

EPISODE ONE - FERRET AND THE PHEROMONES

'And another fucken' thing,' bellowed Ferret, his little yellow tuft of hair reeling from the shock, 'your pub smells like stale shit!' He sneered and stood, one leg forward, as if anticipating a brawl.

The publican was having none of it. It was late and he was tired.

'Thanks for that,' he replied wearily. He knew the little ferret-faced upstart all too well. He was a regular and full of shit. 'Now if you could just leave?'

'n' I fingered your wife upstairs just before.'

The publican stared morosely at the wall, 'That's more than I've managed for a long time.'

'Did ya hear what I said?' Ferret fired again. 'I just had me index finger and pointy man right up ya wife's coit! I could a gone right frough to the pinkie, but I need somethin' to pick me teeth wif on the way 'ome.'

'Yeah, I hear ya.'

'Well, what are ya gunna do about it! You gunna defend your wife's honour, or what?'

The publican, whose name was Steve, sighed heavily and looked down at Ferret. What a dick, he was thinking. For one thing his wife had no honour left. She'd ridden everything in Windsor from the horse drawn diner, to his brother. And for another thing, this little prick was five foot, when kicked up the arse and wearing high-heeled shoes. Who was he kidding? Every Friday night it was the same – Ferret Cutler, first-class, unemployed loser would spend his entire dole cheque in 'The Imperial Hotel', pick a fight and get his head smacked in. Tonight he was picking on Steve himself because everyone else had gone. Steve knew that Tai, the bouncer, was listening outside the window and was ready to respond as soon as Ferret started the usual ruckus. Tai was a big Maori boy and would put a porthole through the little twit. Steve was basically a nice Aussie guy. He had no desire to have the diminutive dickhead beaten up but he was tired and he had to get rid of him.

'Listen, Ferret,' he replied, 'I got a proposition for ya. 'If you fuck off right now, no questions asked, you can have a freebie on me tomorrow night. What do ya say?'

Ferret hesitated. His single tuft of hair drooped down enquiringly over his brow to see what his decision might be. He relaxed his stance and his track pants lowered slightly and rested on his old sandshoes. 'Two beers,' he said.

'Alright, two beers. Now fuck off.'

'You're lucky I'm feelin' in a generous mood,' Ferret sneered. And he sauntered out with a drunken swagger, taking a small sideways detour into the furniture on the way out.

Tai looked at Steve. Steve shook his head and Tai let Ferret pass.

Ferret, for his part, didn't notice the big man, otherwise he would probably have picked him too. But he was bleary-eyed, and tired himself, now that the excitement of the pool table, the pokies and the drinking was over. So he stumbled home, yelling obscenities down Macquarie Street to no-one in particular, about nothing in particular. Several people yelled back for him to shut up which only inspired him to greater heights. His voice echoed down the early morning street. He was so busy raising his head to make the loudest possible noise his drunken tonsils could muster, that he slipped and fell into the gutter. It had been raining and his sock got soaked.

'Fuck!' he hollered.

He attempted to pick himself up. Then, he attempted to pull up his soggy sock, which threw him off balance and sent him hopping haphazardly into the street, where he fell and ended up on his back, looking up at the stars.

He was still in this position when the frame, within which the stars dizzily tumbled, was filled with a closer object; a much closer object; two much closer objects, in fact. These were two very angry faces. They looked down upon him as his mother used to when he was a baby - with complete disgust and simmering contempt.

'It's that fucken' idiot again,' said one.

'Let's kick 'is arse,' replied the other.

So they did and Ferret crawled home to his single-bed apartment above the local brothel, bleeding heavily from the mouth but feeling at least satisfied that he'd managed to get his face smacked in on a Friday night.

Everybody likes routine.

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Ferret was on a tropical island. A beautiful dark-haired Hawaiian girl was licking his arse. Just then, her huge and furious husband ripped off the grass door of the hut and made a beeline for Ferret. 'Oh shit!' he yelled disengaging from the woman's wagging tongue, which now found only air, where previously there had been a fleshy, hairy orifice. The hulk pushed Ferret in the upper shoulder while Ferret grabbed for his trousers. The massive, snarling man shoved Ferret again. Ferret knew, from bruised experience, that this was a certain prelude to a beating.

Then Ferret woke up.

A large man was poking him on the shoulder.

Ferret, his heart in palpitation and his hands upon his genitals, yelped involuntarily and sat bolt upright in his bed.

