



# Anticipation

A Novel by

Robert E. Gelinus

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# Dedication

For Joanna, Tristina, and Ryan

# Anticipation

## Prologue

APRIL 1990

### Dallas, Texas

The wheels of the twin engine Lear Eagle glanced once against the runway with a brief, whining protest of rubber, then settled down firmly as the nose of the private jet leaned forward into a picture-perfect landing. The pilot reversed the pitch on the twin turbines and throttled the engines hard to slow their speed down to a comfortable roll. As the flaps retracted and the co-pilot received ground instructions from the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport air traffic control center, Nicole unbuckled her seat belt. She opened her pocket

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book, took out a small cosmetic mirror and touched up her makeup, then ran her long smooth fingers through her auburn hair, smiling quietly to herself. Her excitement was already building. She could feel her heart rate accelerating even before her jet stopped on the tarmac and her captain opened the door. In less than an hour it would begin again; and this time for just over a full week. Her imagination was already running wild with anticipation.

Captain Brian Weaver turned around in his seat as the aircraft came to a halt, and smiled. "Right on time, Ms. Prescott. Just like we promised."

The shrill tone of the private jet's engines rapidly sank in pitch as its twin engines slowed to a halt. Nicole looked out her window at the approaching ground crew. Her Mercedes limousine stood ten yards away, ready to receive her; the rear door and trunk were open and waiting. Phillip, her Dallas chauffeur, walked up to take her bags.

Turning to Captain Weaver she nodded with approval. "Excellent, Brian. Thank you."

Captain Weaver had refused to let the rain at Boston's Logan International Airport impede them, despite a departure delay of forty-five minutes. Co-pilot Joel Parnell had adjusted their flight plan en route to arrive at DFW precisely at 3:00 PM according to Ms. Prescott's wishes. Parnell unclasped his shoulder strap and swung his legs away from the control panel, glancing down at Nicole's long, graceful legs, sheathed in sheer, black silk hose. He discretely watched her slip her Gucci heels back on.

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“When shall we expect you, Ms. Prescott?” Parnell asked, deliberately looking her in the eye.

Nicole suppressed a grin. She’d caught him looking. “Not until next Sunday.”

She picked up her suit jacket off the seat next to her, along with her black and gray ostrich-skin portfolio, throwing the gray tweed jacket, which matched her skirt, over her arm. The jacket was appropriate in Boston, but the weather was too warm for it in Dallas. She had hoped to change before heading for the airport, but it had taken much longer to complete the Trident Corporation antitrust brief than she had anticipated. She had no alternative but to come straight to Logan from her office near South Station, hastily leaving her candy-apple red Lamborghini Diablo with her Boston based ground crew to park. Besides, she thought with a chill of delight rippling through her, in a couple of hours clothes would not be an issue.

“Day after tomorrow?” asked Weaver as he concluded his post-flight instrument checks, pulled his gold-rimmed aviator sunglasses out of his shirt pocket, and slid them on.

“No,” she corrected, moving toward the open doorway. “Sunday next, in nine days.” Phillip took her hand as she made her way down the two small steps onto the concrete tarmac.

“Nine days?” Parnell looked at Weaver as the co-pilot went to the open door.

Nicole stopped and turned around, reached into her purse, and produced a legal-size envelope. Looking back at Weaver, who was just climbing down the small steps

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after Parnell, she smiled and said, "Here's some cab fare. I had Katy make reservations for you and Joel at the Westin-Galleria. I'm confident you two will be able to keep yourselves entertained for a week. But do check the hotel for messages in case I need you." She turned back toward her car without waiting for a reply.

"Yes, ma'am." Weaver nodded after her.

Parnell took the envelope and peered inside it, his fingers quickly thumbing through a stack of cash. Inside was five-thousand dollars, all in one-hundred dollar bills.

Phillip had no sooner closed the door and pulled away when Nicole picked up the platinum-cased telephone and pressed speed-dial button number one.

A soft voice answered on the second ring, "North Dallas Women's Center, Stephanie speaking. How may I help you today?"

"Stephanie, this is Nicole Prescott. Advise Dr. Brighton I have landed in Dallas and will be arriving at the center within the hour." Nicole noticed a slight trembling in her hand as she held the receiver next to her ear. She reached up and removed her earring to more comfortably hear the other party.

"Yes, Ms. Prescott. You're expected at four o'clock. All the arrangements you've requested have been made. Your suite has been prepared as usual." The voice was matter-of-fact but courteous.

"And my itinerary for the week?" Nicole watched Phillip pay the parking fee at the north exit of the airport. The attendant tried to peer into the dark privacy glass to see who was inside.

The soft voice paused for a second. "Yes, Ms. Pres-

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cott, everything seems to be in order. However, Gerald is still in the process of reconditioning your saddle for your riding lesson on Tuesday. He left a note saying that it might have to be rescheduled for Thursday. Is that a problem, ma'am?"

The image of Gerald flashed across Nicole's mind: tall, sandy-haired, muscles toned with a working man's daily labors, always wearing skintight knee boots and riding breeches. Yes, the wait would be worth it. "That's fine, Stephanie. Move my golf game to Tuesday if you have to."

"Certainly, Ms. Prescott. We appreciate your understanding." The phone crackled as they left one cellular zone and entered the next. "I'll inform Dr. Brighton that you're on your way. Will there be anything else?"

"Sounds like I'm all set. If I think of anything I'll call you back. Thank you for your help."

Nicole returned the receiver to its cradle and sat back in the rich burgundy water buffalo hide seat. The sumptuous leather filled the car with its aroma like a finely stitched garment. The ornate silver champagne bucket mounted in the recessed niche between the two rear-facing seats was properly iced down. The bottle of Dom Perignon nested inside was open as usual. She leaned forward, pulling one of the long-stemmed flutes from the oak rack below the bar, and smartly filling it halfway. The rich, sparkling foam cascaded over the rim and dripped lightly onto the thick white carpet beneath her. The warm Texas afternoon prompted her to reach over and adjust the climate control a notch. With a long, luxurious sip of her glass, she raised the volume of the

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precision sound system, filling her spacious compartment with the expressive melodies of Schubert. As the delicate enchantment of the music swelled around her, Nicole marveled at the silver, gold, and bronze panorama of the monolithic glass towers of North Dallas passing by on either side of the eight-lane expressway.

The ride to the North Dallas Women's Center would take just under an hour. Phillip would proceed down Loop-635 to the recently completed expansion of Central Expressway north, through Richardson and Plano, east on Parker Road out past the historic Southfork Ranch, winding through two-lane back roads to the north shore of Lake Lavon. There on the one-hundred acre grounds of the lakefront retreat, she would find the delightful relaxation and exhilarating fulfillment she had come to crave week after week. Normally, Nicole would summon her jet to make the three-hour journey from Boston to Dallas on Friday evening, enjoy a satisfying weekend, then return Sunday evening ready to start the week. But this week she conceded to let Dr. Brighton apply a specialized treatment to the tiny wrinkles that had appeared around her eyes.

