

Maid in India 2

A Maid in my 50s



MONICA GRAZ



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MAID in INDIA 2

A Maid in my 50s

By Monica Graz

Characters:

Original characters:

Nikki Carson or Harita, a transwoman who works as a live-in maid and outside cleaner.

Ms. Pamela Manley (Pam), Nikki's former wife and present prime employer.

Arka, Nikki's Indian friend and confidante.

Characters in India:

Sarita, an Indian transwoman working as a full-time maid for her wife and larger family.

Priya, Sarita's wife and now her prime employer.

Sonali, Sarita's mother,

Mitali, live in maid in Sonali's home and teacher and mentor of Sarita, mother of Arka,

Mona, Priya's mother,

Prema, Priya's sister

Anand, Prema's husband

Vishal, Priya's new boyfriend

Rakhi, live in maid in Mona's house.

PROLOGUE

It is more than two years now, that Nikki Carson, a transitioning transwoman, had started her exciting trip and had taken a most unusual path pursuing her dreams and inclinations. She is going to be sixty soon but she looks at least ten years younger and very womanly with developed breasts and soft features, after two years of various manipulations and adjustments to her body and voice. She works as a live-in maid for her former wife Pamela (Pam) Manley and as an outside cleaner, employed by the cleaning firm owned and managed by Miss Annie de Laurentis. One of her closest friends is Arka, an Indian young woman who

also works in the same cleaning firm as the manager's assistant.

Arka and Nikki had become good friends and Arka had gradually introduced Nikki to the Indian culture and way of thinking. She had convinced her that she would look good in a saree and had given her an Indian name, Harita, which Nikki had willingly adopted as her spiritual name.

For many months now, Arka is pushing Nikki to ask permission from her employer so they can take a trip together to India. Arka hadn't been back for several years and is badly missing her mother Mitali who is working as a live-in maid for a nice and kind lady in the outskirts of Kolkata.

Finally Nikki, feeling now more secure in her new identity, and having all the necessary papers in order, including a brand new passport in the name of Nikki Carson, gender F, had decided to take the big step. Her former spouse and now prime employer Mrs. Manley is convinced to give her a six weeks leave, after Arka had reassured her that she would take good care of Nikki and had organized through her employer Miss De Laurentis a cleaning service twice a week for Mrs. Manley's large and luxurious mansion. Tickets were purchased and here they are Arka and Nikki, now permanently called Harita by Arka, cramped in their economy class seats, as the plane is getting ready to land at Kolkata international airport.

CHAPTER 1 – Arriving at Kolkata

“I’m so excited! We’re landing soon. I can’t believe that this is really happening,” Arka said as she turned with a smile towards me, squeezing my hand.

“I’m more scared than excited, it’s all so new to me, I haven’t been out of the country in years and never in this part of the world and of course never in my new persona,” I replied, squeezing back Arka’s hand.

“Many firsts for Harita sweetie, but don’t worry, I’m here to protect you. We’re going to be among friends and family and lots of exciting things will happen to you,” Arka reassured me touching my knee, modestly covered by my printed cotton skirt. We both were wearing western clothes, I was wearing a comfy skirt and blouse outfit and Arka was having her jeans on and a simple cotton T-shirt.

As if reading my mind she said, “Probably this is the last time we’ll be in Western clothes dear. As soon as we arrive and settle in Madam Sonali’s house we will be asked to change into sarees. You will feel so much out of place if you are not in a saree in this part of the world. You will understand it as soon as we land,” Arka meaningfully added.

As the plane started going down we both gone quiet, deep in our thoughts. My mind was full of what I was told by Arka during our long flight. For the first time I was able to fully understand why she was from

the very beginning, so easy going and supportive of me and the colossal changes in my life.

I was trying to summarize in my head what Arka had told me during those long flight hours. Arka's mother Mitali, close to her sixties now, was working since she was 23, immediately after she had given birth to Arka and her twin sister Aarna. Her young and unreliable husband had abandoned her soon after the birth of the twins and she had to become a live in domestic, in order to support her two girls who were raised by Mitali's mother, as often happens in India. Her employer was a very nice middle class Indian lady a true Begum called Sonali. She was living alone with her teenage son. Her husband had died in a work-related accident and she was just her and her son who was 15, when Mitali started working for them.

