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Jeremy's Path

Charles Coiro

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Jeremy

1

Jeremy Hawks had always been interested in taking photographs. Since his 10th birthday, the day his uncle had given him the Canon F1 camera he bought in Japan during his military posting, he photographed everything he saw. In his mind, the objects of the world were a series of moments which the camera froze in time and space. There was no continuum, only instants that when joined together that appeared to be some sort of flow. He pestered his father and mother for money to buy film and any gifts he was given for his birthday or for Christmas always had to be for the small lab he was building or towards an enlarger, trays or chemicals he needed to buy. At first, his father felt that “at least the boy has a “stick-to-it” quality which says a lot for him but frankly, how is he going to make a living taking pictures. The other sticking point was that Jeremy spent far too much time in his lab. “We never see him except for meals and even then, he grabs a sandwich and a fruit and goes back into his lab.”

It was soon time for Jeremy to start thinking of going to college so that he could prepare himself for some type of career. There were very few colleges in Maine and Jeremy naturally figured that he would go to the Maine College of Art. When he told his father that he would like to go to study Photography, his father was flabbergasted. “Do you know what tuition is for one year at the Maine College of Art? It costs over \$28,000 a year. And on top of that, the average earnings for photographers goes between \$38,000 to about \$63,000; you would be paying \$112,000 for a 4 year course that could only bring you a pittance as a salary. I have been doing some checking up on Photographers earn, and I say, put your feet on the ground and go for something like Engineering where you could at least earn a good wage. I’m sorry son, but I cannot see your mother and me scrimping and saving for your education and then see everything go up in smoke because of a hobby you want to pursue. Photography is a hobby which you can still pursue in your spare time. It’s not a career.”

“But Dad, I’m not interested in engineering and I don’t feel that I’m capable of being an engineer. I want to spend my life doing something I want to do. I’m not basing my life on how much I can earn. Besides, you don’t even make \$38,000 a year and you and Mom seem to be getting by.”

“I’m sorry Son, but our saving for your education can not be wasted on learning to take pictures. You will have to think of some other career if we are to pay your tuition.”

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This then was to be his first test. If he gave in to his father's demands, he would be able to have his tuition paid for; but, at the price of losing his own conviction of what he not only wanted to do but what he felt he must do; and that was to take pictures as his father would say. He was now 18; had studied at the local high school; got decent but not great marks and was ready to go on in life. Maine was, in a sense a dead end. Why they had only graduated 8 students who were studying photography last year. So from that point of view, the college could not afford to hire any top-notch person to teach the subject.

In thinking things over, Jeremy decided that if he wanted to learn from the great photographers, he would go to where they were. New York, that would be his destination; but how to support himself, he wondered? If he found a job, it would only be some mundane job that did not require any special training and that would take him away from learning to be a photographer. His only experience was the experience of having taken hundreds if not thousands of pictures on his own. "Well," he thought, "that is how I will try to get a job at some photography studio." So with that strategy, Jeremy started to put together a portfolio of his work. He realized that no one was going to take the time to look through all his pictures, so he decided to choose 100 of what he considered to being successful pictures and put them in a portfolio. He then went to the public library and copied down the names of all the photography studios he could call upon when he went to look for work. Now, the only thing was to be able to raise enough money so that he could live on his own until he found work. He also looked in the "apartments for rent" ads and saw that it was going to take a great deal of money to just have a roof over his head. He would not look for anything but that would serve the basic needs; stove, refrigerator and space to set up his lab. He would sleep wherever there was room and bring only his tee shirts and underwear, a few pair of jeans and a sweater and his running shoes. He could go to a place where you could wash and dry your clothes and with tee shirts and jeans, he would not even have to iron them. He also decided to leave his enlarger and equipment at his father's house until he could send for them. After he was settled, he would be able to send for his equipment and he would be able to set up and photograph just as he was doing now but with the exception that he would be working with photographers who could guide him. Having then decided that this was to be his plan, he spoke with his mother and father and told them of his plans. He asked only that they "lend" him some money until he could settle himself. The money, he would pay back as soon as possible.

Of course, his mother cried and his father felt that while he had hoped to see his son study for a good paying career, he was also proud of him for having the gumption to plan his life as he saw fit. “I didn’t realize how set in your mind you were. Of course, they would lend him the amount he needed until he was on his own two feet. We are still a loving family and can only wish you well and let you know that we are here for you if you should need us.”

*

Jeremy arrived in New York in the loveliest month of June. He had taken a bus from Maine since that was the least expensive way to travel and found himself at the Portland bus destination at East 42nd Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues. His first objective was to refer to a “New Destiny” newspaper which he had written to from Maine that listed “affordable” apartments in various parts of the city. Realizing that he would be unable to just find a place immediately, he decided to check into a YMCA hotel so that he would at least have a place to sleep at night. The next days were spent in looking at apartments and finally Jeremy found a small studio apartment in the North Bronx. Its main drawback was that it was a long subway ride into Manhattan where he supposed most of the photographers were operating. Manhattan also was the most expensive so he opted for the longer ride. He spent his nights locating the possible photographers that he could visit. He had always been interested in “street photography” since it represented his ideas of what photography was; a brief stop in the continuum. He had a list of photographers who were known in the field as street photographers such as Eric Kim, John Free, Bruce Gilden, Martin Parr and Joel Meyerowitz. These photographers had studios as home bases in New York and they would most relate to his type of photography.

Joel

Jeremy Hawks must have been born under a lucky star. He had managed to obtain an appointment with Joel Meyerowitz. At that point in time, Meyerowitz’s assistant, a woman, had decided to marry and live in California with her new husband. After reading Jeremy’s letter, he invited Jeremy to visit him at his studio and to bring his portfolio so that Meyerowitz could see his work.

Jeremy was aflame in passion at being able to speak with this great photographer and at the same time overwhelmed with a great fear that he would be told that his work was passionless; without meaning and mundane. He suffered the doubts that many photographers felt after they had made their photographs and wondered what would be revealed to them after the film was developed. At the same time, he felt that fate had given him one opportunity and that he must do his utmost to take advantage of this interview.

When Jeremy was finally brought to Meyerowitz's studio, he saw a thin, bald man with piercing eyes sitting at a table with a Leica camera which he seemed to be studying. The man was not young, he appeared to be in his mid seventies but Jeremy could feel the energy that seemed to envelop the space itself. The face was animated and the brow wrinkled and when he spoke, he picked words out of the air to express himself.

"Why do you want to be a photographer?" he was asked. "What kind of thing are you looking for when you photograph? Wait, before you answer, let's take a look at your photos. The answers should come from what you photographed than from your lips. Sometimes, the words cannot honestly express what you are doing. Do you understand what I mean? For instance, what is a photograph in your thinking?"

Jeremy felt uncomfortable in trying to express what he felt. He hesitated for a few uncomfortable minutes and finally, said "I don't know if I am expressing myself because I have never really thought about it, but I guess that I see the photograph as stopping a moment in time. I don't seem to see that there is just one thing that moves continually but instead, a series of separate moments that move so quickly that they seem connected. In a sense, I freeze the moment with my camera and then look at each moment to see if they follow each other because of some force or is it just that I, or we, never realize that there has to be a stop and a start to everything that is happening; that the change from one thing to the other has to have a start or a beginning and an ending or a finish to complete itself."

Meyerowitz looked long and intently at the young man and asked. "How long have you been taking pictures?"

"I started when I was 10, that's 8 years ago. My uncle who had been in the Marines and was stationed in Japan and he bought the camera there. After he took some pictures, he lost interest and gave the camera to me. It was a Canon with an F-1 lens and so I was able to capture a lot of movement with the fast lens. I still use the camera and it was the one I used in taking the pictures in my portfolio." This last was mentioned because he wanted to have Meyerowitz's opinion of his work.

“What makes you think that time doesn’t just flow and that it is a series of events that move so fast that they seem like one,” asked Meyerowitz?

“I just figure that if something is going to change, it has to have a beginning and an end. I haven’t really figured what the interval of time is, but if each brief moment is different from the previous, it would have to stop and then start. So when I take my picture, I freeze that one infinitesimal moment. Everything outside my frame either does not exist or is at best waiting to become. I don’t know if I am expressing myself well; it’s more like just a feeling I have.”

“And tell me”, Meyerowitz asked, “do you use color or black and white?”

“To be honest, I am a little afraid to use color. I feel that the different colors have a force in themselves and that I am too inexperienced to take on such a challenge. In black and white, I have only the gradations of black to white to deal with.”

Joel Meyerowitz then asked to see Jeremy’s portfolio. He turned the pages slowly and Jeremy could tell that his photos were being looked at and not just seen. Meyerowitz made no comments and when he was finished, he turned to Jeremy and said. “I still use my 8 x 10 large frame camera at times. It also has a heavy tripod. I suppose that if my prior assistant could lug them, you could too.”

Jeremy had a job!! He was walking as though there was no firm ground beneath him. He was told to come to the studio at 7:30 AM. No salary was discussed for even if there was no money, Jeremy would have jumped at the chance to work for Joel Meyerowitz. This was the start of his career and a student couldn’t have a better teacher than Joel Meyerowitz.

2

June in New York is delightful, and to get up early was pleasurable. It was just that Joel Meyerowitz’s studio was located below Canal street. It was one whole floor of a converted loft building and the space was vast. Meyerowitz had a room set up for himself when it was too late to go to his home although he felt it was necessary to be with Sasha and Ariel, his children as much as possible in the evenings and even now, though they were adults, he felt it was necessary to be together as a family. The trip down from the North Bronx where Jeremy lived, sometimes took an 1 ½ hours to reach the studio and that was the only negative part. As soon as he had earned enough money, he would rent a small apartment closer to his work.

7

As the years flew by, Jeremy became more involved in the process of picture taking. Working with Joel, he was learning by osmosis since Joel kept up a continual chatter of speaking about any and all aspects of what he was concentrating on. Mostly though, this took place when they had studio shoots of fashion which Joel also had to involve himself in making a living. Shooting fashion allowed Joel the freedom he needed when filming.

Audrey

For fashion shooting, Joel had a young woman called Audrey Ellison who acted as a make-up consultant and who in general took care of the details. Audrey and Joel often went off together when Joel decided he needed some sort of special prop, or flowers or whatever else he felt he wanted to use. Joel had a group of antique shops that he dealt with and would rent the items that were a little unusual. Jeremy also learned a great deal working in the lab which Joel had had constructed. Sometimes Jeremy spent long hours working for the effects Joel wanted to achieve.

