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ENCORE!

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To my Tuesday Night Gang who have provided me with such happy memories! Also to Francesco who again provided me with his endless support – and endless cups of coffee!
Grazie a tutti!

OVERTURE

Fanny Fanshaw, or to give her her correct name, Fanella Fanshaw, was, in her childhood, a thoroughly obnoxious, misbehaved, impolite little madam. Often in trouble with her teachers, she also seemed to enjoy picking fights with her school-chums, and, worst of all, she was a real handful for her parents to cope with. 'What did we ever do to deserve a kid like her?' complained her mother, Molly, after Fanny had been up to her old tricks yet again.

'Beats me,' replied her husband, Vic, 'If she ain't careful she's gonna get my belt across her sweet little arse!' The years went by without much improvement in Fanny's attitude and, although she never was subject to her father's threat, she did, on more than one occasion, receive a spanking which, much to her parents' regret, seemed to have little or no after-affect in the way they had intended it to have.

'She'll grow out of it soon enough,' they were told by Vic's mother, after hearing of Fanny's latest episode of wrong-doing. 'Wait till she goes to Secondary Modern, they won't put up with her tantrums there, that's for sure!'

'Roll on the day!' said Molly, hoping her mother-in-law's words would come true.

'Why can't I go to a Grammar School, like some other kids do?' she screeched at her parents one evening, as Molly was preparing a nice, tasty, sausage-toad for their dinner.

'Cos you ain't clever enough, my girl, that's why,' answered her father.

At that, Fanny stamped her feet and shouted out, 'Keep your rotten sausage toad, it's not fit to give to the dog!' and stomped out of the room. Vic actually told her the truth. Fanny was not a particularly bright pupil and did not excel in any subject, except when she was given parts in school plays. Those were the times

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when she was much more tolerable and much less argumentative.

'She should go to stage school,' said Molly to Vic, one night when they were in their bedroom, out of Fanny's earshot. 'Our lives would be so peaceful!'

'Ain't much chance of that Molly, luv. Would cost a fortune, and a fortune we ain't got!'

Fanny went on to attend Dewsthorpe Secondary Modern School, and as Vic's mother had prophesised, her behaviour did, little by little, start to improve. Her tantrums were at an end, and she was actually starting to take an interest in her schoolwork. Her parents were later to find out the real reason behind her change. There was an after-school-hours Amateur Dramatics Club which she had joined and which resulted in Molly finding herself stitching and sewing costumes, not only for Fanny, but also for other school-friends. 'You should get paid for that,' complained Vic, when Molly was spending so much time making the costumes.

'What you talking about, Vic? It's a God's send! Look at the difference in our Fanny!'

'Yeah, I know, but all the same, luv,' he said, cheekily, 'Time's money, ain't that what they say?'

Fanny had one dream, and that dream was to become a star of stage and screen. There was to be no back-street penny-pinching for her. Champagne, bubble baths, and a life of luxury were the only thoughts in her mind. That's how it would be! Night after night she could see her name up in lights, as she dreamt of her undoubted success. People would flock to see her performances! All she could see in her mind were the words "Starring Fanella Fanshaw"! She had made up her mind that was to be her future. That was her one and only goal in life. Feeling so sure of her undoubted stage and screen success, she even composed her own triumphant song which, time and time again, she would stand in front of her full-length mirror and sing, as if she had a huge live audience before her. The final verse went something like this -

"When I reach that final curtain
Then I'll know for certain
As they scream and shout for more
It's encore! It's encore! It's encore!"

She was, indeed, one determined little madam! But, did they scream and shout for more? Did she go on to find success? Did she have to make sacrifices in her endeavours to make it to the top?

You will have to wait until the end of Fanny's story to find out and, not until you have reached The Final Curtain, will you be able to have those questions answered!

CHAPTER ONE

Using the pocket money her parents gave her, she would spend it queuing up for the one-and-nines at the local cinema, or joining the queues for the Gods at the Horford Hippodrome. Saturdays were the one big night of the week for young Fanny. She would sit there entranced, as she watched the performances of both film and stage stars. She could imagine the thrill of taking bows to the immense applause of the audience or seeing her name on the giant screen. As each week went by, she was more and more determined. She knew in her heart the success she so yearned for could only be achieved in Hollywood. 'That's where all the real stars make it!' she said to herself, time and time again.