Mitali soon realized that the young teenage boy liked to help her with the chores and she had also found out that he was secretly trying his mother's clothes. Begum Sonali had also found out, but she was very tolerant and understanding and she had allowed him to dress in her clothes and before long the son had become Sarita the assistant maid, helping Mitali who started teaching him everything that a young girl/maid should know. His mother allowed his crossdressing with one condition; he had to successfully continue to his secondary school and then study further in college.

“I see now why you had named me Harita, a name close to Sarita,” I jokingly said to Arka when she had mentioned the name.

She had laughed saying, “Clever girl, you guess right, but wait until you hear the rest of the story.”

And so, Arka continued her story, that was like a modern fairy tale. Sarita finished college and at his twenties got married in an arranged marriage organized by his mother Sonali. ‘Mind you, I never found out what Sarita’s male name was, nobody ever mentioned it and I’ve never asked’, Arka chuckled.

So, Sarita married a beautiful girl named Priya and they moved to USA where they both started working. During their stay there, they had produced two beautiful daughters and it was at this point that Priya discovered by chance or by instinct or both, her husband’s crossdressing and submissive tendencies. And they had never looked back after that. Sarita started doing the housework, eventually dressed in a maid’s saree, when the girls were at school and that had become the norm.

The family had moved back to India when the girls were teenagers and today, many years later, Sarita is appearing as a transwoman and had officially become the maid for the larger family. They all now know, their two girls included. Priya is now an independent woman, in an open relation with a man and Sarita is nothing more than a mere maid and everybody seems to accept it.

Wow! I thought when Arka finished the story, so many similarities with my story, in two different parts of the world, thousands of miles apart. And now, I'm heading to India to meet that transwoman who is in her early fifties, a few years younger than me. What a small world!

"We just landed!" Arka announced clapping her hands, like many other passengers, and bringing me out of my reverie.

"Welcome to India, welcome to Kolkata," We heard the flight attendant's voice.

Arka turned to me and said, "Madam's Sonali driver will expect us, I hope I'll recognize him, I hadn't seen him in years, his name is Dipak."

"From now on I'll just follow you, it's your country and your family," I said in a voice full of anxiety and expectation. A new adventure was about to start in a completely unknown world to me.

"As I already told you, we go first to Madam Sonali's home where we stay. You will meet her and Mitali my mother. Madam Sonali speaks good English but my mother knows only a few words so I'll translate for you. You are to address Madam Sonali as Sonali Begum or Madam, you are Harita a maid to her and she will treat you accordingly. She will be kind and friendly, but you have to remember your place."

An excitement shock wave run though my body, as my submissive genes kicked on. I arrive in India and I already am branded as a domestic, a servant!

“Yea Arka,” is all I manage to say, “I simply follow you and your instructions.”

We immediately spotted Mr. Dipak the driver, he was holding a small signpost where the name ARKA was written in bold letters.

Soon we were aboard a rather expensive SUV driving towards Kolkata. We soon arrived at a single two-story house surrounded by a garden. Mr. Dipak parked the car on a reserved spot and we both went in followed by him carrying our suitcases.

A woman in a saree started running towards us letting out small cries of joy. “That’s my mother,” Arka managed to whisper before she was hugged by Mitali. The hugging and whispering in a language I couldn’t understand lasted for a whole minute, before Mitali turned to me and said in accented English, “Harita, welcome, Arka speaks a lot about you.” And with those words she gave me a long hug as well. A smell of mild exotic perfume mixed with sweat and spices tickled my nose, a smell that would be always present during my stay in India.

At that moment another woman appeared also in a saree, looking more elegant and composed. “I can see, our guests from the West had arrived,” she said in a chuckle. She must be Madam Sonali, I thought.