Even at age forty-two, Nicole was a stunning beauty, with her long, chiseled features; and she knew how to use her appearance and demeanor to her advantage. She didn't really care about the faint crow's feet around her eyes. What had appealed to her most was the thought of spending a full week convalescing at the Women's Center—if convalescing were what it could be called. With a shiver of delight she wondered if she had the stamina to endure a full week of their *special* care.

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After another hearty sip of champagne, her tongue wiping the sweet juice from her lips, she nodded with satisfaction. She deserved this vacation. It was a victory celebration. On Wednesday the judge in the Dalmar Corporation trial had awarded her client, Ball Petroleum, a \$6.5 million settlement. That meant \$2.15 million in attorney's fees for her two months' worth of trouble. And with an extra two million dollars in your pocket, you can afford a few pleasant indulgences—like nine days at the North Dallas Women's Center.

Nicole loved to practice law. Her law firm was not only revered, but feared by any potential adversary. Her sharp mind, flawless analytical logic, and fluid public speaking skills never failed to dazzle judge and jury alike. Over the years she had developed a reputation for success second to none. And with the conquests of war come the spoils.

This week she was ready to be spoiled.

Phillip stopped the long white Mercedes under the wide stone porte-cochere in front of the Women's Center. The drive had taken under an hour, conveniently timed just ahead of the North Dallas rush hour. Nicole's anticipation had feverishly swelled as they came through the artistically sculpted wrought-iron gates, snaking down the immaculately landscaped drive past flawlessly manicured grounds to the magnificent complex.

The uniformed doorman opened the rear door of the limousine as Phillip proceeded to the rear of the car to unload Nicole's luggage. Nicole took the white-gloved hand of the young, smiling, dark-haired attendant as she swung her long legs out of the car, rising gracefully into

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the warmth of the Texas air, an atmosphere graced by the inviting fragrance of a wide spray of blooming honeysuckle billowing over the waist-high stone wall between the massive columns of the porte-cochere.

“Ms. Prescott, welcome once again to the center,” offered the young man with the bright red uniform jacket and tight black trousers, holding her hand at shoulder height as he promptly closed her car door behind her.

“Thank you.” Nicole nodded politely and quickly strode into the foyer of the main complex building, leaving the doorman to help Phillip with all of her bags. The dark glass doors silently slipped closed behind her as she passed. Inside the richly appointed foyer, decorated with classic antiques and warm hearty woods, she stopped at the circular reception desk. A young woman in her early twenties wearing a small earpiece and clear boom microphone looked up at her from a computer console and smiled.

“Ms. Prescott. Right on time,” came the familiar voice.

“Hello, Stephanie.” Nicole could not restrain the eagerness in her voice, nor her wide-eyed grin.

Stephanie mirrored her joy with a warm smile of her own. “Dr. Brighton said to proceed directly to the clinic. She’ll see you in examination room five.”

Nicole walked past the reception area into the main gallery of the central complex. The great room was two and a half stories in height, one-hundred feet from front to back and two-hundred feet wide. The rear wall was all glass to the peak of the roof overlooking the two outside terraces and the waters of Lake Lavon below. The other

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three walls were tastefully appointed with original art treasures from around the world, mostly Renaissance masters' work. The gallery's breathtaking inlaid wood floor was lavishly adorned with oriental carpets, attractively arrayed with numerous plush, comfortable sitting groups. Several women were gathered in clusters of two or three, engaged in conversation, sipping their favorite blends of teas, exotic coffees, or deliciously prepared cocktails. Periodically a ripple of laughter would erupt in one of the groups, eclipsing the light strains of Mozart which filled the air. Young, attractive, uniformed waiters quietly moved around the guests of the Women's Center, attentive to their every need.

In the center of the room was a circular fireplace covered by a great bronze hood extending up and through the vaulted ceiling. Surrounding the bronze flue at the top were massive beams running down in four directions to the separate corners of the room. The afternoon sun filled the entire room with its relaxing hues. Nicole stood for a moment drinking in the majestic ambiance, then made her way to her left, out of the great room to the long corridor extending to the medical facilities.



Examination room five looked more like an artist's studio than a medical clinic, sparsely furnished, with a wide skylight overhead. Yet its lack of intimidating anti-septic austerity was comforting. An antique oak armoire held all of the medical supplies. Nicole laid her jacket on

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the back of a bentwood armchair and took a seat at a small, round, country-styled kitchen table which matched the china cupboard against a side wall. She heard footsteps.

Dr. Alicia Brighton came into the room with a smile and an apology. "Nicole, my dear. I'm so sorry to keep you waiting. Delores Fennery does like to talk so, and I feel so guilty telling her to shut up and bother someone else." Alicia didn't look like a doctor either. She wore a bright print blouse and a comfortable-looking knee-length dark skirt. She came over and gave Nicole a familiar hug of welcome.

Nicole laughed. Alicia always seemed to be able to make her laugh. In fact, Alicia seemed to bring a smile to everyone's face at one time or another. "It's all right. I've just arrived."

"Nonsense," protested the older doctor with light streaks of gray coursing through her short brown hair. She pushed her wire-rimmed glasses up on her nose, looking intently at Nicole's face. "This is supposed to be your special week, and I'm keeping you from enjoying it. You must hate me with a passion."

"Alicia!" Nicole frowned. "Don't be ridiculous." Actually, she did hope her consultation would be quick.

"Now, let's see." Dr. Brighton set her metal flipchart down on the table and pulled a chair directly in front of Nicole. She sat down and took Nicole's cheeks in her hands, turning her head to the left and slowly to the right, peering out of the lower lenses of her bifocals. Nicole straightened her back and leaned forward.

"Mmm." Alicia furrowed her brow.

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“Is that a good mmm or a bad mmm?” Nicole squirmed on her chair.

“Let’s try to hold still and relax our face, shall we?” admonished Dr. Brighton.

Nicole complied.

“Yes, Nicole, I think we can have you tuned up and ready to go with only two applications. I’ll schedule the first one tomorrow morning and the second on Wednesday.” Alicia picked up Nicole’s chart, extracted a pen from behind her right ear and began to make some notes.

Nicole leaned back in her chair and smiled. “Is it going to hurt?”

Alicia smiled and patted Nicole’s hand in a motherly way. “Of course it will, dear. We use very long sharp needles.”

Nicole’s smile faded, her eyes growing wide.

Alicia laughed out loud. “Got’cha.”

Nicole smacked the older woman’s hands playfully. “You’re wicked!”