“Jeremy”, he said, “Spontaneity is essential but you also have to control what sneaks into your frame; something that should not have been there. In his enthusiasm, Joel often forgot to stop and have lunch and they would send out for a sandwich and coffee for him. When he realized that Jeremy and Audrey had not eaten, he would send them out to have a decent meal at one of the local restaurants. It was how Audrey and Jeremy became friends. They talked about work and how exciting it was to be learning so much from Joel. Often times, Jeremy said, “I never did get to go to college but where could I have learned more than with a master like Joel Meyerowitz. And then there were times when each spoke about personal things, like what were their expectations; what they wanted from life and how were they going to achieve the dreams they both had. They shared upbringing and family and what their childhood had been like. It was during one of these “let your hair down sessions” that Jeremy discovered that Audrey really wanted to be a fashion designer. She had taken the job with Joel because it brought her in contact with the fashion models who also worked for some of the top designers. Photographing them was as close as she had been able to come. It was also her wish to work in Hollywood where she hoped she could be under contract to one of

the major studios and design clothes where she could do research on fabrics, and ornamentation and styles of the different periods that the film was representing.

Audrey was born in Pennsylvania on a farm in which her father was among the farm hands who lived and worked on a large farm that raised mostly wheat. His days were long and his contact with his family was limited to greeting them after work; having dinner and going to bed by 9:30 PM. He usually left for work at 5:00 AM. Bruce Ellison was a quiet man who spoke little but he was also content. His manner was not cold but he appeared distant from his wife and Audrey. On Sunday, he liked going to church and to then sit in front of his television and watch some sport event. If his wife suggested that they go to a movie, he always said, I can't stand the smell of popcorn and people all seem to think nothing of yanking out their cell phones and talking as though they were alone and not in the theatre. Here, I can take off my shoes, put my feet up at home and sit in comfortable chair and take a little nap when it suits me. This is my reward for working a hard, long day.

With his lackadaisical attitude, he never was close to his daughter and the two stayed a respectable distance apart. He never inquired about what she was doing or what her goals in life or interests were and felt that a laissez-faire attitude was best for all concerned.

Audrey's mother, in a sense abandoned, spent most of her time with some of the other farmer's wives who all talked and gossiped about the wives who were not present. That left Audrey to chat and talk to two other girls who were 4 and 5 years younger than she was. The only subject they all were interested in was the Hollywood stars and they listened in awe at the stories Audrey made up to amuse them. It was not long after she turned 18 that Audrey decided to make her break from home. When she got to the railroad station, she found that she didn't have enough money to go to California what with her need to buy food so she settled on going to New York instead.

Audrey was not a beautiful girl as the description of beauty goes but she had a quality of uniqueness that made her different – almost in opposition to beauty. Everyone always remarked that she had an interesting look – a look that sometimes was stronger than the vapidness of a merely symmetrical beauty of so many models who seemed to have no quality or sense of character. Audrey had been working for a cosmetician and had delivered some cosmetics to Joel's studio when he spotted her and just on a whim, asked her to model a piece of jewelry he was photographing. Her straightforward way interested Joel who then asked that she work at his studio working on the cosmetic affects he sometimes used on his models

and as his helper or “general factotum” since there was always something different for her to do.

With Audrey now working close to Joel and Jeremy found that the long hours they shared in the studio, both felt more comfortable with the other. Audrey had no reason to impress Jeremy and Jeremy felt the same so that Jeremy was used to seeing Audrey in all her naturalness, i.e., she did not like wearing make-up or having her dine in any special way. Usually, for conveniences sake, she just drew her hair back so that it was not falling in her eyes. And with clothing too, she often found herself kneeling or bending while she did some task and for comfort, she wore jeans and a pullover sweater. She wore no jewelry or perfume but was always clean. Jeremy saw her as a natural, wholesome female with whom with whom he could talk to about anything.

With Audrey, she saw Jeremy in the same clothes each day. His preferences were a tennis type shirt and jeans with some type of running shoes which didn't have to be polished. Jeremy had one suit, a blue and a white shirt; two neckties and one pair of black, leather shoes in case he needed to be “dressed up”.

Before starting work in the morning, Joel asked Audrey to pick up ½ dozen donuts from “Dunkin Donuts” and with the office coffee pot bubbling, they had their breakfast as they started to do their daily work. This schedule had the effect of isolating them from others and was probably the reason that Jeremy and Audrey bonded so deeply.

One day, Joel let out a cry of surprise and joy. Both Jeremy and Audrey looked up from their work surprised. Joel was not a silent person and he talked incessantly while he was working . I want you two to be first to know, I have been selected by the International Photography Awards to photograph images of the countryside and the people of Tuscany, Italy. Maggie Barrett will write the copy accompanying the photos and I will probably be away for 1 ½ to 2 years. I just received the news and I will barely have time to get my papers in order and so I will not have the time to cover my commitments. Jeremy, I am going to leave covering my appointments to you. We have worked together now for a number of years and I have complete trust in your abilities to cover for me. I am also going to ask that you live here in the studio and in addition to covering my appointments, to pay the rent, utility bills and keeping the plants watered and cared for. My son will be calling you every few days and he will know how to get in touch with me if some emergency comes up. He will also be able to cover any expenses.

Turning to Audrey, he said, “Audrey, I’m sorry but I won’t have anything for you to do. I’ll pay you a month’s salary so that you can look for another job. If you want to continue working with me after I am back, consider the job yours, but as you can see, I will have nothing for you to do.”

“Oh yes, Jeremy, I have also been asked by International Photography Awards to be one of the judges for a very important competition on judging the works of several outstanding, young photographers. The results of the competition will be traveling around to all the most important museums in America and in Europe. I’ll leave the letter in my in-box stating all the requirements. I think you should seriously consider try for it.” Dashing off with a hug for both and he was gone.

Jeremy turned to a surprised Audrey and asked, “Wow, that was fast. What will you be doing? Have you any leads for a job?”

“Not at the moment since this is all happening so fast. But I understand Joel, since I was working directly with him, my work was tied into what he had to do. And since he is going to be away for two years or so, what would I do? I am going to get in touch with some friends I had at my last job; the cosmetic firm. They often hear of things, we’ll just see.”

“Look”, Jeremy said, “Joel didn’t say that I had to live in the studio alone. Why not cut your major expense which is your apartment and come stay with me? I will feel isolated in this vast space when I am not working and you could have the pressure taken off you until you find work. For me, I think you know that I would really like it if you were here. If you are working someplace and I am here, we would hardly ever get to see each other. At least consider it, it is at least an option.”

“Thanks Jeremy, I just don’t want you to get in trouble with Joel.”

“You were here, did Joel even mention that I couldn’t have someone here with me?”

“Well, OK, but I think you should mention the fact to Joel or his son, like I said, I don’t want to get you in any sort of trouble.”

Audrey moved in; she had very few belongings, even less that Jeremy who had his darkroom, chemicals, paper, enlarger etc. at his place uptown. Jeremy chose a little used space in the vast studio and stored his things there. With Joel’s darkroom, he would have ample space and the use of the equipment.

One afternoon, Audrey came back to the studio with good news. She had been directed to a good job with highly successful publicity firm whose clients included many people in show business and in the movie industry. Audrey felt that this was a step closer to getting a connection to work at one of the big studios in Hollywood. It was just a dream but who knew, maybe fate had something to do with it. The man she worked for was named Blaire Davis. He was a highly successful Black man who had contacts with the many Black performers and singers in the industry. Audrey almost took on the role she had with Joel in that she kept track of the many conversations and meetings that Blaire Davis was involved in. She reminded him of things that were sometimes agreed to verbally with some of his clients. In a way, she became indispensable to him. Their late nights working generally led up to a late dinner together at some open all night diner where he had a fried egg sandwich and a glass of milk. He never drank but on occasion and depending in where they were dining, he ordered a light, dry white wine, usually a Pinot Gris. Getting away from business was also part of the deal. They worked with numbers and contracts all day long and it was a relief to turn the conversation to other things. It was at one point in time, after a few glasses of wine Blaire started to talk of his personal life.

He had been married for 16 years to a Black lawyer, Lanette Grover and they had a 17 year old daughter together. With the woman pregnant, they decided to marry even though were not really in love. It was during a time when Blaire had been drinking a great deal and on that occasion, did not use any form of protection. They got along well together until Lanette discovered that his late night business dealings also included a series of women that were not connected to business. Lanette was unforgiving and from that time her trust and confidence and finally in their marriage dissolved; It destroyed the marriage. They did not divorce with Lanette constantly reminding him that she was sure to be awarded everything they owned if she did agree to a divorce. "The more successful you become, the more you will have to pay. Lanette also turned their daughter from him and so the family was a family in name only.

If Lanette visited the office for any reason, (usually it was for money), she generally barged into his office despite his secretary's plea that he was with an important client. The office personnel disliked her for her unfriendliness and her dismissing attitude towards them.

This was the unhappy topic that Blaire finally confided to Audrey. Audrey was dismayed to see her boss with tears in his eyes as he unfolded the tragic events of his life. In sympathy, she embraced him mainly to assuage his anguish. The embrace was longer than need be and she allowed him to kiss her. As the saying goes, one thing led to another and Audrey had feelings she never had before. Perhaps it was the fact that a sort of taboo was exciting since she had

never considered herself so intimately with a Black man but also the things he did to her and the things he urged she do to him. This was not a shy, diffident Jeremy fumbling with her in the dark; too timid to even show his face; no this was an awakening of primal feelings that she never imagined were in her. She delighted in giving in to his most outrageous demands ; and she loved them.

Still, Audrey was in love with Jeremy. Nothing could dislodge her faith and admiration for what Jeremy stood for. Her expressions of sympathy for Blair had led to lustful outbursts of a visceral, almost otherworldly that were a complete surprise to her. If she had to choose, it would be to remain with Jeremy, Besides, Blair would never divorce his wife and lose all that he had developed in his business and his success.

With her certainty of remaining with Jeremy, she also thought that she should be completely open with him ; that there should not be anything that one could not divulge to a loved partner. Unfortunately, Audrey did not take into consideration that the voice says one thing but the brain seems never to forget. Luckily, she waited before being so open with Jeremy. Her involvement with Blaire however ended soon after. After repeated breaking of dates and excuses of his being tired or of his need to get back home so that he could be fresh the next morning, she soon discovered that he was involved with two other women, she decided that she no longer wanted to work with Blaire and be another of his harem. Blaire's wife was right after all.

In the meantime, Jeremy was involved with completing the requirements for the competition. While Jeremy had great interest in street photography, he felt that the pictures taken (especially in New York or any large City,) a dominant factor was overlooked, and that was the forms of the buildings and streets themselves. Strong vertical and horizontal forms including the forceful diagonal light which was cast when the sun struck the strong solid buildings. He had been experimenting with ways to subtly introduce this influence in his photos. He told no one of his investigations; not even Joel or Audrey, but the studying and experimenting brought him exciting results which he felt brought more of a force to the photo and gave vitality to the mighty vertical, horizontal and diagonal forms which did not impinge on the street action. The photo itself was not affected but were a strong influence; an unseen force that occurred without taking away from the subject matter being photographed.