Before him, stood a man of irresistible proportions. He was approaching six and a half feet on the old imperial scale and would have no doubt tipped those scales at several hundred pounds. He was sandy-haired and his facial features were most child-like. He was quite handsome in a boyish way: orbicular face; large blue eyes that drooped like a puppy's when seeking attention; generous large lips; a well-proportioned pug nose; large facial features and a matching, solid frame. In all, he was a study in 'big', and a physical juxtaposition to the small, scrawny Ferret who was now eyeing him suspiciously, having finally broken through the miasma of hangover clouding his mind.

'Who are you?' asked Ferret with characteristic grace.

'Are you Ferris Cutler?' asked the man politely. His voice was soft and sonorous. He bore the unmistakable scars of a British public school education.

'Who's askin'?'

The man did not reply but instead delved deeply into his coat pocket and withdrew a jaded photograph, at which he looked for a moment, and then presented to Ferret.

'It is you,' confirmed the man, pointing at the photograph.

Ferret looked down at the photo and reeled his head back with surprise. It showed three boys - an oversized baby-faced boy of perhaps four, and next to him, identical twins in a large cradle. Both were swathed in huge bibs and both had a small tuft of yellow hair above a crinkled forehead. Apart from the tuft, both heads were as bald as a khaki-wearing lesbian. One of the babies sported an angry scowl whilst the other beamed a large and optimistic

smile. It was as if Ferret had been shrunk by some sort of Bugs Bunny potion to an infantile version of his present self and then doubled. The large, older child stood proudly, smiling at the camera and bracing a protective arm around the cradle.

'My long lost brother!' exclaimed the newcomer and he tried, in vain, to replicate the photo by embracing Ferret.

'Hold your horses!' Ferret replied in kind. 'I ain't no poof and I ain't got no brother.'

'But look! You have! Two of them!' remonstrated the large man. 'Surely you see it? That's you! That's me! And that's Horatio!'

'Who the fuck is Horatio?'

'Your twin brother. Mumsy took that photo on my fourth birthday. Pater was taken ill not long after this and that's when you went missing. But I've finally found you!'

He tried to hug Ferret again.

By this time Ferret was on his feet and pushing the hulk away. 'What the fuck are you crappin' on about?' he yelled. 'And who the hell is Mumsy?'

'You wandered off. Mumsy blamed herself. She's never got over it. For years she's carried the guilt and just recently she's become gravely ill herself. We promised her we'd find you and take you home to see her before she dies. Oh Mumsy!' And he began to cry.

Ferret had had enough. 'Alright. Fuck off!' he yelled

'And she's leaving us a fortune.'

'Poor Mumsy,' consoled Ferret. He hugged the distraught man.

The large intruder blubbered like a pre-schooler. Tears fell onto Ferret's head with the intensity of a rich Eastern Suburbs girl's piss on the turf at the end of Melbourne Cup Day. Ferret's face was buried into the man's stomach but his facial expression, could anyone have seen it, resembled that of one who has smelled something bad in the fridge.

'So, what did you say your name was . . . bro?'

'Oh, I'm sorry,' the man replied, wiping away an offending tear. 'Bernard. I'm Bernard Cutler, your long lost brother.'

'Yeah. Right,' said Ferret. He tried a disingenuous back pat, but due to their relative sizes, it ended up being a bum pat and Ferret pushed Bernard away on homophobic impulse.

'A fortune, you say?' he asked, wiping his hand on his track pants and trying not to seem too interested. 'Come 'n' 'ave a beer 'n' we'll talk this over.'

Bernard wiped another tear away. 'Oh, but you haven't met Horatio yet.'

'Is that the little cun . . . I mean, is that darling Horatio in the photograph?'

'Yes, he's run off to buy you a present. He knew it was you as soon as he saw you there sleeping. I wasn't so sure, but now I see it really is you.'

He went to hug Ferret again, but Ferret was having none of it. 'Alright. Alright. Just fucken' settle,' he warned. One sentence of polite conversation at a time was about his limit. He pushed the unwanted affection away.

Bernard stepped back towards the door and someone bellowed. Bernard stood to one side and revealed Ferret's double, jumping around in pain.

'Oh, sorry, Horatio. I always step on him,' explained Bernard, 'accidentally, of course.'

'Oh that's okay, Bernie,' replied the runt, in a strangled falsetto, as he hopped around in pain. Eventually, he stopped hopping, regained his composure and looked up at Ferret.

Ferret was stunned. 'Well fuck me with a greasy light pole,' he whispered. 'It's like looking in a mirror.'

