

Chapter 1

The blue Cayenne hybrid SUV wove its way down the steep canyon road. It hugged each curve at a measured pace as it navigated the sharp hairpin turns. Within the car, a handsome, middle-aged couple argued. They had been in a quarrelsome discussion for some time, and tension infused the air.

“Lars, this is ridiculous. You can’t be sure of your decision. All of these years—a lifetime’s work! The repercussions could ruin everything we’ve worked for.” She ran her fingers through her bobbed black hair in frustration.

“Listen, honey, sometimes you have to go with your gut feeling. You have to stand up to the powers that be.”

“But your reputation!”

“My reputation will survive. It’s my conscience that I have to live with.” His angular, lined face was set with resignation as his fingers gripped the wheel.

Faye looked at her husband’s profile, her eyes and words pleading. “But why now? Can’t you wait a little while longer? There might be another way. There’s so much more to be done.”

Turning to look at her with a softness that belied his words, he answered, “I’ve waited too long already. My mind is made up; I’ll make the announcement at the conference in Germany. The press will be there, along with distinguished representatives from both the political and scientific communities. Believe me, Faye; this will lead to a healthy debate among everyone involved. Too much is at stake. Someone needs to stand up. What I’m planning is just what is needed.”

Faye's eyes filled with tears as she turned them back to the road. In that instant, she became aware that the car had picked up speed. "Slow down, Lars; you know how I hate this road. I don't know why you insist on taking it." Her voice, normally modulated, rose in volume as adrenaline flowed through her veins. "Lars, please slow down!"

Lars pressed his foot on the brake pedal to slow down. When the brake hit the floor he felt his heart leap from his chest. In a complete panic, he began pumping and pumping, desperately trying to force the brakes to engage.

Turning to his wife, his eyes strained with fear; all color drained from his face. "Jesus, Faye, something's wrong with the brakes, they're not engaging."

"What do you mean they're not engaging?"

Lars pumped the brakes like a bellows, but they responded only with a sickly wheeze. As the downward slope increased, the vehicle continued to pick up speed, swerving from left to right as Lars desperately tried to correct the imbalance. "What the hell's going on!?"

The runaway vehicle reeled, slamming Faye against the door. "Lars, stop the car. You have to stop the car!"

"Damn it, Faye, I'm trying!"

Skerrrt, the tires screeched as Lars tried to keep the SUV on the road. In a complete panic, Faye braced herself against the seat as she grabbed Lars's arm.

Faye's screams were like fingernails dragged across a chalkboard. "Stopppp!"

Lars clutched the steering wheel, fighting to gain control as the Porsche bumped the wall of rock at the side of the road, which forced it to cross into the other lane. In a cold sweat, he jerked the steering wheel, and the car swerved back toward the mountain. The Porsche bounced off the wall of rock a second time, careening toward a hairpin turn.

Faye's scream rose above the screeching of the tires. "*I don't want to die!*" Desperately, her fingers clawed at her husband's shoulder, anxious to hold on to the man who had been her world. Her life passed before her eyes in a fraction of an instant. "Oh my God, what will happen to Adelia without us?"

"Lucas, will—" Lars words were lost as he fought to hold the screeching tires on the road, but the wheels would not sustain traction, and the car plowed through the guardrail. The man and woman, their eyes filled with terror, turned to each other in a last look as the SUV shot into space like a rocket blasting off, tires spinning. For a moment, it seemed as if the car might fly. Then the front end dropped, and gravity pulled the car toward the earth. The canyon echoed with Faye's unearthly screams and the sound of the Porsche turning end over end as it bounced off the cliff walls, hurtling down the mountain until it landed on its roof at the bottom of the ravine with a final crash. The tires spun like a roulette wheel. Loosened gravel and rock cascaded downward—a landslide of earth and debris set off by the impact. Then came utter silence until a flock of frightened birds rose out of the canyon, their wings flapping and their cries penetrating the stillness. The only witnesses to the deadly crash flew in a frenzy out of the canyon, heading for a safer haven.