“So I’m told,” retorted the doctor. “Don’t worry about a thing, my dear. All we have to do is give you a small injection right about here.” Alicia touched the forward part of Nicole’s temple. “The medication will then do the work. Within a few days you’ll see the results. The small lines will disappear and you’ll look like you did when you were twenty-five.”

Nicole’s memory jumped back to when she was twenty-five, back at Harvard Law School, living in Cambridge. That’s when she first met Rae, in the early seventies. That’s when it all started. *Had it really been seventeen years?*

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“What is it, dear?” asked Alicia, concerned at the sight of her friend’s pensive expression.

“Nothing. Is that all for today?” Nicole reached for her coat.

Alicia was smiling again. “I can see you’re eager to get settled in. Don’t let this old woman keep you any longer. I expect you have a therapy session scheduled for this evening?”

“Indeed,” announced the powerful Boston attorney as she rose. “Actually I had planned to be in therapy for the entire week.”

“Oh, my.” Alicia’s eyebrows arched. “You always were an ambitious thing. Well, I’ll see you here in the morning.”

Nicole swung her jacket over her shoulder. “Not too early in the morning.”

“Of course not.” Alicia walked with Nicole to the door. “Say around ten?”

“I’ll try.” With a mischievous wink Nicole sauntered off down the corridor, back through the great room, her heels clicking rapidly against the polished inlaid woods, to the elevators on the opposite side. Her private suite was on the third floor.



Nicole forced herself not to run when the elevator opened on the third floor. She was a trained professional. She could control her emotions and actions. The problem was, she had no desire to do so. When she turned the key in the lock of room three-fourteen and

swung the door open, the scene was just as she had imagined it. Her luggage was neatly arranged on the ceramic tile landing. A long white terrycloth robe was laid out for her on the king-sized brass bed in the raised niche to her right. To her left, the drapes were drawn allowing the sunlight to come in off the terrace, illuminating the overstuffed leather couch and sitting group by the fireplace with warm, sultry hues. An open bottle of 1967 Chateau Lafitte Rothschild was breathing on the bar of the kitchenette. Quietly in the background, a solo pianist rendition of Chopin was playing on the entertainment system. And across the room, in front of the sunken hot tub, behind the waist-high massage table, folding a towel, stood Brett.

Everything was perfect.

“Hello, Brett.” The words coming forth hesitantly, expectantly.

A disarming smile preceded the tall man’s reply. “I’ve been waiting for you. Everything is ready for your treatment.”

Brett leaned against the long table upholstered in rich, black leather. The well-defined muscles of his tanned upper body and arms stood out nicely from his royal blue tank top. The matching sweatpants covered legs Nicole knew were like pillars of polished marble. His piercing blue eyes held hers as she closed the door and walked into the room, stopping at the foot of the wide brass bed. Her heart began to race again. The athletic therapist walked around the table and approached her. She stood silently still as he came within twelve inches and stopped.

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“I trust your flight was pleasant?” he asked, never taking his eyes off of hers. She felt his hands reach up and undo the top button of her blouse, then slowly move on to the second and third.

“Yes,” she whispered, wanting him to hurry, but relishing each moment of his patient manner.

“Good.” He nodded once, genuinely pleased. “But I can tell you need to relax. I would like to help you relax.”

He finished the last button and methodically pulled the two tails of her blouse out of her skirt. She watched his eyes glance down at the delicate black lace brassiere she wore. He reached down and took her hands in his, gently unbuttoning her cuffs. His hands felt warm and strong. Then, with an alluring smile, he stepped behind her and slid the blouse off of her shoulders and carefully laid it over the brass footboard of the bed. She could feel his breath on her shoulder and the back of her neck while his hands unbuttoned and unzipped her skirt. His haunting fragrance filled the air and she breathed it in deeply.

While Chopin’s pianist ran his fingers lightly along the keyboard, a slight push of Brett’s palms against Nicole’s hips sent the conservative tweed skirt into a gray pool at her feet. He ran his hands back up her hips, over the lace edges of her French cut panties and black lace garter, along the gentle curve of her waist, teasingly slow across her breasts and around to her back. A wave of electricity tingled up her spine; but she held still, letting her head tilt back slightly, resting it against his cheek, knowing her patience would soon be richly re-

warded.

She felt him unclasp her bra, his fingers carefully cupping the fine lace straps and moving them forward until the delicate garment fell to the floor on top of the tweed skirt. She kicked off her shoes when she felt his left forearm gather up her legs, and his right arm pull her shoulders to him, lifting her up off the soft, white carpet. She rocked her head back, her respiration rate climbing with the pace of her heart. He carried her over to the warm, leather covered table and gently sat her down facing him. With meticulous care he unclasped her garter and slipped her black stockings off each leg. She cherished the feel of his powerful fingers sliding along her legs. She caught his gaze looking up at her, smiling, as his hands pulled at the edge of her panties.

She playfully grabbed his wrists; her eyes flashed. "Do it with your teeth."

He laughed softly. "I'm afraid if I did, you wouldn't get to enjoy your massage. The oil is ready. But it's up to you."

With a shudder of delightful anticipation she released his wrists, put her palms against the soft, electrically warmed leather beneath her and lifted her bottom off the table. He slid her undergarment off and tossed it in the pile with her bra and skirt. She allowed him to turn her onto her stomach, knowing that getting the full treatment was vastly superior to rushing things to a premature conclusion.

Nicole folded her arms under her left cheek and watched him walk around the massage table to the accessory stand. She could hear the electric motor of the

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tall black hot oil dispenser filling his cupped hands with the hot, sebaceous liquid. She gasped slightly as the succulent heat dripped onto the small of her back. Warm, strong hands spread the glistening oil up her spine, over her shoulders, back across her shoulder blades, down her sides, around the firm curves of her hips and buttocks, up over the small of her back, and returning up her spine in a subdued, deliberate, hypnotic pattern. Nicole felt each muscle melting away in the path of Brett's experienced touch, as meticulous as the pianist's delicate technique pleasing her ears.

After spending ten minutes on her back, and with a fresh handful of the hot, coconut scented oil, Brett worked on each leg, kneading the muscles of her feet, calves, knees, thighs, and hips. After each leg was done, she felt him part her knees slightly, and tenderly begin to rub her inner thighs, his thumbs just barely making contact with her velvety pubic hairs.

It was almost more than she could stand.

A fine layer of her own perspiration beaded up on the oil across her back. Her breathing was now long and relaxed.

With a gentle pat on her rear she heard him say, "Time to turn over."

This was the part she loved the most. Nicole had never received a hot oil massage before coming to the North Dallas Women's Center. And after her first one, she had not found a better way to relax or become more sexually aroused. And the front side was always the better of the two. With an almost sleepy moan she rolled over onto her back, just as the hot oil landed on her

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stomach, filling her navel and running down her sides. She closed her eyes and let her arms drop to her sides.