The two young men were indeed identical. They had even chosen to wear the same colour t-shirt, except Ferret's had a picture of Black Sabbath and was somewhat soiled with beer and blood from the night before. Horatio's t-shirt had a drawing of Pokémon.

'Ferris!' yelled Horatio and he ran towards Ferret with his arms spread wide, like a lover on a beach in a Hollywood flick. Ferret, however, would not have passed the audition, because rather than returning the wild embrace, he chose to sidestep the oncoming love machine and purposely tripped him up and shoved him onward as he passed. Horatio sprawled forward and cracked his forehead into the wall.

'Oh sorry, mate,' said Ferret as he helped Horatio up. 'Oh, and you bought me a present too.' Ferret took a quick look at the photo frame and tossed it on to the floor.

'Oh, no worries Fezza,' replied Horatio, in a high-pitched whining voice, shaking his head to regain his senses. A lump the size of a small golf ball was growing there by the second. 'Accidents happen, eh?'

Yeah they do, thought Ferret and there might be another big one, depending on the size of the inheritance. A two way split sounded better than a three way split and a one way split sounded best of all. He wasn't sure he could take on Bernard but he could certainly handle this little shit head.

'Well I'll be damned. It's really you,' mused Horatio, now fully recovered from the blow and smiling at Ferret. 'Oops, sorry. Shouldn't swear. That's five cents in the swear jar, eh, Bernster?'

'Pater will be watching from Heaven,' replied Bernard solemnly.

Ferret looked from one to the other with his eyes wide and his upper lip curled up in amazement.

'Let's get the fuck out of here,' he said.

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Ferret strutted down the Windsor Corso with his arse as tight as a Jewish landlord. When he walked, his whole body was clenched. His shoulders pumped forward alternately at almost forty-five degrees and his upper body followed in a tense macho dance propelled forward by his arms. These were held fast at the shoulders and formed two scythe-like arcs from shoulder to dangling fingertips, so that when observed from the front, the strutting figure looked like an aggressive, advancing trophy cup.

Ferret's face, as he strutted, was held in one grotesque visage of sneering disgust. His upper lip was raised slightly in an ugly version of the Elvis sneer, his beady Ferret eyes were semi-closed like Clint Eastwood's just before the kill and his yellow tuft of hair bounced from side to side like a drunken ballerina.

By contrast, Horatio skipped along, grinning at everyone like the kid in the playground in junior high school who often ate alone and Bernard, the giant, lumbered beside him like some monstrous, handsome Shrek, with his legs bowed slightly in his suit trousers from the weight of the chassis above.

It was after midday and in the pub the Saturday crowd was in full swing. The pool tables were taken by a group of local girls who had fat arses, bleached white hair, more tattoos than a Brooklyn hooker and who said 'fuck' a lot. The fellas looking on didn't seem to mind. This was a collective of fine Aussie males who urged the girls, through toothless grins, to pot any ball that would reveal the girls' cleavage. They rested their beers on their bellies, laughed

uproariously and congratulated one another each time a tit was revealed. And they said 'fuck' a lot.

There were a couple of families in for an early lunch and a clever little girl of about five, who had evidently learned to read early, had looked at the cocktail menu and, just as Ferret passed, was asking her dad what a 'Cocksucking Cowboy' was.

'Three quarters shot of Butternut Schnapps and a quarter shot of Baileys,' he threw in. 'And if ya want a Wet Pussy, that's a half shot of Canadian Royal Crown whiskey, half a shot of Amaretto and Red Bull for a mixer. Though lookin' at you, you're a bit young for a wet pussy.'

'Hey,' replied the father, 'watch ya mouth!'

'Settle down,' replied Ferret. 'They're both on the menu.'

The father was deciding whether to make something of it when Bernard's shadow fell upon him. So he shut his mouth.

Ferret, who was always looking for a stoush, was disappointed at the father's lack of action. He hadn't realised the impression his new brother was making, not just on the father, but also on the whole bar and he was surprised not to be already amongst the flying furniture. So for good measure he added, 'Or if you'd prefer me to be more educational about it,' and he swung the little girl around so that they were eye to eye, 'it's when one homosexual man who wears a big fucken' hat puts 'is mouth on another man's dick.' And he grabbed his own dick to illustrate the point.

'Right. That's it!' shouted the father, and he rose from the table like a genie from a bottle.

Just in time, Steve, the publican arrived. 'Alright. Enough!' he shouted. 'Ferret take your mates and piss off down the back. I'll get you the beer I promised ya. Go on. Git!'