As if nothing had happened, the sun continued to warm the earth, the breeze wafted through the trees—life continued. The only signs of what had occurred were the black skid

marks and a missing guardrail. The vehicle lay at the bottom of the canyon. The man and woman who, only moments before, had argued within it were dead. Whatever they had argued about—no longer mattered.

Chapter 2

Beverly Hills, California

Miles poured himself a brandy and walked to the terrace of his plush penthouse hotel suite. He looked out onto the busy Wilshire Boulevard Friday night traffic and frowned with displeasure. He had never liked LA. He was an easterner, top to bottom. The stop and go traffic, congested freeways, and distances to travel to get anything done struck him as a colossal waste of time. Everyone seemed to be running on a treadmill, mile after mile, in a hurry, going nowhere. Even the brilliant weather after a day or two wore on his nerves. *How do people think with all of this sunshine?* It left him yearning for a change of season, something to break the monotony.

The Solarian board of directors meeting that he had flown in for had been a complete disaster. It had taken all of his self-control and patience to hold the contentious board members from cutting each other's throats. Solarian, an innovative solar cell company, was bleeding money. If the company didn't raise more cash, and soon, there would be no way to avoid bankruptcy. Miles was not about to let his investors lose \$50 million. What he hadn't expected was the vehement objections of Lars Lindstrom. There was no question, the man was angling for an exit—he wanted out. Miles hadn't quite figured out how he would keep the stubborn scientist on board. He knew he would have to find a way; without him it wasn't likely that the Department of Energy would agree to a second round of loans to keep the enterprise afloat. He sipped his brandy, thinking *nothing is ever easy*.

At least, for now; his business in LA was finished. He couldn't wait to fly out of tinsel town. If the girl the escort service was sending over was half as good as touted, for a few hours at least, his worries over the Solarian board meeting would be lost in more arousing activities. He

needed to burn the day out of his system and a few hours of mindless sex would get him through the night until the tires of his jet lifted off the ground flying him out of la-la-land. He couldn't wait to return to the hectic, reasonable, chaos of New York. The \$5,000 that her one night's company had cost was worth every penny, so long as she was good. He wasn't normally a man who paid for sex, but now and again, it made for an easy in and out.

He was about to turn away from the rush hour scramble of Beverly Hills when she caught his eye. He wasn't sure why he noticed her across the street as she waited for the light to change. She was petite, overburdened, with a ponderous backpack that weighed upon her frail shoulders. She wore a black and white plaid, pleated skirt, white blouse, and black knee high boots. *Probably a parochial school student on her way home*, he speculated. Intrigued, he grabbed the telescope that stood just inside the suite and pointed it across the street. Focusing the eyepiece, he could see that her skin was translucent, pale as a Nordic sky at dawn; she looked incongruous among the tan, toned, pedestrians and tourists that surrounded her. Everything was bright and chromatic next to her pale colorless persona. Her hair, ebony black, hung straight down and touched her waist. Like a protective cloak, it hid her from the scrutiny of strangers. She reminded him of, *Morticia*, of *The Adam's Family*. She wore large sunglasses that had begun to slip down her thin, delicate nose, but before he could see her eyes she pushed them up to maintain her incognito. He speculated on what color they might be; he was a sucker for blue. The light changed and she squared her shoulders heaving the backpack with her as she crossed the street.

With a sigh, he turned away toting the telescope back inside the room. The tinkle of ice against crystal broke the silence sealed in by the closing of the sliding glass doors. The elegant suite provided a quiet oasis, a cocoon like refuge from the outside world. Shaking his head, he cleared his thoughts, and returned to the bar to refill his glass with amber brandy. He was so

caught up in the vision of the strange girl that he barely heard the hesitant rap of knuckles against the door.

The sound pulled him from his reverie. *Finally*, he thought, *let's get this party started*. He opened the door unprepared for what he saw. His mouth dropped open and he stared. Before him stood the girl from the street looking, if anything, younger than springtime. He was speechless, the seconds ticked by as they stared in uncomfortable silence at one another. He waited for her to speak.

The sunglasses once more had begun to slip down the aquiline nose. He caught a glimpse of color before her thick black lashes hid her eyes as she gazed down at the floor.

“Samantha sent me.” Her voice, barely audible, whispered over his ears like a will-o'-the-wisp on a foggy night.

