

Chapter 1: Julia

Julia did not think she was an ordinary person and she was not interested in having an ordinary life. Ever since she was a child she daydreamed. She daydreamed of an exciting future life - of an extraordinary future life. It would be a life full of love, passion and a fabulous career.

She was born in Cairo, Egypt, of mixed parents (Greek mother, Lebanese father), and had grown up in an unconventional family atmosphere. Both her parents had been very liberal, unlike those of ethnic minorities in the Middle East. She grew up reading American magazines and seeing American and European movies (yes, there was no movie rating in Egypt and she and her sister often went to the movies with their parents and watched adult films) and she had one big dream: To leave Egypt, go to the U.S. and have a glamorous life with a flourishing career as a fashion designer in New York, marry an intelligent, handsome, passionate, wealthy and out of the ordinary man, have intelligent children and lead an extraordinary life in love, sex and everything else. This was her goal and she had made up her mind to achieve it one way or the other. But how? It was not easy getting out of Egypt in those days. One needed a valid reason (there was no such thing as going out as a tourist) and an exit visa, which was very difficult to obtain and, of course money, which her family did not have. She was an avid reader and she had read somewhere that if you wanted something badly enough, you would get it. So she dreamed and she hoped things would somehow happen to her to put her life on the right track. She did believe in God so she also prayed. Her mother

had taught her to say a prayer before going to bed. After wishing her father success in his job and health to all the family, including the family cat, she prayed about her future.

She had always had very western ideas about boyfriend/girlfriend relationships. This was frowned upon by the society in Cairo where she lived. Marriage was arranged by the families and most women stayed at home and took care of the house and the children. Careers for women never entered the picture. There were no careers for women anyway. The only openings, for girls with no family fortune, were that of a secretary or a shop girl. After graduating from high school, girls of well to do families, as young as 17, waited for the right suitor to come along, preferably an older man from a wealthy family, who would be a good provider. However, if the parents of the girl were not wealthy, the girl was obliged to seek a husband from a middle class family, one who would hopefully have a promising future. Some young people did manage to have boyfriends and girlfriends but it was all clandestine, not in the open.

Julia refused vehemently to follow that custom. She had her own ideas. She had decided that she would choose her own husband. She therefore told her mother not to accept any suggestions from friends and family to introduce her to a prospective suitor. The very first time that a man had been brought to the house, by well-meaning friends, to be introduced to her, she did not come out of her room. And people talked about what a bizarre young woman she was. From then on her mother never accepted any more propositions. "My daughter is different" she would say "she wants to make her own choice." "But you people don't have any money" her aunt told her mom, "how on earth is she going to make her own choice?"

Julia and her sister went out in groups of girls and boys and no one was anyone's special boyfriend. Her case had been quite unique. David, the son of a wealthy family in their group of friends, had fallen in love with her and, against his parents' wishes, wanted to marry her. This was her first real boyfriend, the first boy she had ever kissed. The first objection the guy's parents had was that Julia was a "working girl" meaning her parents had no money. However, after trying to dissuade their son not to commit this folly and jeopardize his chances of furthering his education by an early marriage, they had finally relented and accepted their son's decision. Admittedly, Julia and David were very young to take this step. She was 19 and he was 21, too young for a man to get married. In retrospect, she thought this was pure folly for her to get married at 19. She had not yet had any life experiences. But they were in love so she embarked into this with enthusiasm, especially since they had plans to move to the U.S. where she would start a new life and have her dream career. In Egypt, married women did not pursue a career. They had children and took care of home and family. Not Julia, she had other projects up her sleeve. She was adamant, she was going to have a career as a fashion designer.

David also had modern, western ideas and readily agreed that his future wife have a career. She had also insisted that she would not be the only one doing the cooking and the cleaning once they moved to the US. In Egypt they had servants who catered to them. She did not know the first thing about housekeeping or cooking or ironing clothes for that matter. Ironing was done by experienced ironers. It was inconceivable to wear a shirt or a dress that had any signs of wrinkles. Everything had to look freshly pressed.

David was head over heels in love with her and agreed to everything she asked for and even took lessons from the ironer to be able to iron his own shirts in the U.S.

A week before the wedding, after her dress was made and all the preparations were going full speed ahead, Julia started having doubts whether she really wanted to marry David. They were quarrelling all the time and her love for him had diminished.

Her mother warned her, "I am surprised you are marrying this guy, you are always bickering. It will not get better once you're married you know. This is as good as it gets."