Ferret gave the man one last withering 'I'll be back' look and withdrew, followed by his brothers.

'Sorry, mate,' Steve apologised to the father, 'he's a dickhead.'

'What's a dickhead,' asked the little girl?

'I'll get you extra fries,' Steve apologised again and left the father to his explanations.

Ferret settled himself at a large wooden trestle. He nodded towards the little girl in the distance. 'She'll 'ave the Windsor Waddle within ten years, no worries.'

'What's the Windsor Waddle,' asked Bernard, sitting on one end of the trestle and rapidly elevating the other, so that Horatio was catapulted like a blur between him and Ferret and across the room. He landed on his back on a neighbouring table, which fortunately was unattended. 'Oops. Sorry, old man,' said Bernard.

'That's okay Bernie Boy,' croaked Horatio as he picked himself off the table and grimaced with the pain of a bruised lower back.

'The Windsor Waddle,' Ferret replied, 'is so named because the chicks in this town eat so much shit that by the time they get to senior high their arses swing from side to side. You gotta give 'em a metre each side or they knock you out. They need lanes for pedestrians in the Hawkesbury.'

'Hey, Ferris . . .' said Horatio, as he took up his seat.

'The name's Ferret.'

'Why do you have to swear so much, mate?'

Horatio had a musical falsetto twang for a speaking voice. It was a whining drone that grew higher pitched and more strained towards the end of his sentences where the 'mate'

was invariably placed. It was a combination between Essex and Aussie and it was annoying the hell out of Ferret.

'Hey, listen,' Ferret said loudly, 'this is my fucken' pub, right? This is my fucken' world. So don't you think you can fucken' come in 'ere and tell me how to handle it, alright?

But Horatio was unperturbed and as whining and annoying as ever, 'Sorry, mate. No offence meant, eh' Bern?'

'Mumsy doesn't like swearing,' Bernard concurred.

'Speakin' of Mumsy,' said Ferret, suddenly polite with the memory of riches, 'what was that you were sayin' earlier about an inheritance?'

'There's heaps of it, isn't there, Bernster?' Horatio prattled out. He looked up at his big brother like a doughy-eyed antelope.

'You look like fucken' Bambi,' said Ferret.

'No need to swear, mate,' Horatio replied with a smile. With one hand he held his lower back and with the other, the egg on his forehead.

'Mumsy and pater were awfully rich,' Bernard began in his thoroughly upper class British voice. 'Pater was in the Lords and mater, that's Mumsy, was originally his maid. You see, Mumsy flew out from Australia especially for the job of minding the three of us. She was originally from New Zealand, I believe, but she grew up in Australia. She lived with Pater for a year or so . . . I should explain that pater and was already married at the time and, well . . .'

'A bit of hanky-panky ensued,' Ferret guessed.

'To put it somewhat indelicately, yes.'

'One for the southern hemisphere, eh?'

'Well, yes I . . .'

'It woulda been less than a day before she hopped on. They're randy bitches those New Zealand girls. She woulda been blowin' the old fella faster than a Redfern Abo on a ring-pull bong.'

Bernard was about to continue when he stopped for a moment and thought about that. Then he did a short double take and said, 'I have no idea what you just said.' But continued. 'So Mumsy is really the only Mumsy I remember and, of course, you two, being younger, knew absolutely nothing of the first Mumsy at all.'

'So what happened to first Mumsy?' asked Ferret, becoming interested.

'Oh, real Mumsy died tragically on a visit to Australia.'

'How?'

'Terrible accident. Bitten by a funnel web under the golden arches . . .'

'Painful there.'

' . . . in Lithgow, I think it was.'

'Was second Mumsy on that particular trip?' asked Ferret with a glint in his eye.

'Funny you should mention that. Yes. She was. Pater had insisted on her coming, for some reason.'

'Can't think why,' said Ferret, scratching his balls.

'No. But everything turned out well in the end though. Pater was grief-stricken at first . . .'

'Naturally . . .'

'But he recovered quickly . . .'

'Of course . . .'

‘. . . and soon after, married Mumsy two, who is of course, Mumsy. They remained in Australia for some time. Pater was president of the Windsor Polo Club and Mumsy used to service the local horses.’

‘And their owners too, I’ll bet,’ mumbled Ferret.

‘What was that?’ asked Bernard.

‘Nothin’. So what happened to me?’ asked Ferret, who got the picture, but in spite of his usual lack of decorum, figured there was no need to unnecessarily disrupt the equilibrium of these two naïve little shits.

