

## Chapter 18

### *Denver*

Silver found himself in the lobby of an upscale high-rise in downtown Denver. The place looked more like a hotel than an apartment building. The centerpiece was a fountain spraying water almost to the vaulted ceiling. Silver couldn't say why but it wasn't exactly where he pictured Gwendolyn's friend living.

He and Gwendolyn waited while a uniformed clerk at the front desk called up to Tam's apartment. Getting off the elevator at the twelfth floor, Silver could see the woman at an open door down the corridor.

In thinking about the threesome, which had been Silver's preoccupation during the past hour or so, he'd imagined a garden of women, but had failed to imagine Tam.

When the door opened, the two women exchanged cheek kisses in the French style.

"Fucking beautiful," said Gwendolyn, stepping back to look at her friend. Silver didn't disagree. The woman looked as if she'd stepped off the cover of *Vogue*. Tam was dark, slim, and Asian, wrapped in gold lamé that clung to her curves. Her feet were bare and her silken black hair was gathered in a tall topknot.

She put a hand out towards Silver. "Tam."

"Dan."

"See," Gwendolyn turned towards Silver, "I told you you'd like her." Gwendolyn shed her sandals before entering the white carpeted room. Silver removed his sneakers, walked in, and felt the deep pile under his feet.

Tam swept a hand towards the cream colored couch. "Make yourself comfortable. Drink?"

Silver was aware that he was staring at her cleavage, but he couldn't

help himself. The plunging neckline of her dress revealed much of two firm fleshy globes, while just managing to hide her nipples.

“Drink sounds good.”

The woman disappeared for a moment. Gwendolyn laughed. “She’s a fucking exhibitionist.”

Tam reappeared with a bottle of Pinot and a corkscrew. “This okay?”

Silver nodded.

The bottle opened with a satisfying pop. Tam turned to Gwendolyn. “Producer?”

“He’s not in the business.”

“Really? Not in the business at all.”

Tam took several glasses from a shelf and poured. “Then what are you doing with him?” she asked Gwendolyn.

“I told you on the phone. He’s my new project.”

Tam handed a glass to Silver, and another to Gwendolyn who’d seated herself cross-legged on the carpet. Tam stretched out on the end of the couch opposite from Silver, her bare feet nearly touching Silver’s hip.

“What kind of project?” asked Tam.

“Fear of missing out. He doesn’t want to die without having experienced everything.”

Tam raised her glass and looked at Silver. “Climbing Everest?”

Silver smiled. “That’s not on my list.”

“He was heading for Eden,” Gwendolyn explained, “so I picked him up.”

Tam wrinkled her nose in disapproval. “Why Eden?”

“You know why Eden,” Gwendolyn replied before Silver could answer.

“I’ve heard good things,” Silver added.

“Yes, it’s a lovely place if you like swimming in cum.”

“Got any pot?” asked Gwendolyn.

Tam ignored the question. She pushed her feet forward until they rested against Silver’s hip. “You like them?”

Silver looked at the woman. “Your feet?”

Gwendolyn laughed.

Tam was holding a palm cupped beneath each breast.

“I told you she’s obsessed,” Gwendolyn reminded him.

“They’re beautiful,” said Silver.

The woman looked a bit disappointed.

“Wait. That’s not at all what I meant. Listen. I’m going to tell you the truth.” Silver spoke with sincerity. “When I first saw you, I thought those were the most beautiful breasts I’d ever seen. Absolute perfection. I just didn’t want to come out and say it, because I didn’t think it was appropriate, but that was exactly what I was thinking. I was completely knocked out. Still am.”

Tam was clearly pleased, and Gwendolyn looked at Silver admiringly. “Well done!”

“Thank you,” said Silver.

“See how important it is to say what you think,” Gwendolyn continued. Of course you know those boobs are the best that money can buy.”

Tam raised a slender middle finger in Gwendolyn's direction, then turned back to Silver. “You don’t think that matters, do you?”

“Not to me,” he replied. “Art is art.”

Tam rose. She opened a cloisonné box on the coffee table and removed a fat joint. She lit it, took a hit, and passed it to Silver.

Silver sucked in a lungful and felt it immediately. Denver’s best.

Everything was going to be just fine.

Tam's bare feet dropped into Silver's lap. Lance began to pay attention.

"So, Gwen darling," Tam asked, "what are you getting out of this?"

"Artistic satisfaction."

Tam laughed.

"And reasonable fees," Gwendolyn added.

Tam turned to Silver for confirmation.

"I'm happy so far," he replied to Tam's unasked question.

"Well, don't let her take advantage of you. She can do that."

Tam's words floated in the air like butterflies. Silver wasn't paying much attention to their meaning. He was miles high from the weed and not caring much about anything. He had the sense that whatever was going to happen had already begun.

Without thinking, Silver was absently massaging Tam's legs where they were exposed by the slit in her dress.

"Like them?" Tam asked.

"Don't fucking encourage her," warned Gwendolyn. "No one should be so obsessed with their body parts." Gwendolyn stood and refilled the three glasses, emptying the bottle.

Tam looked at Silver from the other side of the couch. "Tell me about my legs, darling. And don't listen to her. It's not neediness. I just like to hear words. I love to hear words."

Silver obliged, "Firm, shapely, nice definition but not too muscular."

"Know what her hobby is?" asked Gwendolyn.

"No, what?"

"She writes pornographic books."

He looked at Tam. “No, really? People still read them? I thought video would have killed the market.”

“It’s not pornography. I write romance novels, and lately it’s been making me more money than acting.”

“I read one,” volunteered Gwendolyn. “Total porn. Very explicit.”

