

# skeletons IN THE CLOSET

EVERYONE HAS A SECRET. KIRSTY BROOKS REVEALS  
HER STINT BEHIND THE WHEEL OF A SEX-DELIVERY SERVICE

I was at uni studying journalism and trying to fake my way through life. A dud student (I thought it was spelt "journalism"), I was living with my parents in what my friends called "a mansion" and I had big Dallas hair. I was destined to be an eastern-suburbs princess and marry a guy called Lachlan before I could say "hors d'oeuvres".

In a blind panic I started hanging out in clubs where smiling was the kiss of death. I kept to the shadows to hide my lack of genuine angst. I drank Wild Turkey and danced to New Order. I dated deranged drummers with tattooed hands and carried an *A-Team* lunchbox as a purse. I wore clothes I called by name ("virginity slacks" and "devil dance boots") but despite my efforts, I got shot out the other end of the Goth scene after a couple of weeks in the limelight. My allure was severely compromised one evening when I laughed because a friend's rat bit him on the ear. It wasn't the callousness of my response; it was the frothiness of my attention-getting guffaws. I was a tipsy debutante on the wrong side of town and no amount of Debbie Harry hair was going to save me.

Having been rejected by the social undead and therein hitting an unmistakable crisis point, I went grazing for new alternative culture pastures. I soon met a couple of sex workers at a techno club who laughed at my jokes and taught me how to apply industrial-strength lipstick. They were loud and brash and treated men as though they were a race of badly dressed butlers. When one of their bodyguard/drivers/dealers was laid up for a week with gastro, I volunteered to drive my friend (let's call her Jan) around to sex gigs. I figured I had a car, I was writing a novel with a sex worker as a central character so it would be good research, and I'd had sex before so I wouldn't be all girly and squeamish when conversation turned to something sexy.

I figured that my worst day driving a sex courier car would be pretty much better than any other day, but the novelty waned early and the pay wasn't terrific. I was also

all girly and squeamish. My car became filled with whips, rubber suits, weird hammer-and-nails kits and odd things that had to be assembled with screwdrivers. I'd never twigged that when Jan said her stage name was Agony Aunt she didn't just mean she solved their sexual "issues".

One rainy day I zoomed out the back of a cockroach motel just as the cops swept through on a raid. One evening, a blackout at the brothel meant I had to sit in my car listening to '80s tapes while semi-clad sex workers smoked pot in the back and talked about the hassles of washing rubber clothes.

On good days I finished my studies and discovered new facts of life. On bad days, I removed abandoned underwear from under my passenger seat with barbecue tongs and dragged a suitcase of bondage gear into uni for safekeeping. One night I watched *Pretty Woman* and learnt about street

smarts, tanned mid-sections and the sharing of customer tips. The next day I asked Jan if she could share her tips and she said, "Okay, don't wear slacks, you have chunky thighs".

I don't know what I would have done had there been trouble in the grotty underworld of timed sex; if Jan had balked at performing some nude circus trick and a client had more fire in his belly than his loins. I suspect I would have revved the car, jumped the kerb and gone home to watch *The Bold and the Beautiful*. I guess I could have crotched an errant client with a steel-capped boot or threatened him with a large marital aid (those things pack a wallop) but as my idea of violence was yelling, "This bloody hair gel isn't strong enough. Hard Rock my arse!" at the local chemist, I was dicing with death and it wasn't sexy.

A week later Jan's bouncer returned and I passed my exams. I also got a haircut and realised my "beer as food" theory wasn't going to cut it in the real world. I still poke around in the underworld, looking for characters and quirks for my work, only now I do it from a safer distance. My car hasn't seen that sort of action since but I guess that's why they call it a dark past: so you don't catch sight of it too often.

