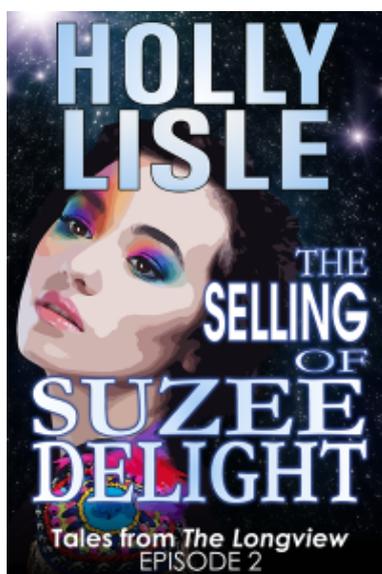


Super-Snippet: The Selling of Suzee Delight—all three scenes of CHAPTER ONE

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle



Tales from The
Longview, Episode
2: The Selling of
Suzee Delight

All rightee. Deep breath for me, here. Just got finished putting THE SELLING OF SUZEE DELIGHT, Tales from The Longview: Episode 2, up on Amazon.

It should go live tomorrow at some point, and when it does, I'll send out notices.

I love this story. I cannot believe how much I love this story. It kept shifting and changing on me, getting bigger not just in length, but in what it means to me personally. In the end, after more revisions than I've done on a story in years,

because my editor (a.k.a. my husband Matt) is a cruel genius who's superpower is the ability to say, "You know, you never really showed me why X did Y..."

With X being a character or scene that I hadn't thought completely through, and Y being the part of the scene I'd fudged, and Z, the variable we're solving for in this little equation from Hell, equalling 10,000 words. ☐

Yes. By the time I finished it, the story was over 30,000 words.

And I love it, I love it, I love it.

So. Here are the complete first two scenes for you. And yes, this is a LONG post. ☐

ADDED LATER: Scene 3.

Just because.

CHAPTER 1

Transcript: Suzee Delight – Preliminary Death Sentencing Interview #1

Danyal Travers, SPORC Capital Offenses Interviewer, Cheegoth:

Prisoner, you have stated your professional name and ident. For the record, who are you?

Suzee Delight, First Courtesan, Court of the Diamond Dome,

Mariposa Pleasure City, Cheegoth: *What* I am was chosen for me when I was nine years old, when the Educational Selectors discovered that I could sing and dance and play musical instruments and draw pretty pictures—and when they also discovered that my aptitude for science and mathematics was even stronger than my aptitude for the arts. Wishing to suppress my mathematical and science interests and to encourage my entertainment abilities, my Selector removed me from the General Consumer cohort, named me Tawny Girl, and placed me on the Introductory Arts and Pleasures track. I was trained to be a consort.

Because I exhibited superior skills and ability to learn and equally because I was obedient, when I was twelve I was placed into Advanced Arts and Pleasures and renamed Sweet Silver. Along with my physical and entertainment training, I began learning languages, courtesies, and what the Pleasure Masters refer to as Polite Observational Skills.

Danyal (interrupting): Spying.

Suzee Delight: I've heard it called that. I do not think that is the correct word. My training teaches that as a consort and courtesan, my service to my profession must consist of equal parts information gathering and recording on my clients, and the providing of entertainment and pleasure for my clients.

Third voice: Suppress that, Travers. That does not go into the public record

Danyal: I've deleted that. Prisoner, please continue.

Suzee Delight: By the age of seventeen, I had learned so far beyond the rest of my Pleasure cohort that I was moved into Masters training in Arts and Pleasures. At that time, I was renamed Suzee Delight, and for the past six years I have been the First Courtesan of Diamond Dome. I have served at the direction of the Pleasure Masters, and at the pleasure of my clients.

Danyal: While the information you have given is true, it does not answer my question. *Who* are you?

Suzee Delight: I'm sorry. I don't understand your question.

Danyal: You murdered the Administrators of the five most populous and powerful Pact Worlds. You did so during a seduction dance performed for all five men at once, using a knife that you could not possibly have had, hidden beneath your costume and... on... on...

(The sound of the interviewer taking a deep breath is followed by a long silence.)

(Audio resumes.)

You killed all five of them before any one could warn the others. Our holos show that you never hesitated, that you never missed a step, that not one of the men had any inkling of his danger or made any move to protect himself when you killed him.

Suzee Delight: Yes. I am a remarkable dancer. And I killed them quickly because I wished to be merciful. I had always considered them dear friends.