After he had selected and printed a number of the photos he selected the five best for submission. The photos and application were delivered and he was given a number by which his work could be identified. Any identification would automatically force any of the judges to recuse himself from being a judge because of a possible conflict of interest. He was given

a date on which he was asked to report to the receptionist; give his number and she would inform him whether as to whether he was selected as one of the five finalists.

Meanwhile, Joel had telephoned that he had finished his work and that Jeremy could expect him within the month. His arrival would precede the competition and Joel studiously avoided any mention of the competition with Jeremy.

Jeremy informed Audrey of Joel's imminent return and suggested to her that she find an apartment which both of them could share. He would no longer be able to stay in Joel's studio and since both would be without a place to stay, they decided to live together. Audrey had forestalled any mention of Blair and she would tell Jeremy everything once they were settled in their new apartment; she wanted to start fresh and open. When Joel returned, he was caught up in the hundreds of things that he had to attend to personally. He rehired Audrey and things started to take a semblance of what they were before.

*

With Audrey finally settled again with her return to Joel's studio, she decided to do the "honest thing" and tell Jeremy of her time with Blair. In her own mind, this "confession" would expiate her of all her "sins" and her conscience would be clear.

One night after a busy day at the studio, she mentioned to Jeremy that she wished to talk to him about something which had been bothering her and for which she felt uneasy. She asked that they go to bed early; something that she had never asked before. She also asked that they leave the lights on. Jeremy understood that this was an invitation to make love. After they had finished she told Jeremy of her affair with Blaire, her ex-employer.

"I waited until we made love thinking that perhaps my fanaticizing would result in something, but no. Do you realize that I have never had a climax with you? I was content with things as they were since you were the first man I made love to. But circumstances occurred plus my being off guard plus my trying to ease what I thought was Blaire's pain and I agreed to make love to him. When it happened, I was not prepared to find myself enveloped in feelings I had never had before; feelings that I had never even suspected were in me. All at once, I became freed from my own imaginings. Blaire did things to me and asked me to do things that I would never even imagined and to be open and honest, I loved everything that was being done to me or doing what I was told to do.

I know this sounds unbelievable, but Jeremy, it is you that I love. The other was not love, it was something outside of me and yet, I was able to see for the first time an aspect of

myself that was savage or vestigial or primordial; something I did not recognize that was within me and perhaps was even vital.”

Jeremy listened in silence. The words had the effect of his being pummeled by forces that he did not suspect existed. He immediately felt himself inadequate and a failure at that most intimate aspect of human compatibility. Was she telling Jeremy that she loved him but needed the sexuality that it appears he cannot provide? Did she mean that she loves me but must have sex elsewhere?

“What are you trying to tell me,” he asked? Tell me what I must do to give you those same feelings. What were the things he did so that I can learn how to satisfy you?”

“Jeremy, I would be too embarrassed to tell you and as to learning what to do, I know that you would not look kindly at the things he did and made me do. It is simply something you either have or you don’t.”

“Why are you telling me these things? Wouldn’t it have been better to remain silent? What did you think my reactions would be?”

“Jeremy, if I didn’t love you I would have remained silent. But if I am to have a life with you, I wanted to let you see all of me. I want to be open and honest with you. Is that wrong? I am not saying that I will go sneaking off to have sex; no, that part of me I would suppress but I had to tell you everything.”

“Audrey, I am too confused to answer. Why don’t we just live with things and see whether I can be as big as you in accepting your confession as you were in making it. You know, he said, “Love is not a four letter word.”

Saying that, Jeremy turned off the light and tried to sleep.

*

The competition was to be judged the following week. He told Joel only that he had entered the competition. He did not say that he had been selected as one of the five finalists. He said no more knowing that if Joel felt a bias towards his photos he would immediately recuse himself. On the day of the choosing of the winner, he told Joel that he had an important errand to attend to. He left the studio and returned to the apartment that he shared with Audrey. There he changed into his one suit, his blue shirt and his now polished leather shoes.

When he arrived at the auditorium where the photos were display, he sat in an obscure area so as not to be seen. The works of the five finalists were on display and there were many people examining and observing the photographs. Jeremy tried to see whether people stopped and looked at his works and he would have loved to hear their comments. Then everyone was asked to return to their seats and the four judges appeared. There was a short speech by the Society president and the judging then commenced. Jeremy, still more or less hidden watched as the judges pointed out things in the photos or discussed some merit in the work being presented. He was both pleased and fearful when the judges gathered at his photos and made comments. Sometimes, the judges would pass his entry and then go back to look at something more carefully. It took about an hour to judge and choose a winner. But finally, the announcement was made and the judges called on the photographer by his number. Jeremy was the winner. He greeted an astounded Joel; posed for numerous photos and proudly and timidly gave a short speech of thanks to the Society and judges. A small reception was held where they served wine and Hor d'oeuvres.

After the judging, Joel and Jeremy left together to drink a celebratory glass of champagne. It was during this private talk that Jeremy said that he had a cousin coming down from Maine and that this cousin had asked Jeremy to find a "friend" for him that could be his companion when he visited some of the well known places in New York; see some Broadway shows and dine at a few really nice restaurants. Jeremy indicated that the cousin had recently broken off with a girl he was going to marry and who he was trying to forget his sadness. It seems that his girlfriend was having sex with someone else.

"Joel," he said, "I don't know any girls outside of Audrey and she doesn't have any friends she can recommend. Where can my cousin find some girl that that is a little less uptight than the girls from a small town in Maine without resorting to a girl in the streets"

Joel indicated that he would not be able to help him too much since he didn't have any dealings with "as you say" girls that are less uptight. Probably, if I was looking to meet some girl I might go to a bar in a decent hotel. Many times there are women who are a little friendly and a girl working the streets would be just another prostitute working for some pimp.

" I guess I will just tell him I can't help him and that he will have to work the "date" out himself."

"In matters of this kind, I recommend you don't get involved", said Joel. "Too often they can boomerang right back at you."

Simone

“Well” he thought, “At least I have a lead and frankly, you wouldn’t find too many girls at bars, especially young one. The bartender would ask them to leave or he might be serving someone underage and get in trouble. I would find a woman who was not so young but who might have a different kind of experience. After all, I’m looking for a woman who can advise me. “

Jeremy looked in the telephone directories and just went into nicer neighborhoods where some decent hotel was located. After selecting one that seemed ideal; not crowded, some tables, low lighting he made his way into the bar. It happened that he arrived rather late and the bar was empty except for two men sitting at the other end of the bar, nursing some drinks .

After Jeremy sat at the bar for a while, he figured it was probably too late to find a woman. The majority would have already made their contacts and have concluded their business for the night He decided to finish his drink and go home. It was almost at that moment when a woman in her late twenties or early thirties came through the door. At first, she seemed to be scanning the bar, perhaps looking for some man sitting alone. Then as she seemed to be determined to leave, she spotted Jeremy sitting behind a column. Casually, she made her way to the bar and sat one stool away from Jeremy. Placing her coat and handbag on the stool that separated hers from Jeremy, she asked “is anyone was sitting at this stool?”. She ordered an aperitif , lighted a cigarette and completely ignored Jeremy. She drank her aperitif almost in one draft as though she needed the effect of the liquor. It was then that Jeremy, taking a sidelong glance noticed that she had almost finished her aperitif. Glancing over, he said, “I was just about to order another drink for myself, can I offer you a refill?”

Slowly turning her head towards him, she sized up Jeremy as only the way woman can and said, “Thanks.” She did not use this breaking of the ice as an excuse for paying attention or starting a conversation for she returned to finishing off her drink. But Jeremy noticed, however, that she was looking at him through the blue mirror behind the bar. When her new drink was served, she looked at Jeremy and raised her glass in a toast and said, “Could we have this drink at one of the booths. I really need lie back?”

Of the booths, he noticed that she selected one that was more hidden than the others.

“Good”, thought, “at least I can talk to her privately. For Jeremy, he was sure she was a prostitute but he admitted to himself, “she sure is a pretty lady and her figure is nothing to complain about.”

Seated with their fresh drinks before them, the woman said, “My name is Simone Cosnard and whom do I have the pleasure of meeting?”

Jeremy noticed the soft French accent and replied.

“My name is Jeremy Hawk and I am a photographer.” He thought it prudent not to ask what she did.

“Oh, how thrilling! Do you take pictures of weddings and other social events?”

“No, I take pictures of what I see in the streets and also, pictures of models and of things a manufacturer wants to print in a magazine.”

“When you said models, I first thought you took pictures of models without clothes.”

“No, those are photographers who take only special pictures and videos and they probably make a lot more money than photographers who take pictures in the streets as an art.”

“I know those models also make a lot of money too.”

“What was it you wanted of me? She asked. “ Maybe we can help each other out. I need some photographs that I can show the producers of those shows where the model can make a lot of money and you need advice. Why don’t we just exchange our experiences so that we both gain? Why **don’t** we have one more drink so that we can know each other a little bit?”

“Getting back to what I wanted to talk to you about is not easy for me, but for some reason, I feel I can really be open with you and not feel ashamed. You see, Simone, (using her name for the first time) my problem is this:

I am in love with a woman called Audrey. Audrey and I work at the same photography studio. Before working together, she worked in a well known Publicity office for a short time. Later, she returned to

work at the photography studio and our being together so much led us to become good friends. As time went by, I spent many nights in her apartment after we worked late since my apartment required at least 1 ½ hours to get home. And so, I found it convenient to stay at Audrey’s place. Anyway, we fell in love and had sex together. For me, it was beautiful since Audrey was the first woman I was ever intimate with. But I was, and still am very shy. We

never really saw each other naked since we both changed into our pajamas and got ready for bed in the bathroom. So with the lights out, I didn't feel too awkward.

As I said before, Audrey had a job at a Publicity firm that was headed by an important man in the Black movement. Audrey had been hired as his assistant and that brought them together a great deal of the time. Well, in spite of being commercially successful, her boss had a bad relationship with his wife and daughter. Since Audrey and her boss worked late many times, he told the story about how he and his wife still lived together but were distant from each other. He said his wife had turned his daughter against him as well, He always ate his breakfast and dinner alone and neither of the two ever talked to him nor greeted him in the morning. Telling these things to Audrey, he broke down and with tears in his eyes, asked Audrey to forgive his bringing his personal affairs into her life. Audrey, seeing him so miserable, embraced him in sympathy and as the saying goes, "one thing led to another", and she had sex with him. It seems she completely lost her head. The fact that he was black and sort of taboo was one factor but he also did and asked her to do things which she said were too embarrassing to tell me. She only said that she learned about the depth and strength of her sexuality with him, a sense of savage, primordial, vestigial feeling that she was unaware existed in her. When I asked what he had done and/or made her do, so that I could learn, she only shook her head and said, "It's like music or rhythm, it's a force that you can't control. Either you have it or you don't."