Standing to her left, he began with her arms, gently rubbing the oil between each finger, into her palm, around her wrist, down her forearm, upper arm, shoulders and neck. After spending a few minutes on each arm, he rubbed the intoxicating lubricant over her cheeks and forehead, her skin drinking it in. His hands flowed down her neck and chest, cupping each breast in both hands individually, working the firm tissues round and around. A rapturous moan eased past Nicole's lips; she knew her nipples were growing erect beneath his touch. He was so tender, so gentle. Brett was always like that. It was almost mystical how he knew exactly where to touch, to rub, to please.

Chopin's etude swelled again with the musician's passion as Brett's hands pressed the liquid heat into her abdomen, and down her long legs, always defining a rotating pattern of intense pleasure, up to her shoulders, around and over her breasts, down her stomach, over each thigh, again and again. The tempo of his rhythm increased along with the pressure of his hands. Her tongue delectably encircled her lips, her mouth agape; she knew she was not going to be able to contain the kindling heat inside her much longer.

Once again she felt his hands serenely push her knees slightly apart. Only this time as his left hand pressed and massaged along the inside of her thighs, she felt his right hand move under her lower back, sliding easily in the oil between her skin and the now well-lubricated leather. She sensed his hand stop in the center of her back, lifting

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her into a gentle arch. Her breath stilled, in the same moment, as she felt his mouth close over her left nipple as his left hand rose up between her legs. She raised her right hand and ran her fingers through his dark brown curls, pressing his face firmly against her. His fingers softly teased her moist loins, carefully brushing the hairs aside to allow him to explore further.

He lifted his head slightly, running his lips and tongue down the incline of her left breast, up the right one, then playfully encircling her erect right nipple with the tip of his tongue. Now both of her hands held the back of his neck, her nails running up into his scalp and caressing his ears. She held her lower lip between her even white teeth, her eyes clamped shut, as her hips began to move in rhythm with his probing left hand. With soft featherlike kisses, his lips moved down her right breast, across her stomach, his tongue lingering for a teasing plunge in her navel—a foreshadowing of his intentions—bringing her nearly to a climax at the thought.

Without lifting his face from her gently writhing body, she sensed him move around the end of the table, and felt his hands reaching under her hips and carefully lifting her knees apart. As Chopin's etude crescendoed in a shower of intertwined melodies, Nicole pulled her knees up toward her chest, feeling his warm, darting tongue disappear inside her. Her eyes snapped open as the early waves of a thunderous orgasm began to crest. She gasped in gulps of air through clenched teeth, her legs stretching up toward the ceiling, toes pointed, muscles tightening—

And then he stopped, a moment before she went over

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the precipice of ecstasy.

All was still.

The pianist began another movement of the concerto.

“What’s wrong?” she asked incredulously.

Brett stood up and pulled the royal blue tank top over his head and used it to playfully wipe his face of the oil, sweat, and savory juices from her body. Nicole’s eyes drank in the beauty of his washboard stomach and glistening chest.

“Not yet,” he whispered.

He walked around the right side of the table and scooped her up into his arms, his moist lips covering hers. Nicole floated in his arms over to the bed where he laid her down on the quilted spread and stood once again. She leaned on one elbow watching him kick off his huarache sandals and slide the sweat pants down, kicking them away from the bed.

Nicole bit her bottom lip again in anticipation. Brett was gorgeous. And it was obvious that he wanted her. She lay back and held out her arms. As he leaned over her, she reached down and guided him inside her, filling her completely. Their hips slowly rocked together in unison for several minutes as his mouth alternated gifts of euphoric sensation between her mouth, neck, ear lobes, and breasts, sending her to the brink of the precipice yet again. And yet each time he sensed her about to explode, he would slow down, force her to relax, and teasingly whisper, “Not yet.”

Brett masterfully varied the pace of his lovemaking, picking up speed to tease her, then gracefully backing

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off. Each plateau short of orgasm that he brought her to heightened her feelings of near delirium. Finally, she knew she couldn't be denied any longer.

Nicole grabbed his solid buttocks in both hands, wrapped her legs tightly around him, and forced him inside her faster and faster, deeper and deeper, hotter and hotter, accelerating into a blinding fury. The music around her increased its volume and tempo. She was barely aware of Brett's hands reaching around her perspiring body, taking hold of the small of her back, and beginning to work the rhythm of her hips at an even greater pace, faster than the pianist's hands upon the keys, fantastically increasing the direct pressure on the exact spot that pleased her most. Again his mouth closed over her left breast, drawing on it more and more as the tempo of both the lovers and the musician grew white hot.

With the resounding base octave crash of the classical pianist's thundering fortissimo of Chopin's finale, the lightning struck. Like a devastating collision of locomotives Nicole took four desperate breaths, held the last one, every muscle in her body instantly immobilizing her lover, her mouth locked agape, eyes locked shut, a throaty moan penetrating the entire room, her loins throbbing and contracting in transported rapture for a full half minute. And just as the crashing waves upon waves of euphoric gratification began to ebb, Brett suddenly accelerated the tempo of his thrusting back to fever pitch, sending Nicole soaring back up the next hill of the roller coaster of unbridled sensuality.

"Yes!" she cried out, her bodily appetite ravenously

gorging on the feast of raw passion. Without mercy, he kept her in a state of almost constant orgasm for several minutes, till at last her body fell back limp on the bed in utter exhaustion. Drenched and glowing with oily beads of perspiration, she looked into his eyes and panted, “I can’t go on. I can barely breathe. You’re going to kill me.”

He smiled down into her glassy expression, kissing her tenderly. “But my beautiful Ms. Prescott, we’ve only begun.”

The peaceful strains of the next movement of the concerto played on the sound system while Brett tenderly and silently held Nicole in his arms for over twenty minutes, letting her heartbeat settle down. She loved being just held, feeling him still joined to her. Over the next hour he slowly made love to her, allowing her to just relax and enjoy the gentle closeness. He brought her to orgasm three more times, patiently, easily—not so furiously as when they began, but tenderly. And when he knew that she had been fully satisfied, he allowed himself to climax. When Nicole felt the warm rush inside her, his body pulsating within her, it sent her into one last delicious contortion. She savored every moment.

Brett kissed her softly once more, rose from the bed, and grabbed a towel from under the massage table. He wiped off his body, and quietly put his sweats and tank top back on. “I’ll be back after dinner if you desire.”

Nicole rolled over on the soiled quilt. “Yes. I desire.”

Brett nodded with a gratified smile and left.



