.U. Isn't that right?

DR.YELLEN

Well, traditionally journalistic or creative writing sample are awarded larger sums-

DR.RODRIGUEZ

Thank you Dr.Yellen. See, schools don't award merit funds to frilly nothing piece's. That's all I wanted Evie to know.

Dr.Rodriguez squeezes Dr.Yellen shoulder, smiles at another guest, floats over to them.

A server walks by with a tray of petit fours. Evie grabs one, shoves it in her mouth.

DR.YELLEN

Evie.

EVIE

I - I'm sorry you were a part of that she-

DR.YELLEN

Evie. Write another piece. Send it to me before the semester starts and we can reevaluate. Keep it sharp, creative, and traditionally published.

Evie looks to her mother, blinks backs up at Dr.Yellen.

EVIE

Thank you.

**END OF EXCERPT**