"It's Okay mom, we can manage and there's always divorce, you know."

"You are not yet married and you're already talking of divorce, are you out of your mind girl?"

"No, I'm just saying that if it does not work out there's always a solution." Julia was very pragmatic about this. She brushed away her negative thoughts and decided to go through with it. After all there was the prospect of going to the U.S. where she would finally have the career she always wanted - fashion design.

They had a sumptuous wedding in Cairo; the church was full to the brim with family, friends and acquaintances who wanted to see this Romeo and Juliet of Cairo finally make it to the altar after so much opposition from the groom's parents. They honeymooned in Alexandria. There had been heavy petting before the wedding night but, when the marriage was finally consummated, she was disappointed because she did not have an orgasm. She had been very much looking forward to this. Alas, she had very few of them during her married life.

Their married life began in Egypt, living with her parents for a couple of months, then they moved to New York. She managed to have a thriving career in fashion designing in Manhattan through sheer determination and he became a very successful fashion photographer. However, after a couple of years of a turbulent and unsuccessful go at the marriage – they fought all the time about asinine things - she decided she wanted to be free and have adventures. She was too curious and could not envision going through life without having had sex with any other man. In Egypt she could not even have had other boyfriends, let alone a lover. After having had a boyfriend a girl was branded and men were reluctant to marry one who had already had a boyfriend. She would be considered tainted. In her opinion, the men in her community in Cairo were all mama's boys. They all wanted a virgin of course. Technically all girls were virgins. They did everything with their boyfriends, if they had any, except the act of penetration. If there was any penetration and if the couple parted, then the girl would get sewn up to pretend to her next suitor that she was a virgin.

Their marriage did not last long though; two years into it, one day, after a stupid fight, she suddenly blurted out, "I really can't live with you any longer, you are always criticizing me and picking up fights for stupid reasons. You've become a control freak, I want to get a divorce."

David was stunned at her outburst. "You really mean that?"

"Yes, it will be better for both of us. We can't go on like this, we are not really happy together and my health is suffering."

"Don't you want to sit down and talk about this?"

“Not really, I’ve made up my mind; for God’s sake David we have been fighting even before we got married” Julia retorted. She was fed up of being chained down and was very eager to investigate other pastures. Her mind was set on Europe. She wanted to meet European men.

David was too proud to argue, so he picked up his belongings – the car, his stereo and his clothes and moved out of the apartment the very next day. Julia found a lawyer and they divorced and she moved to Geneva, Switzerland to be as far away as possible from the unhappy experience. She was ready to start on her European adventures. She had no alimony and had only \$ 500 in her bank account. If she would not find a job in Geneva, then she had decided on Plan B – go to California, where there was a guy (an old friend of theirs) who had asked her to marry him. However she was not ready for that possibility at this time. She would go to California but not to marry this guy. She considered him only a good friend.

She loved Geneva from the moment she arrived. It was a small, picturesque, very clean, very well organized (Swiss style) international town and it housed the European Headquarters of the United Nations as well as organizations affiliated to the U.N. The town had a magnificent lake which was called Lake Geneva by the Genevise but in fact its real name was Lac Lemman. People had a very pleasant life in this town where the lunch hour was considered sacred and most shops were closed during a two hour period at midday. In summer it was not uncommon for people to go swimming in the lake during their lunch break. After the frenetic pace of Manhattan, this was ideal for Julia. Imagine going swimming during the lunch hour.

Julia's life as a free woman began in Geneva. Finally she had sexual freedom. This was the 60's and women's lib was in full swing. She was on the pill and there were no constraints; she could go out with anyone she felt like. She was determined to have a ball with her new found freedom. People told her that Geneva was a very difficult place to find a job, an apartment and, and as for men, to forget ever being able to get one, because women outnumbered men by 5 to 1. In any case, "girls were so easy," she was told, "that men could get them over a cup of coffee." Julia always liked a challenge and she proved everyone wrong. She got a job at the United Nations by lying through her teeth about her work experience, found an apartment by sheer luck and had men galore running after her.