Danyal: Prisoner, I want an answer to the question I *asked* you. Someone planted you in the Diamond Dome, someone gave you the order to kill the Administrators, someone gave you the knife, someone put you up to this. *Who are you really?*

Suzee Delight: You are mistaken in several ways. First, I am not a *who*. I am a *what*. I am the product of my training. Every moment of my life since I was tested at the age of nine has been recorded; every action I have taken with every man and woman who has paid for pleasure from me is available to you in full holographic detail. Second, in every encounter with every client, I have acted on my training, and I have done exactly what that training has dictated I do—including the encounter

for which I am now here.

Danyal: You're saying that you acted on your own—that you murdered the five Pact Worlds Administrators because your whore training required that you do so?

Suzee Delight: I am a courtesan. I don't know what training whores receive. My lifetime of training as a *courtesan* required that once I learned and verified the truth about my old friends and longtime clients—Radiva Kels, Stannal Bregat, Nethamatnu Ha, Soth Smithe, and Kiero Chenzwa—I had to stop them before they could commit the crime they planned.

And the only way I could stop them, because of the enormity of the crime they were planning and how close they were to committing it, was to kill them. They were going to legalize sla—

Third voice: OH, GOD! Delete, delete, delete! Stop the interview, get her out back to her cell, and delete that entire last bit.

(The sound of someone pushing buttons while warnings sounded, and then a long pause.)

Danyal: Prisoner, we'll resume this interview at a later time.

— * —

Suzee Delight

I lied to Danyal Travers. I know exactly who and what I am.

A courtesan is a whore with a good education, and what I am is the best-educated whore in the Pact Worlds—and the most famous one. I'm Suzee Delight, and from my original songs and dances

and my *Paint Beautiful Pictures as Suzee Delight Senso* series, on through my instructional pleasure moves and positions, and right up to to my studio-recorded personal full-Senso sessions with famous clients, my mass-appeal products sell to more than three billion men and women across Settled Space. The Pleasure Masters make a great deal of money off of me.

As for who I am...?

Well, I'm the woman who, as a little girl, wanted to be a scientist and design custom nanoviral augmentations for GenDaring on Bailey's Irish Space Station.

When, during my Wish Conference back when I was nine, I told my Educational Selector that I wanted to leave the Pact Worlds and become a citizen of Bailey's Irish so I could make tiger people and pony people, he should have let me go.

Now—because he didn't—I'm going to destroy the whole poisonous, corrupt Pact Covenants system and every power player in it.

The five great men who had entrusted me with their pleasure and privacy had come to the Diamond Dome to make use of me... but also write law—to modify the final language of the Covenants of the Pact.

They had a clever plan to become even richer and more powerful, though at the expense of the people they supposedly served.

And that's where I come in. The life I wanted to live was taken away from me when I was nine.

In truth, it was taken away from me when I was born, but I did not find out that I was an Assisted child and that my government would choose my life path for me until my ninth birthday.

My life—the life I wanted—was over a long time ago. My

execution—if that is where I end—will be the conclusion of my long humiliation and pain.

But if I die, I'm going to bury the people who did this to me right along with me.

How?

It starts with my comment during my interview about me being nothing beyond the thing their training created.

I put that into the interview with Danyal Travers because I knew the new Administrator of Cheegoth was listening in, as were my Pleasure Masters, the Educational Selectors, and everyone else in the whole corrupt Personal Skills and Educational Tracking and Optimization system.

By stating categorically that my training required me to kill my clients once I knew and had validated that they were planning to commit a crime against the Pacts of the Covenant, I sent everyone responsible for my education back through every bit of it from the day I was old enough to toddle into General Consumer training at the age of two.

While they task ever more resources into dissecting those stored holos and figuring out where I came up with my justification for murder—and at the same time put more resources into searching for outsiders who might have somehow implanted in me a trigger they could use from afar—I have both the time and the means to contact an old client who promised to help me out should I ever find myself in a situation where I had to do something that was both right... and criminal.

Charlie

Charlie, the *Longview's* mandatory Pact Covenant Observer, sat in Passenger Room 5, her *Longview* quarters, and on split screens watched what was being billed as the holocaust of the century, presented by ever-smiling Danyal Travers, who had been covering the story for days. Each of Charlie's two screens showed a different datastream of the same event.

On the left screen, she had the official Pact Worlds coverage of the public confession and sentencing of Suzee Delight, First Courtesan of the Diamond Dome, superstar goddess of a thousand Sensos—some actually suitable for general audiences—and reputed simultaneous murderer of the Administrators of the five most important Pact Worlds.

On the right screen, she had the raw, siphoned, underground version of the same feed. If Charlie's Pact Worlds controller ever discovered that she watched unofficial feeds of anything streamed from the Pact Worlds, he would recall her and drop her citizenship level to F-10: Permanently Unemployable, Sentenced to Minimal Survival Assistance Only.

