

Wearing a pair of Nick's jeans, vintage, 'Velvet Underground' t-shirt and faded old leather biker jacket, Jed felt somewhat possessed as he sailed down the stairs, out of the building and into the night. He had no time to check what kind of possessed because that would detain him and he had left those inquiries back in the apartment, out on the ledge, fucked them off into the eternal blackened sky. And with his glasses and Nick's, black straw weaved rimmed hat, he looked like some maddened scribe from the underground. He had his notebook and pen tucked in his back pocket, ready to record the experiences ahead, feeling vibrant, virile and clear with only the slightest foggy inclination that he may be peddling backwards...or downwards but it was just a slight annoyance that he shrugged off as he hailed a cab and hopped in.

"27<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>..." Jed said as he took out his boost cell and called Marcello's number. A message came on. "This is Marcello, leave me a good one. Ciao."

"Shit!" Jed said, aware that his voice was just little too vicious but he liked it all the same.

"You want me to pull over," the cabbie said. "You forget something?"

"Nah..." Jed answered, somewhat impolitely, "Don't worry about it...keep goin'..."

And he surmised that it was well after 2am and that Marcello was probably in his club with the music blasting and not answering his calls... so he sent a text message to the number.

*Marcello, it's me, Jed. I'm on my way down to your club.*

*Are you there tonight?*

He waited, anxious, tense, staring at the phone, held tight in his hand and as his hand began to tremble he felt thrills of anticipation. He clenched his eyes shut. Please, please, please. Come, on, come on, come on. He opened them. The text came back.

*Jed! My boy! Didn't know whose number this was, too many girls calling me. Ha ha ha. Come down right away. Black and pink canopy, south side of 27<sup>th</sup> btwn 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>. Be out front 15 min.*

Jed grinned with a pleasure he had not known for years. He relaxed and watched the taxi TV screen built into the center divider, with the Ken and Barbie doll, botoxed newscasters, reporting the latest gossip and world disasters with the same silly demeanor. He saw the credit card swipe underneath.

"These TV things new?" Jed asked, with no real interest.

"Had em' for a few months, now..." the Driver said as he turned down his own music coming from the front that sounded like some ancient bootlegged 'Grateful Dead' concert. The Driver looked about sixty, with shoulder-length greasy grey hair in a loose ponytail. There were bags under his weary eyes, showing wistful hints for his ole' hippie hey-days.

"Tell me if ya wanna pay with a credit card, I'll set it up but, I'm tellin' ya the whole thing is a pain in the ass. Most people can't even figure it out, swipin' their cards, punchin' the damn screen...takes up too much time, my time and theirs...not somethin' I asked for, let me tell ya. I have to pay five percent of it, five bucks on every hundred. Now ya got people who can't afford taxis taking taxis, overloading credit cards they can't pay off and we get charged, hear what I'm sayin'? Bad for business. Bad for the economy. Got friggin' GPS in case my cab goes missin' or I try and go some where's I want without them knowing...and a they're gonna flash ya in the face when ya get out...they say it's to remind you if ya wanna swipe your credit card but I know...I know it takes your picture, that's right pal...that's what's not bein' told... so they know

exactly who you are...just in case you're someone they're looking for. Everyone is recorded now, that's the way of the future... every friggin' move we make gets tracked...supposedly to protect us, which is bullshit, ya know what I'm sayin'? Everything is based on fear. Fear. Fear and friggin' more fear. We're losin' our friggin' freedom for security here, ya got me. And who makes the all money? Friggin' corporations, the big ones...big, big, big, the ones that own everything...the whole friggin' world they're gonna own, if ya know what I mean. I got no say in it, I didn't want that TV credit card shit in my car but I gotta make a livin' here...I gotta drive a cab...so tell me if ya wanna use it. Some customers they go to the airport, fifty-sixty dollar fare but..."

"I'll pay cash," Jed said, interrupting as he also pressed the, off, icon on the TV, staying in his own thoughts about what the night might bring. He had pussy on his mind, he couldn't deny it. And as the Driver went rambling on and on about government wiretapping and water-board torture, Jed wasn't engaged as he usually was with the Drivers. He didn't ask questions or answer back. He was separate, apart, disengaged and he felt it but he didn't give a shit.

