

Chapter 8

Heart of Glass

It took no time at all for Gwendolyn to make herself comfortable in the Prius. She'd plugged her phone into the charger, kicked off her pink heels, moved the seat back, and propped her feet on the dash.

He looked over, his eyes following the long tattooed legs from the bottom of her frayed short-shorts to the purple enameled toenails. The vision, in equal parts stunning and trashy, exploded in Silver's hypothalamus.

"So," he asked as the Prius exited Mom's immense parking lot, "who was the guy?"

She looked puzzled.

"The guy who ran off."

"Oh, him."

"You said he was your boyfriend?"

"Did I?" She considered. "Definitely not my boyfriend. And now he's got all my shit. If I find him, I'll kill him."

"We could stop in Denver. You can buy whatever you need in Denver."

"Not so fucking easy to replace that shit. It's my performing outfits."

"Performing?"

"Yeah." She looked at him. "What did you think?"

Silver's brain failed.

"You thought I was a hooker, didn't you."

"No."

"Fucking liar." She smiled, knowing she'd caught him.

“Pole dancer?”

“You’ve got to be shitting me.”

He surrendered. “Listen, I don’t know what you do.” And he didn’t see any reason why he should. “You want to tell me?”

“Performance artist.” She said this with a flourish of pride.

“Ah.” Silver nodded, mulling this for the next mile.

“So, what’s your show like?”

Her look told him that he should have known better. “Art can’t be described; it must be experienced.”

He knew he should have stopped there. “And people pay you for the experience?”

“Through the fucking ass, and I’ve never heard any complaints.”

Silver was beginning to get the picture. “There’s a roach in the ashtray.”

“Huh?”

“I said that there’s a roach in the ashtray. You know, a joint.”

“Oh, no kidding?”

Silver motioned an elbow towards the console between them. Gwendolyn rummaged until she found a half-smoked reefer. She touched it to the glowing filament of the electric lighter. She breathed deeply and then began coughing.

“Oh, good shit!” she said when she could speak again. She took another hit and then held the joint to Silver’s lips. He breathed in slowly, holding the smoke in his lungs.

Silver turned up the volume on the radio. It was still tuned to the oldies station.

“Hey! I know that one!” she called out, laughing. They both sang along, “Once I had a love and it was a gas. Soon turned out had a heart of glass.”

Silver felt it now. He was heading to Eden with Gwendolyn in the passenger seat. The stars had aligned. There was nothing to think about. The essentials were all there, good pot and the XM radio. Gwendolyn was moving now, snapping her fingers and gyrating in the seat.

“You know what, Dan, honey,” she shouted over the music. “We’re going to have a good night tonight. A good good night.”

She relit the joint. They each took another hit. He felt her hand move to the inside of his thigh, gliding over his jeans. Time began to warp. He took his eyes off the road occasionally to peek at an arm covered with bright tattoos of jungle animals. It was all happening so easily, so effortlessly, so naturally.

Gwendolyn spoke close to his ear.

“Listen, Dan honey, I could see at Mom’s that you’re into my body. That turns me on, baby, you know that?” Her fingers wriggled in his lap. “Fuck these young shits. Total dicks. Two dimensional, paper thin, nothing but air. When I see an older man like you, a guy who keeps in shape, who’s done something with his life, someone with maturity, that’s what turns me on.” She paused for a moment. “What I’m trying to say is that the way you’re looking at me, that’s how I’m feeling about you.”

Silver was high as a kite.

“I know there’s a part of you that might not trust me. Trust takes time, but just for tonight I’m asking you to let it go. I don’t want your money. I don’t need your money. I want you, inside me tonight. I’m feeling it. You understand, baby?”

She touched the lobe of his ear with moist lips.

“You see,” she went on, “I’ve got the feeling that this is going to be the fuck of your life. You know what I’m talking about, Dan? It’s the one you’ve been waiting for, the one after which you can die happy. And you know what, Dan? It’s going to be real good for me too. I can feel it.”

Silver sailed down the highway. He was beyond high.