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Two hours later, long after Nicole had showered and dressed in a sheer white gauze caftan, she sat quietly on her terrace, sipping a glass of the deep red Rothschild wine, watching the sun set to the west. It still seemed incredible to her that a place as fabulous as the North Dallas Women's Center, a place where a woman's most intimate needs and fantasies are fulfilled, could exist. She began to have doubts if she really could live through a week of pure pleasure. It was certainly worth a try. But what was most incredible was that she was here as a favor to the Center's founder, Dr. Rae Taylor.

Nicole resigned herself to the fact that Rae, Marsha, and Alicia apparently seemed to know what they were doing. The fruits of their work were certainly proven. They had helped so many women—many cases nothing short of miraculous. Alicia's surgery and Rae's genetic therapy could make any woman beautiful. Certainly the treatment was expensive, but it was worth it. But they went beyond the outer woman. They also knew how to care for the inner woman, how to make her *feel* beautiful, alive, vital, and fulfilled. It was hard to imagine how anyone could put a price on that.

She chuckled softly to herself. Who could have ever known that it was all here because of that bitch Rebecca Danforth.

# Part I

## Bygones

Friendship is constant in all other  
things  
Save in the office and affairs of love:  
Therefore all hearts in love use their  
own tongues;  
Let every eye negotiate for itself  
And trust no agent; for beauty is a  
witch  
Against whose charms faith melteth  
into blood.

**William Shakespeare**  
*Much Ado About Nothing*

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# Chapter 1

**FEBRUARY 1972**

### **Cambridge, Massachusetts**

The fresh snow made it even more difficult for Rae to maneuver her little green 1968 Volkswagen Beetle into the parking space at her apartment. The tiny rear engine groaned, making the tires spin as she eased the clutch back, doing her best to thread the little round vehicle into the slot between her neighbor Judy's Camaro and her roommate Rebecca's Corvette. The front bumper thumped against the ice covered brick wall of the four story brownstone tenement letting her know she could go no farther. The condensation on the small flat wind-

shield in front of her had completely frozen. She could only see to drive by smearing a six inch wide hole with her glove. After a firm tug on the emergency brake, she killed the lights and the engine, glad to hear an end to the Carpenter's "Rainy Days and Mondays" on the radio. It depressed her. It was only six o'clock, but already completely dark outside. The parking lot was poorly lit, so she turned on the little round dome light to find her apartment key before she got out of the car.

Readjusting her scarf around her neck and pulling her toboggan firmly around her ears, Rae grabbed the sack of groceries from the seat next to her and opened the thin metal door. A blast of cold air cut through her navy blue wool overcoat, prompting a violent shudder. The metal cans and jar of mayonnaise clattered together as her door banged sharply against the side of Rebecca's car. It was too cold to worry about a nick in Rebecca's precious gold paint job. But Rae didn't care. Actually, she hoped she cut all the way through the primer. Besides, Rebecca probably had ten *other* things to rant and rave about when she arrived. Steeling herself against the wind, Rae closed her car door and carefully plodded through the ice and snow to the entrance of her building.

Grateful to be inside, out of the bitter cold, Rae threw her keys down on the dinette table and carried her bag into the small kitchenette, placing it on the counter by the porcelain covered iron sink. She glanced down at the tall stack of dirty dishes. Rebecca didn't do dishes. In fact, Rebecca didn't do much of anything she didn't want to. It became apparent after only the first week sharing the apartment at Harvard Yard that the only rea-

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son Rebecca tolerated a roommate at all was because her family refused to buy her a maid. But the arrangement had been tolerable over the past two years. In exchange for a little housework, and listening to Rebecca bitch and whine about any and every conceivable topic, Rae could afford to live at Harvard Yard and complete her education. It was one of life's little sacrifices.

The television was on and Rebecca was flopped down on the couch watching the news while she painted her toenails. The apartment was filled with the pungent chemical smell of the bright red polish and the overly loud drone of the television.

“Hi. Have you eaten anything?” Rae asked, taking the knit cap off her straight brown hair and unbuttoning her coat.

Rebecca ignored the question, waving her hand at Rae in a gesture of irritation and a demand for silence as she strained to catch every word of the newscast. Rae shrugged her shoulders, opened up the food cabinet, and began to empty her grocery bag. After she got all of the items put away she took her coat off, walked back into the living area, and hung it up on the wooden coat peg on the back of the front door—right next to Rebecca's full length leather trench coat with fox fur collar. Her hands were still cold, so she briskly rubbed them together. Even after four years of undergraduate work on a biochemistry scholarship at Radcliffe, a Ph.D. at Harvard, and now just over halfway through her first year of postgraduate work at MIT, she had not acclimated to the New England winters. Rae had grown up just south of Houston, Texas, in Pasadena, where the greatest cli-

matic threat was the humidity.

“Can you believe that?” Rebecca shook her shiny black ponytail in amazement, gesturing at the nineteen-inch color screen with the palm of her hand. The television was a birthday present from Rebecca’s mother.

“Believe what?” Rae came around the end of the orange Herculon couch and sat down in the green overstuffed chair by the window. Both the chair and the couch matched the burnt orange and green shag carpet that ran throughout the entire two-bedroom, one bath apartment, with the exception of the kitchen, which had the one foot square checkerboard black and white linoleum tiles.

“President Nixon.” Rebecca pointed. “He’s in Peking opening up diplomatic relations with the Chinese.”

Rae frowned. “So what? They’re communists. I thought you hated communists.”

“Yes,” Rebecca snapped. “But this is the first time an American president has recognized the Chinese since Chairman Mao’s takeover.”

“So what happens now?” asked Rae. “Is he going to get them to make the North Vietnamese get out of South Vietnam?”

Rebecca shot Rae a cold glare. They had undertaken numerous unproductive discussions on the “police action” in Southeast Asia. Rae always complained of the ridiculousness of the conflict and Rebecca always defended the current administration’s actions citing the communist threat and our strategic Pacific interests.

“Look, Rae. I know you don’t understand world politics. But just be happy that we have a good man in

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the White House that has the tenacity to take on the communists directly and make them listen. I expect China to have a complete democratic government and a free market economy before 1980.”

“I don’t know.” Rae looked at the smiling face of the balding, sagging jowled statesman on the screen as she pulled her legs underneath her, straightening out the wrinkle in her bell-bottomed jeans. “He looks too shifty to me. I don’t trust him.”

“You’re just paranoid,” Rebecca countered. “He’s bringing back the men from Vietnam, isn’t he?”

Rae looked at her nails; she knew she should stop chewing them. “Yeah, but why were they there in the first place?”

Rebecca screwed the cap back on her bottle of nail polish. “I’m not going to explain it to you again. If you haven’t grasped it by now, it’s because you are incapable of doing so. You spend all of your time at that stupid laboratory, or at the library, or God knows where, and you’re out of touch with world affairs.”

“The news is boring,” Rae offered, taking her brown-framed glasses off and cleaning them with the loose material at the bottom of her red, cowl-necked shirt.