He could feel the anger building as he wondered what the hell he was supposed to do with this pubescent child. In a voice that was unnecessarily harsh he ordered, “Come in!”

Her pallid face blushed pink as she stepped through the threshold. He closed the door, but not before searching the hallway for prying eyes. He watched as she walked to the sofa and gingerly deposited the backpack on it.

Sipping his brandy, he warily observed her as if she were some rare species of bug under a microscope that he had never seen before. “How old are you,” he asked. *What the hell was Samantha thinking sending me jailbait*, he wondered.

The tiniest of smiles, like the Mona Lisa's, tilted her lips. "I'm legal, above the age of consent, if that's what you're asking. I'm a student at UCLA, a chemistry major, pre-MED. Look, if you don't like what you see I'll call Samantha. She'll get someone else."

He pondered her suggestion before answering. "I'm trying to understand why Samantha sang your praises. You certainly don't look like a sex goddess." He regretted his words immediately, but she just shrugged them off with a lift of her shoulders.

She walked to him taking his glass and lifted it to her pale glossy lips and sipped. The alcohol burned her throat. "This is pretty good." She coughed.

Amused, he stood still, considering his options. He hadn't made up his mind yet whether to keep her here, or show her to the door. His curiosity piqued, he prodded. "So explain why a bright girl, obviously you must be smart if you're a chemistry major, are doing..." he tried to find the least offensive words, "why this?"

"This is how I pay my tuition and rent. It requires the least amount of interference to my studies, pays really well, and keeps me fed."

He shook his head in amazement. Eyeing her he wasn't sure about the well fed part. As far as he could see she looked like a waif, undernourished. "If, and that's a big if, I let you stay; how do we proceed... I mean... you look pretty fragile. Samantha said—never mind..."

Again, the Mona Lisa-esque smile. She removed her glasses and tossed them on the couch. When she turned back to him, her blue eyes, pale like an Arctic iceberg searched his.

At least I was right about her eyes, he thought. He stood transfixed when she lifted her rosebud lips to his and kissed him. It was a sweet kiss that disarmed him. A subliminal message

filled his loins. He felt the promise of so much more. It stunned him how attracted he was to her. Acting on impulse, his arms encircled her, drawing her against his chest as his tongue probed deeper into her mouth. Her tongue was soft and pliant; his tongue hard and demanding. Releasing her, he felt his heart racing. There was no question, he wanted her. “Get undressed.”

“Whatever you like.” She took him by the hand and led him to a tuxedoed club chair opposite the sofa. “Watch me,” she flirted. Settling him, she leaned over to get inside her backpack revealing beneath her skirt, her pale butt cheeks separated by the smallest of lace thongs. He felt the swelling of his cock as he thought of penetrating her impossibly sweet ass. With her back to him she unbuttoned her blouse, removed it, and neatly folded it. Her skirt slipped from her narrow hips and she bent to unzip her boots kicking them aside. He noted the diminutive waistline that his two hands would have no trouble encircling. Then reaching behind her, she unsnapped her bra, letting it slip from her shoulders and tossed it in the growing pile. Miles held his breath as he waited for her to turn and face him. She reached into the backpack removing something, and turning hid it behind her back as she whispered, “*Voilà! Je te plaire?*”

Her ethereal skin was alabaster white, flawless, like a marble statue. His eyes travelled the length of her body settling on her breasts. They were small, yet perfectly formed. *Enough for my mouth*, he thought. Then he frowned, focusing on the rings that pierced her nipples. “*Beaucoup! Beaucoup! Je suis heureux avec ce que je vois.* But...” he pointed at the piercings, “don’t those hurt? Aren’t you afraid someone will pull too hard on them?”

She blushed pink, her words cryptic and brief. “There is pleasure in pain.” From behind her back she revealed a short crop that ended in a beaded fringed head.

“Not for me there isn’t.”

“No, not for you, for me...I need it.” The color of her eyes deepened with her admission.

Her intimation filled him with desire. “What’s your name? What do I call you?”

“Helene, my name is Helene.”

“*Helene de Troie?*” He teased.

“*Oui, tout comme Helene de Troie*”.