‘Mumsy took you for a toddle by the Hawkesbury River, to see the ducks, but mysteriously, you went missing. They dragged the river but there was no sign of you.’

‘Any reason why Mumsy would want me off the scene?’ asked Ferret, with the faintest twinge of a soggy memory.

‘That’s a strange question,’ replied Bernard. ‘But I suppose you did bite off one of her nipples during breast feeding and you did used to spit at her.’

‘And you used to head butt her knee as soon as you could toddle,’ added Horatio, ‘You broke her kneecap once, but she loved you dearly.’

‘Yeah, I’ll bet she did,’ murmured Ferret, fitting jigsaw pieces together in his street-wise mind. He turned on Horatio. ‘But how come you speak like some sort of apologetic, semi-Aussie poofter and the big guy talks all posh like?’

Horatio shrugged. ‘Just lucky, I guess.’

Bernard chipped in, ‘The doctors were puzzled by that too. They ended up thinking it was genetic: some sort of aberrant throwback to the convict days. Mumsy married into aristocracy but let’s not forget she is from inferior antipodean stock. I mean, I think even you would agree that it is generally recognised world-wide that Australians are vulgar, fly-ridden scum, with mediocre minds and nasal intonation. No offence, of course.’

‘None taken,’ Ferret replied, staring at the wall in thought. ‘So, how much?’

‘Somewhere between five and six hundred, we think,’ Bernard replied.

‘Thousand?’ asked Ferret, impressed.

‘No, million,’ replied Bernard.

‘Fuck me!’ replied Ferret. And he got an instant hard on.

‘Five cents for the swear jar,’ said Horatio.

‘Fuck off,’ said Ferret.

‘No need to swear, mate,’ replied Horatio with a broad, idiotic grin.

‘Bloody right,’ added Steve, placing three beers on the table. ‘Mind your mouth. Here’s three beers and that’s one more than I promised. Who are your mates?’

Bernard stood and shook Steve’s hand. ‘I’m Bernard and this is Horatio. We’re Ferris’ brothers and we’re here to take him home to Japan to be at Mumsy’s side when she passes.’

Ferret was gulping down the VB and spat it out all over the table. ‘What the fuck!’ he blurted.

‘Mind your manners,’ Steve chided. ‘Your brother’s a gentleman. Take a leaf out of his book. And stop swearin’ in my joint.’

Just then a fat, overly made up forty-something woman, wearing tights for pants and a loose t-shirt for a top, stuck her head around the corner. ‘Steve!’ she bellowed, ‘stop talking to that little cunt and get your fucken’ arse in ‘ere! There’s more customers at the bar than fucken’ flies under an Abo’s armpit!’ Her head disappeared around the corner as quickly as it had appeared.

‘Alright, I’m comin’!’ he yelled at the blank wall.

'Your wife?' asked Bernard.

Steve nodded.

'She seems nice,' Bernard said with a smile.

Steve left.

Bernard resat, which sent Horatio skyward again. This time he was thrust vertically and he landed with a crunch on his backside, right on the edge of the trestle.

'What's this shit about me goin' to Japan?' asked Ferret. 'I ain't goin' there. 'Everyone's Asian and it's full of fucken' radiation.'

'But it's all arranged and paid for, Ferrisimo,' said Horatio, rubbing his bottom, stretching his back and feeling the egg on his forehead.

'What the fuck is she doin' in Japan? I thought she was in England.'

'She was,' explained Bernard, 'she and pater returned after a year or two but they went via Japan where Mumsy was lucky enough to discover she had three long lost brothers. They were in a pop band and if my memory serves me correctly two of them worked as male models as well. It was such a stroke of luck finding them. Mumsy seemed so fond of them. She admired their tattoos constantly. They would often kiss her extremely affectionately and playfully fondle her breasts and buttocks, as brothers do.'

Maybe in England and Japan, thought Ferret.

'At any rate,' Bernard continued, 'she stayed there for several months after Pater decided to return to England. She lived with her brothers and we were put into a boarding school, even though Horatio was only a baby, really. Mumsy felt we needed to learn self-reliance. She was always thinking of us.'

'Tell 'im how I nearly died, Bernie Boy,' Horatio piped in.

'What?' asked Ferret, back from his mental calculations.

'Oh yes. Just before Mumsy decided it was time to return to England, she took out Horatio for a day trip to Mount Fuji. I can't remember why I didn't go, but the strangest accident occurred. Somehow, Horatio here, managed to fall into the caldera and it was only by sheer luck that his nappy caught on a rock about thirty metres down or he would surely have perished. You were very lucky, young man.' He waved an admonishing finger at Horatio who beamed back at him, proudly. 'Mumsy cried for days after that.'