“You think that way because you’re out of touch.” Rebecca smugly sat back on the couch and folded her legs underneath her. She was wearing her long blue satin house robe over her blue pajamas. “I study and analyze the news because when I’m running my own company, I’ll need to be in touch with changing trends and markets. You see, I *need* to be aware of who the shakers and movers are. I’ve only got three more months before I’ve

got my MBA finished, and then I plan to blaze out of this place into glory. I'm ready to write my own ticket—and mark my words, no one's going to stop me. Learn a good lesson, Rae. You get ahead in this world by knowing what to do, when to do it, and who to do it to.”

Rae raised her hands in mock surrender. “You can have the rat race. I just want to finish my research and go to work in a hospital or clinic where I can do some good.”

Rebecca made a patronizing face and affected the tone of her voice, “Well, isn't that sweet, little Miss Florence Nightingale. Have you found your Nobel Prize winning cure for cancer yet?”

An angry surge of energy flashed through Rae's body; her eyes narrowed. Her mother had suffered from ovarian cancer six years ago, undergoing a hysterectomy and numerous painful chemotherapy treatments in the years since. Rae indeed had a vested interest in using her gifts and talents in fighting terminal diseases. “Almost. I think in another year I'll at least have cervical cancer, ovarian cancer, and breast cancer licked.”

Rebecca rolled her eyes and looked back at the television. “You're so full of shit, Rae. Sometimes I don't know why I let you hang around here.”

Rae did not appreciate her roommate's vulgar insult, prompting her words to tumble out with quick, terse venom. “Well, Miss Danforth, for your information, curing major diseases is not as complicated a task as you might think. You, who pride yourself on being so *in touch* with everything that's going on in the world. Well, *obviously* you haven't bothered to pick up on the work

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that's being done in DNA regeneration and cell mapping."

Rebecca never broke her gaze from the TV, ignoring Rae.

Rae flipped one hand up emphatically. "Every cell in the human body has a pre-programmed image of the entire makeup of human physiology. If that programming becomes disturbed, chemically or genetically, then things like cancer can occur. But with the right chemical stimulus to unmutated cells, an idealistic pattern can be used to restore cancerous tissue to its original state."

Rebecca sniffed, obviously unimpressed. "Are you finished with your little dissertation, Dr. Louise Pasteur?"

Rae just shook her head in disgust. She was in no mood to spar with Rebecca tonight. Both of the nucleic acid regression tests had failed today and an entire new culture series would have to be started all over again tomorrow. The laborious preparation and documentation was beginning to wear down her nerves. She had been researching the inner working of the cell for almost five years; and just when she thought she was near a breakthrough, setback after setback had cropped up. First the temperature variances in the incubators had invalidated the first six months' results. Then there was the specimen contamination caused by some careless lab technicians. Then the grant money hold-ups. She wondered if it would ever end.

Rebecca smiled at her plain-looking roommate. "Rae, what you need to do is get your nose out of your books and find you a good man. You're becoming a

drag. Let your hair down. Have a little fun.”

Rae didn't respond. She was twenty-two years old, and still a virgin. Her work was too important to be distracted by boys. At least that's what she constantly told herself. But the sharp edge of Rebecca's remark did its damage. Rae wouldn't admit the real reason her social life was nearly non-existent was the fact that rarely did anyone of the opposite sex ever bother to notice her existence. But then there was Matthew.

“I do go out on occasion,” Rae offered defensively.

Rebecca laughed. “Really? With who?”

Rae cleared her throat. She didn't like talking about this subject, but she hated Rebecca's arrogant attitude even more. “I've gone out a few times with Matthew Tobias.”

“Really?” Rebecca turned on the couch to face Rae, her voice eager, as though she were genuinely interested. “What's he like?”

“He's nice.” Rae held back a slight smile. “He's a second year divinity student at Harvard. I met him in a philosophy class I had to take last year to complete my Ph.D. We've had dinner together a few times. In fact, he called me this week and asked me to dinner on Saturday.”

Rebecca shook her head. “No, dear. I mean what's he like *in bed*? How big is he? Does he make you scream?”

Rae's eyes flashed in outrage. As far as she was concerned Rebecca was a slut. She paraded her paramours in and out of the apartment with no shame whatsoever. “I'm sorry, Rebecca, but we don't have *that kind* of a re-

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lationship.”

“Too bad,” Rebecca mocked, then mused, “Perhaps Matthew wants to have *that kind* of relationship and you just don’t know it.”

Rae huffed, “Wrong. Matthew is not that kind of a guy. For pete’s sake, he’s a seminary student!”

Rebecca tossed her shoulders, suggestively writhing her curvaceous body. “Sometimes the quiet ones are the best. They know how to take their time and make it last.”

“You’re disgusting,” Rae scowled.

Rebecca ran her fingers back through her hair. “No, my dear, sweet, innocent, virginal, Dr. Rae Taylor. I’m a realist. I learned years ago that we women have something that men want. And I know how to use it to get what *I* want. There’s no free lunch out there in the real world, dear academic sister. So you’d better open your eyes, and realize that if you want a piece of the action, you’ve got to march out there and take it. No one’s going to give it to you. And you’d *better* learn what it takes to get ahead.”

“I don’t want to get ahead if it means I have to be a whore.” Rae’s eyes were cold and unflinching. “Like you.”

Rebecca held her gaze for several seconds, then burst into laughter, mocking Rae’s slight Southern accent. “Why, Miss Taylor, I do declare, you just might have some spunk buried down deep inside that cold asexual exterior after all. That’s good.” Then her smile faded and her voice lowered. “But don’t get too self-righteous. You’d sell your soul as quickly as I would if it would

bring you what you really wanted.”

“You’re wrong,” Rae rasped, her anger growing.

“Am I?” Rebecca stood, pulled her robe about her, and walked toward the kitchenette. “Like I said, I’m a realist. I know how to get what I want.”

Rae crossed her arms and looked back at the television. The weather was coming on. “Well, I’m happy with what I have right now.”

“Are you?” Rebecca taunted. “You never know, Rae. You could lose everything in an instant if you’re not careful.”

“I’ll take my chances,” Rae said through pursed lips, pushing her glasses back in place once again.

“Suit yourself.” Rebecca shrugged apathetically. “But you might try being nicer to your friend Matthew. You never know, he just might decide to go after a *real* woman.”

Rae glared at Rebecca again, not dignifying the comment with a reply.

“Who knows?” Rebecca mused, pulling open the refrigerator door and propping her elbow on it. “I might give him a ring just to let him know what he’s been missing.”

Rae forced a laugh, trying to sound genuine. “Be my guest. He has more common sense than to eat out of the gutter.”