She and I still have sex together on occasion but I could sense it was just boring for her. That was when I decided to find someone with experience who could tell me where I had gone wrong. I was uncertain as to whom I might ask until I approached my boss and asked him. He suggested that I try to find a decent hotel with a bar in a nice neighborhood and see if there were any woman there who might help. He warned me not to go to any of the girls on the streets. He said that they were probably working for a pimp and would not have the sensitivity to advise me. The fact that I met you in a bar; someone so beautiful and refined looking was something I couldn't imagine and I still can't. With all your manners and sophistication, how is it you chose to be an escort?"

"Thank you for your sweet words but I am not an escort. I p[refer to face the truth and say shat I really am and that is a whore. No matter how you twist the words around, it adds up to the same thing."

"Ever since I was 12 years old, I lost the sense of pride in myself. Would you like to her about how I came to be the shameful word of whore? I have never told anybody this story. It's funny, when you told me that you found it easy to talk to me, I realized I felt the same way.

Only one other man in my life made me feel that I had worth and I lost him four years ago. I honestly tried to live a decent life but without even A High School diploma, I couldn't get any kind of a job. Well, getting back to how and why my path led me to where I am ; it all started when my father died when (was 12 years old. My Dad owned a company that he started and developed with his own two hands. After he died, my mother had no way of continuing with the company so she asked my Father's brother to take over the operation. My Uncle was a widower and had two children, Denny who was only 8 and his sister Jane who no longer lived at home. My Uncle and Denny slept downstairs in a room behind the kitchen which was downstairs.

One day, my Mother was going to visit my Uncle's father so that Denny could know his Grandfather. Since they lived in another State, she planned on sending a few days away. She had pre-pared some casseroles for us so that we would not have to cook dinner. Anyway, one of the casseroles was a vegetable meal which I always hated.

That afternoon, it was a Saturday, and my Uncle only worked half a day. When he arrived home, he asked what was on the menu for us to eat. I told him it was a vegetable casserole. He wrinkled his nose to show he was not in favor of the dish, he winked at me and said in a secretive voice, "What do you say to going downtown and having a nice big pizza and maybe a movie?"

"Well," I was delighted and went upstairs to change my clothes. Instead of the jeans which I usually wore, I put one of my miniskirts which were fashionable with all my friends. He said, "I like your dress; jeans always hide a woman's best feature; her legs. In his hand, he was holding a plastic bag.. I looked questioningly and he again said in his whispered voice, "We wouldn't want your Mom to know that we didn't like her cooking, so we will have to dispose of the evidence. Only one thing though, we will have to keep this as our secret. "

"When I think back at that simple idea of having a secret from my Mom, I remember that it was only slightly naughty but at the same time it was sort of exciting too. It was like doing something that you did without permission and all on your own. I guess it was a first step of independence. But my Uncle was clever, he somehow knew that if I accepted simple secrets, I would also accept more serious secrets.

My Uncle and I got into the car, drove downtown and had a huge pizza with everything on it. The next step was to go see a terrific movie, a movie that I could only see if accompanied by an adult. He bought me a great big canister of popcorn.

After the movie, it was just starting to turn to dusk. He then asked me, “Well what will it be, straight home or a stop at the malt shop for a great big ice cream Sunday with all the fixings; ice cream, nuts, syrup, and a big dollop of whipped cream and finally, topped with a delicious red cherry. How does that tempt you?”

“That sounds super but we will have to share another secret since my Mom has told me that I must stay off all sweets until I lose a few pounds. No telling her OK? But since you are being so nice to me, I will give you my cherry; would you like that?”

He then said, “Oh, you can never know how much I would like that.”

I thought, “What a strange answer” but I put it out of my mind as not worth wondering about.

When we left the ice cream parlor, the evening was just setting in and you had to use your headlights to see to drive. When we got to the car, he said, “I have one more surprise for you. I want you to drive the car home.”

“Me”, I screamed, “Will you really let drive the car? But I can’t reach the pedals and it’s getting dark outside.”

“I’ll work the pedals and you can steer sitting on my lap. Would you like that?”

Yes, I almost shouted, Wait till I tell Denny, he will be busting with envy.”

“No”, he said, this will be another secret between just the two of us. Do you promise not to say anything, especially to your Mom who would give me the devil for letting you steer.”

“But isn’t it getting to be too dark?”

“A little, but I wouldn’t want the police or anybody else to you steering; it’s against the law and we could both get into a lot of trouble.”

We started driving with me sitting in my Uncle’s lap. My mind was on steering and would have preferred it if it was not so dark. After settling down a bit, I became aware of my Uncle’s hand caressing my chest and thighs. I looked at him pointedly and said, “Uncle”!! in a surprised and accusatory way.

“What’s the matter sweetheart? You know I really love you and please don’t ask me to stop touching you. I’m not hurting you and it feels so beautiful. Am I hurting you in any way?”

“No”, I answered but should you be touching me like that?”

“Does it make you feel unpleasant? I thought you might like my touching you.”

“Well it doesn’t make me feel bad and some of it feels warm and nice.” In my mind, I thought, “Maybe I can get him to buy me a present “, so I said, ”If I let you touch me, will you buy me a present?”

“Christmas time will be here in three months, what if I buy you something; anything you like, would it be alright to touch you and also to kiss you?”

“I’m not so good at kissing, but I guess it’s alright, if you teach me what to do.”

“ I will teach you everything and be very gentle, would you like that?”

“Yes, that will be ok. What will you buy me?”

“Like I said anything you want.”

“Will you buy me a new bicycle – a mountain bike?”

“Yes, a new mountain bike will be under the tree Christmas morning. But you have to remember, this has to be our biggest secret. You must promise not to tell even your best girlfriend. It must just be between the two of us.

“But when will I see you, there is always someone at home?”

“I’ll work all that out so don’t you worry.” Saying that, he let his hand wander under her skirt and gently caressed her vagina.

“Does it feel alright touching you there?”

“Yes, I’m just a little scared; please be patient with me.”

“Yes, my sweetheart, I’ll be very, very patient with you. But don’t forget, don’t tell anyone, OK?”

“I won’t tell anybody, it will be just our secret.”

*

“Well, I got my bicycle and found that I didn’t mind my time with my Uncle. Maybe a big part of it was that it was a secret and I really felt grown up. While I didn’t tell anybody

about my Uncle, I did ask my girlfriend what it was like “ going all the way” since she and her 14 year old boyfriend had been making love for over a year. “

The girlfriend said it was the most exciting thing she ever did and she loved it.

“The only thing though, is that you make sure you protect yourself. Don’t leave it up to the guy. I’m on “the Pill” and so that takes a great part of the worry away. I have someone who buys me the pills since the drugstore would not sell them to me. So if you need them, I can get them for you but it will cost a little more.”

I said, ” money will not be a problem.”

“He kept giving me little presents or money since he couldn’t give me anything that my Mother would notice. Well I kept seeing my Uncle for the next three years. Sometimes we had a secret signal so that I would sneak downstairs and we would go to his room, Other times, he picked me up after school and took me to some small motel away from the town. And then, there was Sunday. My Mother went to church and usually stayed there for two hours. She usually took Denny with her .Then we just stayed at home and had a good time.”:

After a while though, he stopped buying me presents and had all kinds of excuses like he was too busy or that he was looking for something really special but for me, it was all talk. When I turned 15, I told my Mother that I had decided to go to New York City and find a job. I told her I didn’t want to live at home anymore. I sensed that she knew my Uncle was molesting me but if he left, who would run the business? She also knew that if I was not at home, he couldn’t touch me. It was a hard decision for her; keep your daughter at home knowing that her Uncle was molesting her or let her go to the City and try to work out things for herself.”

“Anyway, I went to the City. Guys were always making passes at me so I knew I was attractive, I also didn’t have to worry about losing my virginity. So why not? I let some guy pick me up; at least he was clean looking. One hour with him and I made enough to rent a decent room for the night; eat at a restaurant or see a movie. It was easier than working 8 hours at some boring job. It didn’t take me long to feel comfortable with my ‘work’ .“

“Look”, said Simone, “It’s getting late, why don’t we order one more drink and set up a time where we can meet. My apartment is convenient, why don’t we meet there say this coming Friday. I’ll make you a nice, hearty French peasant meal called Cassoulet, You can bring the wine. Come about 6:00 PM.

“What kind of wine would I buy?”, he asked.

“Oh, just ask the wine store what would go well with a Cassoulet .

That Friday, Jeremy told Joel that he had an important thing to do and had to leave early. Jeremy went to the apartment, bathed and put on his one suit, white shirt and his tie and polished his shoes. As he left, he stopped at the building office and asked where could he find a wine shop in the area. At the shop, he confusedly looked at all the bottles with foreign names and finally decided he would ask the shop owner which wine would go with a Cassoulet; a French peasant meal.”

“I have just the wine for you; it’s a French import and has been reduced in price by 40%. You can’t go wrong with this. It’s a Chateuneuf-Du-Pape and it’s more than 10 years old. Your dinner hostess will really appreciate your fine taste. Shall I wrap up a bottle for you?”

“Better wrap up two bottles”, he replied. “This might be a long night.” he thought.

Arriving at Simone’s apartment, he was met by Simone dressed in a sheer dressing gown, The apartment was glowing softly by many candles and the fragrance of incense wafted through the rooms. Jeremy was unused to such embellishment not after his apartment with its basic, utilitarian furnishings that just made do. He thought, “She must make a great deal of money at what she does. I’m glad we made a deal to exchange services.”

Sitting close to him on the sofa, she said, “Let me finish my story and how it came to be the reason for our meeting each other. You remember that I told you of my Uncle’s behavior towards me? Well after I got to the City, I could not find any type of work. “Too young” they said or “you will need at least a High School diploma.”

“ So I thought, maybe I should try to study for my diploma at night, but it would have taken me years since at night, you can only study 2 courses per semester. It was too long a time to get what? Some file clerks job? So, I was without a job, and rather than return to my home and my uncle, I simply did what a great number of girls do and slept with men for money, It seems that was the only thing that didn’t require a High School diploma. At least, I thought, I’m free but it seems that we are never completely free. We must always have a base of security from which we can try our wings, but I had none.”