The cab slowed as it approached a long line of other cabs, double and triple parked in front of a club scene on 10<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>; a crowd of drunk, stoned, screaming young 'look-at me's' not able to cut the grade, spilling out onto the street, pushed behind barricades, reaching up hands and yelling out like school kids desperate for candy, waiting to get an entrance wave from the bouncer, wannabe actor/models, while the chosen ones, slipped through and breezed in.

"It's crazy down here, like Sodom and friggin' Gomorrah with these kids..." the Driver said.

"Drop me off after these cabs," Jed said. The Taxi pulled over just passed 27<sup>th</sup> and a flash, seemingly out of nowhere snapped in Jed's face as he fished in his pocket for the fare.

"They got ya..." The Driver said as Jed paid with a silent, "Fuck..." and jumped out.

He walked down 27<sup>th</sup> under the ominous, rusted old railway bridge past stretch limos, waiting in the shadows to see a row of more clubs on either side. He spotted the black and pink canopy, hanging from the brick building Marcello described and walked up to the scene, which seemed smaller and more exclusive but still packed with people trying to get in. A model/doorman picked and chose who

entered, snapping open the gold-plated and red, entrance rope as two massive black ex-football type bouncers along with a few roaming, shaved-headed, swat-team types herded the crowd away from the cold steel barricades.

"Go home...mutts...you're not getting' in..." one of the shaved heads barked at a couple of drunk, whiney girls, dressed nicely but not looking nice enough to enter. The other shaved head laughed as he eyed a couple of hotties and motioned them to move closer to the doorman. Groups of single guys waited, smoking and pissed off, arguing with each other about who knew who and why they had to wait and making bitter accusations about guest list bullshit.

Jed stood in the street, behind it all, his eyes blinking as if some sense were trying to seep in from somewhere to get him to leave but he stayed put.

"Jed! What are you doing back there!"

He looked to see Marcello in an embrace with an Amazon model, who was at least a head taller than him. "Hold on!" He said as he came out to the street and grabbed Jed's hand. "Look at you, with that shirt and hat and your glasses. You look like a very cool writer, my boy. We're going to get you plenty of action tonight," he said as he personally led Jed back through the crowd and into The Club.

Marcello walked him down the elegant red carpeted hall, dipping into a wide flight of dark stained hardwood stairs, past a steady stream of chosen partiers, more security, two rocket-titted, bleached-blond ticket girls that looked like twins in their tight, silver sequined dresses and more model type PR guys, making sure customers paid the twenty buck cover, while promoting the two-thousand dollar private table fees. Marcello, in-between constant text messaging and kissing every pretty girl's cheeks he could, introduced Jed as, "...an old friend of mine, a writer, very talented..." And as they all nodded or smiled or offered handshakes with, "Any friend of Marcello's is a friend of mine..." Marcello led him back up another wide flight of stairs, the walls on either side lined with thick green hedges, seeming to vibrate with the pulse of the music as they reached the top.

"You like the beautiful décor? Come on. You're gonna love it inside."

Marcello stretched his arms out like some thrill-maddened Moses reveling in his self-created sea of celebrators as the house music throbbed and rotating ceiling lights swept hot purple red and blue streams over the ecstatic, faces sparkled with sweat on the sunken dance floor under a huge

revolving gold mirrored disco ball. A deafening siren sounded.

"You like that? For ambiance..." Marcello said into Jed's ear as he guided him under an elegant crystal chandelier past a long sensually curved bar through the capacity crowd, dancing in the aisles, on raised platforms and cozy lounge couches behind tables with gleaming silver ice buckets, Champagne and Vodka plunged into the cubes. Shouts of "Marcello! Marcello!" echoed from every direction as they arrived at his private table in a corner alcove situated above the rest, where a complete and exclusive view of all could be seen. Peppe was up on the couch, grinning and nodding his head to the beat between two young crazed model-types, both hands raised in the air, one clasped around a glass of champagne, shaking their lithe bodies, dressed in tight jeans and sleeveless T's as they swung their heads back and forth, luxurious long hair flying in their finely chiseled faces.

"Oh! Jed!" Peppe yelled as he put his arms around both girls. Three cute waitresses, Black, Latin and Asian in Pocahontas outfits complete with head-band and feather popping out in back, shimmied over, all kissing Marcello on both cheeks, asking for his requests.