'No doubt,' muttered Ferret.

'So, to cut a short story long, Mumsy returned with us to England where a few years later pater died from a freak accident.'

'Freak accident?' parroted Ferret.

'Yes, there was nothing Mumsy and Renaldo could do.'

'Who the fuck is Renaldo?' asked Ferret.

'Oh, Renaldo was Mumsy's fiery Latin pool keeper. Lovely chap. Used to walk about with his shirt off all the time, even in winter. But I have to say he did keep that pool crystal clear in every season, didn't he Horatio?'

'Beautiful. And Mumsy appreciated it, didn't she, the Bernmeister?'

'Oh God yes. She was always very affectionate towards him. She used to rub oil onto his chest to keep him moist and supple and often, when pater was away on business, she would invite him in for dinner and they would have toad in the hole. Mumsy said it was a divine meal comprising of sausage enclosed in batter. We never ate with them, of course. We were put to bed by that time. Mumsy made sure we got our rest.'

'She was always thinking of us,' added Horatio.

'Unfortunately, one night pater ventured too near the pool filter and it severed his jugular vein. Poor old Renaldo. The police didn't know him like we did. They questioned him for days. Eventually he was charged. I have no doubt of his innocence.'

'Is he still in gaol?'

'Oh, heavens no. He was accidentally beaten to death by a guard shortly after going to gaol. I know Mumsy tried to protect him because the guard came over to our house on several occasions prior to Renaldo's death, but it was no use. The guard's truncheon accidentally slipped a dozen times and poor Renaldo was gone. It was about that time that Mumsy disappeared.'

'Didn't she take you?' asked Ferret, who couldn't believe what he was hearing.

'No, she just forgot, apparently. Silly Mumsy; always forgetful.'

Horatio laughed fondly.

'So we were brought up in an orphanage and beaten mercilessly, but it made us all the stronger for it. Then, out of the blue, we received a message a few days ago telling us that Mumsy was gravely ill, that she didn't have long to live, that she had quite by chance learned of your whereabouts and that we must find you and come to Japan immediately. And so, here we are.'

Ferret rested the back of his head against the wall of the pub. 'Japan?' he whispered to himself. 'I ain't never been out of Australia, as far as I can remember. Japan, eh? For how long?'

'Only until Mumsy passes, then you're free to do as you please.'

Ferret's mind was alive with possibilities. "'n' I get a third of the treasure?'

Bernard and Horatio nodded.

Apart from the riches, he figured these two innocent little turds needed some protection from 'dear old Mumsy', near death or not. 'Alright. Fuck it!' he exclaimed. 'I'll go.'

'Excellent,' replied Bernard. 'We leave tomorrow. We'll arrange some new clothes for you.'

'I gotta take a piss first,' said Ferret.

He quaffed the remainder of his beer and headed for the toilet.

After he left, Bernard said, 'He seems awfully nice.'

'Mumsy will be so pleased to see him and so proud of us for finding him,' Horatio replied.

'Yes, it's funny that she never thought of looking in the telephone book before.'

'Oh well,' replied Horatio, 'all's well that ends well.'

He took a sip of beer just as Bernard slapped him on the back in congratulation. Horatio knocked out an incisor, which he accidentally swallowed.

'I say, sorry old boy,' said Bernard.

'No worries, Bernmobile,' replied Horatio and he smiled with a new gap.

Ferret was in the toilet, pissing into the troth, when he looked to his left.

On the wall were two dispensers. One was for condoms, he had seen that a million times before, but next to it was a brand new machine. It was for some weird thing he couldn't quite read. So when he finished peeing, he approached the dispenser and looked at it more closely.

Printed on it was: 'Wipe On Sex Appeal. Australia's Number One Pheremone Wipe. Warning. Can Trigger Powerful Responses. Use Responsibly.'

'Bullshit,' said Ferret but he fished in his pocket for two bucks anyway. He put in his dough, pulled out a tray from the machine and took out a small blue box. 'But if I get a root out of it . . .'

He opened the packet and rubbed the scented moist wipe onto the back of his neck and onto his wrists, just like the packet said. Then he pushed out through the toilet door and went up to the bar.

'Give us another VB,' he ordered.

'Whatever happened to 'please'?' asked Raylene, Steve's wife, as she poured him a beer.

'How long you had the new machine?'

'What new machine?'

'The dispenser in the shitter.'