Rebecca set a jug of apple juice on the counter and pulled a glass out of the cupboard. “My, aren’t we bitter this evening. Settle down Rae. I won’t take your precious little preacher-boy away. I’ve enough men in my life to keep me satisfied. But take my advice and learn to

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enjoy him. It'll keep you from coming home every night so...so...frustrated."

Rae was at a loss. She didn't dare let Rebecca have the last word, especially with her condescending attitude. Sure she was rich, sure she was beautiful (and worst of all knew it), sure she had men calling the apartment at all hours of the day and night; but Rebecca was still a spoiled bitch. Rae consoled herself in the knowledge that if you opened any unabridged dictionary and looked up "Spoiled-self-centered-slutty-bitch" you would find a picture of Rebecca. It was a simple scientific fact.

After a moment of thought, Rae coaxed her expression into a look of sincere concern. "Rebecca, on the way in I noticed someone put another scratch on your car."

## Chapter 2

AUGUST 1979

### Daytona Beach, Florida

The windows of the 1970 Dodge Charger were completely fogged; but the full moon outside cast a dim luminescence inside the car parked just off the two-lane Route A1A on a desolate strip of sandy beach just north of Tomoka State Park. The ignition key had been turned half-on allowing the radio to continue playing the golden-oldie “Help Me Rhonda” by the Beach Boys, but the soft rush of the Atlantic waves could still be heard washing against the moonlit sands. At 11:30 at night the heat of the summer day had passed, dropping comforta-

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bly into the mid-seventies with a gentle breeze; but inside the car Sabrina was sweating. She wanted Tommy to hurry up; she was ready, she was more than ready—she was becoming impatient. Her red bandana-styled halter was untied, draping around her exposed breasts; her cut-off jeans and panties lay crumpled on the floor board below her. The blond, well-tanned, young man leaning between her uplifted legs awkwardly fumbled in his efforts to unroll a condom on his throbbing erection.

“Come on,” the nineteen-year-old blond urged, rubbing her breasts back and forth against his chest and reaching her left hand down playfully to his testicles. “I want it.”

“I’m trying,” panted the eighteen-year-old boy with three cans of Budweiser on his breath, as fresh beads of perspiration broke out across his forehead. After a few more futile moments he finally determined it was upside down and corrected the problem.

With a blunt stab, he plunged inside her and began pumping as fast as he could go, with his belt buckle flapping against the edge of the back seat. Sabrina winced slightly as he entered, but pulled him close, desperately wanting to feel the heat inside her. She could feel the bony edge of his stubbled chin pushing down on her bare right shoulder as he strained in his frantic motion.

He had been eager to climb in the back seat and kiss and fondle her, but she wanted more. She wanted to feel it all, the rush, the ecstasy, the thrill of young passion. When they stopped the car she couldn’t wait to pull her clothes off, and feel a warm body against hers. Even in the darkness of the car she could tell her young lover’s

eyes grew wide with desire when she opened the criss-crossed bandana covering her generous breasts and pulled his face between them, just minutes ago.

She dug her short grease-stained fingernails into his back, running them down to his surging buttocks. In her right ear she could hear his breathing growing more labored and short. The movement inside her felt good; she was just beginning to feel a swell of pleasurable sensation. Suddenly, the young man froze, his body went rigid, the tendons in his neck stood out, and a strained breath seethed through his grinding teeth. She could feel the dull pulsing inside her and the subsequent slow fade of his erection.

“That’s it?” Her voice was filled with unmasked irritation.

His eyes blinked with confusion. “What’s the matter?”

“That’s all you’ve got? Two minutes and a puny squirt?” She pushed him away from her, his latex covered penis flopping out onto the vinyl seat already looking like a withered two-day-old balloon from the carnival.

“Hey look,” he protested with an obviously bruised ego. “Y-y-you were great. I thought you were really getting hot, you know, really getting into it.” His expression grew smug. “Look, I’m sorry if you don’t know how to really enjoy it. *Other* girls do.”

Sabrina was livid. “Get your boney little ass out of my car.”

“What?” Tommy looked at her in disbelief, his faded blue jeans still wound around his thighs as he knelt on

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the floor board straddling the drive train.

“You heard me,” she snapped, grabbing her panties and shorts off the floor and pulling them up over her legs. The acrid smell inside the car, a mixture of beer, sweat, and spermicide-covered latex, was starting to make her feel ill.

“Look, *babe*, I’m sorry.” The blond surfer held up his hands in sarcastic defense. “What do you want me to do? Give me ten or fifteen minutes and I’ll give you some more.” He reached out to fondle her breast again.

“More? More of *what*? No thanks. You had your shot.” She pushed his hand away in disgust and climbed past him, between the bucket seats, and back into the driver’s seat, buttoning her fly. He awkwardly rolled over, sitting on the back seat, and started to pull up his pants, suddenly realizing he still needed to attend to the soiled prophylactic.

“Hang on a minute,” he groaned as he leaned forward and opened the passenger side door, pushed the front seat forward and climbed out. “I’ll be right back. I gotta dump this thing and take a leak.”

Sabrina watched him walk a few steps away from the car and carefully squeeze the rubber off his shriveled organ and toss it in the sand. His head turned around sharply when he heard the sound of the modified four-hundred and fifty-four cubic inch engine roar to life. He didn’t have time to pull up his pants before Sabrina popped the clutch, slamming her custom transmission into gear, sending a skyward shower of sand spinning from beneath her high performance tires. The passenger side door slammed shut of its own accord from the sud-

den forward movement.

Sabrina laughed at the sight in her rearview mirror, watching the helpless boy fall forward in an attempt to chase her with his pants around his knees. She could just make out his enraged expression, his mouth bellowing unheard ire, and his upraised right hand with extended middle finger. The fifteen-inch Goodyear radials squealed across the blacktop as she cornered hard to her left and headed south, back toward Daytona.

When the high distortion, high energy rock and roll strains of Tom Shulz's guitar ripped into "Don't Look Back" by Boston, Sabrina's hand automatically moved to the volume knob of the radio and cranked it up loud enough to compete with the deep roar of the engine. She lowered her window a few inches to let the cool night air rush through the car. She didn't even know Tommy's last name. He was just a good-looking thing that had approached her at the time trials that day at the track. His bright smile and good sense of humor had led her to believe he might be a lot of fun; but he was as disappointing as most of the others.

She shook her head in silent disbelief as her Charger flew down the coastal highway at just over a hundred miles and hour. Why couldn't these assholes see what she needed? Why did they always just jump on, have their thrill, and climb off—some without so much as a thank you? She knew there was more. Deep down inside she knew there was a height of pleasure she had never been to, a place as exhilarating as her racing. She knew exactly what it felt like to move at life and death speeds, roaring between tons of screaming metal machines. But

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that titillating thrill wasn't enough. She wanted that feeling of raw power in all aspects of her life—especially when it came to her own body.