"You like them, Jed. Got the Thanksgiving theme going. Look at my cute little Indians. What will you drink? Champagne? Vodka? Tequila? Beer? Anything you want. How about a bump of coke?" Jed looked at him, kind of blank. Marcello slapped him on the back and laughed. "Ah, I was just testing you my boy. I don't do that shit anymore, no more cocaine or weed, none of that but some of the girls are always looking for a little bump to get them in the mood. I might do a little bit with them, if they're hot enough...but these other chicks are so crazy, doing ecstasy, GHB, heroin, ketamine...that's not my thing...unless I'm in Ibiza in the summertime...that's a different story. You have to come to Ibiza with me or Rio or Buenos Aires. I throw parties everywhere these days. And Cuba, you ever been to Cuba? The girls are so hot..."

"I haven't been around much in the past years. I got married," Jed said.

"You? Married? I don't believe it."

"Yeah, and I haven't been out at all really. No drinking or partying...just writing...and searching..."

"Searching for what, my boy?"

"For myself I guess...my true... God...self..." And as Jed trailed off, feeling suddenly as if he were telling some

fictitious story about some fictitious man, Marcello threw up his hands, confirming the incredulous tale.

"What are you now, a Saint?" He yelled to Peppe in Italian, repeating rapidly what Jed had told him and Peppe, made the sign of the cross before beckoning Jed with both arms, yelling, "Saint Jed Dostoevsky!"

They both laughed and the girls, who were completely clueless, laughed and Jed laughed along too as if it all were quite ludicrous, what he had been telling them. "Come, Saint Jed, let the Devil pour you some champagne," Marcello said as he picked up the bottle of Cristal. "You look like you need a little corrupting tonight." He poured Jed a glass and handed it to him. The two girls dancing next to Peppe jumped down and sandwiched Jed, both grinding up against him as Marcello refilled their glasses. "Like the old days, my boy but now I'm the King!" he said as poured his own glass and raised it to Jed's who took more of a sip than a gulp...then he took more of a gulp than a sip. "Help yourself..." Marcello said. "Look, there's the cutest little girl up there in the DJ booth..." He waved to the DJ, a tall thin, unshaven kid with glistening afro hair, basic white T, jeans and white mirrored shades, who was smoking a cigarette and grinning next to a wildly writhing butch-cut, button-nosed, redhead in a shiny white silk top and

psychedelic flowered skin-tight pants. "I let her spin a few records so I can come up and dance behind her. Oh, I get right up, so close. She has the sweetest little ass...and I have these, oh they're so hot...these two Brazilian girls...they're supposed to be here already. One of them you're gonna love...crazy but hot, hot I'm telling you...she likes to fuck artists, musicians, actors... writers like you..." Marcello laughed and gave him a roguish jab. "She's from a very powerful family in Rio, loaded, about twenty-two years old...you're going to forget all about your wife and your self-searching for tonight my friend." He rubbed his palm against Jed's salt and pepper stubble. "You should shave though my boy, it makes you look younger." Marcello rubbed his own smooth shaven face. "Look at me, like a baby. I have to teach you all the tricks... I'll be right back..." And he raced up to the DJ booth.

Despite his underlying premonitions of Nostradamic proportions, Jed began drinking and dancing and losing himself. It was strange though as he only felt a slight shift from the champagne where he thought he would feel more. So he took a shot of vodka but somehow the vodka had little or no effect on him either. One of Peppe's girls

asked for a shot too and after Jed poured her one, she  
downed it fast then kissed him hard on the lips.

"Vodka is so sexy," she said after, running her hand  
over his chest then she poured a shot for the other girl,  
who downed it and they kissed hard on the lips, running  
their hands up and down each other's bodies before hopping  
back up on the couch, dancing next to Peppe.

The club became more and more crowded, the music  
shifting from house to hip-hop to classic rock to re-mixed  
Michael Jackson and Donna Summer hits. The multi-colored  
lights swirled, white, snow like confetti blew in from  
between the high wood-beamed ceiling, wafts of chilled fog  
were sprayed out from recessed wall machines, as the sirens  
wailed again and again while everyone danced 'till they  
were sweat-drenched and drank and smoked and snorted and  
grinded, arms raised high, heads thrown back, all together  
like it was the last night on Earth. Every few moments the  
cocktail waitresses filed out three at a time with the  
first holding a huge magnum of champagne, silver Roman  
candles attached to the neck, blasting out gold sparks  
while the other two followed with ice bucket and glasses  
towards the buyer so everybody could know who the big  
spender was.