She'd listened to classroom gossip of who had slept with whom just to get a bit-part in some second-rate movie. Starlets, they were called. 'Who cares if I have to do the same,' she said to herself. 'I have to start somewhere. I'd even sleep with King Kong if that's what it takes!' Looking at herself in the mirror, she had doubts. 'Who would want to sleep with me? Let alone give me a part in a movie for the privilege!' went through her mind as the image she saw before her was a rather plain, dreary-looking, girl of fourteen. That made her mind up. She must change her image!

She made up her mind that that week she would go without her usual visits to the cinema and theatre and would, instead, spend her pocket money on some make-up and also try to do something with her lanky locks. She needed to become Fanella, and not Fanny, Fanshaw! The items purchased, she locked herself in her bedroom where she would attempt to bring about the transformation. She spent hours in that little room, with copies of Movie News, opened at pages where famous actresses were staring her in the face, trying to immolate what she saw before her. She even painfully plucked her eyebrows, using a pair of tweezers she had borrowed from the family's medical

box. After several attempts of dabbing a touch of rouge to her cheeks, mascara to her eyelashes, eye-brow pencil, eye-shadow, and rich-red lipstick to her lips she was finally satisfied with the face she saw before her in the mirror. Next was a new hairstyle. She had no qualms in snipping off long strands, used electric curling tongs borrowed from a friend, and, finally applying a generous spray of lacquer, she felt she looked the part. The new Fanella Fanshaw was ready to go on stage!

Now all she needed was an audience and who better was there to test out her new image on but her parents, she thought. Taking a deep breath, she opened her bedroom door, and, as if she were a catwalk model, swept into the living room where her parents were busily watching a television programme. Vic looked up at her, in total disbelief, 'You can take that muck off your face as soon as you like!' he yelled at her, 'And what, for Christ's sake, have you done to your hair?' Fanny burst out in tears, quickly running back to her bedroom and slamming the door behind her.

'Why did you have to be so unkind?' asked Molly.

'She looked like a little slut! That's why! If we ain't careful, next thing we know is she'll be sleeping around. She's only fourteen for God's sake!'

'Oh! Vic, it's just a craze all girls of her age go through! They all like to think they're older than they are and, well, if you ask me anything, she looked a real stunner!' replied Molly, sympathising with poor Fanny.

'That's also what worries me! She looked nigh-on eighteen instead of her real age! She'll come a cropper if she keeps that up, mark my words!' Molly was so distraught at the remarks Vic at thrown at his daughter she went to see if there was anything she could do to console poor Fanny.

She found her, in tears, laying face-down on her bed. 'Your dad didn't mean all those nasty things he said, Fanny. I suppose it came as a shock seeing his little daughter so grown-up,' she said to her, trying her best to make amends for what Vic had said.

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'He meant every word of it! And I'll tell you what Ma. When I'm up there, with my name ablaze in lights, he can go to hell as far as I'm concerned!' she spouted back at her mother.

'You know you don't really mean that, Fanny. Your Dad's a good honest man and only has your best interests at heart.' 'Like him, I mean every word of what I've just said. And, as for being a good honest man, if that's what he is, give me a bad dishonest one any day!' she yelled back at her mother. There was nothing else Molly could do to comfort her daughter and she reluctantly decided to leave her alone, hoping that time would heal her wound.

Fanny, although feeling dispirited with what her father had said to her, was now even more determined to succeed in her quest. 'I'll show him just what his sweet little daughter is made of! And when I do he can really go to hell! And he can rot there for all I care!' she said aloud into the mirror. Not wanting to remain in the house a minute longer in case she was to be the subject of more abuse by her father, she quickly repaired her make-up, which, because of the tears she had shed, needed re-touching. She crept silently out of the house, and, not knowing where else to go, made her way to the local park where she could, at least, be out of reach of her father.

'Wow!' she suddenly heard a voice say. 'Is that really you Fanny?' Looking up she saw it was Tom, her friend Sheila's brother.

'Yes, of course it's me. Who else did you think I was?' she said sourly.

'Mind if I sit with you?' he asked.

'Be my guest, Tom. I could do with someone to talk to,' she replied. Tom was a tall, fairly good-looking boy, some four years older than Fanny. They started to chat, and Fanny could see, from the way he was eying her up and down, that he was a far more appreciative audience than either her mother or father had been.

