



## Chapter 3

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May 10, 2001

The sudden freezing weather had killed most of the young fruit

Add  
① Same details of her 2nd flight - the where at Manila  
② Visit to lawyer  
③ End with Ref. to Junior and Romen for Head P.V.

The sad little orange trees were running as fast as they could. ~~No fruit weighed them down in October~~, so they ran lightly along the edge of the highway, slowing only when Christine lifted her foot from the gas pedal. Then they cut their pace to a stroll. For forty miles west of Silk, land was turned over to fruit trees; forty miles north, to tobacco. A glass of orange juice and a cigarette made bad neighbors, thought Christine—each one canceling out the effects of the other while holding its ground. ~~And forty~~

pass to. (see over) on foot

was also the number of years since she first ran away. The first escape was by bus, the second by <sup>bus</sup> car and each time the orange trees adjusted their pace to hers. <sup>and learnt</sup> <sup>baptized her</sup> <sup>journey</sup> <sup>with intense</sup> <sup>fruity</sup>

lining the road

Now she drove <sup>along</sup> the ~~same~~ road with the <sup>similar</sup> ~~same~~ haste, spurred by the

fx

same person. Only this time she was not taking flight; she was staking claim. Romen's version of washing the car did not include opening its doors, so the Oldsmobile sparkled on the outside but its <sup>dank</sup> interior smelled of <sup>rot</sup> damp. Christine rolled a window down remembering that she had fought with a better car for less. Tried to kill it and everything it stood for, but

fx

having less of an odor a stench.

because of an a finer car ~~with its~~ odor much less than this

2

was ingrained (?) inborn?

Familiar road — altho' to H.

The orange-scented Road to Harknely was familiar — it

more than

it ~~was~~ <sup>formed</sup> the architecture of her dreamlife.

From silly to frightening

Orange for each escape

Almost every dream <sup>she had</sup> took place on or near this road.

Or if not visible, it seemed to lurk just outside the image — ready to assist the right mare or provide the setting for a pleasant

Road remembered episode ~~of~~ <sup>four</sup> times it was she had escapes.

formed/was the essential structure of her dreamlife.



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trying mostly to kill the <sup>White Shoulders</sup> ~~Pine Scent~~ that choked her nostrils and <sup>stinging her sinuses,</sup> ~~clotted~~ <sup>ing</sup> her <sup>1</sup> tongue.  
~~brain.~~

The owner, Dr. Rio, never saw the damage because his new girl friend had the car towed away before the sight of it could break her lover's heart. So Christine's hammer swings against the windshield, the razor cuts through butter soft leather; the ripping out of radio knobs; the ribbons of tape (including and especially Al Greene's tk) that she draped over the dash board and steering wheel he only heard about, never saw. And that hurt as much as his dismissal had. Fighting a Cadillac was never easy but doing it in bright day light in a <sup>caused by of another woman's Cologne</sup> ~~Pine Scent~~ frenzy was an accomplishment that deserved serious witnessing by the person for whom it was designed. Dr. Rio was spared, according to <sup>Manila said</sup> ~~Christine's landlady~~, by his new woman. A mistake ~~Christine thought~~. The new woman should have let him see the lesson—the warning of what a displaced woman could do—and sealed her own rental in his arms.

Thoughts of Dr. Rio dulled her apprehension about Heed. And regret over her mis-managed life faded too, as did the embarrassment of her battle with his beloved Cadillac. <sup>\*</sup> The three years with him--well, near him; he was mightily un-divorceable—were the best. <sup>ones</sup> She had seen movies about the

<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>  
\* In spite of the humiliat<sup>ing</sup> end (of the affair)

Manila's girls



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misery of kept women, how they died in the end or had suffering illegitimate

babies who died also. Some times <sup>the women</sup> they were saddened by guilt and cried

on the betrayed wife's lap. <sup>Yet 20</sup> Even now, <sup>the</sup> years after she'd been replaced, <sup>(over\*)</sup>

Christine recalled her kept years as the best. <sup>Still</sup> Complete freedom, total care. <sup>ones</sup>

Reliable love, reckless gifts. Trips, parties, edginess. <sup>a high place inspecting order in \*</sup> He was an older

man. <sup>when she met Dr. Go to</sup> To her forty-one years, <sup>made him</sup> his sixty was "older." <sup>mid</sup> Now, in her sixties, the