Marcello was back, arm around Jed, pointing to the receiver of one of the magnums; a heavy set, olive-skinned young guy in a black suit and turtleneck, greased back hair and cigar jutting from his jaw, clenched with ego and joy at all the little honeys hurrying over, lining up for a glass of his bubbly.

"See that guy there..." Marcello said, "...worth 400 million, he's in finance. That's where all the money is in this city. You know what he told me? That soon the whole US economy is going to go to shit and America will bring everybody down with them. He said they will bankrupt the world and then build it up again from the bottom, continuing to be number one and he said he will be making money from it all the way. How fucking brilliant is that? He is such an evil man but I love it!" Jed nodded, mesmerized in this Devil's den. He felt the shift but it wasn't from the drink, it was his shift in perception. He was thinking this is what life is all about, even when he caught the occasional glimpse, the split second of complete despair on any one of the sea of faces, which he was now one of, showing how desperately they needed to get out, out of themselves, if just for one moment. This was the life for the moment and that was all that mattered. Marcello pinched Jed's ass as two girls approached. "There they are,

the Brazilians..." And he saw the one staring right at him with a mischievous smirk of interest on her face. She was young, dark, daring and voluptuous and it was as if she already had a bead on him, like she knew who he was and wanted to find out more. *Marcello must have texted her*, he thought but he didn't care, his door had opened. As Marcello hugged and kissed the other girl, while grabbing her hand, she leaned in for an air-kiss then picked up an empty champagne glass and held it in front of Jed.

"Please..." she said in a strong Portuguese accent and he obliged. "Thank you," she said. You look a little crazy, cool but crazy. And intelligent, I like that."

"Did Marcello tell you something?"

And maybe Marcello overheard, maybe he didn't but he slipped off with the other girl, who made some subtle twitch with her nose, a bump signal perhaps.

"It doesn't matter what Marcello says, she continued. "I make my own decisions. You just seem different. We haven't talked so I don't know..." then she laughed a laugh that could start a fire. "Okay, Marcello texted me and told me you are Jed and you are a writer and I like writers. So what? Is that okay?"

She was very direct which threw him off balance while at the same time feeding a dire need within.

"Yeah, that's okay," Jed said.

She shook his hand. "I am Simone."

"Hey, Simone..."

"It's so loud in here," she said and she leaned in so the swell of her breast was right up against his arm. "What are you writing?"

"I'm...ah, working on a book right now."

"What is it about?"

Jed's truth seemed to not be with him anymore as he hedged in his answer with only fragments of what he intended to say coming through. Her sensuality was overpowering.

"About a man that... is lost... that has always been lost but has traveled many paths...always searching, trying to find something...something to make him complete...and he finds...he ah..."

"What if he finds me?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Please, don't take me for some bimbo girl just because I am young and beautiful." She was, like a beautiful five foot, six-inch hourglass with long, dark hair layered in waves, matched by wide dark honey eyes, set in her smooth, bronzed angular face with a nose of a fierce young hawk and ruby-colored lips to define succulent. She was a temptress and aware of it, standing so close in her

short, black wool dress; Prada, Gucci, one of the "haute couture" type, and black boots so tight around her strong calves that they seemed to be painted on.

"Is your book is based on yourself? Yes? No?"

"Well, somewhat, it is..."

"The same as many writers do, of course. What they do, what they see...their experiences, they write about it. So now you see me and I tell you I can give you some experiences to write about..." She closed her eyes slowly like a purring cat, batting her long curled lashes with confidence. "Yes I know I can."

Suddenly Jed felt a warm surge of ego. He rose to the challenge as if he were his old self in a tete' a' tete' with some chick he wanted...some chick he wanted in the worst way, some chick that he pursued and possessed.

"You're pretty sure about yourself, aren't you?" He said, positioning himself closer to her, now fully engaged, although he had a passing line out of 'Augie March' fly through his mind, something Thea said to Augie about not being able to stand up under flattery. He let it pass. It had nothing to do with him.

"Why not?" Simone said.

"How old are you?"