However, as long as she was assigned to the *Longview* and had Passenger Room 5 to herself, she was safe. If she did her job and made sure the Pact Worlds received a steady stream of money in exchange for their sentenced criminals, she could hope to remain aboard the *Longview*, where she was treated better than she'd ever been treated in her life, for at least a couple more years before she received mandatory rotation orders.

Charlie's only objective where her controller was concerned was to remain unremarkable—to do an average job, turn in average numbers, and in all ways be an invisible cog in the Pact Worlds' massive machine.

So she was content that the *Longview*, rumored to be the most profitable Death Circus franchise in Settled Space for its owner, only managed to stay in the middle of the pack where its profits on criminals bought and sold was concerned. How its owner made his *other* money was officially none of her concern.

Unofficially...

...Well, anything she knew, she might be able to use to her own benefit. And she'd made it her business to know a lot.

Until she found a way to use what she knew, Charlie had decided that if she received rotation or recall orders, she planned to defect. Her defection details were fuzzy, but she was getting them together.

Meanwhile, however, she was in a position to make a difference for people the Pact Worlds considered fodder.

So she watched, tense, anxious, and at the same time hopeful.

Left-side Suzee said, "I am ashamed of my actions. I betrayed the trust of five men I loved, and used my position of trust to murder them because I envied them their power."

Right-side Suzee said, "I am not ashamed of my actions. These five men betrayed the people they served. They planned to use their positions of trust and power to destroy the autonomy of the citizens they claim to represent."

The cutwork on the official version had been skillfully done. Charlie couldn't see or hear the blending between the segments that were actually Suzee's words, and those that had been inserted.

Most of Settled Space would see the raw version, would know the venom in Travers' voice as he asked her the questions, would see his eyes glitter as he envisioned her eventual fate.

Most citizens of the Pact Worlds, however, would only have access to the official version, which had little truth in it.

Left-side Suzee said, "I failed my government, my educators, my selectors, my trainers, my clients, and my profession as a courtesan—the highest calling to which any woman can aspire."

Right-side Suzee said, "I accuse my government, my educators, my selectors, my trainers, and my clients for creating laws that make being a courtesan the highest work to which any woman can aspire."

"Damned right," Charlie muttered. "You tell 'em, Suzee."

Charlie had been lucky enough to be born homely and lacking in any discernible entertainment skills—she had been channeled into a low-level government job from which neither her intelligence nor her competence would ever elevate her. But her other government-designated career track had been D-3 Convenience Prostitute, and only the the shortage of PCOs caused by the higher suicide rate in the D-3 Pact Covenant Observer career field had saved her from that fate. The people she had to watch burn themselves to death on People's Home of Truth and Fairness worlds haunted her. The executions she had to certify haunted her. She didn't question for an instant the reason D-3 PCOs had the highest suicide rate of any career field in the Pact Worlds.

Her plan was to disappear from her job before it devoured her, too.

In front of her, left-side Suzee said, "Because I am guilty of five murders of men designated A-1, and because I freely confess that I committed these murders by intent..."

Right-side Suzee also said, "Because I am guilty of five murders of men designated A-1, and because I freely confess that I committed these murders by intent..."

Left-side and right-side Suzees both said, "I waive my right to trial in order to save the Pact Worlds the cost of such trial when the outcome is already certain, and instead elect to sell my death to the highest-bidding Death Circus, where my execution will be streamed for all viewers on all Pact Worlds. All Pact Worlds citizens need to be able to see me receiving the consequences of my actions."

Charlie didn't hear Suzee's last few words, however.

She was out the door and shooting herself onto the *Longview's* passenger bridge transport, screaming, "I need to speak to the owner, I need to speak to the owner now!"

Shay, the owner's representative, was on the bridge waiting for her when the passenger transport unlocked.

"Suzee Delight is selling herself to the highest-bidding Death Circus now," Charlie shouted.

Both the captain and first mate looked back at the two of them.

Shay looked startled, then pleased. "Oh, that's excellent. You and I will go to the owner's quarters, Charlie. His condition is bothering him again, so he won't meet with you personally, but you and I will talk, and he'll watch us and relay suggestions to me." She paused. "I'm assuming that you've brought this to me because you hope the owner will buy Suzee Delight's execution."

"Of course."

"Because you want to be the one to witness it?"

Shay's suggestion was as far from Charlie's truth as it was possible to get.

But Charlie shrugged and nodded. "That... is as good an explanation as any."

The corners of Shay's mouth twitched. "You have good entrepreneurial instincts. Come with me, then. I'll let the owner know we have an investment opportunity for him."

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