<sup>word</sup> term meant nothing. He was beautiful. <sup>passionate, playful -</sup> Elegant dresser, successful

GP....Her last good chance for happiness wrecked by the <sup>second</sup> oldest enemy: <sup>in the world</sup>

Another Woman (over \*\*)

The road was empty except for a few pick up trucks now and again,

encouraging Christine to speed and remember. <sup>head pressed</sup> Scenes of herself being led

<sup>into a patrol car</sup> away by police; <sup>from a coveted place at the N.M.A. Banquet to a Semper-stained mattress</sup> rocking between her own elbows on her landlady's couch;

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> packing her shoes, pride, <sup>brassiers</sup> halter tops and pedal pushers into a shopping

bag. Everything but the diamonds and her baby spoon. Those she zipped

into her purse along with the <sup>Manila's</sup> landlady's loan of fifty dollars. Some exit:

thrown out of the apartment after she had refused for weeks to leave

quietly; given no time to get <sup>furs,</sup> her suede coat, ~~her~~ leather pants, ~~her~~ linen

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> suits, the St. Laurent shoes—not even her diaphragm. The four Samsonite

<sup>back to Manila's</sup> <sup>immediate</sup> dependant on the <sup>generosity</sup> of ~~the~~ <sup>what was left they own</sup>

<sup>hookers</sup> She poured White Shoulders

down the toilet and

\* a certain middle class Black Society that understood itself to "swing" if the money were right

how abrupt the expulsions. From a 1st class cabin on the Princess — to



7. Whores & the tree

replacement (Unlike roses or some other bouquet of cut flowers)  
on the day she moved in. The dracena was meant to  
speak legitimacy, permanence. The "White Shoulders"

- who knew? Maybe he read it somewhere.

Same ~~men's~~ magazine <sup>marketed to show the difference</sup> for men ~~who~~  
~~thought saure~~ between saure and a

Shampoo. Some creaky, unhip  
glossy for <sup>the</sup> teenagers disguised as men.

~~the~~ that catalogued seduction

techniques. (As if any technique at all was  
needed when a woman <sup>decided</sup> ~~made up her~~ on a man.)

He could have sent her a jug of Clonox  
and a dead Christmas tree - she would have  
done what <sup>she</sup> he wanted for what he made available:

(woman with a)  
White Shoulders,  
by a fresh bottle of

\*\*

Manila's girls said  
Apparently Dr. Rio gave each new  
a certain

love a gift of Calogne. ~~always~~

~~the same one.~~ Christine <sup>had</sup> thought it  
unique - a

was <sup>gesture</sup> ~~their private~~ <sup>sent</sup> He preferred it;  
<sup>from an imaginative love.</sup>

She learned to. Had she stayed longer <sup>with</sup> ~~at~~ Manila

or even visited <sup>if</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>her</sup> whores once in a while

she would have discovered at once. Dr. Rio's

particular pattern of bull shit: he fell in love,

courted, offered the (same) beautiful apartment on  
TK Ave and sent a Dracena ~~plant~~ and White Shoulders <sup>↑</sup>

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suitcases she had left home with in 1950 held all she thought she would ever need. In 1975 the Wal-Mart shopping bag contained all she owned.

Considering how much practice she had had, her exits had gotten worse and worse. The first one as a seventeen year old was sudden; the second

one better planned but disastrous. The third time she left with murder on

her mind. Each time leaving home was harder, fed more and more by

disorder and malice. But leaving Harbor City, Jackson, Tampa,

Waycross—or any of the places that once beckoned her got easier. Until the

final return to Silk in shame and on borrowed money, into a struggle for justice: her legitimate share of her father's estate.

Heed's look, cold and long, was anything but welcoming so Christine

just pushed past her through the door. With very few words they came to

an agreement, of sorts, because the place was filthy, because Heed's

arthritis was deforming her hands and because nobody in town could stand

either one of them. So the one who had attended private school kept house

while the one who could barely read ruled it. A bad bargain, a hopeless

truce and for 16 years the dance of mutual hatred and suspicion hooked

them together—need being tighter than love.

Christine braked for a turtle crossing the road but, swerving right to

\* but the third and  
until that last one was fueled by the  
(in 1974) murder she had  
on her mind.

to avert  
the murder  
she had in  
mind



\*\* The one who ~~was~~ had been  
 (by a man) sold by her father ~~battled~~  
~~and~~ ~~the~~ had been.  
 one who ~~was~~ bought by  
 me.

