

The Changing Room

C.W. usually takes number 6. She leaves two cocktail rings, the valet tag and lip gloss in a leather wristlet, but puts her BlackBerry in the pocket of her robe. Hanna leaves a Birkin filled with goodies—a Symthson diary, black AmEx, ‘scrips—in number 11 on Mondays and Thursdays. And an unnamed patron with an impeccable silver bob favors number 18. The shoes she leaves are insanely good, if I was lucky enough to be her size.

I take 24 in the corner. But I won’t tell you what I keep in it yet.

You really don’t need to bring anything here. In the atrium, there is always hot tea and yerba mate, fresh fruit and a crisp stack of magazines. The girls provide a warm robe and slippers and a little brass key that matches a numbered brass plate on your locker. Just drop your car with the valet and give your signature for all else. You don’t need anything, but it’s amazing the things people bring.

The moneyed are trusting, I told Brewster. Just last month, I returned a handbag from Filene’s Basement to Ralph Lauren. And the tony catering spot next door took my personal check without asking for an ID or running it through a machine. It’s as if you wouldn’t even know they existed unless you were one of them, so of course you can afford it.

When I joined Highsmith, there was a whole docket of paperwork to fill out. But when I gave the guest services manager my check, she simply folded it into her appointment book.

“Do what you need to do and get out of there,” said Brewster. “Get the hell out before they try to cash that check.”

It takes time, I told him. I need to learn routines. Hanna, for example, takes off her jewelry before a massage so it doesn't get slick with lavender oil. C.W. doesn't wear her rings to her appointments with the new young pro.

It's not too hard to fit in. Old money, that's what you want to be. Old money has a certain look. Don't bother with the runway stills in *Bazaar*, take note of what the philanthropists are wearing. I chose a camelhair coat, oversize sunglasses, a pair of ballerina flats, and a burnt-orange "Kelly" bag. The faux-Hermès stays tucked snug under my arm, so you can't see the crooked stitching. My studs are CZ.

I go straight to the ladies' lounge without opening my coat. There's no point in wearing anything underneath. If I wanted to dress like them, though, I'd wear one color from head to toe. Preferably ivory or cream. You have to be well-off to look immaculate in a color that's so easily stained. Old money shies from color at the argument of quality. If you get regular manicures, you shouldn't need polish. Fingernails and toenails should be the healthy pink of a seashell. Polish is tacky, acrylic tips are tacky, logoed handbags and piss-colored diamonds are tacky.

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