"Twenty-three. Marcello says I am twenty because he likes to fantasize about being with young girls."

Twenty. Twenty-three. "Are you fucking kidding me?" Jed thought.

"How well do you know him?"

"You mean have we fucked? No. He is friends with my father in Brazil. They do some business. My father's family is from southern Italy, so...what they do..." And she pressed her chest up against his, their faces inches apart.

"Nothing more to be said about that, okay? I want to talk about you and your writing."

"Why would you be interested?"

"Because I can tell there is something...dangerous and crazy about you."

"Like what?"

"Like you did some dangerous and crazy things in your life and if you write about these things, I want to know what they are. I want you to tell me these stories..."

"What else did Marcello tell you about me?"

"A few things...but I don't care. I want to know from you."

"All that crazy stuff was my past..." And as a blur of fuck scenes flashed through his mind, he repeated, "That was my past..."

"I see it is still there," she said, her wide, wanting eyes of honey drawing him in further.

"Oh, you do, huh?" Jed said, holding her stare, completely knowing it was better to look away.

"Yes..."

"Where?"

"In your eyes. I see some danger wanting to come out of you, right now...with me. Do you understand?"

"Maybe, maybe I do..." Jed said, suspicious but sucked in all the same.

"I don't know what you are doing in this place," she said.

Jed laughed...but the laugh came as if it were someone else laughing at him, someone else who knew it was too late, that Jed was drawn in deep and his suspicions were insignificant compared to the power he was under and what he was destined for.

"What do you find funny?" She said.

"Well, first I thought Marcello might have paid you to flirt with me, telling you what to say...then I..."

In an impulse, she grabbed his chin with her hand, squeezing.

"Let me tell you, first. Nobody tells me what to say or do. And I already have more money than Marcello will ever make..."

"Okay, okay," Jed said, clasping his hand around her wrist and holding it tight. "It was a thought, a thought like a writer would get. My imagination."

"And what is second?"

"I knew Marcello almost twenty years ago. I have never been here. He just gave me his card the other day when we met and I came because...because I had the feeling..."

"What feeling?"

Jed felt his heart pounding almost jumping out of his chest with his head hot, swelled and pulsing, all the music and background noise drowned out, knowing that if he said the words rising in his throat there would be no turning back.

"That I would meet you..." And in the crunch of an apple bite, she drove her lips into his, devouring, hands running up and down, clenching and squeezing body parts. Jed heard echoes of Marcello and Peppe shouting his name and whistling but remained oblivious, his eyes rolled back in his head, lips locked hard onto Simone's. When she pulled away with her eyes on fire, she had his notebook and pen in her hand.

"A true writer always has these," she said as she flipped through the pages, attempting to decipher his scribbles but not really caring... because they were there. She wrote something across a clean page and put the notebook up to his face to read.

*I will fuck Simone and write all about it..*

She clipped the pen on and slipped the notebook back into his pocket.

"Yes?" she said with unblinking command in her eyes and disarming childlike smile. Jed's mouth opened but he couldn't answer. She snatched his black straw hat off his head and put it on hers. She grabbed his hand and headed towards the exit. As Jed followed, he felt another hand from behind rest on his shoulder with a brotherly squeeze and Peppe's, low but distinct voice in his ear, saying, "Ciao, Idiot..."

Simone, with her hand clasped around Jed's arm, ushered him towards an elegant black Bentley coupe waiting across the street. A stout and quietly dangerous-looking man, brown-skinned in a black fitted suit with straight, long, black hair, opened the back door as they approached.

"That car yours?" Jed asked, not really surprised. He had been in these scenarios before. Sense memory. No problem... and even if he did have the fleeting thought to run for the hills, he didn't.

"Yes, it is," she said. "You like it?" Jed didn't answer. He was going to hell, he knew it and it didn't matter what he rode in.

"I like this model," she said. "They call it the Continental Flying Spur. It is modest compared to the Azure, hip-hop mogul monster model... although I could afford that one too..." She tossed her head back, mocking royalty. "What can I say, some people have it all..." She yanked him closer, her warm lips pushing against his ear. "I'm joking. I am so fucked up. You will find out..." The driver stood stone-faced as they stepped into the car but Jed noticed a slight tremor in his upper lip. It was a subtle smirk of judgment. His eyes, coal black and hard, showed nothing,

but Simone was acutely aware of his every move. She snapped a flurry of words at him in rapid Portuguese, sounding proud, justified and entitled. He cast down his eyes submissive as he closed the door and Simone translated to Jed while he took in the aroma of the, sturdy but supple, rich blue leather seats they sunk into.