'Why don't we go for a walk? It's a bit boring here with all these old gits about. If you're a good girl I might even buy you

a drink later,' he teased. Fanny, feeling quite grown-up at that, agreed, and leaving the park, she followed him into the wooded Dingle Lane.

They strolled along for a few minutes and, coming across a stile, Tom said, 'Let's go into the field, we can sit down on the grass. We'll have it all to ourselves in there with no old fogies to bother us!' Fanny, not realising what was on his mind, climbed after him, over the stile. He lay down under an old oak tree, his legs sprawled, and beckoned for her to do the same. They were lying there chatting, when he said to her, 'Fanny, you are a really beautiful girl, you know. Do you like me?' Fanny liked being told she was beautiful and, at that point, had no reason not to like him.

'Yes,' she replied, 'I like you a lot.' They smiled at each other and, before she knew it, he was almost on top of her, one hand in her knickers, with his fingers probing, and the other fondling her breasts.

'Here! What's your game, you dirty little sod!' she shouted. 'Come on Fanny, you know you want it!' he shouted back at her. 'I want no such thing!' she cried, struggling to get to her feet. Trying to adjust her clothing as best she could, she ran and called back at him, 'Just you wait till I tell my Dad. He'll give you what for!' she sobbed.

'It was only a bit of fun, Fanny,' he called in reply.

She ran all the way home but, when she was back in the safety of her bedroom, she decided she would tell her parents nothing about the incident as she could imagine what her father would say, 'Your own bloody fault, made up to the nines like that!' Instead, she climbed onto her bed where she laid toying with the thought that perhaps what had happened had not really been that bad. Telling herself that, if what her class-mates had told her was to be believed, and if she was to really start to climb that ladder of success, that type of thing was something she would have to get used to. 'And, anyway,' she said to herself, 'He was far better looking than King Kong!'

CHAPTER TWO

The following February Fanny was to celebrate her fifteenth birthday which she hoped would be a bit different from the way it was usually spent, hoping that her parents might, this time, push the boat out a little and maybe let her have a party to which she could invite her school friends. This was, to her regret, not to be the case and she was to be faced, yet again, with the all-too familiar, boring, high-tea spread at which just her grandmother was to be the only invited guest. 'But, Dad it's Sheila's birthday in two weeks time and her parents are letting her have a disco-party!' she persisted.

'If you think we're having that bloody noise in our house, you've got another think coming, my girl!' he told her in no uncertain terms. 'And if you don't like what you're getting, you can damn well go without!'

Fanny, furious that a party was to be denied her, realised it would be useless to pursue the matter further. 'Old fashioned sod!' she thought to herself. Molly went to great lengths to provide, what she thought to be, an attractive birthday-tea, with salmon and cucumber sandwiches, a trifle with real cream, and birthday-cake, complete with fourteen candles for Fanny to blow out.

'What's up with you Fanny? You're very quiet today,' asked her grandmother.

'She's sulking,' replied Vic, before Fanny had a chance to say a word. 'She wanted to invite all her friends and play loud pop records, instead of this super spread Molly's done for her.'

'I don't blame her!' replied Elena, Fanny's grandmother, which surprised both Vic and Molly. 'She's a young teenager, Vic. That's what they all get up to these days!' Fanny felt like hugging and kissing her grandmother, who was the only one who had come to her aid.

Molly was embarrassed she had taken Vic's side when Fanny had made her plea for a party and hurriedly said, 'There's

always next year, Fanny. We'll see what we can do about it then.'

'Next year!' thought Fanny, 'There won't be a next year for me in this horrible house, if I have my way about it!'

She had made up her mind and that was final! Hollywood was where she needed to be! That was where the action was! That was where she would climb the first rung of that ladder to stardom! 'But how am I ever going to get the money together to get there?' was the continual question she asked herself. She put her mind to finding an answer to her own question. She could save her pocket money, but that would take years to accumulate into a tidy sum. She could see if she could get herself a paper-round, to boost her pathetic little income. Even so, it would not result in the kind of money she needed. 'There must be a way! There has to be a way!' was all that was going on in her young, determined mind. 'I don't care what it takes, but I'm going to get there.'

There had been more school-girl gossip in Fanny's presence, this time the subject had been prostitution. 'Do you know how much they get for opening the legs?' laughed one of them.

'Quite a penny, I'll bet!' said another.

And yet a third cried out, 'They make a bloody fortune!'

