

The Price Excerpt

As the months went by, the clients got more and more exclusive, and the piles of cash grew larger and larger. Everything Jason had envisioned was coming to fruition. It was eerie. There was an almost magical sense to everything that was happening. Our drug-fueled, 3:00 a.m. fantasies were actually coming true.

Then Jason came up with another one of his brilliant ideas. He believed in the Grey Goose marketing strategy. The more you charge, you more they'll think you're worth—even if you're basically selling the same formula of fermented grain or the same girl with the same ass, pussy and mouth.

“Natal, I'm going to up your rate to two grand. What do you think?”

This would mean my hourly rate would be more than double what most of the top high-end escorts in the city were charging, including ours. You could make the argument I had earned it. Thank to the full color ad with my face in *New York* magazine and an unprecedented run of seventeen perfect ten out of ten client reviews on the theeroticreview.com, I had become something of an underground legend. Everyone wanted to know what was so special about “Natalia,” New York's hottest escort.

Here's the crazy thing: I am not a super model—far from it. I'm cute, but nowhere close to drop-dead hot. I do have a great ass, and I enjoy sex like a true nymphomaniac,¹ but my secret was I made guys want to hang out with me. I listened to them when they bragged about how much money they made or went on and on about their favorite baseball team. We joked, we partied, and then I fucked their brains out.

“Uh, what do you think I think?” I said. “But will anyone pay that?”

“We'll find out. Next call that comes in, I'm going for it.”

His thinking was we would not only be making that much more money, we could use the notoriety that came with me being the most expensive girl in the city as a marketing tool for the entire agency.

So we sat and waited. Twenty minutes went by. Nothing. Then the phone rang. It was a new client—Asian, in private equity. Perfect. Jason looked at me, smiled and took a chance. He asked the new client if he was looking at our Web site.

“Look at Natalia's page and click on the link to her reviews. Read a few and call me back.”

¹ I actually looked it up in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. I fit the profile to a tee.

He hung up the phone. We waited. A few minutes later, the phone rang and we both smiled.

Jason spoke first, "So what do you think?"

He said something that made Jason laugh and respond, "She's sitting right beside me. Are you ready to have the best sexual experience of your life?"

Jason listened, then winked at me, "How much? Her rate is two thousand an hour, with a two-hour minimum."

I could almost see Jason's pulse quicken. I couldn't believe it, he was about to close this guy. Jason's technique on the phone had been evolving. It was almost like the clients were being interviewed to see if they were deserving enough to see me.

"So, tell me about yourself," Jason said. "Well, you sound like someone who knows the best things in life don't come cheap."

He had flipped the whole game around. It was absolutely fascinating to watch.

"Excellent.... Where am I sending her? Better yet, how about this, we have a gorgeous loft in Tribeca, why don't you come here?"

My excitement vanished and I did a little inward groan. I really, really didn't like seeing clients at the loft. The energy of the place always interfered and made for a less than intimate experience.

"Get over it," I told myself. I didn't want to let anything bring down this moment. I could see the adrenaline flowing through Jason's veins as he reassured the guy I was going to be worth every penny.

He hung up the phone.

I squealed with delight.

I was now, by the only measuring stick that mattered, the top escort in New York City.

I looked up to see Mona's reaction. She had daggers in her eyes.

"Look at you, Natalia," she said with a smirk. "You'd better be worth it, you know how Jason hates refunding clients."

I felt the tears welling in my eyes, about to stream down my face. It took everything I had to hold them back. I had sacrificed so much to get to this moment. Just months earlier, I had been a nearly homeless out-of-work actress with a boyfriend who hit me, now I was poised to become the city's most expensive date. Some of the richest men in the country were lining up to pay more than I had ever made in a month to be with me for a couple of hours. It had all become so unreal. When I started, I instantly became addicted to the pursuit of the ever elusive *more*: more sex, more fun, more money. Now my competitive nature had kicked into overdrive and I was

becoming addicted to the recognition, the idea that everyone would know me as the best. It seems so crazy in retrospect—who would want to be a famous escort? But I was so detached from the morays of the mainstream world, it had consumed my notion of self-worth. This moment. My Oscar. If only Mona would let me enjoy it.

I had vowed not to let her hurt me. It wasn't easy, her words were venomous. She wasn't just our office manager, she was Jason's ex-girlfriend, and she knew just how to get under my skin. Screw her, I told myself, they were just words. As Jason hung up, I challenged myself: turn this client into a regular and silence Mona. With this kind of money coming in, I could actually start to save, instead of blowing it all on drugs and clothes, and get out of the game and away from her for good.

Hulbert walked into the loft carrying some canvases and shopping bags with his paints and brushes. Jason was letting him use the loft to paint, it added to the vibe.

“Hey Hulbert, I just booked Natalia a two-hour, four-thousand-dollar appointment. Am I the best or what?”

“That's what she should have been getting all along,” said Hulbert, as he gave me a quick smile.

I loved Hulbert.