"Alessandro was wondering about you. Sometimes he has to protect me from myself."

"Was that about me?" Jed asked.

"I just said to him, He's a writer and I'm going to find out what he writes about...but understand Alessandro is a master in Jiu Jitsu and if you fuck with me, he'll kill you. Not fuck me... but fuck with me, you see..." She placed her hand on his thigh and laughed into his face. Her breath was hot and sweet.

"I'm joking, joking, joking..."

Jed grinned, not at her joke but at the bigger joke which he had now made himself a part of. A joke that that he knew would turn sour.

"This is no laughing matter," he said.

"What?" She said as she reached into her black with gold clips, Prada purse and pulled out a flat, bone-colored pipe.

"Nothing..." Jed said. He stared out the window as Alessandro headed up 27<sup>th</sup> street, while gawkers and wannabes walked up to the car, trying to get a glimpse of the glamorous life through the black tint. Jed pushed his face against the glass and let out a silent wide-eyed scream.

"Alessandro..." Simone said and as if the tone of her voice suggested it, a bluesy African voodoo music began to filter through the surround sound system. Jed watched her tweeze a tiny nugget of bright green colored weed from of plastic pouch and deftly place it in the pipe. She took out a thin gold butane lighter, torched the bud and took a long sensual pull with a purring moan. She passed the pipe to Jed. It smelled sinfully pungent. He took a draw on it. Why not?

"So where are we going?" Simone said as Alessandro turned onto 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. "I want to see where you write."

"I've been writing in a couple of places," Jed said. "Now I'm writing in a little box somewhere."

"I like the way that sounds," Simone said, hitting the pipe again, her eyes glazing over. "Take me to this little box somewhere."

Jed told the unnervingly silent and aware Alessandro to go to 22<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. He waited for the weed to kick in like a storm but it had little or no effect on him, same as the

champagne and vodka. There was some other power not allowing it. Strange but not strange enough for Jed to examine on any deeper level, although he did feel like it may be his last chance.

Simone leaned into him, kissing his neck while she casually dropped her hand back over his thigh, moving it up to his crotch, rubbing smooth and steady. Jed gave in with a swallow as he swelled under her hand.

"Your cock is so nice, I can already feel it inside me," she cooed. She darted her tongue deep in his ear as she squeezed tight with her hand. "I want you to write that too, okay. I want you to write everything..."

Jed felt the mantle of protection over him collapse as the rush of the liquor, weed and desire hit him all at once. He let his eyes close in dark surrender as his head fell back, cradled by the soft leather, moving his arm around her shoulder, hand dropping over her breast, fingers searching for the bud of her nipple through the smooth woven wool.

"Okay," he said. "I will..." and he took a deep breath in with the faintest hope it might just be some wicked dream. But he was living it and he smiled helplessly because it seemed there was no waking up from it now.

In the wee, wee, darkest of dark hours, Alessandro parked to the side on 22<sup>nd</sup>, they walked into the building, Jed's heart pounding with premonitions of pleasure and disaster as Simone followed him up the stairs. She stayed close, her hands tapping on his ass cheeks while she chided him.

"Marcello told me you used to fuck many, many girls. So I will be just one more for you...and you, one more for me. Yes, we will see...we will see..."

"Is that, some lame childish poem you just made up?" Jed said.

She tugged hard on his back pocket, almost tearing it open.

"What? What did you say?"

They reached the fourth floor. Jed whirled around in the stairwell. He yanked Simone through the door and slammed her up against the wall, incensed, with his eyes burning into hers.

"What do you know about writing? Do you know what it really fucking takes? Huh? What the fuck do you know?" She grinned, clutching onto his arms with her eyes shooting back, fierce sparks to match.

"Yes, now I see you..." she said in a low guttural voice,

"...now you are here..." She grabbed a fist full of his hair and pulled him in for a vicious kiss. Jed sunk down, knees

bending as she kissed and bit and clawed, with both of them, sliding across the wall towards the apartment door.