She very much enjoyed life in Geneva. The living was easy, the money was good and vacation time unbelievable – six weeks a year besides being off work during Easter week, Christmas week, etc. She called her sister and suggested that she also leave New York and come and join her in Geneva where they would have more fun than they ever had in the U.S. Her sister arrived soon after and also found a job with one of the organizations and they lived together and shared one car. They could not afford two. She had accepted the fact that there was no fashion designing in Geneva and chose the next best thing which was working for the U.N. She did not particularly like working in an office but all that time off was very attractive and she continued to further her career as an artist (painter). Her principal goal in life never changed though. She wanted to meet the right man who would whisk her off to have a successful, passionate marriage and have children. *Does a passionate marriage really exist? Or does passion fly out the window after marriage?* Actually, she was very much hung up on the Rhett

Butler type of man - very masculine, oozing lots of charm. Ever since she had seen Gone with the Wind when she was a teenager she had fallen in love with Rhett Butler, not with Clark Gable. Rhett was the man for her.

She met a lot of men at work, but never fell in love with any of them and, much to her dismay, none of them seemed to be of husband material. Some of the men she had affairs with were married men from out of town on business in Geneva. They all said they were separated, of course, but she did not believe them and therefore did not take them seriously. She was wined and dined and went on weekends to major European cities as well as skiing in winter on the Swiss or French Alps. She had not yet met THE ONE but in the meantime she was having fun at least.

She had quite an array of boyfriends one after the other and some even overlapped. Sometimes she had a lunch date with one guy and a dinner date with another. She was always on the lookout for an attractive marriageable man. A man who would love her unconditionally, care for her, envelop her, a passionate man who would carry her to orgasmic heights. A man who would dominate her sexually but not otherwise. She pursued this goal relentlessly.

During her second week in Geneva, after she had found a job and an apartment, she met Carter, an American scientist, 38 years old, at the Movenpick restaurant, which was the most popular hangout right smack in the middle of town. He was in Geneva with a year's contract with a scientific firm. He was very intelligent, had a great sense of humor, made her laugh and they went out on dates to good restaurants, to the movies, to parties and of course they ended up in bed. He fell in love with her. Close to the end of his contract and a few of months into the relationship, Julia realized that she was late

having her period. This had never happened before and she was very concerned. This was no time to get pregnant. She had to tell David.

During a dinner date she came out with “Carter, I think I’m pregnant.”

“Are you sure?” He looked very concerned and took her hands in his across from the table, looking at her very tenderly.

“Yes, almost sure, I have never missed a period ever before – it has always been very punctual and I do feel very swollen.”

“So, it’s not such a big deal, I have not come out and told you Julia but you must have guessed by now that I do love you very much. We’ll get married and go back to New York at the end of my contract. We’ll look for a bigger apartment and everything will be Okay.”

Julia looked at him dumbfounded. Marry Carter? She knew that he loved her but she thought he was going to suggest that she have an abortion. She did not think that he was ready for marriage. There were no problems with getting abortions in Switzerland. It was a simple matter arranged by the mutual consent of two doctors. No government interference whatsoever. She enjoyed Carter’s company, had ordinary sex with him but was not in love with him. There was no way Julia was going to go back to New York so soon after arriving in Switzerland and certainly not for Carter. She told him she was not ready to get remarried. He was disappointed at her decision.

“What are you going to do then?” he asked.

“I’ll just have an abortion.”

“Julia, I really do love you, and I do want to get married. Won’t you reconsider?” He was still holding her hands.

It was comforting to know that Carter wanted to get married but she was adamant in her decision. An agonizing week went by contemplating all kinds of possibilities but in the end she did have her period so the matter was settled. They continued seeing each other until his contract was over and he returned to New York.

“My proposal still stands” he said when she took him to the airport, “just give me a call anytime.” They hugged and kissed and Julia felt rather sad that he was leaving.

They did remain in contact and remained good friends throughout the years. He came to Geneva every summer and asked her “How is your love life, are you still free? Can we resume where we left off?” The answer was she had another boyfriend and no, they could not resume where they left off. He had not given her any sexual thrills and there was no earthly reason to go back to someone who did not excite her senses. Carter never got married.

Then came the Belgian, a high-ranking international civil servant, quite a bit older than her. He was extremely obsessed by her and became too possessive. He wanted to see her every evening as he had nothing else to do. Well she had plenty to do, she had to paint and go out with her friends. When she wanted to break up with him, he tried to kidnap her one day. She gave him up immediately. He had told her mother “your daughter does not know what she wants.” *The daughter did know what she did NOT want, stupid fool.*

After that there was the Italian lawyer from Milan. He was a great guy, a gentleman, worldly, romantic and debonair as only Italians can be and quite athletic. All in all a very good catch. He came to visit her almost every weekend or she went skiing with him in the Italian Alps. He asked her to marry him and move to Italy. She did like him a lot but

not enough to get married, leave Geneva, and move to Italy. She could absolutely not visualize her life in Italy. She was very much at home in Geneva. She told him so and he was extremely disappointed but he kept pursuing her thinking she might change her mind one day.