“But wasn’t that dangerous? How could you know what type of person it was? There are many strange men in the world.”

“I guess I was lucky because one rainy night, I got caught in the rain. The only protection I could find was a hotel, so I went in and sat at the bar. When the bartender asked me what I wanted to drink, I panicked since I had never taken a drink before. Then I

remembered some female friends talking about what they liked to drink. Most of them did not like the taste of whiskey and said, “I always order a “Carstairs and Coke”; the coke always hides the taste of whiskey.”

“The bartender looked At me and knew I was under 18 even though I wore my hair in an upsweep in order to look older. Then he said, “Why don’t we make that a coke with lemon. You know, if it wasn’t raining so hard, I would ask you to leave. If I’m caught serving you liquor, I could get in a pack of trouble.”

“Pretty soon, a man sat two seats away from me and I could feel his eyes on me. Just then, the bartender wrote me a note on a napkin telling me to avoid the man. He was known to be very rough on women. ‘Leave now ’! He wrote, so I left as soon as I could. The bartender then said, “the coke is on the house.”

“It was still pouring down rain and since it was a long wait for the bus, I decided to sit in the lobby until the rain let up a little. I sat as far away from the front desks I knew they would ask me to leave. I must have fallen asleep because I saw the bartender leaving for the night. I went up to him t9o thank him for his warning me about the guy but also want to thank you for letting me stay at the bar. You must have known I was not 18.”

“Look”, he said, it’s none of my business what you do to your life but you don’t have enough experience to spot these creeps. Like I said, your business is your business and I try never to interfere, but if you come to my bar, I’m going to put you at a table. I have my regular customers who over the years have become good acquaintances, almost friends in that they have me, a stranger to tell their troubles to; I’m not only convenient but I ‘m also anonymous. Each has his reasons for spending his night in a bar instead of going home. Most of them are just lonely and would like to have a female for company. If you like, and if you want, I can steer then to your table and after that, it’s your party. I’m just doing this to keep you off the streets.”

“If you do send me any guys, I can offer you part of my take”, I said.

“Forget about it, I’m no pimp, I’m just doing this because I hate to see a pretty, young girl go to the dogs before she has had a chance to know a normal life.”

“He was the first decent human being I met who didn’t want something in return. I kept going to the bar until the hotel manager asked about me and in order not to get the bartender in trouble, but after that, I always sat at a bar in a decent hotel. Many of the men I

met became steady clients. At least that kept me from all the rough trade that was on the streets. That was the way I earned my living for the next 4 years.”

Then, by chance I went into that hotel bar and there I met you. I thought, he is so young but even the young have needs. How old are you anyway? I never asked because it was not important.”

“I’m 28”, replied Jeremy.

“Why I am only three years older than you. I wonder why I thought you were so much younger? Maybe I sensed a sort of innocence. That was what Damien said to me, even knowing that I was a woman you could pay for, he detected an innocence in me. How old is your girlfriend?”

“She is one year older than me, she is 29.”

“Why we could almost be brother and sisters. You know, I had almost forgotten that you came to me to ask me to show you how you could give pleasure to your girlfriend. It’s almost as though I was going through the same things that I went through when I met Damien. It’s strange, he was the first man I wanted to give myself to and now, I meet you and I feel the same need to give myself to you; not my services because you can find thousands of woman for that.”

On Friday, a somewhat diffident Jeremy approached Simone’s apartment. He noticed that it was not in a fashionable area and only a little less run down than his own neighborhood. When he arrived, Simone, was dressed in a loose robe that enhanced her already desirable body. They sat and talked for a while and then Simone asked, “Shouldn’t we start on the photographs, it could take some time? Wait here while I want to go into my bedroom and change.”

Simone came out wearing the most transparent negligee. The softness of the silk fell in soft folds withholding nothing.

“Do you want me to pose nude first and then with something sexy? Remember, I’m not interviewing for a Miss America shoot. The guys who are interviewing want to see how sexy a woman can be and how sexy they will make some viewer feel. I leave it to you to make me somebody you can take home to mother but at the same time, somebody dad would leave home for.”

For the first five minutes, Jeremy saw a sexy desirable woman. After that, he saw her only as a composition of masses; of forms and shadows that combined desirability and admiration. After three hours of intense work, both were ready for a rest and a break.

“Why don’t you take a nice shower?, I will leave a terrycloth robe for you. In the meantime, leave your shirt and shorts and I will put them in the washing machine. In a couple of hours you will at least have some clean clothes to wear.”

The shower was just what he needed. His mind was still on his work and he marveled at what possibilities there were in photographing that most wonderful form, the human body. Entering the living room, Simone had set out two wine glasses. She asked Jeremy to pour out some wine, I think it has had enough time to breathe. You bought a real treat, Chateauneuf-Du-Pape and it’s 10 years old!” You shouldn’t have spent so much but now that we have it, I’m going to enjoy it. I’ll just put the Cassoulet to heat and in the meantime, I’ll take a shower. Make yourself at home.”

Jeremy, covered in his terrycloth robe looked at himself in the mirror. How did all this happen? Here I am in an attractive woman’s apartment after seeing her nude in every possible position and pose and now I am going to have dinner and an intimate talk. If someone would have asked me “where do you think you will find yourself on Friday at 8:00 PM? My answer would have been, “Working in the studio or working in my home darkroom; but here, never?”

Seated in the living room, Jeremy could see the table set in the dining room complete with two candles and place settings., He wondered whether he would like what she was serving. He was not used to fancy sounding French food although Simone did say it was a peasant dish. Jeremy generally had a “hero” sandwich sent in with a cup of coffee and a piece of pie. He never ate breakfast at home but generally ate a few of the donuts Audrey bought for the studio. “Well, you never know , I might even become a gourmet if I become involved with her. I’m sure those peasants don’t drink 32 dollar bottles of wine. “

Just then, Simone came out of the bathroom. She had on a fragrance that was fresh and beautiful. She wore a short, “baby doll” nightgown with a matching pair of “mule” slippers. “He thought, I don’t know why but those slippers make a woman’s leg really look good.” Simone busied herself in the kitchen and said, “why don’t you light the candles. I’m just going to toss the green salad.

After lighting the candles, she asked that he pour some wine for each. After Simone served the Cassoulet, Jeremy , with a breathe of relief said to himself, “Why it’s just a stew. I am

always afraid that when they use these fancy sounding names it's going to be brains or kidneys or something that I can't eat.

After tasting the Cassoulet, he exclaimed that "it was really delicious, using the crusty bread to sop up the juices. As for the wine which Simone was praising, it was OK, but nothing I would order. Frankly, I would have preferred a coke. In spite of the wine being just OK, Jeremy drank more than half of the bottle and was starting to feel very sure of himself.

After dinner, Simone suggested they lounge on her king sized bed. There seemed to be an abundance of pillows so that one could make himself comfortable.

"I'm going to get nude so that I can feel free. Why don't you take off that robe and do the same. It's not as though you were seeing me naked for the first time. You had me posing in some positions even I would not have thought of."

"Let's just lie here quietly. With just the candles for light, it makes one really feel relaxed. I'll just open the other bottle of wine and we can start talking. I want you to tell me how you start making love to Audrey. Do you start by kissing her or do you start by caressing and touching her? Just make believe I'm Audrey."

"Well, like I said, we generally get ready for bed by changing into our pajamas in the bathroom. When we decide to make love, she or I generally put our books on the night table; shut the lights and Audrey lays on her side with her back to me. I then move up to her, (they call it the spoon position) and then after a while she pulls her nightgown up to her waist and I push my pajama bottoms down. Then we do it. I usually climax very fast and then I'm no longer interested so we roll over and go to sleep. That's it."

"That's it?" Jeremy that's where you are making the biggest errors. At the very beginning is the most the most important part. How would you feel if Audrey was the first to climax and then said, "I'm bushed Jeremy. Let's get some sleep because 6:30 AM comes awfully fast and Joel has a lot of things he wants done."

"In one sense, you could not expect Audrey to show any enthusiasm. It is like an automobile, when the weather is cold, you cannot expect to get it's maximum power and response if it is cold. So, you first warm up the engine and then you receive what you expected. Cutting off the love making so fast and without considering your partner could not continue well. You would soon become frustrated or uninterested or you might even go so far as to look for a woman who makes her living relieving frustrated men."

Simone was soft and tender and spoke in a low and intimate voice, For Jeremy, the gentleness was exactly what he needed to convey his own tender feelings towards Simone. He avoided touching her genitals, not because he did not want to but more to convey his interest in her and not in the sex she could provide. Side by side, open to each other, they started to talk and gently touch .It was one more proof that Jeremy enjoyed her closeness and her presence. In one sense, he would have been disappointed in himself if all he wanted from her was a carnal satisfaction and nothing more. With Audrey, he was too timid to show tenderness.

“Jeremy, she whispered, would it be alright if I asked to let me put my head on your lap? I want to feel close to you and to feel you touch my face or my arm or my shoulder, because if we are going to work on your problem, we have to be close together.”

Without waiting for Jeremy’s reply, Simone placed her head on Jeremy’s lap close to his penis. She did not touch him but her cheek was very close. Now and again she would turn to look at Jeremy as he spoke and her cheek just grazed his now engorged member. Jeremy was never able to answer her queries because his mind and body were waiting in anticipation for the next moment of contact. Tortured by her closeness and her occasional contact only enhanced his desire for her. Knowingly and seemingly innocent she asked Jeremy, “Should I stop lying on your lap or is it alright to stay here?”

Jeremy croaked an affirmative reply. How could he withstand this exquisite torture?

Receiving the “yes”, Simone shyly asked. “Would it be alright if I just grazed my lips over the glans? I just want to know if it feels good to you. Without waiting for Jeremy’s reply, she gently placed

the head of his penis between her lips and listened to Jeremy groan with pleasure. Again she asked, “I’ll stop if you want?”

Jeremy was lost. He responded as he had never responded before because he thought Audrey would never consider doing anything as vile as fellatio. He was beginning to know and enjoy the excitement of foreplay. After a short while, under the expert and experienced Simone, he moaned that he could not hold off any longer. He was surprised and delighted when she told him he could climax in her mouth, yet, another first for him.

After he was satisfied, Simone said, “Now let’s talk about you. Did I enjoy what I did for you?”

“More than you can ever know,” he replied.”

“And do you think I received the same satisfaction as you by my not climaxing?”

“Possibly not, but I don’t really know.”

“Well, I will tell you. No! In making love, the two partners must be satisfied. When men pay me to relieve themselves, they never try to satisfy me for I was only someone to use. So when a man satisfies himself without regard for the woman, he is, in effect treating her like a whore and not a loving partner.