"I gotta fucking piss..." he said, as he walked in, thumb and forefinger clamped on his stone hard cock, bulging inside his jeans already un-zipped before he reached the toilet. He growled with relief, lower jaw jutted out over his upper as the hot stream of urine shot out of him. He looked up at the 'Exquisite Torture' photo over the mirror and saw Simone standing there, watching him, biting on her finger. She had slipped out of her dress and was wearing only blood red satin panties and her boots, her swelled breasts heaving, cherry chocolate colored nipples popping out. He shook his cock right in front of her, shoved it back in his boxers and flushed, resigned like they were trapped in a steaming hell together.

"It was hot in here...so..." she said, grinning with eased confidence then she referred to the torture photo. "Is that what you like?"

"No, that's my nephew's..." Jed said with a snort as he reached out and pinched one of her protruding buds. She slapped him and he laughed. He pushed past her and fell back on the futon, shoving his computer and books and notes aside, his jeans still un-zipped and loose around his hips.

"This is his place. He goes to a film school 19<sup>th</sup> and 5th. I'm just writing here for now."

"A bit stupid and amateurish, that...but maybe fun for him," she said as she took two skips and dropped to her knees next to Jed.

She looked around at the wall posters. "I like his taste in movies though." She ran her hand across Jed's belly, sliding it under his boxers, where she grasped and fingered his flesh until his cock began to fill again.

"Is he cute, your nephew?"

"He's nineteen. You want to fuck him too?"

"No, he is too young. I fuck some of these young boys and they get all suicidal on me. Sometimes the older ones too."

She pulled Jed's cock out, teasing her nails up and around the head as she stroked and as she leaned down to put it in her mouth, she reached out with her other hand and grabbed one of his notebooks.

"I want to read some of your notes while I suck you," she said looking up at him, her eyes engulfed with hunger. Jed felt an awful buzzing in his head and a flash of strange shivers run down his spine as she opened the notebook, turning through the pages, reading. His breathing became heavy and labored as she read and stroked and sucked

and turned and read and stroked and sucked and turned. Something was shifting in the air, right inside the apartment. Impending. Unknown. Omniscient. Arriving with no stop to it.

Simone, with one hand spread flat on a turned page, her other secured around the base of his cock, stopped and looked up. "Who is this Christine?" she said. "She is everywhere..." Her eyes blazed into Jed's with such intense envy that when she stared back down at his notebook it was as if she was trying to burn Christine right off the page but Christine was there on the page and she was there in the room. Jed could see her, sitting at the edge of the bed beyond Simone, beyond and above smiling down at him with empathy, love and compassion. He blinked himself back to life as if he were recovering from a temporary coma.

"Yes...she is everywhere...she's everywhere...she's everywhere..." he said, a smile serene forming.

"Is your book about her?" Simone said, studying the change on Jed with mild alarm. She reached under her silk, moving her fingers, methodic in circular motion, her hand coming out sopping, wrapping it around his cock again, covering it with her juices.

"Let's fuck." She stood up quick, pulling her panties down over her boots. Jed picked up the notebook, flipping

through pages, reading; remembering, recalling, rejoicing in the warmth his own words were bringing back to him, words describing all the beauty and all the pain of a man searching, a man moving, no matter what towards his own true purpose. And as a breath of new hope seemed to pump in his chest, Jed became aware that he was returning. He was coming back.

"Did you ever read, 'Dark Night Of The Soul'?" he asked Simone, somewhat surprised at his own calm with her blazing naked body standing over him. "No. I'm not interested in any, Dark Night Of The Soul." She said disgusted. "I'm interested in this Christine. What does she do for you?"

"She was the Angel that showed me the Dark Night." Simone spat out air through her lips, pursed and perturbed.

"Oh, shit. You are some religious now? I see the Bible there too. What are you, a born again?"

"No," Jed said. No, I'm not. He noticed about a three-inch blush-red, blue and gold-filled tattoo floating where her pubic hair had been waxed to satin.

"What's that tattoo of?"

She placed one boot on the bed, straddling him and squatted down, shoving the red cherub cheeks with blue outlined wings, filled with gold up to his face. "That's my

Angel. My Angel likes to fuck and she will fuck this Christine out of your mind."

"The choices have presented themselves," Jed said...or maybe he didn't say it. His mouth didn't move but in his mind reeled...