Her voice melodically scratched along, accompanying Boston's lead singer as her powerful V8 engine hummed on an even tone, blazing through the night. She had personally rebuilt and enhanced that engine herself. Even before Sabrina had her own driver's license she had been working on cars—an only child helping her perfectionist father, John Doucette, a professional auto mechanic, in his garage in Jacksonville.

John Doucette never let Sabrina get away with second class work. He relentlessly pushed her to do things right, even if it meant going back and repeating steps until the job was done exactly right. He was never a very affectionate man, was always hard on her, criticized her mercilessly, always with a Marlboro hanging out of one corner of his mouth. But he didn't treat her any different than any of the other professional mechanics in his shop. And in a strange way, she liked that. By the time Sabrina was fifteen she could tear down a block, optimize a transmission, tune a carburetor, and custom turbo-charge an engine to perfection. She was versed in everything from struts to fuel-injectors. She was an excellent mechanic, but she was an even better driver.

As soon as she climbed behind a wheel at age fifteen she became addicted to speed. The entire Jacksonville police department knew her 1965 Ford Mustang convertible on sight; and she was on a first name basis with three-quarters of the traffic officers. When her mother and father soundly refused to pay her weekly traffic tick-

ets she accepted a well-meaning auto shop teacher's advice and took her passion for speed to the race track. All throughout her last two years of high school she spent every afternoon and weekend either in a garage or out at the raceway. At age seventeen she entered her first race and came in third. The little bronze loving cup she was awarded became one of her most treasured possessions, and represented a key turning point in her life.

Sabrina never had any desire to hang out with the "feminine crowd" of cheerleaders and panty-hosed socialites at her high school. They used to unmercifully tease her, singing the jingle of that damned cartoon, calling her the "Teenage Witch." Her real friends were auto mechanics, parts store clerks, pit crew technicians, and young racers with big egos and fast cars. However, if there were any justice in the universe, mother nature and her parents' genes had been kind enough to give the young blond a stunning figure, smoldering green eyes, and a classic face. Many people had told her if she didn't spend "so much time messing around with those silly cars" she could easily have a successful career in modeling. The Florida sun had made its contribution to her bright blond hair, and it wasn't long before her male acquaintances caught the scent of fresh blood. And she didn't mind. It was nice to feel wanted for a change.

The "track talk" she heard so often made her so curious about sex she lost her virginity at age sixteen to a dark-haired swarthy racer with a devilish smile—just to see what it was like. The painful experience in the cab of his Ford pickup left her mystified as to what all the attraction was. But over the last three years she had had a

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few sexual episodes that made her feel good enough to want to explore the subject further. Yet each time, she kept expecting something more that never seemed to happen. A few times she actually felt like she was going to lose control, but just before it happened everything would usually stop and the guy would be zipping up his pants and bumming a cigarette. No one understood her, of that she was certain. She was a woman of passion—dark, untamable passion. But so far, it lay totally undiscovered, or selfishly abused by insensitive brutes who used her more as an act of masturbation than any act of mutually pleasurable lovemaking. And yet her own personal frustrations fueled her desire to win, serving as an outlet of raw power on the battlefield of high-speed competition.

Two days after her eighteenth birthday, she had her first win. With the completed modifications on her restored Dodge Charger, she had taken the checkered flag at Daytona in a minor league race. It wasn't the big time, but it was a start. The prize money had been fifteen-hundred dollars, and to her it was a fortune. In that victory she received her first taste of blood, and wanted more. At that point in her life she could truly say that the thrill of victory was "better than sex."

Her father sternly lectured her to put her winnings aside for a college education, but she routinely used them to buy parts, fuel, and protective clothing. One of her happiest memories was opening the UPS box containing her specially ordered, custom-fitted fire suit. The skintight crimson unitard fit her like a glove, accentuating her dangerous curves and hard lines. She wore it

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around the house the entire first day and slept in it that night.

She remembered standing in front of the full length mirror hanging on the back of her mother's bedroom door holding her helmet under her arm, imagining standing next to her Formula One racer in the checkerboard winner's circle at Indianapolis on Memorial Day. No other woman in history ever held that honor. She knew, even as a teenager, that one day, that glory would belong to her. That image often came to mind, almost daily. There she would be, her oil-stained face being washed with flowing champagne and tears of joy as Paul Newman kissed her and conceded defeat, handing her the wreath of roses and the tall silver-plated trophy. Yes, it would happen someday, or she would die trying.

But reality told her it would be many years before she climbed into the cockpit of a multimillion dollar wing car. You had to have huge corporate sponsors and be part of a world class racing team. Those things were far away on the horizon. She had managed to get a few articles written about her in the local papers; and a racing magazine once had her picture in it after she won a stock car race in Louisiana the previous spring; but no national attention had ever come her way. But that could all change the following Saturday. Saturday she would be racing again at Daytona in the Sea World charity race to benefit the American Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. The world famous NASCAR champion Richard Petty would be in pole position number one. And based upon the results of the time trial today, she would be right on his tail in pole position number three.

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Sabrina downshifted the Charger's V8 into third as she saw an approaching red traffic light a mile down the road. As she pulled further into civilization, she saw where Route A1A widened into four lanes. Her car came to a rolling stop at the light on the right side of a dark blue pickup with three young men inside and a radio turned up as loud as hers to some hard rock station. With her eyes impatiently locked on the traffic light she absently reached over in the bucket seat next to her, grabbed the last unopened can of Bud and popped the top. It was getting warm, but still tasted good.

The throaty growl of her revving engine brought the attention of the bearded young man in a black T-Shirt sitting on the passenger's side of the pickup, hanging his arm out the window holding an open gold can of Michelob. Sabrina turned her head when she heard the pickup's horn honk and the three young men break into juvenile whistles and cat calls. Noticing they weren't admiring her car nor her pretty face it suddenly dawned on her she had neglected to tie her red bandana halter back in place. Her firm breasts stood out at prompt attention in the light of the nearby amber street lamp. But rather than entertain any sensation of embarrassment, Sabrina felt a rush of wicked teasing wash over her.

She rolled her window the rest of the way down and turned her shoulders toward the door to give the three ogling spectators a better look. She ran her tongue over her full red lips, her words dripping with sensuality, "Catch me and you win a taste."

The stunned young men sat there in shocked silence until the light turned green, then were all simultaneously

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startled by the sudden ferocious roar of the V8. Sabrina's tires smoked and screamed between the friction of the asphalt and the torque of a four-hundred horsepower engine. She broke into peals of laughter watching the frantic little truck, going as fast as it could, fading away in her rearview mirror. But miles down the road, as she turned off of A1A onto McKensie Boulevard, she wondered if perhaps three might have been better than one.