“*Vous parlez francais bien.*”

“*Ma mere etait francais. Elle est morte.*” Her countenance reflected sadness and loss.

“*Desole.*”

Her grateful smile warmed him. In fact, everything about her turned him on. He shifted in his seat, his hard-on no longer bearable.

She bit her lip suppressing a knowing smile, and bent to her knees before him. Her icy eyed gaze held him. “I don’t think this is a conversation that inspires sexual congress, do you?” She unzipped his pants and pulled them down removing them. She looked down at his arousal, her fingers tracing themselves up and down as she examined him, “You have a beautiful cock.”

He could barely breathe as he watched her lower her head, her dark hair cascading into his lap like a waterfall. Her eyes held him as she took him into her mouth; inch by inch, until he could feel the back of her throat against the head of his cock. He groaned as he watched her greedily suck his cock. “Jesus, how in the world...do you take me so deep? Oh...yes...”

Her only response was the liquid sound of her sucking him like a Popsicle. “Hmmm,” her throat vibrated encapsulating him.

His eyes clouded with excitement as he teetered on the brink of orgasm. Her mouth and lips were heavenly. *I'm being sucked by an angel.* He knew he wouldn't last, it felt too good; he had to come. Twisting her hair through his fingers, he pressed her head downward, a motion that made most women gag. Instead, her throat opened, allowing him deeper access. Driven to find fulfillment, he pushed and pulled her head up and down until gasping his erection exploded, semen gushed into her mouth as she moaned, swallowing, gulping, and licking up each drop.

“Oh, yes, baby, that's it, suck me! God, you're amazing!” His head fell back in delirium, shuddering, he lost himself in the waves of pleasure that rolled over him extinguishing his fire.

Helene's head fell forward in a faint, her cheek against his thigh. As if from a great distance he heard the sound of ice dropping from a tray in the ice dispenser, and then silence. Lifting her into his lap, she rested against his chest while he pushed her dark tresses away from her face so he could see into her eyes.

The faintest hint of pink lit her cheeks. She rolled her lips together moistening them with her tongue. Instantly, he felt heat fill his loins.

“I want to fuck you, to bring you pleasure.”

“Quoi que vous désirez.”

Her words of submission raged through him igniting his desire. He pulled a condom from his pants pocket and rolled it over his thickening cock. Then he picked her up, cradled in his arms like a child, he turned toward the bedroom.

“A moment please?”

He stopped, searching her face. Had she changed her mind? Jesus, he didn't know what he'd do if she refused him.

“The crop, take the crop, please.” Her voice was hoarse—pleading.

He bent toward the sofa and she grabbed it. Just looking at it, turned his cock to steel; he strode to the bedroom kicking open the door. Gently he laid her on the bed. Lying beside her, he ran his hand down her silken skin. Her supple body felt feverish to his touch, goose bumps rising, as she responded to his caress. He bent his head and took her nipple and the pierced ring in his mouth, he pulled and sucked gently. Her eyes rolled back in her head; her back arched, a slender bough, she seemed fragile, breakable.

Breathlessly she begged, “Hurt me, please, you have to hurt me?”

“I don't know if I can.”

The black arrows that defined her brows knit together in displeasure. A frustrated cry rose from her. “Get off me! You're useless to me!” Before he knew what hit him she raised her hand and slapped him across the face with a force that surprised him. A tidal wave of anger surged through him driving out all reasonable perspective. Her eyes blazed, and again she slapped him. He felt dizzy, disoriented, disassociated. Without thinking he grabbed the cat-o-nine tailed crop, flipped her over, and began whipping her ass. The room exploded with the sound of his panting, the slap of leather on her white skin, and her gasping cries of satisfaction as each stroke hit its mark. Welts rose blood red on her lily white skin. He felt his cock throb as it engorged and thickened. His hard on was painful, demanding satisfaction.

He lifted her rear into the air, holding her firmly in his grasp as he prepared to mount her. She scrambled to get away, her fingers tearing at the sheet. “No,” she cried, “I don’t want you unless you hurt me.”