I am going to ask you to smell my forearm. Can you detect any fragrance that is not a perfume? Each person has his own particular fragrance. Usually when people who have a relationship that includes love, they enjoy the fragrance of the other. When men or women are in a state of sexual excitement, their particular fragrance is sometimes stronger and their secretions are also stronger. Fragrance: not the smells are what you will have to learn to love. These are love products. Part of satisfying a woman is to bring her excitement to a level so that her emotions and body prepare themselves for what sex was developed in us by nature, i.e., penetration so that we would reproduce.

Have you ever thought of felt like making Audrey excited before making love? I think you experienced it when I prepared you by my soft touches and caresses.”

“I learned by not ever receiving anything from men. In my case, I was too young to know that I had a right to the pleasures of making love. I have never told this to anyone but somehow, I did feel I wanted to tell you because I believe you are sensitive enough to learn from my experience. That was until I met Damien. Did I tell you how I met him?”

Damien

“One day, a girlfriend in the trade asked me if would be willing to join her on a weekend at the beach. She told me that her date, his name is Clifford Sayles, had asked her if she had a friend who wanted to spend the weekend at the beach at Montauk since the owner of the beach house was without an escort.

“I said “sure”, why not, I haven’t been to a beach since I can remember. I don’t even have a bathing suit., I’ll just wear some nice really short shorts and you can say that I really prefer to lie on the beach than go into the water.”

“The other thing, I was told the man was not young , he’s 67, but that he is a real gentlemen. It would also mean that we would have to leave at 5:00 AM since the house is in Montauk Point, Long Island.”

“Well,” I said, “at least I won’t have to be holding him off, and as far as the early hour, I can sleep on the way. If it’s alright with you, I can spend Friday night at your place so that we can both be picked up together. Will we be having breakfast on the way? I suppose we will have to wear something for lunch and dinner.”

Saturday morning came too quickly. The girls had showered the night before going to bed so all they had to do was brush their teeth and have quick cup of coffee. At 5:00 AM sharp, the doorbell rang and Marthe, Simone’s friend opened the door to see 2 bright eyed men. The older of the two was called Damien Courteau. He was neatly dressed in a blue blazer with gold buttons, light grey flannel trousers and dark blue loafers. His shirt was an open necked, fine pima cotton shirt of an exceptionally white fabric. Around his neck, he wore a silk foulard neckerchief. A white, Captain’s hat sat at a sporting angle covering his white hair. His nails wee beautifully manicured. Upon meeting the two women, he took each hand on introduction and kissed their hands as though he was used to doing when meeting a woman. Damien Courteau was a man of medium height and for his 67 years had a neat, exercised body devoid of all signs of flabbiness for his age. His eyes were an icy blue and deeply set, and his jaw firm yet not out of proportion with his face. His voice was richly deep which charmed most of the women he knew. He was also a very intelligent, and cultured man who enjoyed the finer things in life, whether it be French poetry to modern art. His one lacking was that he could not stand facetious, poseurs who tried to appear as ore than they were. When they reached the street, they saw an automobile like one they had never seen before. It happened to be a Delahaye 135 MS cabriolet manufactured in 1948.

“Wow,” remarked Marthe, what kind of car is that?” Damien answered in a matter of fact way and said, “That is a Delahaye, an automobile of French manufacture and no longer made and is to me, one of the beautiful automobiles ever designed. I keep this car because it is beautiful and hopefully will be an inspiration to the manufacturers of cars that come from Detroit. For me, anything that is beautiful must continue to exist. Genius, whether it comes in the form of painting or sculpture or music or dance must be preserved. It is an inspiration for other forms that man, on occasion can create. Instead of perpetuating what we create only for its

economic value. We must hold on fiercely to what the Gods grant to those few individuals who are blessed with that gift of true creativity.”

“It will take a little less than 3 hours to get to Montauk and we will stop for breakfast on the way. The car is beautiful but unfortunately, the persons riding in the back will feel a bit cramped since the car is really comfortable for two people.”

Marthe, in order to say something said, “I have never really been to Long Island, which way will you go?”

“Well, we will take the Midtown Tunnel to Highway 495 and then we go as far as Ronkonkoma where I discovered a great little restaurant . It is owned by a very fine chef who decided to live a carefree, casual life. But his cooking still is at the top of the line and I usually call him the day before I make my trip and he cooks up something special for me. I never know what it will be but I can assure you, it will be superb. It’s also a good stop to freshen up and shake your legs a bit.

Then after breakfast, we will continue to Highway 27 straight forward to the “Lighthouse”. I have a casual, cypress wood cottage grayed by the salt air and the wind. From my house, you can see the “Lighthouse,” which is a monument. It is my escape from the City and from where I can breathe the first cool air from the sea. I have a small vegetable garden which produces enough to eat some fresh picked vegetables for a salad. The rest of the time, I lie out in the sun, or read or listen to music.”

Marthe, Simone’s friend asked, “How is the TV reception? Can you get most of the channels?”

“My dear,” Damien replied, “I have never had a TV or a computer or an I-phone at the house. I leave those distractions behind along with the City. The only phone I have has a number that only two people know: my office manager and the superintendent of the apartment where I live. The phone is only for emergencies. The only sounds I get are from the wind, the surf and the seagulls.”

Marthe whispered to Simone. “Boy, I can see this is going to be a real exciting weekend; listening to the wind, the surf and the seagulls. I bet the music he talked about must be longhair music from the beginning of the world. I’m sorry I got you into this.”

“Don’t be sorry for me, quite frankly, I am looking forward to being able to put my feet up and live like I hadn’t a care in the world. How many times have I asked myself for just a

little escape from my life and how I make my living? I want to know what it feels like to be just a person and not having to feel forced to submitting my body to some guy.”

“Well”, returned Marthe, “What do you think you were invited here for; to listen to the seagulls? You never know about these “green grandpas” and what they have in mind.”

“I don’t know Marthe, but somehow he seems different. Of course, if it’s like you say, it will be just one more disappointment and just another day doing what people want from me. I suppose it’s foolish of me to start having dreams.”

When they finally reached the cottage, they found a small wooden structure. Its windows were shuttered against the wind and the rain and looked like a little gray lady stooped over. There was a weeks growth of weeds and grass. A weathervane that looked old and antique but which still indicated the direction of the wind; some wooden deck chairs on a weathered deck along with a small table. The house in no way matched the beautiful automobile that brought them here. A flagpole without a flag but with its worn ropes still in decent shape attested to the flying of flag whenever Damien was here. Two bronze hooks for a hammock were located under the porch roof.

Marthe’s first words when she saw the house was to paraphrase Bette Davis’s famous line in “Beyond the Forest” “What a dump”, she exclaimed, I’d rather spend the weekend in the car.”

“Stop grumbling and try to get into the spirit of the Place. What were you looking for, a suite at the Waldorf?” asked Simone. For me, I have never known this kind of living and I am sure he is rich enough to have the best if he was so inclined. Let’s go along with things and maybe we will find out something we didn’t know.”

Inside the house, the walls were wooden siding, the same as the outside; a red tile floor and a large hanging fan for cooling. There were two bedrooms with similar walls and floor; a double bed with mosquito netting, two non-matching dressers; a large desk, an easy chair and two canvas captain’s chairs. On the floor there was a rag rug in red and blue stripes and a closet made of aromatic cedar. The bathroom was connected by the two bedrooms and had been recently remodeled.

The main room or living room was open and on one side a small kitchen. A large, wood burning stove provided both heat and a place to cook. The living room was decorated with several easy chairs, a sofa and a large wooden table used for dining or as a counter. All the chairs in the house were covered in canvas sailcloth for rough wear and easy living.

All in all, the house was suited to its site on the dunes and was unpretentious and blended in with the rest of the cottages in the area.

When Marthe finally saw the interior of the house, she was speechless. Sidling up to Simone, she said, “Even I wouldn’t live here with canvas covered chairs and smoky wood burning stoves. And to think, I had to get up while it was still dark, ride for 3 hours in the most uncomfortable car and then give up my fee for what I thought was going to be in a modern, classy house. Instead, I end up in this poor excuse for a house. I am going to give Clifford a piece of my mind and he will have to pay me my regular fee. No freebies for him. I’m glad I have my I-phone, at least I can talk to people or play games or listen to music: my music. I told all my friends that I was going to spend the weekend at a classy place on Long Island, but you can be sure I won’t take any pictures of this joint, They would die laughing.”

But Simone saw all this as quaint and it somehow reminded her of the pictures she had seen of early American houses in some of her father’s books; no fuss and no muss, just plain living.”

When Marthe heard that lunch was going to be whatever we could catch, i.e. crabs, clams, eels and mussels, she had had it. She said in an aside to Clifford to please excuse her but she had to return to the City. There is a train going back to Manhattan; do you have a schedule? I’m sorry but I really feel sick.”

Clifford, concerned said that he would accompany Marthe to the City to make sure she was alright. He asked Damien to please take the both to the railroad station.

The two were driven to the station and no sooner did Damien’s depart, Marthe let Clifford have it with both barrels.

“How could you have invited me to spend a weekend at that place? Don’t you have any consideration for my feelings? He with his fancy car and all spiffed up as though he was going to take us to his yacht. He ends up dragging us in the middle of the night to that excuse of a house; why even the dressers didn’t match and his chairs, covered in canvas. I’m sorry if I inconvenienced you but I am trying to better my life; not sink to the depths. You can just tell Mr. Elegant that your whore felt sick. And as far as my time, I lost 6 hours travelling in an uncomfortable train and an even more uncomfortable car and I want my fee. I’m only sorry that I had to abandon Simone. I really feel bad about that.”

Simone did not really feel abandoned and as a matter of fact, she was glad she didn’t have to hear Marthe’s complaints. There was something unpretentious about Damien. He had

explained the reason for keeping an antique car; that it was beautiful. “Just think,’ she said to herself, preserving something because it was beautiful. He is so knowledgeable about so many things and he doesn’t tell you something sounding like a professor; he speaks so that you can understand. When he discovered that I spoke French, he didn’t want to speak English. He said our language is among the most beautiful in the world.”

When I protested and told him that I spoke French as an 8 year old, which was the time we moved to the States, and that I remained with only my 8 year old vocabulary, he said, “I will read to you. I will read you some of the most exquisite poetry you will ever hear. You know, he said, “poetry needs to be read aloud and not in silence because the sound of the words delights the ear and so the ear as well as the eye or the brain partakes of the beauty.”

Damien spoke to Simone for several hours. Simone listened in fascination as Damien explained his views. No one had never spoken to her before as though she was someone with whom he could express his inner feelings. She was being treated as someone who was more than an outlet for his sexual needs; she was being spoken to as a person. The hours ticked by and soon Damien said that he was tired and wanted to get a good night’s sleep. “Remember”, he said, we have to catch some fish if we want breakfast and fishing is always better in the morning. At least you will have the guestroom to your self.”