“It’s called romantic realism. And you didn’t read it, you listened to the audiobook.”

“Same thing.”

Tam looked at Silver. “My books tell stories. Just try to tell a story in one of these videos. There isn’t a producer in the country who’ll touch it. All they want is in-and-out, in-and-out like some mechanical dildo. Same positions in the same sequence every time. No plot. No backstories. It’s a fucking wasteland.”

“It wasn’t always that way, you know,” said Silver, “but that was before your time.”

“I know all about it,” said Tam becoming quite animated. “I’ve been studying the classics. Deep Throat, Behind the Green Door.”

“Pamela Mann?” asked Silver. That was one of his favorites.

Tam smiled. She had tuned directly into Silver’s wavelength. “Those movies told stories. Maybe not the greatest stories, but they made an effort. And there was humor. They had fun.”

Silver nodded. He felt a deep nostalgia for that golden age. “You know,” he said, “there was a time when you could watch those movies in a theater.”

“Really?” said Gwendolyn. She hadn’t been particularly focused on the conversation, but this caught her attention. “Are you sure? It’s hard to imagine.”

Silver laughed. “Of course, I’m sure. There were movie theaters that showed porn. Adult theaters. Maybe not a lot, but you could find them.”

Gwendolyn looked doubtful.

Silver looked at Tam. “I think people just don’t have patience for stories anymore. Stories take too long. You have to pay attention to stories.”

“But people still read books,” Tam looked over at Gwendolyn, “or at least they listen to them.”

Silver didn’t say it, but he wondered if that too would vanish in time.

Tam leaned towards Silver. “I keep thinking that if there was a really good story, a story so true that people couldn’t turn away, a story of life and death that people could relate to, that we could find backers. We could make something beautiful, something so much better than these shitty videos.”

“Well,” agreed Silver, “I’d watch it. And I’ve got friends who would too.” He was thinking, in particular, of Jack. “And you know, a lot of things go in cycles. Maybe we’re due for a porn revival, a new golden age.”

“You really think so?” Tam was now on her knees on the couch, leaning so close to Silver that he could feel her breath on his face.

Silver thought for a moment. He knew that his judgement might be clouded by the pot, so he was careful in his answer. “It’s possible. There’s so much garbage out there that people might be hungry for something better. But it’s so hard to know.”

Tam didn't speak but leaned forward until her lips touched Silver's. Whatever his imaginings of Tam might have been, Dan was utterly surprised to discover that she was someone with whom he had a natural connection. He never would have expected it. It was an astonishing bit of luck. Unless it was just the pot. Silver couldn't be certain.

It didn't matter, of course, Silver relaxed into the luxuriant sensation of Tam's probing tongue.

“You two are making me very fucking horny,” said Gwendolyn, smiling from where she still sat on the carpet.

Silver’s hands had made their way to Tam’s face. Tam’s hands were behind Silver’s neck, one of them still holding her wine glass.

After a moment, Tam separated her lips from his. Silver felt a slight stickiness that resisted the parting.

Tam looked into his eyes. “Tell me what you want, darling.”

His brain was momentarily stuck.

“Come on, baby,” said Gwendolyn, a little impatiently. “The beautiful lady asked you a question. Don’t you know now that you’re supposed to say what you think. It’s not so hard.”

“Your nipples,” said Silver to Tam, “I want to see your nipples.”

Tam smiled. “Just see them?” She undid the bow behind her neck that held the gold fabric in place. The big globes were freed, and Silver stared at enormous dark brown nipples that stood erect like carved totems. Tam held her breasts forward. “Only see them?”

Silver leaned forward and sucked the nipple of Tam’s right breast between his lips, letting his tongue feel the texture. Gwendolyn stood up from where she’d been sitting on the white carpet. She leaned over the pair on the couch. Tam tilted her head upward and Gwendolyn kissed her full on the lips.

“I really missed you, baby,” said Gwendolyn, pulling her lips away for a moment. “I love you so much, honey. Just don’t get mad at me again. I can’t help being who I am.”

“I know, darling. I love you too. It’s all okay now.”

Silver moved on to the left nipple. He’d memorized the right one. The conversation taking place in the atmosphere above his head suggested some historical connection between the women, but Silver was too engaged in the present to care. Lance was at full attention.

“Maybe we should move to the bedroom,” suggested Gwendolyn.

Silver did not want to move an inch, but he followed when the two women rose and walked to an open door.

Like the living room, the bedroom was all white, the walls, the carpets, and the bed, with some black highlights. The huge circular bed occupied much of the room, but Silver's attention was seized by the cameras.

Attached to the walls and ceiling were cameras, a half dozen of them. Each was attached to a boom.

"Show him," said Gwendolyn.

Tam took a device that rested in a plastic nest on the wall. She began pressing buttons and touching levers. The cameras came to life. Booms swung in various directions and cameras rode back and forth along the booms. Silver was mesmerized.

"Lie on the bed, honey," said Gwendolyn.

Silver complied. As he lay back on the huge round bed, the cameras followed him. He moved towards the middle of the mattress and the cameras followed him again."

"Take off your pants," suggested Gwendolyn.

Silver did as she suggested.

"Everything."

He removed his briefs. As soon as the erect Lance became visible, there was a whirring sound and four of the cameras panned in.

"Wondrous, isn't it?" asked Tam.

Silver watched an image of Lance, enlarged, on a monitor fixed to the wall. "Fucking incredible."

"On your hands and knees," suggested Gwendolyn. Silver complied and one of the cameras traveled within two inches of his anus. The dark hair looked like a forest on the monitor.

"Okay," said Gwendolyn, as both women jumped onto the bed, "let's make a movie."