*This is it, this is my Last Tango in Paris story I originally wanted...right here... It has come to me...I can live it and I can write it.* He trembled, temptation calling, calling him to bite on her pussy lips and suck and put his tongue in as far as it could reach...

*This is the story, this is it...right here...this or...* He looked down under the steamy shadow of Simone's spread legs, and began to read words in his notebook from a passage of King David he didn't even recall he wrote. *Near to my God, my will cannot act in it's old human manner...*

He read the line over and over and over, his heart pounding with renewed fervor, feeling the shift in his soul and in his mind as Simone braced her hands against the wall, waiting to be devoured. He placed his hands on her thighs and pushed her back.

"I can't...I just...this is...I'm ah...I'm, I'm also married..."

"Oh...!" she screamed as she slammed her hands against the wall in violent frustration, swearing in Portuguese and Italian.

"So you are married to this Christine!"

"No...but I love her too...just not the same way I..."

Simone leap off the futon in a fury, pacing back and forth like a trapped cat ready to swipe out at his face with her claws.

"So you can fuck this Christine but not me? You can write about this Christine and fuck her but not me!"

"I don't fuck Christine..."

"Don't! Don't tell me!" Simone screamed. "I read! I read your words!"

She stopped in her tracks with a sudden realization, jutting her arm out, pointing at his face, accusing.

"So then, it is that you want to fuck her but you can't! Ha! Piece of shit!"

Jed watched her rage. He remained calm and unaffected, feeling the mantle of protection back over him. There was nothing to hide.

"That's true. I did, like I needed to eat, like I needed to breathe...but I've gone beyond that and that desire no longer exists"

"Liar! It's because you can't! You want but you can't!"

"No. I want to be with my wife."

"Who is this wife? I don't give a shit about your wife!"

"Well, her name happens to be Beth and I guess I do..." he heard himself say and felt stunned that he really meant it.

Simone spat at him. She spread her arms, looking down over her strong, young, wicked beauty.

"Look at me!" she said, her voice straining to command. "Do you see this? Do you see what I am?"

"Yes, I do," Jed said, with tears of empathy replacing his desire. Simone sucked in a desperate breath of pride and grabbed her panties off the floor.

"You do..." she retorted in mock disgust. She eyed his cock, now resting limp over his boxers.

"And look at you...how weak. You are weak... and old..." She snarled up, ferocious, waiting for a response so she could attack and wound more but Jed refrained. How could he try to make her understand he was free now, simply free? She would take that as an insult so he chose not to answer.

"Ha!" she said, triumphantly. "You are!" she said. "And you are scared of me."

"I'm not."

"Then fuck me..." she said, teeth clenched, eyes fixated, glaring, filled to the brim until she screamed, blood-curdling with all she had left. "You piece of shit, man! Fuck me!"

She kicked out at his face with her boot but Jed caught her leg and she tumbled to the floor, where she began to whimper and shake. She crawled back to the futon and curled up next to him.

"Hold me, please just hold me."

Jed put his arms around her and held her as she began to sob and sob and sob. She abruptly stopped, grabbed his soft cock, squeezed it and swatted it with her hand.

"Put that away, if you won't use it."

Jed complied. She laid her hands on his chest, pushed herself back up, swiped her dress off the floor and stepped into it, her body still smoking with heat.

"I don't need another Pappa," She said, wiping away the excess tears. "I'm going. Good luck with writing your book."

"Thank you," Jed said. "I need it."

"Maybe you need this too," she said. She reached into her purse and plucked out five hundred dollar bills. "I give it to support your art."

"Please, no..." Jed said.

"Why can't you say...please yes? she cried. "Why can't you say, please stay with me? Why?" She crunched the bills in a final fit of anger, flung them over her shoulder and walked out the door with a, "Fuck you!" slamming it behind. Jed looked at the clump of hundreds lying on the floor. His first thought was if she didn't crunch them and just tossed them in the air, it would have been more dramatic to see the bills individually float to the ground. He laughed out loud. He was relieved she had left and felt his breathing becoming steady and eased. There was a warmth within him that he couldn't understand but he didn't need to. It was there, strong and constant. He let his eyes fall closed and in moments, he drifted into a meditative state, a subtle smile of bliss forming across his face.