“Oh, I think you do. I think you want it hard and deep. It’s going to hurt, I promise, just the way you like it.” His breath caught in his throat at the prospect. “Now that you’ve misbehaved, I’ll have no trouble giving you a proper thrashing. I’m going to fuck you in a way you’ll remember forever. Before I’m done, you’ll be walking on a leash like my pet.”

He held her forearms in a vice grip, pinned to the bed. His cock was so stiff, it ached demanding fulfillment. With a will of its own the head of his cock prodded against her forcing its way in. She braced in anticipation as he rammed himself into her cunt. He growled nearly coming as he burrowed into her tight passageway. It felt as if he was tearing her apart, but her cries of, “Hurt me!” urged him to inflict pain. He pounded to break her to his will. Inside, she was still dry and unyielding. He hammered her thrusting in and out. He felt her wince in pain from his size and aggression. Groaning, he continued his assault until he finally felt her vagina yield to his powerful dominance; accommodating him, filling and flush with aroused secretion. He banged in and out of her. She mewled like a kitten, relaxing into submission as she absorbed his thrusts. Her dark tresses spilled down her back tempting him. He grabbed a handful and wound it around his hand, yanking her head back, bringing a moan to her lips.

Sizzling with stimulation, he pounded against her. He drilled her until her cries told him she was close to orgasm. Then he stuck his middle finger down to his palm into her anal passage; her vagina shrank and shook in response. He fucked her with both his finger and his cock as she shuddered out of control.

“More, more... yes... yes... *La petite mort. J'arrive!*” She cried in abandonment.

He felt her quiver, beginning to shake apart in orgasmic release. “Oh, god, don’t stop!” she begged.

He pulled out of her leaving her only half fulfilled, leaving her whimpering in protest.

He turned her over and lay beside her. His leg wrapped around hers, pulling her legs apart, opening her to his gaze. “Now I’m going to show you that there can be pleasure without pain.”

Her eyes grew wide as he bent to kiss her. It was a kiss of bliss; filled with passion and desire. He ached to please her. Finally, he pulled his lips from hers and moistened his fingers with saliva. Kissing her again, his tongue pressed deep into her mouth; his fingers circled her clitoris expertly caressing her swollen jewel. His tongue was relentless as were his fingers; she was a prisoner to his insistence. Her hips tried to move, but he allowed her no quarter. When his own need was equal to hers, he slipped his cock into her. “That’s it, pretty baby; your pussy is so hot, so wet, and so delicious. This time I’ll fuck you until you come.”

She clung to him as he fucked her with a penetrating rhythm; her pelvis rising to meet his. She closed her eyes, relaxing, allowing him deeper penetration. His breath came ragged. He watched her face transform with erotic pleasure.

“It feels good doesn’t it? Wrap your legs around me, and let me take you all the way to heaven.”

She did as she was told. He could feel her heartbeat flutter like wings against his chest. He fucked her steadily, each thrust aimed at her fulfillment. Her gasps of delight spurred his

rhythmic penetration. He pulled in and out of her stroking her clitoris. It seemed an eternity that he watched her color heighten, beads of perspiration form on her brow. He felt as if he could fuck her forever.

This time you'll come from ecstasy, not pain Helene. “Stay with me, baby. Open those baby blues, and watch us come together. A man wanting to please a woman, there is nothing better.”

Her dilated pupils filled her irises; her lips parted as she fought to breathe. Feverishly, like a machine, his piston sank in and pulled out of her. Soon he would bathe in her honey. Then, like a locomotive building up steam the velocity of his pounding increased.

“Come with me, now!” He groaned grabbing her ass, grinding himself into her pussy, rubbing her clit. Then, in ecstasy, his semen burst from him; a volcano blowing its cone.

Quivering in rapture, she shook beneath him. “Ohh... y-e-e-s-s...I can't stop...it feels so good!”

Spasms rocked both of their bodies in an explosive climax.

“That's it, baby. You're good, so good.” Burst after burst of his life force emptied into the condom.

Spent he collapsed on top of her, drained. He felt her kisses, her fingers through his hair, her satisfied breath on his face.

“I've never had that happen before... before... the only way...I could, was with pain. I can't quite believe it.”