Arka turned to her and did something that took me by surprise, She approached Madam Sonali, kneeled in front of her and kissed both her shoes murmuring something in Hindi or Bengali, I couldn't tell. Then turned and looked meaningfully at me. Does she ask me to do the same?

Blushing from a mixture of embarrassment and excitement I approached and did the same.

The whole scene of two women dressed in Western clothes kneeling in front of an older Indian lady was taken as something very ordinary by both Madam Sonali and Mitali.

Madam Sonali said in perfect English with the distinct Indian singing accent, an amused look on her face, "You shouldn't be embarrassed Harita, we are a nation full of traditions and you had just performed the foot sajdah, a sign of respect for the elders and your betters. I understand you are a maid at your country and I, as the lady of the house, expect that respect. It will be more natural to you when you are in a saree and start your Indian education," She finished in a smirk. "Mitali has a lot to teach you."

"Yes Madam," I said, remembering Arka's suggestion, as I was getting up with some difficulty, my knees were not what they used to be, I was pushing 60 after all.

Madam Sonali had noted that and said in a laugh, "Oh dear, you need some serious exercising with your knees, our maids here spend a lot of time on their

hands and knees scrubbing floors. Wait until Mitali puts you to work.”

Then turning to Mitali, she said something in fast Bengali or Hindi which Arka instantly translated to me, ‘She asked Mitali to take us to our rooms’.

And then she said to us in English, “And next time I see you two, I expect you both to be in a saree.”

“Yes Madam,” We both said in unison as Mitali said something in Bengali and beckoned at us to follow her.

Mitali gave us a guided tour of Madam Sonali’s residence which was impressively big, as big as my employer’s house back home.

In the elevated ground floor there is a formal living room, a dining room, a guest WC, and a kitchen next to the dining room. In the back of the house and very private is the servant’s room and bathroom where Mitali is living. Next there is a laundry room and iron room and an outside clothesline. In the upper level there is the family room, which as I would soon find out is the center of the family life and they all gravitate there, three bedrooms and a guest room all with adjoining bathrooms. The guest room was given to me and one of the other bedrooms to Arka. All bedrooms had small balconies.

As soon as Mitali left, we both had a much-needed shower and when I started unpacking Arka burst in my room without knocking, wearing a half petticoat and a blouse, saying, “Right Harita, we better chose

your new Indian clothes, Mitali had left some clothes for you, a whole set of Indian maid's clothes."

I felt a shudder of excitement, an Indian maid's uniform? What that could be?

Arka saw my face and burst into laughing, "Don't expect a maid's uniform like the one you wear all the time, the dress and apron outfit, nothing like that. It is only a saree, a much humbler one though, a full cotton saree with a simple pattern or no pattern at all. Mitali is kindly giving you one of her sarees plus the other needed pieces to wear."

The excitement had become stronger. Mitali had given me some of her used clothes to wear? That was so cool!

Arka went to the built-in cupboard and opened one of the drawers. She retrieved some clothes and passed them to me.

"You know the drill of wearing a saree Harita, first the half petticoat that you tie around your waist with the little string, then the blouse on top of your bra and then I'll help you with the saree. Just hurry up, Madam Sonali expects us in the family room for tea."

"Yes Arka," I dutifully said and picked the petticoat and the blouse and I quickly put them on and tied the strings around my waist which was quite trim now. My B cup boobs were modestly protruding under the fabric of my blouse which was a bit tight, Mitali was smaller than me, but I still was excited that I could wear her clothes.

Arka approached me with the saree, she unfolded it and started to wrap it around my waist. It was a two tone material with a discreet border, made of strong cotton. It was in good condition but I've noticed some small discolorations in parts of it from probably a detergent, it was certainly used for housework.

"Now pay attention Harita, this is the hard part," Arka said as she started to wrap the saree around my waist. "After wrapping the material around your waist, you pleat the rest and tuck it in, then you pick the other end of the saree and throw it around your left shoulder, so the pallu can be formed, pallu is the material that goes behind your back and should go down to your waist. There you are," she concluded as she looked at her work and made minor adjustments.

