

1  
?

VW 1/2

Hooker #1

(1) Room Service At The Ossining Hotel vW (Susan edited)  
GG revised as per susan's suggestions 8/7/13 AOTH Read?  
© 4/10/2011 Gary Gladstone

Revised → 5/4/2014 6:59 PM

It's 1:30 in the morning and the party's over. My ride home left an hour ago without me, and it's too late for a bus home. I'm stuck in Ossining, 15 miles away from my house attending a spring party with my private school pals. I'm fifteen years old and this is going to be a serious violation of my curfew.

I'm sitting in the dark with four friends inside Pete's mom's Mercury. There's a discussion about what to do with me. No one wants to bring me to their house because they are afraid of waking their parents or causing a lot of explaining in the morning. They all seem to believe that even though it's way past curfew they can quietly slip in their houses unnoticed and avoid grounding or loss of car privileges and other dreaded consequences. But showing up with a stranded friend will raise too many questions. Pete doesn't want to make the forty-five minute round trip to my house because it will make *him* even later. Somebody suggests I sleep in Pete's car and hitchhike at dawn, but that idea dies when Pete says his mom may be using her car and she might find me in the morning if I oversleep.

BRA STRAPS - SEXY -

Finally, there is a suggestion that I sleep at the hotel in Ossining because it's cheap. The four agree to chip in and loan me the money to pay for the room. I think everyone's feeling a little guilty and this

1

will get them off the hook.

Everyone agrees that the problem is now solved so I'm driven to the front of the old downtown hotel. The street is deserted as the five of us walk into the almost totally dark empty lobby. An old man in a rumpled white shirt shuffles from a door behind the front desk and says, "How long?" Pete, pointing to me, answers, "Just for tonight," to which the old man replies, "Five dollars," <sup>he</sup> and shoves a long-stemmed latchkey attached to a small wooden paddle across the desktop towards me. Everyone digs in to their pockets and we produce the coins and wrinkled bills to pay for the room with enough left over for a bus in the morning. The clerk points to the stairs. "It's one flight up," he says. "Will you need anything special?" I've never stayed at a hotel without my parents so I don't know how to respond. I become momentarily absorbed with the gaudy carpeted stairs and when I turn back to the attendant, I see that all my friends are gone. "No thanks," I reply and, feeling very alone, begin the trek up to the unlit second floor hallway.

I'm uneasy and very tired. At the top of the stairs, I find my room in the unlighted hallway. With the long key I open the door and slide my hand inside the frame and feel for a wall switch. I can't find one but there is enough street light from the window to see the small bed against the far wall. I sit on the old chenille bedspread's fuzzy ribs and kick off my loafers. Stepping out of my pants, I toss them to the foot of the bed and slide in between the cold, rough sheets.

*Points + Says??*  
*Nescosson?*

My eyes close and I feel the rush of enveloping sleep.

As I am drifting off, I'm startled awake by three short knocks. I figure it must be the old man, so I throw the covers off and stagger across the room. Keeping my legs and midsection hidden, I open the door. I'm startled to see the shadowy shape of a roundish young woman with dark curly hair and dangly glittering earrings. She's wearing a ruffled pale pink scoop-neck dress that's hanging way off her shoulders revealing two thin white straps. I can smell the exotic licorice candy aroma of Sen-Sen, a breath lozenge that I recognize from the times I've carried it on dates in case there is a goodnight kiss.

She smiles at me and says, "Did you need something?" She's clutching something bulky.

I turn to look back and see if I have enough pillows. "I don't think so," I mumble,

She shifts her weight from one leg to the other. "I thought you might need something," she says. I have no idea what she's talking about. "Like what?" I ask. She unfolds what she's carrying as she tells me, "I thought you might like to have a newspaper, The Herald Tribune or the Daily Mirror or something?"

I am dumfounded by this strange conversation. I feel completely inadequate.

I squint into the darkness to see what she's holding and, recognizing the Tribune, I say, "No thanks, I have one at home."

She looks more confused than I am and lets the hand with the newspaper flop to her side. Then she turns and walks away. I have an inkling that I was supposed to have understood something that I simply don't. I feel relief that this uncomfortable situation has gone away and now I can go back to sleep. As I'm closing the door I think I might have hurt her feelings so I stop and lean into the hall and shout, "Thanks anyway."

**( 862 ) words**