He pulled her into his arms. “There’s nothing wrong with mixing pain and pleasure. It’s fun, but it’s not the only way. You have to know that there can be another way. Sex is an art, it should be experienced in many forms. Let’s sleep for an hour. You’re not to move.” He held tight to her, afraid she would disappear.

When he woke she wasn’t in the bed. *God, she didn’t leave, did she?* Then he heard her in the bathroom and relief flooded him. He rose and dressed. Fetching his wallet he ripped out a check. When she exited the bathroom, he saw that she was dressed. He couldn’t help notice the bloom of roses on her cheeks. She ran to him, hugging him, pressing her lips into his.

After returning her enthusiastic affection he pulled away. He was afraid that her body against his would end with them back in bed. Her innocence was irresistible to him. He knew that she could easily become an obsession for him. “Listen, I’m starving. Why don’t I order us up some room service? Then, at least, I’ll know that I’ve fed you.”

She nodded, “God, I thought you’d never wake up. I’m so hungry I opened a jar of peanuts from the snack bar. You don’t mind do you?”

“Peanuts! Are you kidding, what kind of nourishment is that? You sit, young lady, while I order.”

After a sumptuous meal of cheeseburgers, fries, and thick, velvety shakes, Helene curled up in his lap like a contented cat. They talked for hours until it was late and time for her to go. She had classes in the morning. The busses would stop running soon stranding her.

“There will be no bus,” he insisted. “I’ll call down and have a town car take you home.”

“Il n’est pas important.”

“It is to me!”

When the phone rang announcing that the driver was ready to take her home, Miles hung up and turned to her. He loaded the heavy backpack onto her shoulders. Then his hands lifted her face to his and he kissed her. When he released her, he pressed a piece of paper into her hand.

“What’s this?” She asked.

“Look and see.”

When she opened it and looked, her eyes opened in amazement. “\$25,000, I don’t understand?” She whispered, confused.

“Listen carefully to me Helene. This is for your new life; one that I hope will be a good and successful one. It’s for tuition, rent, and keeping you well fed.” Her hands flew to her mouth as tears escaped from her eyes. “I don’t know what to say.”

“No need to say anything. Whenever you need more, you will contact my assistant Karin,” he handed her a business card, “forward your grades to her, and if you maintain a B or better you will receive whatever money you need. This will continue every year you are in college until such a time as you graduate with your MBA, Ph.D, or medical degree. There is one stipulation.”

Her eyes clouded with concern. “And what is that?”

“You must quit working for Samantha, and you’re never to sell your body again. If I find out that you did, everything stops, all of it. If Samantha gives you any problem, let Karin know

and I will handle it. I am giving you the gift of freedom Helene, the freedom to become something special. It's a gift, just like the one that someone long ago gave to me. So, what's it going to be? Can you live within my parameters?" He waited as she considered his offer.

Silently, he willed her, *Make the right choice Helene.*

She rushed to him, her head nodding yes, her arms encircling his neck. "Will I see you again?"

"No, honey, you won't. We're not right for each other. Besides, the way I feel about you is a danger to both of us. Believe me; what I'm doing is for the best. You're so young, and have so much life to live."

Again, she nodded affirmatively.

"Now, you go make a great life for yourself. Follow your dreams."

Tears slipped down her cheeks. She brushed them away. For a moment she clung to him, her cheek pressed against his. "Thank you, I will remember this for the rest of my life."

Then heaving the heavy backpack with her, she walked to the door, opened it, and with a last grateful look at him she walked out.

Pouring a brandy he stepped out to the terrace. A few minutes later he watched as she exited the hotel. The driver held the door, but before she got in the back seat, she looked up to where his suite would be. Seeing him she blew a kiss and waved before getting in. He raised his glass in salute as the driver shut the door. He sipped, feeling contented, as he watched the town car disappear.

It was exactly the kind of intervention that Miles enjoyed. Anonymously changing one individual life for the better. He would never see Helene again, she was far too young and unsophisticated to prosper in the world that he inhabited, but he had altered her life forever and it pleased him immeasurably. No one knew better than Miles what it meant to come from dysfunction and poverty and have to fight your way to the top. He had a feeling that Helene would not disappoint him.