'I dunno. Steve, how long we had the new dispenser in the shitter?'

'Come in yesterday!' he yelled back from the pool table where he was devotedly leaning behind and into a young tart to show her how to line up the ball. 'I told the tall poofta bastard who brung it that pheromone was spelled wrong, but 'e wouldn't fucken' listen!' Steve played the shot with an exaggerated pelvis thrust and the young bleach-haired girl laughed a hoarse laugh and slapped him for his trouble. 'You cheeky fucker,' she said.

'Looks like your old man's not sure whether to pot the pink or the brown,' suggested Ferret with a dirty smile.

'So long as he leaves me alone, I don't give a fuck,' Raylene replied. But as she leaned forward towards Ferret to place his beer on the counter, she looked up at him with the strangest expression on her face.

'What?' he asked with some alarm, turning his head both ways to look behind him, unsure of what the look meant.

Raylene's eyes widened; the pupils dilated and her cheeks grew rosy.

'What?' he repeated, somewhat urgently.

'Jenny!' Raylene yelled to a nearby barmaid who was having a fag outside. 'Take over the bar for a minute!' To Ferret, from whom she had not taken her eyes, she said in a strangled voice, 'You come wif me.'

She grabbed him roughly by the t-shirt and hauled him in one swift movement over the counter. Within several seconds Ferret found himself down in a small cellar, with the door shut firmly behind him. Before he knew what was happening, the amorous woman had ripped off her tights and undies and was rubbing her vagina on his leg like a randy dog.

'What the fuck are you . . .'

But he had no time to finish the sentence. Raylene was on to him quicker than an Indian into a food queue. She ripped open his fly, sucked his cock to achieve firmness and rode him like an electronic bull stuck on ten. Metal barrels flew and unearthly moans of orgasm penetrated the hollow cellar.

Several minutes later, her torrid passion sated, Raylene quickly hitched up her tights and said, 'See ya next time.' And she was gone, leaving the defiled Ferret alone and breathing heavily into the gloomy den.

'Fuck me,' he gasped. 'It works.'

'We were wondering where you got to, Fezza boy,' said Horatio as the somewhat dishevelled Ferret approached them.

'Give us some money,' said Ferret with urgency.

'I say, are you alright?' asked Bernard, producing his wallet.

'I'll pay ya back,' replied Ferret, grabbing the wallet and disappearing as quickly as he had arrived and then returning as quickly again with a full plastic bag full of bumps. 'Let's get

out of 'ere,' he said and several seconds later the three of them were marching back towards Ferret's apartment.

Later that night Steve went to check the pheromone dispenser. 'Hey Raylene!' he yelled, 'You won't fucken' believe it. Those stupid bastards've already emptied the pheromone dispenser!' He chuckled to himself. 'Silly pricks wouldn't know the truth if they fell over it.'

At about that same time, Ferret was lying awake in bed, thinking. From the next room came the snores of Bernard and the occasional yelp from Horatio who was apparently an unsettled sleeper. He kept yelling out: 'Not the face!' and then laughing uproariously and muttering, 'Nice one, Bernie.' before descending into sleep for a short while and then repeating the process.

It had been a big day. Ferret had gained two brothers and an inheritance and become a stud. In terms of significance, the brothers were obviously of least importance and the money, well, he'd believe that when he saw it, but the pheromone wipes: they seemed to work. Or was that coincidence? Fuck, could it be? Raylene had never paid him any attention before, except to turf him out of the pub on the odd occasion Steve was away. So surely . . . But fuck, he'd better be right. He'd just spent a hundred bucks on a dispenser full of the stuff. If it was bullshit . . .

He turned on the light, grabbed one of the little blue boxes beside him and squinted at it until his eyes adjusted and he could read the packet clearly. It read: PHEROMONES HAVE LONG BEEN RECOGNISED AS THE MAIN INFLUENCE ON SEXUALITY IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM. SOME EXPERTS BELIEVE THAT THEY PLAY AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN HUMAN BEHAVIOUR. Ferret considered that. I thought we *were* a part of the animal kingdom. He shrugged and continued. WHILST THE WAY HUMANS REACT IS AN INDIVIDUAL FACTOR THE PHEROMONE AROMA CAN BE RELIED UPON TO ACHIEVE UNFAIR SOCIAL ADVANTAGES. FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY. Thank fuck for that, thought Ferret. THIS PRODUCT HAS NOT BEEN TESTED ON ANIMALS. What the fuck did they test it on, Ferret wondered - whitegoods? THE HIGHEST QUALITY PHEROMONE WIPE. So presumably there were lower quality wipes out there. If so, why would anyone produce a low quality pheromone wipe? It was all so confusing. But so long as it worked.