“You mean that I will be sleeping alone? Why did you bring me out here? For a brief moment, Simone who always to be careful that her clients pay her reacted to Damien’s proposing that she sleep alone. In her business the motto was “no lay-no pay”. She was enjoying herself but she was here for business. That momentary lapse into business soon became less important because she said. “It’s funny, you know, this is the first time I felt like I wanted to give myself to someone and not simply to submit for the money. I was curious as to how I would respond to wanting to give instead of just being a lump of a woman without self respect and without dignity. I became accustomed to not feeling anything about myself that was not negative. I was a whore and I didn’t count in this world; my only reason for being was so that I could be degraded by anyone who had the money to use me. And now, for the first time I would be willing to give myself, not as a whore but as a woman as someone who could give herself freely with what I think of as real affection and you refuse me and in so doing, tell me that that is all I am and that “Master” does not want his whore tonight.”

“Please Simone, don’t berate yourself. I can still sense an untouched innocence inside you that seeks release. If only you knew how much all of me wants to sing inside you. In just the short time we have been together, I knew without waiting that you were someone special to me. I thought, “Here I am, an old man speaking from his heart and spirit to a young woman

who has beauty and youth and the willingness to see how wonderful life is. Someone who would perhaps understand that no matter how many years pass, the heart and the spirit only grow in understanding the miracle of life which surrounds us. It sees the beauty of youth as it prepares to confront the greatest challenge that is known - and that is death.

And then, to think that this –petite fleur de champs – (this small wildflower) is permitting herself to be trod upon by the muddy, destructive boots of gross, unfeeling men; I could not allow that idea to be made real. Yours is the small un-noticed wildflower whose exquisite beauty surpasses even that of the rose.”

If I could be granted one wish, it would be to have your presence with me and to then feel the breeze ; to feel the sun on my cheek; to see the sky and the clouds and the trees and the flowers and all the creatures we share this beautiful planet with for the first time with you at my side. How could I dare to think that this wish could come true and yet, for that slight hope, I tremble to think how just one word from you would destroy that hope?

Can you now understand why I could not cloud the beauty of my wish without besmirching that innocence that I see in you?”

“Does that mean you do not wish to see me again?, an astonished Simone replied.

Damien looked with kindly eyes into those of Simone. “Tomorrow”, he said when I leave you at your apartment, I will give you my telephone number. I do not wish to have yours. If you wish to see me, you may call. If you do not call, I will have had your answer.”

That night. neither Damien nor Simone slept. For Simone, the shock of hearing what she heard would not erase something else that Damien had said and that she herself felt. That buried under the misgivings of her life, a life she had accepted, that buried below there was still a sense of innocence ; of some expiation, in spite of the life she was living.

How had he discovered this sensation she felt when they had only passed a number of hours together and that she had only glimpses of herself? She had not even thought of the differences between their ages for when he spoke to her, only his words were the thing that mattered. As long as the decision of seeing each other or not was up to her, she eased her mind and settled down to sleep.

For Damien there were different questions. He had not told Simone that he was married and had a daughter Simone’s age. He also reviewed in his mind, his own vulnerabilities for at age 67, he had only limited time for his physical abilities and his potency to remain intact. If this hoped for dream did come true, should he tell his wife Clotilde? In all the years of their

married life, he had never lied to her. And what about his daughter Marcelle? Even though he had not watched her grow up; what would her reaction be knowing that her father was involved with a woman her own age? And then, the most painful question, would Simone be ashamed of being seen with an old man? After all, there were 48 years difference between the two of them. For the first time, Damien felt doubts about himself.

All the next day, neither made mention of the night before and they enjoyed each other's companionship. They fished with Damien having to bait Simone's hook for she could not bear to see the worm suffering and she stood behind Damien when it came time to clean the fish. But she felt justly proud for both fish had been caught by her. Their day went by too quickly. As the time approached for them to return to the City, the question of what was to follow loomed large. As the car pulled up to Simone's building, Damien's goodbyes were friendly but curt. Holding out his card to Simone, he said, "It feels as if I am handing over the card to my happiness. Thank you Simone, for everything." He said no more, kissed her hand and turned to go to his car.

Since everything depended on Simone's saying yes or no to seeing Damien, her decision had been made the moment Damien told her that it was up to her whether or not they saw each other again, she felt a surge of happiness; a lightness of spirit, perhaps even a vague hope; a feeling so rare with her that she realized that she was singing; something she rarely, if ever did.

The phone rang as she was preparing for bed. Its insistent ring making it seem that nothing else was important in the world except to hear who was calling her. It made her angry that she responded to the phone ringing as though her very life depended on it. Damien was right: give your phone number to only those who would call in an emergency. Generally, it was only someone who was bored being by themselves and who wanted to inflict their boredom on someone else.

"Hello", she answered. It was Marthe, "what happened and how much were you to get out of "his Lordship? You know, I am really sorry I got you into this mess but I didn't know what we would find and Clifford just said that someone he knew had a house on Montauk Point and that it might be fun to spend the weekend, Naturally, it was not just for fun but for us providing out services. Your guy looked to me like a 20 minute man, you know, after 20 minutes all he wants to do is go to sleep. I was curious to know how the rich spent their leisure time. From what I saw, it's even more boring than I thought. Can you imagine, no TV or music!"

Simone saw Damien soon after that first meeting. Simone stopped seeing other men and eventually Damien asked Simone to move in with him.

“You will be saving all the money you spend on rent, utilities and food but most of all you will be giving me the greatest gift that I could ever ask: you’re presence with me and where I can see you every day.”

“But what will I do every day while you are working?”

“You can shop for clothes for yourself or take some courses in any subject that interests you. I am sure you will find something to do.”

After moving in with Damien, Simone thought long about what would please Damien most. She found her answer one day while she was looking at a gourmet magazine. Normally, she would bathe and dress up to meet him when he came home for the evening. She usually served him a small repast of cheese and wine and some freshly baked French bread which Damien seemed to appreciate. In the magazine, there was an ad for people who wanted to learn basic French cuisine. She made note that of the several schools, one, The French Culinary Institute was located in Lower Broadway in New York City. She called for information as to admission requirements and discovered that she would be accepted and that the course was for six months from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM for five days a week., The course was set up so that the student could learn the basic uses of the knife and other basic utensils and also to learn how to cook some basic French meals. In addition, the students would learn which wines to serve with the selected dishes.

Simone was delighted. First she would be able to prepare some special meals which she knew Damien would enjoy and secondly it would give her a chance to cook some dishes that were different from the bread, wine and cheese she usually served.

At cooking school, most of the students were women who wanted to improve their skills. They were generally well to do, dressed well and kept themselves in splendid condition. Simone made some friends after classes where they usually drank coffee and discussed the day’s classes. After about 4 months into the course, an excited Simone decided to cook her first dish for Damien. A week earlier, the chef had shown them how to make “Sweet Breads Albert”. She was sure Damien would enjoy the meal and since the class had made it just last week, the procedures were still in her mind. On Wednesday morning, she went to her butcher which was run by a German butcher whose family had opened this shop when the Germans

migrated to the America in 1820. Successive members of the family had kept the shop open and serving its clients for almost 200 years. She asked the butcher to order some very fresh sweetbreads for Friday morning. She then went to a local vegetable shop to order leaks, celery, green peppers, carrots and shallots. Her next visit was the wine shop. She ordered a Chardelle champagne for an aperitif and 2 bottles of Puligny-Montrachet of the year 2009 made by the St. Aubin vineyards. Her last stop took her to a bread shop at 724 11th Avenue, the “Le Boite Bakery” which still makes the famous Poilane bread.

All day Friday found her busily preparing her first French dish for Damien. How she hoped Damien would find it good. She carefully chilled the champagne and prepared her little feast to be served in the dining room. Usually, they ate her small repast at a small table in the living room. She heated the Poilane bread just enough to bring out its full, slightly sour taste.

When Damien entered the apartment, he noticed that something unusual had taken place. Simone brought out the chilled champagne for him to pour. He looked at the bottle ; held the glass of wine to the light and tasted it. A broad smile on his face was all that was needed. An excellent champagne and a good year.

You little wildflower, you have been doing some excellent research. But what I am really curious about is the heavenly aroma which makes me hope that they come from sweetbreads.”

Simone was very pleased, she had so hoped that her efforts would be appreciated. Damien congratulated her on everything. He praised the Puligny-Montrachet, the year and the choice of wine to go with the sweetbreads and without being told, he said “ the bread reminds me of one of the finest bread bakers in Paris. But how could you ever Have gotten that bread here? It is for certain A Poilane loaf of bread but where could you have possibly bought it in New York City?”

Simone said that “the cooking school mentioned the bread and so she went to buy it. The owner of the Bakery had explained that they used the same flour; the same starter and baked the bread in wood burning ovens, the same as Lionel Poilane, the baker’s son, who now runs the bakery.

Damien praised everything she had done and knew the effort she made were to please him. Their life together was loving and respectful and was growing more solid each day.

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One day, after a pleasant evening at home with Simone, he said: “Simone, would you be terribly disappointed if we didn’t go to Montauk this weekend? I have been feeling somewhat tired for these last few weeks and the drive seems to wear me out. And that’s another thing, I would like you to take driving lessons so that maybe you can drive sometimes. I have noticed that at times that after a long drive, my leg seems to fall asleep and I would not want anything to happen that might cause an accident.”

Simone’s reaction to what was said immediately made her feel uneasy. Damien was a man who never complained about his health and certainly would never admit to not being able to perform his everyday duties.

“Tell me Damien, have you been feeling badly without telling me? I think we should make an appointment with Dr. Baumann, your physician. You know, you haven’t had a checkup since I have been with you. I didn’t want to say anything because you always get upset when we mention doctors. Please, let’s make an appointment for you as soon as possible. Let me call tomorrow and just in case he is working, we can go visit him. Will you let me call tomorrow?”

Simone was completely astonished to hear him say, “OK, give him a call tomorrow.”

Now she was really worried, he would never give in to visiting the doctor if he was feeling well.

Early the next day, Simone called the doctor’s office only to be informed that “Dr. Baumann never worked on weekends and usually retreated to his small cabin in Vermont where he preferred to remain with his family. For emergencies, he always has his patients call another doctor, Dr. Jaime Brenes with whom he works.”

Damien insisted that he go alone to visit Dr. Brenes. He preferred to visit the doctor alone.

Despite her insistence, he refused to be accompanied.

