

Two for Tuesday

A NOVELLA

NELSON PAHL

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Author's Note

For Vienna -

I love you. I thank you. I miss you. I *am* you.

Till we meet again...

- Papa

Two for Tuesday

Wednesday, 7:12 PM
Early May

“Mmm. I’m so glad to see you.”
I gazed down at her from the porch’s second and top step; the puppy dog-brown eyes and radiant smile invited me closer. “And me you,” I whispered. I reached for her cheek.

Manny tossed her shoulder bag to the sidewalk, then stepped up as I stepped down. She clasped the denim waistband with one hand, the black leather belt with the other. She leaned in and consumed my lips with a sigh.

The taste of Manny—my lady for seven months to date—always sent me through the roof.

Some ninety seconds later, we came up for air.

Manny licked her lips, then brushed two fingers across them with a grin—a winsome gesture designed to reaffirm the utter joy the experience entailed. “So how’s your day?”

I couldn’t help but smile. “Um...” I swept a tress from her face, “...getting better by the minute.”

“I like the sound of that.” She cocked her head to one side. “You busy tonight?”

I chuckled. “*Very*.” I picked up the shoulder bag, then offered my hand. “Why don’t you come in for a bit.” I winked. “Let me show you around.”

Manny beamed. “I’d *love* to.” She took my hand and stepped onto the porch.

Emmanuelle Foshey—“Manny” to friends, family, and lover—wore her twenty-nine years with dignity. Five years my junior, she boasted a five foot four pseudo-vegan body, complete with lean coryphée legs, a taut yoga derriere, and crunched Pilates core. Manny danced with Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago for three years prior to college—which she completed in 2½ years, thanks in part to four semesters of high school honors courses; she earned a BBA from Ohio State. Yet, she never sacrificed her jazz dancer regimen while there, nor whilst she amassed fifty-hour ad industry workweeks.

Straight, shoulder-length, caramel and cocoa-highlighted hair—often worn in a sport ponytail or corporate bun—encircled exotic, ageless skin; the

flawless ecru wrap, a gift bequeathed to her by way of mom-n-dad's brilliant Chinese-Swiss cross-pollination. The Pepsodent smile always rendered me vulnerable; the dark, kept eyebrows, thick, fanned eyelashes, and large, sensual doe eyes stirred the earth goddess cravings in me.

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Although damn-near perfect, I thought Manny to be more "cute" than "beautiful." She refused to wear much make-up, and she *never* played up her looks just to showcase them. If the occasion called for it, she could sparkle. But, she valued *soul*. Hence, jeans, sweatshirts, and no make-up felt more comfortable—more *natural*—than suits, heels, and clown face.

Manny glanced toward the curb-side charcoal Ford Focus and the vast oak tree in full-bloom just before it. "I'm OK parked there tonight, aren't I?"

I nodded. The town's winter/spring street parking ordinance had expired three days earlier.

"Stay outta my fuckin' life!" Corey screamed.

Manny jerked her head toward the shared driveway. She darted across the porch, and eyed the scene with great concern.

The neighbor's back door slammed, and seconds later the white Subaru Legacy raced down the driveway. Corey banked a hard right, slammed on the brakes, slapped the car into drive, and floored it down the street.

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Manny turned to me, her face long. “He’s still having trouble with his mom?”

4 I stepped to the front door. “Always.”

Manny pulled up tight behind me. She wrapped her arms around my waist as I grasped the doorknob. Her chin rested on my shoulder, her lips at my ear. She squeezed. “I feel so sorry for him; he’s such a good kid.”

I pushed the door open. “Yeah, he is.”



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