Then she produced two largish safety pins and put one below my waist where most of the material was gathered and one in my shoulder to pin the pallu on my blouse, "There, you are safe now, even if you do abrupt movements when you work; you don't worry anymore about losing your saree," She finished with a laugh.

I looked in the large mirror in front of me and what I could see was a pale looking Indian woman. All traces of my Western origins had gone. Another wave of excitement run through my spine. My hair was jet black and after two years of not cutting it, was long enough to keep it in a high ponytail. I smiled and Harita smiled back at me!



“Put some light makeup on and some lippy and wear those flip flops I left for you by the bed. I go back to my room to put my saree on and I’ll see you in a few minutes,” Arka said and left before I had the chance to say anything.

CHAPTER 2 – Settling in Madam Sonali’s house

Arka reappeared shortly, dressed in a much more glamorous saree, the material being silky with a wonderful pattern. No comparison with my plain utilitarian one. I had instantly felt what my position was going to be and the familiar stomach fluttering reappeared. She was holding something in her hand that she had passed on me. They were copper bangles, several of them, Indian women adored them. They could be of all kinds, from gold to glass.

“Let me help you to put them on your left arm, you need some minimal jewellery, they are cheap but perfect for you.”

She put them on as high as possible on my left arm, they were ten of them of various thickness with tiny decorative multi-coloured beads on them.

“They look perfect on you,” she exclaimed, “Come on, let’s go to the kitchen, Mitali can show you where things are; she is in the middle of preparing tea,” Arka said as she gave me another look, “Yes, you look the

part, my mother's old saree gives you the right appearance," she added with a smirk.

We went to the kitchen which was large and modern looking. Mitali was in the middle of preparing a tray of small multicoloured sweets, plus small cups of hot sweet tea. She saw us and a big smile appeared on her face. She was a handsome woman, about my height and strong looking.

"Saree good, you Indian maid woman," She said looking at me, a huge grin on her face..

Arka laughed as well, saying to her mother, "You know many English words mom."

"I learn from Sarita, when we work together." Mitali added proudly.

"Now, you can teach Harita some Hindi daily words when you work together," Arka continued, a Cheshire cat mischievous grin on her face.

"Yes," Mitali replied and then looked at me and pointed to a corner where an unusual looking broom like a witch's broom was resting, "JHADU Harita."

Arka keeping her grin on said, "This is the word for a broom Harita and she says to you that you could probably give a sweeping to the kitchen floor before she serves the tea."

I hesitantly picked the broom which was unusual and old fashioned looking. As I was going to find out, this is a very common broom in Indian households and sweeping is a daily continuous activity as if the

floor needs constant care. I started sweeping though the floor looked clean to me, being constantly aware of what I was wearing, feeling the long saree around my body trying not to step on it or not to let it fall from my shoulder.

Arka had an amused look on her face, "You will get used to do your housework in a saree, all women in this country are familiar with it and you will be no exception."

She saw me looking around as I was sweeping and she smirked, "I know that you are looking for an apron, but aprons are not used in this country, your maid's cotton saree is your apron."

Mitali must have heard the word because she said laughing, "No epran here, saree is epran!"

We all laughed as I said, "But I miss my apron pockets, I used to keep my cell phone in an apron pocket."

"I'll give you a small canvas bag where you can keep all your small items like your phone, ID, some cash and your lippy. Women never use pockets in India." Arka stated in a firm voice. "And your lippy is essential, never forget to freshen it up every couple of hours."

"Yes Arka," I replied blushing, as I felt that she was already standing above me in the pecking order of this home.

“Tea ready,” Mitali said in English, pointing to a large tray at the counter top, adding a few more words I couldn’t understand.

“Mitali said you can carry the tray to the family room,” Arka said.

I carefully picked the tray following Arka; I wasn’t yet certain how to navigate around this big house and yet I was put to work! I also was aware of my new outfit as I was feeling the saree around my body and the bangles on my left arm. Everything felt surreal to me like I had moved to a parallel universe.

Madam Sonali was in the family room sitting in a small desk looking at various papers. She heard us coming in and turned around to look at us.