'That's what I need, a bloody fortune!' said Fanny, silently to herself. It was when she got the invite to Sheila's disco party that gave her the idea. 'Sex! That's the answer! There's bound to be a good few blokes eager to pay for it! Tom found me very attractive, so why shouldn't there be more of his sort around!' Happy and excited she had now found the answer to her dilemma, she thought she would test out her theory at Sheila's party, at which Tom would no doubt be joining in.

It was to be an evening do, and she had given a great deal of thought about the appearance she wanted to project. Her one thought was that Tom should again find her attractive and wanted the same as he did the last time they had met. Provided he coughed up a few bob, she'd not disappoint him

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this time. True she'd had no previous experience in that direction but, would-be actress that she was, she was certain she'd be able to act the part without too much difficulty, and set out determined to give the most important performance of her hitherto sexless life. She'd again applied make-up to her face, although this time not so heavily. She slipped on a mini-skirt and a very tight blouse which showed off her well-formed breasts to their best advantage. Her hair was brushed and lacquered into the same style which had so infuriated her father before. Taking one final glance in the mirror, and having been satisfied with what she saw, she donned a coat, slipped out of the back door, calling a goodbye to her parents. 'Bye, love. Have a good time!' she heard her mother call back to her. 'Oh! Don't worry mother, I intend to!' she whispered to herself as she started to make her way to Sheila's house.

'You look fantastic!' exclaimed Sheila, as she welcomed Fanny to her party. 'Wish I'd had the nerve to do the same!' She showed Fanny to the make-shift bar they'd set up for the evening, saying, 'It'll be soft drinks only till mum and dad have gone to visit some friends for the evening. We've got a crate of beer and a couple of bottles of vodka hidden out the back. We'll bring them in as soon as they've gone.' Fanny cast her eyes over the room. There were plenty of people she already knew, but no sign of Tom.

'What's happened to your brother? Isn't he joining in the fun tonight?' she asked Sheila, as she was passing her a can of Coke.

'Course he is! He was late in from work and is upstairs changing. He'll be down in a minute.' Fanny felt relieved to hear that, fearing she'd gone to all that trouble for nothing.

Two minutes later Tom did appear, wearing a pair of very tight-fitting white jeans, and sweat-shirt of a bright multi-coloured design. Although he had immediately caught sight of her, Fanny was disappointed he seemed to be avoiding her, choosing to socialise with another group across the room from where she was standing. He did, from time to time, give her fleeting

glances, and eventually could not resist coming over to her. 'What's up with you tonight then? Don't you fancy me anymore, lover-boy?' she teased.

'You're joking! I fancy you like crazy but I remember what happened the last time!' he replied, edging closer to her. The beer and vodka were being brought in and there was a rush to the bar, Fanny and Tom being pushed very close together, with crowds of others around them, Fanny seized her chance, and gently ran her fingers over the bulge protruding between Tom's legs. 'Mmmm,' he whispered to her, 'You seem to have changed your mind since last time. Could do with more of that!' 'So you still want me?' she asked, in a low seductive voice. 'Want you? You bet I do!' he answered, not believing his luck. 'Tell you what then. You slip me a fiver and I'm all yours!' she replied, waiting to hear what he would say.

'You want me to pay for it?' he said, alarmed at what she had said.

'Got anything better to spend your money on?' she replied, sarcastically.

It took only a few seconds for him to make up his mind, 'Nope!' he said, 'It's a deal. Let's go out back. There's a shed down the bottom where we can make ourselves comfortable.'

'Very romantic!' thought Fanny to herself.

As they lay together completely naked, on the discomfort of the shed's wooden floor, Fanny sheepishly said to Tom, 'You'd better know, I haven't done this before.'

'Done what? Taken money for it?' he asked.

'No, stupid! I've never actually done it, if you know what I mean. It's my first time, so be gentle!' she replied, not knowing what was to come or even what was expected of her. There was a gleam in Tom's eyes.

'I've got myself a nice little virgin!' he smiled to himself.

'Course I'll be gentle, Fanny. Just you lay back, relax, and enjoy it!' When it was all over, and Tom had had his way with her, he said, 'You sure you haven't done it before, Fanny? You were bloody fantastic!'

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And so, that night, Fanny lost her virginity but, more important to her than that, was the five-pound-note she had collected in the process. That was to be just the beginning of the many rewards she would go on to receive for similar favours and which, she was sure, would eventually get her to her beloved Hollywood. Her dream had begun.