Until Dr. Rio. ~~Until her arrest.~~  
 had her forcibly evicted. for no good  
 And she was ~~forced to leave~~  
 Reason she could think of except  
~~he want~~ <sup>wish</sup> a desire for a ~~happy~~ ~~happy~~  
~~of a happy~~

(and) a new model  
 for the fur he  
 passed along  
 from one mistress  
 to another.

another dracena or <sup>200</sup>

After a following a few <sup>reflective</sup> days at Manila's,  
 named for her father's heroism,  
 Christine discovered a way to ~~turn~~  
 convert a



avoid it, she drove over a second one trailing the first. She stopped and looked in the rear view mirrors—left one, right one and overhead— for a sign of life or death: legs pleading skyward for help or a cracked immobile shellmtk .Her hands were shaking. Seeing nothing, she left the driver's seat and ran back down the road. The pavement was blank, the orange trees at rest. No turtle anywhere. Had she dreamed it, the second turtle? The one left behind, the one trying to keep up and failing, Miss Second Best crushed by a tire rushing to save its sister? Scanning the road she did not wonder what the matter was; did not ask herself why her heart was sitting up for a turtle creeping along Route 12. Then she saw a movement on the south side of the road where the first turtle had been heading. Slowly she approached and was relieved to see two shine-y green shells edging toward the trees. The car wheels had missed Miss Second Best and while the driver was shuddering in the car, she had caught up to the faster one. Transfixed, Christine watched the pair disappear, returning to her car only when another slowed behind it. As she left the verge, the driver smiled, "Ain't you got no toilet at home?"

"Go around, motherfucker!"

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He gave her a thick finger and pulled away.

The lawyer might be surprised-- Christine had no appointment--but would see her anyway. Each time she forced herself into the office, Christine had been accommodated. She was a Cosey, after all and in Harbor City the name still lifted eyelids. William Cosey, one time owner of many houses, a hotel resort, two boats and a bank-full of gossiped about, legendary cash, always interested people but he had excited the county to fever when they learned he had left no will. Just doodles on a 1957 menu outlining his soggy desires. Which turned out to be 1. "Julia II" to Sandler Gibson. 2. Montenegro Coronas to Chief Buddy Silk. 3. the Hotel to Billy's Boy's wife. 4. the Silk house and "whatever nickels are left" to "my sweet Cosey child." 5. His '55 convertible to L. 6. His stick pins to Meal Daddy and on and on down to his record collection to Blind Josephus "the best blues guitar player on God's earth." Feeling good, no doubt, from the Tom Collins, he had sat down one night with some booze-y friends and scrawled among side orders and <sup>the day's</sup> specials, appetizers, main courses and desserts, the distribution of his wealth to those he thought he loved. During the argument following his death fourteen years later, the booze-y friends

1957  
14  
1971



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were located and verified the event, the hand writing and the clarity of the mind that <sup>seemed to have</sup> had taken no further steps to make ~~his~~ <sup>its</sup> wishes known. Questions rose like snake heads: Why was he giving Sandler his newest boat? What Coronas and who was Meal Daddy? The lead singer of ~~the~~ <sup>The Purple Tones</sup>, said Heed. No, the manager of the ~~the~~ <sup>Fifth Street Lovers</sup>, said May, but he's in prison can inmates receive bequests? they're just cigars, fool, he didn't even identify you by name so what? and why give a convertible to somebody who can't drive you don't need to drive a car to sell it this ain't a will it's a comic book! They focused on stick pins and cigars and the current value of old 78's--never asking the central question. Who was "my sweet Cosey child"? Heed's claim was strong--especially since she called her husband Papa. Yet, since, other than May ~~and~~ biologically speaking, Christine was the only "child" left, her claim was equal to Heed's. Or so she and May thought. But <sup>X</sup> years of absence, <sup>^</sup> no history of working at the hotel, except for a few years as a minor, weakened Christine's position. The court examined the greasy menu, lingering perhaps over the pineapple flavored slaw and Fat's Mean Chili, listened to three lawyers and tentatively (until further evidence could be provided) judged Heed the "sweet Cosey child" of a drunken man's