“There you are! You both look much better in a saree. And you Harita you definitely have an Indian look. Mitali’s saree sits well on you, . Your skin is lighter than the average Indian woman but there are lots of light skinned women in this country. Mitali is quite pale. Probably some of her ancestors were mixed with the British, during our colonial era and the British Raj.”

“Thank you Madam Sonali, it’s a totally new experience for me,” I said, my voice sounding more high pitched than usually. Was it the excitement that turned my voice higher?

“I like your voice Sarita, I wish my Harita could have a voice lie yours,” Madam Sonali said with a sigh.

“But you know Sonali Begum, that Harita had a laser vocal surgery to shorten her vocal chords,” Arka interfered looking meaningfully at me.

“Yes, I know, probably Priya will decide on that in the future. Priya takes all the decisions now, she is the boss, Sarita is just the maid,” Madam Sonali said in a resigned sort of voice.

“I hope, I’ll be able to meet Sarita soon,” I said in an impulse.

“Yes, you will! On Thursday she will be here, it’s her cleaning day in this house. Dipak will bring her in the morning and who knows, her boss Priya might decide to join her. After all you are also known in this family as having parallel lives and activities with my Sarita.” Madam Somali said in a chuckle and made me blush.

Then as if she had thought of something added excitedly, “In fact I have an idea, let’s make it a dinner party on Thursday so the larger family will be able to meet you and see Arka again after many years.”

At that moment Mitali came in carrying another tray of small sweets and Madam Sonali addressed her in quick Hindi or Bengali? It sounded similar to me. I saw Arka developing a big smile as she heard their brief chat.

Then Madam Sonali started speaking English again with her wonderful singing accent that brought a grin on my face, “Right, it’s all set then, I’ll invite the family

on Thursday. Mitali will do the cooking and you and Sarita will give the house a thorough clean and then assist in the kitchen. That will give you the chance to bond with Sarita as the two sister maids you are."

Arka then said, "Ok, today is Friday so there is plenty of time for Harita to adjust in her new environment and role until next Thursday. But could I ask a big favor Sonali Begum?"

"Yes child, go ahead," Madam Sonali replied in an inquiring look.

"Could I borrow your car and driver for a few hours tomorrow and Sunday so I can show Harita around? After all she is also our guest and she should see a bit of Kolkata and some of the landmarks of our city."

"Of course, Arka, I should had thought of that myself. Harita has to see our city and surroundings. I could have come with you but I have various functions and obligations during the weekend, but Dipak will drive me first think in the morning and then the car is yours until late afternoon."

"Thank you, Arka, for suggesting it and thank you Madam Sonali for being so kind to let us have your car and driver," I said in my high pitched and squeaky voice.

"Ok, that's settled then; let's have some tea and sweets now, Mitali can serve, but Harita pay attention because soon you might have to do that." Madam Sonali said looking mischievously at me. She had a dry sense of humor this woman.

Arka sat comfortably in a sofa but I wasn't certain what to do as Mitali started serving the tea. Madam Sonali pointed to the sofa where Arka was sitting, "Sit Harita next to Arka, you are a guest today but in the future the only place you can sit without permission is your room."

"Yes, Madam Sonali," I said as I sat next to Arka who slightly touched my hand in reassurance and support.

I was watching Mitali as she was moving around the family room. She was a fine woman in her late fifties, very dignified and erect. She served us the tea and some sweets in a small plate and then she discreetly moved back to the kitchen. This is what I would probably have to do when not a guest.

Arka and Madam Sonali were talking in Hindi as I was sipping my very sweet tea looking around the room. It was a large room with old-fashioned furniture and some sort of shrine in the wall. It must have been a Hindu shrine, I had to ask Arka.

Then I heard Madam Sonali addressing me in English again, "So Harita, how long have been a maid? Arka said that you took early retirement and then had a new career as a maid and cleaner. Is that true?"

She saw me blushing uncomfortably and added, "Don't worry about me Harita, I've seen it all, my son introduced me to the cross-dressing world very early in his life, he was 15 when he started using my clothes."