He couldn't sleep so he rifled through the clothes the boys had bought him earlier in the day. They had tried to get him to buy all sorts of poofy stuff like suits and ties but he was having none of it. He went straight into Lowes and bought up a storm. Quality? Talk about quality? He sifted through the glorious collection of stubbies, t-shirts and thongs he had purchased for a song. And those Viking Jeans – beautiful. Fuck those expensive Levis. Who needed two pockets at the back?

He kicked around his room for a bit, bored and looking for action. He was supposed to be asleep, so he was rested for the flight tomorrow morning early, but he was too excited. He just couldn't sleep. Instead, he pocketed a pheromone wipe and he took a trip down the stairs to see what Cheryl and the girls were up to. It was Saturday night so they were probably all on the job but he thought he'd check and see anyway.

Out the front stood Cheryl and Danielle. Cheryl was the older of the two at twenty-one. Danielle was only eighteen. They were both good lookers and built for action. Cheryl was a blonde dyed black and Danielle was a black dyed blonde. Cheryl had bigger tits but they both had plenty and they both wore short skirts, fishnets and high heels to attract customers. Unfortunately for them, it was a slow night in Windsor. The pubs had been closed for an hour and there was little prospect of work.

'G'Day Ferret,' said Cheryl, as he appeared down the stairs.

'G'Day Shezza. G'Day Danny.'

'G'Day,' Danielle replied without much interest.

'Bit quiet?' asked Ferret.

'Whadda you reckon?' Cheryl replied, nodding towards the empty street. 'If you was a fucken' terrorist and you could let off a bomb in this shit 'ole 'n' you'd only kill yourself.'

'What about a threesome then?' asked Ferret. 'On the house? I won't charge you.' He smiled hopefully.

'You like sex 'n' travel?' asked Danny.

'Yeah,' he replied.

'Then get in your car and fuck off.'

Ferret fingered the tiny box in his pocket. He took it out and began to open it as he listened to the girls talk.

'What 'appened to Mark Hogan 'n' his mob? They was always good for business on a Sat'dy night,' said Cheryl.

Ferret took out the pheromone wipe.

'He got married,' replied Danny, 'so we won't see 'im for a few weeks.'

'Pisser,' replied Cheryl.

Ferret dabbed the moist wipe onto his wrists and onto the back of his neck.

'Did 'e end up marryin' Debbie Hindmarsh?'

'Nah, some Asian bitch. He wanted his kids to play the piano.'

'Oh, right.'

'And do their homework.'

'Right.'

Ferret moved closer to the girls to see if the pheromone wipe had any effect. The girls didn't pay him any attention.

'They moved to Dundas,' said Raylene.

'Dundas? asked Cheryl. 'Where's that?'

'Parramatta way.'

'Right.'

'Why'd he move there?'

'To be close to James Ruse Selective High School.'

'Fuck me,' relied Cheryl, 'that's what I call plannin' ahead.'

'You know them Asians,' said Danielle, flicking the G-string out of her arse. 'That'd be an interestin' country to visit, but.'

'Where.'

'Asia.'

'Yeah,' Cheryl nodded. 'Isn't that near Vietnam?'

Ferret was right between them now.

'Nah, it's . . .' Danielle began, but she stopped just as quickly and turned abruptly towards Ferret.

Simultaneously, Cheryl did the same.

Ferret smiled.

'Fuck me,' whispered Cheryl.

'Fuck me,' whispered Danielle.

And they pulled Ferret's trackies down there and then.

Both girls ripped in abandoned frenzy at their fishnets. Hosiery flew like black snow across the street. Cheryl rubbed her twat with such gusto upon Ferret's upturned mouth and

nose that he could only breath on the upbeat. At one point the friction threatened to catch his snout ablaze. Meanwhile, Danielle stood above his nether regions and pulled him up by the tracksuit pants that hung limp around his shoes. She pulled him up towards her like she was on ice and working with hand weights.

Ferret wasn't sure whether he was coming or going. In the end it turned out he was cumming. And the three of them lay for a brief while, panting and regaining their breath on the footpath.

After a while Ferret pulled up his trackies. 'Thanks girls,' he said and disappeared back up the stairs.

Cheryl looked at Danielle. 'What the fuck was that all about?' she asked.

Danny shook her head. 'I dunno. But I was suddenly randier than an Eskimo in a sauna.'