Gwendolyn East, Attorney at Law, however, thought otherwise and told Christine grounds for reversal were promising. In any case, she said there was room for appeal, review, even if no mitigating evidence was found. For years Christine searched for such evidence: the hotel, the house and found nothing (except keys and <sup>traces</sup> ~~proof~~ of May's obsessions). If there was anything—a real, typed up intelligible will—it would be in one of Heed's many locked desks behind her bedroom door also locked nightly against 'intruders.' <sup>Now</sup> The matter was urgent. No more waiting for the other to die or, at a minimum, suffer a debilitating stroke. Now a third element was in the mix. Heed had hired a girl. To help write her memoirs, Junior had said at <sup>that morning</sup> breakfast. Christine's jaw had dropped at the thought of the word "write" connected with some one who had gone to school off and on for less than five years. Scooping grapefruit sections, Junior had pronounced "memoirs" just the way illiterate Heed would have. "Of her family," said Junior. What family, Christine wondered. That batch of beach rats who bathed in a barrel and slept in their clothes? ~~Certainly not the Cosey family Heed had married into?~~



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Memoirs. She didn't believe it for a minute. Heed was up to something. Maybe writing her own will. Maybe getting ready to evict. Or sell. Or burn the place down as she regularly threatened to do rather than admit it belonged to Christine.

That afternoon, after mulling over what that Junior girl told her, Christine made up her mind. She waited until Junior went up to the third floor. Dressed in clothes Heed must have leant her (a lilac suit not seen in public in thirty five years) Junior looked like a Sunday migrant. Except for the boots, last night's leather was gone. Romen was puttering around in the sunshine, inspecting ice damage done to the shrubs [etc.] Christine <sup>then told</sup> asked him to wash the car, and when he was done, she called him to help her with the garage door stuck in ice that had not melted though the temperature had climbed. Then she drove off, picking up speed as quickly as she could to get to Gwendolyn East before the lawyer's office closed.

Christine's entanglements with the law were varied enough to convince her that Gwendolyn was not to be trusted. She may know the courts but she didn't know anything about police—the help or the damage they could do long before you saw a lawyer. The police who led her away

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from the Cadillac were gentle, respectful, as though her fury was not merely understandable but justified. They handled her like a woman who had assaulted a <sup>child</sup> molester rather than a car. Her hands were cuffed in front, not behind her back—and loosely. As she sat in the patrol car the sergeant offered her a lit cigarette and removed a shard of head light glass from her hair. Neither officer pinched her nipples or called her names or suggested what a blow job could do for racial justice. ~~That behavior which however many times it happened always made her cry--was the usual drill.~~ The one time she had been in a killing frame of mind with a hammer <sup>instead of a switchblade</sup> in her hand, they treated her like a white woman. During four previous arrests—for incendiary acts, causing mayhem, obstructing traffic and resisting arrest--she had <sup>nothing</sup> pamphlets in her hand and was treated like dog shit.

Funny. Every love she had led straight to jail. First Frank Holder, PFC, whom she married at seventeen, got them both arrested at an illegal social club. Then Gravey, whose revolutionary pamphlets she passed out and with whom she had lived the longest, <sup>got her 30 days no suspension, for inciting mayhem.</sup> Finally Dr. Rio. <sup>A Cadillac.</sup> A hammer. A gentle, almost reluctant arrest, <sup>and</sup> after a hour wait, <sup>minus</sup> write-up or interview, they let her go. <sup>(over)</sup> <sup>(over)</sup>



leather pants  
Suits  
id

Known to ~~these~~ <sup>included</sup> a baby spoon and 12 <sup>diamond</sup> rings.  
lawyer-hired goons) & <sup>Aside from that</sup> she had a cancelled credit card and seven dollars & change \* And ~~the~~ <sup>over</sup>

7. She had a cancelled credit card and seven dollars ~~in~~ change \* ~~And no~~ <sup>over</sup> friends to speak of. None <sup>of the</sup> ~~who would~~ <sup>close</sup> dared risk Dr. Rio's displeasure. ~~the not so close~~ <sup>none</sup> ~~who were~~

Other loves had ended in ~~theatrical~~ ~~public~~ explosions the law had other names for: cursing an officer meant assaulting an officer; yanking your arms meant resisting arrest; throwing away a cigarette too close to a police car meant conspiracy to commit arson; running across the street to get out of the way of mounted police meant obstructing traffic

~~\* had not felt that alone since~~  
As lonely as a 12 year old  
watching waves suck away  
the castle.

precious