After his visit, Damien proudly announced that “I am slightly high in cholesterol and was told to eat less fatty meat and instead eat chicken and fish and more vegetables. For my headaches, he suggested a visit to my oculist and to take an aspirin each morning.”

Despite Damien’s assurances, that Monday, when Dr. Baumann returned from his weekend, he was given information by Dr. Brenes, the doctor who stood in for him while he was away. That information prompted Dr. Baumann to call Damien and to ask him to come in and to see him immediately.

Watching Damien's face, Simone could see that Dr. Baumann was telling him something that was very serious.

After the phone call, Damien said, Dr. Baumann insists I see him immediately and I guess I will follow his advice. I hate to ask you but will you go back to the apartment and bring me my razor, my toothbrush and deodorant. I may have to be staying at the hospital for a few days."

"I already have them with me. When Dr. Baumann called, I was convinced that you would follow his advice. What did he tell you?"

"He said that it was urgent that I go to the hospital now and not wait. He feels that it is just luck that I haven't had a stroke yet and he said that maybe I can prevent the stroke if I act now."

What Dr. Baumann said and which Simone did not know was the Dr. Baumann told Damien that if he did not come in now, Damien would probably have a massive stroke which could paralyze the entire left side of his body and leave him helpless and condemned to a wheelchair for the rest of his days. Damien saw that he would lose Simone and he could allow himself to become a useless, lifeless being in need of constant care.

"Excuse me", he said to Simone, "I must tell my secretary to get in touch with General Manager and tell him that he must run the office until I get back."

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As it was, the hospital was able to prevent the stroke which Dr. Baumann was sure was going to take place and after three weeks, Damien was sent home to recuperate for at least 6 months.

"He must not have any stressful matters until we can stabilize his condition," Simone was told. If you have sex, it must be gentle."

Three months after his return, Damien was feeling like his old self.

"I think I feel well enough to go to the office; not to work or anything but just to see that everything is alright."

"Damien, no,! You know Dr. Baumann said 6 months and now, after only 3 months, you want to go back to work. You are not fooling me, If you go once, you will want to go back every few days and before you know it, you will be saying that the company cannot do without

your being there. And the other thing is that you have to be patient about making love. Dr. Baumann said that it is up to me to see that you don't make yourself too excited. I will do all the work while you can be like a Persian Pasha being visited by his Harem favorite. You can just lie back and enjoy it."

When Damien did make love Simone, he insisted on being on top, despite her protests. And so, in an overly excited moment, he moved on top of her. After a few minutes, he stopped and said, "Simone."

"He called my name in such a way that I said to myself, 'Oh good, he has climaxed'. He will soon be sleeping like an infant."

While Simone waited for Damien to lift himself, she suddenly realized that his entire weight was pressing against her, she said, "Damien you are too heavy."

It was then that she realized that Damien was unconscious. His crying out her name was the stroke he had been trying to avoid.

"I ran to the phone to call Dr. Baumann and also called 911 so that he could be taken to a hospital. But it was too late. Damien had died while he covered me and his last spoken word was my name."

"The ambulance came and they took him away while I remained in the apartment waiting for Dr. Baumann so that I could tell him which hospital they had taken him to."

"Later, I called his lawyer and asked whether I should get in touch with his wife and daughter or did he prefer to do so. After all, there was his will, his business, his apartment and his other assets which he had to disclose to her. I said that I would wait until his wife arrived so that I could answer any questions."

"The attorney suggested I call his wife since I spoke French and that he knew very little about what she might want to know." The attorney said, "As far as the legal aspects, I will be at her service."

"I did not feel strange calling Clotilde, his wife, for Damien had told me that he had spoken to his wife and told her that I was living with him. Besides that, I spoke French and could answer any questions. When I called, it was early morning in France. I explained who I was and told her of Damien's passing. I told her I would await her arrival and tell her who his attorney is and who was handling Damien's business and also who his doctor was. If you do

not speak English I will translate any questions she had. She thanked me told me that she would be on the next flight out of Paris.”

“When she arrived, I went with her to Dr. Baumann and then to Damien’s attorney. In accordance with his will, his wife and daughter were heirs to his entire holdings. Clotilde asked the lawyer to dispose of all his properties since she was not interested in living in America or running his business. When it was all over, she turned to me and said: “Thank you, Damien had written to her about me,” she said, “I want to thank you for giving him these seven years of happiness”. She then kissed me on both cheeks and that was the last I saw or heard from her.”

“I was lost without Damien. I had hoped that perhaps Fate was going to give me a reprieve from my early life, but that was not to be the case. So I moved all my clothes and personal things to storage and since I had no apartment as yet, I called Marthe, my old friend and she invited me to stay with her until I found an apartment. I found a small 1 bedroom apartment in a neighborhood that was a little run down but it suited me. My next task was to look for work. It was the same everywhere. No High School diploma, no job. I tried to use my 6 months with the culinary school but even there nobody would hire me. I then decided that perhaps I should go to night school to get my diploma but it would have taken me years since one could only take 2 courses per term. Pretty soon, the little money I had gave out and I had to sell some of the jewelry Damien had given me. Finally, in desperation. I decided there was only one way. There I had experience and my clients were not interested in my having a High School diploma or anything more that what I could give them; so here is where I find myself now.”

“Then, by chance, I went into that hotel bar where I met you. I thought, but he is so much younger than I am. Maybe, I sensed a sort of innocence: that was what Damien said to me. That even though I was woman you could pay for, he detected an innocence in me. How old is your girlfriend?”

“Audrey is one year older than me; she is 27.”

“Simone said, “Why we could be almost like brothers or sisters. You know, I had almost forgotten that you came to me to ask me to show you how you could give pleasure to your girlfriend. It’s almost as though I was going through the same things that I went through when I met Damien. It’s strange, he was the first man I wanted to give myself to and now I meet you and I feel then same need to give myself to you; not my services because you can

find thousands of women for that. And yet, you tell me that I give you satisfaction not only physically but spiritually as well. “

“ You know” said Jeremy. “ that’s the part that is so strange. Audrey and I both love each other but she needs someone else to give her sexual satisfaction, and it seems, so do I. Look Simone, I know I can talk openly with you. In such a short time, I feel alive and trusting with you but, there is a different type of aliveness when Audrey and I talk about art and abstractions for hours and the affect Art has on our lives. Those talks have more meaning than I can explain. Yet when it comes to the point of intimacy, we can’t give ourselves openly to each other and each needs someone else to fulfill that most intimate of acts; the communion of flesh. How can I criticize the needs she has when I find that I have the same needs that only you, it seems can satisfy?”

Simone then said, “I know what you mean. It seems what we are only completely secure is when we are attached to our mother by an umbilical cord. And yet, Nature makes us want to escape that time of security and be free. For me, my only time of complete security was before I was born and then when I was with Damien. After he died, I regained a freedom I did not want. I wanted to belong to someone and feel the security and the warmth surrounding me. For me, my “:freedom” led me to a way of life I could not avoid. And now, I do not know whether I am free or not. You, someone I just met but who seems to have been with me all my life is in love with someone else.”

Seeing the look of befuddlement on Jeremy’s face, she said, “Don’t mind me, I am only looking for the illusion of security and realizing that it is only a vaporous dream that I will never realize.”

Simone was right. We seek security and freedom at the same time. For Jeremy, his long apprenticeship with Joel Meyerowitz was the stable base that he felt he must separate himself from. He had to be free in order to find his own bearings and his own path. Jeremy had decided he would be better off if he located himself away from Joel and his influence and so he sat down with Joel and told him that it was time to try find his own wings and that he had decided to go to San Francisco.

With Jeremy moving to San Francisco, Audrey too felt that her ties to New York and Joel’s studio were not leading her to the path she actually wanted and her reasons for staying with Joel were principally to be near Jeremy. It bothered her a great deal that she had found someone, other than Jeremy to enjoy what she never knew she needed and that was her deep need for sexual satisfaction that she found with Blaire Davis, her black lover. But that was

over now and she needed love more than sex. Perhaps, she thought, I should have been less willing to open myself to Jeremy but her confession did lessen his closeness with her. She was sure that Jeremy's move to California and his not asking her to join him meant that their being together was going to be a thing of the past.

Was his reason for not asking her because she was with Blaire and would that image always be in his mind when they made love? Jeremy's sensitivity made her guess that Jeremy would always feel he was a failure. Maybe it is all my fault. I wanted to be open so that we would have no secrets from each other and that would make our relationship grow. Maybe there are some things one does not divulge to anyone. Perhaps we hold things to ourselves which we can never share.

Never the less, there is no real reason for my staying in New York. When I left home, my thoughts and intentions had always been to go to Hollywood. Maybe Jeremy's leaving was simply a reminder that Fate has something in store for me and that I had not been ready to go to Hollywood before."

Joel was not pleased that the people he trained and needed for his work were going to leave. His biggest loss was Jeremy's advancement in the darkroom. He had trained Jeremy to get many of the effects he wanted in his photos and Jeremy not only not only learned what Joel wanted but was also mastering ideas and techniques on his own.

However, Joel being the kind of person he was, understood Jeremy's reasons "I went through the same process when I went on my own and I can truthfully say that Jeremy has a talent that must present itself to the world."

Only Simone was left to make her decision. When Jeremy informed her of his intentions to move to San Francisco, Simone's first reaction was to join him in San Francisco, but she checked her enthusiasm when Jeremy said, "I want to go away from all the distractions I have been having lately. I find that they steer me away from my true goal which is to develop myself to be an artist."

"Does that mean I will never be seeing you again?" a despondent Simone asked? "I hoped we could be there for each other if the need arose. Since Damien's death, I had been fighting going back to being a woman who would do anything for money. I was trying to find a way to gain my self respect. But I guess I was being selfish because I was only thinking of myself. Somehow I thought you were secure in your profession and that your concern with Audrey was only affecting some emotional part of you."

Jeremy replied, “Unfortunately Simone, the emotional part was having an effect on my work. I always felt in the back of my mind that I had been a failure with Audrey. It was then that I decided that I would forego my feelings for Audrey and that in time, they would have disappeared from my mind. While I have strong feelings for you in that I am able to open myself to you and hopefully would be able to rid myself of my emotional inadequacies, I must choose between sexual satisfaction or my intense need to do my work. For me, there is no other answer except to develop my art. So you see, I too am being selfish, but then, there is no other way.”

There are times in one’s life when the crucial questions are the most difficult to answer. What should the choices be: to feel that one has done all that was within his power and to then measure the success or failure by the efforts made? But the stinging truths can only be based on the time, application and the honesty you have applied. A person can be at peace with himself only when he knows that he gave all of himself to his work and his particular reason for being.

Life ends for everyone but for the fortunate few who were able to make their dreams come true, their existence mattered.

THE END

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