There was the handsome Turk who was in Geneva for a U.N. conference but alas he was married and there was no question that she would ever take up with a Turk anyway. He was very cute and a good lover though and she knew the relationship was going to be short lived because he had to return to Turkey. It was just a summer romance and a lot of fun. No future in it at all. She was not heartbroken.

There was the very good looking Scottish guy – he looked like Sean Connery - whom she met in a hotel in Spain when she was vacationing with her sister. He was there on a business conference. He was “kind of” separated from his wife although they still lived together in London. He was stationed in Geneva for a year. Separated or not, he swore he had not had sex with his wife for the past two years, even though she came to Geneva with the children in the summer to stay with him. It seems the wife did not like sex. So with whom had he had sex with? She did not ask. It was obvious that he was sex starved because he could perform twice a night almost every night. He laid down his position quite frankly to her. He adored her and thought she was the love of his life but he could not figure out how to plan his future. If he divorced his wife and married her, he would lose his children. Julia was quite enamored of him; he was intelligent, amusing, caring and very good in bed but she did not want a man with guilt feelings of having abandoned his children. She decided to end the relationship when he moved back to London. He kept on writing love letters to her for months and would

occasionally come to Geneva on business. She saw him and had sex with him a few times but it was not the same as before. It became kind of casual. They finally drifted apart.

There was the Iranian PhD philosophy student from the University, who dressed impeccably, was very suave and sophisticated but very talkative. He knew how to court a woman though. He sent her 24 red roses on her birthday. Unfortunately she got bored listening to his monologues about the existence of God.

There was the Spanish minister of defense in Geneva for a conference. He was married also. Another short lived affair with a highly intelligent man who was also an artist. They had a lot in common. He pursued her relentlessly and wanted her as his mistress travelling with him on state business throughout Europe. She went on a couple of trips but then got bored tagging along with someone with no prospect of a future. This was not the life for her. She did not want to be his mistress. She might have married him if he was available because she came very close to loving him. They parted amicably and they did not make any further contact.

There was a very sweet unpretentious Danish young man, a couple of years younger than her, who was in Geneva for an internship program at the U.N. This was quite a romantic affair but short lived and of no consequence. Just a passing fancy. Nothing to get excited about.

Some men lasted a few weeks, some a few months but none fitted the bill because they were not husband material and they did not thrill her. They were all in love with her but she was not in love with them. That was the big problem. She realized that she was looking for the “impossible to find” man. Her criteria were too demanding. He had to be

of husband material, intelligent, worldly, amusing, attractive, dependable and passionately in love with her. And of course he had to be wealthy – she had expensive taste in clothes – and oh, most importantly, he should not bore her. She could not suffer bores. *But doesn't marriage get boring after a while?*

Her auntie, way back in Egypt, had come up with the statement “You are too outspoken. Curb your tongue, men don't like outrageously opinionated women and you'll never find a husband if you continue this way. Act demurely and after the wedding you can change little by little in getting your own way.” She brushed her auntie's advice aside. She was not going to think one way and act another way. She found plenty of men who wanted to get married to her, *so there goes your statement auntie dear.*

Her girlfriends were all envious of her and asked her “What is your secret, how come you get all these men swarming around you like bees?”

Her answer was simple. “I don't pursue them. I am not needy. Men do not like needy women. They like the chase and I let them chase me. Men like to feel they have conquered a woman. And, I never encroach on their freedom. Most important, I don't give them blow jobs; men do not respect a woman who does.” None of her boyfriends had ever requested one. There had only been the case of one man, her divorce lawyer in New York who, she must admit, had had a lot of charisma. During her separation period with her husband, her lawyer had told her that she could not go out with any man except him, in case her husband would put a detective on her and find out she was seeing other men. The request for alimony would then go down the drain. She was rather attracted to him and went out on “so called business dates” with him a couple of times. They went to bed and after sleeping with her the first time, he had solemnly

declared “next time you will take me in your mouth.” He never had the next time opportunity because she refused to see him after that and fired him as her lawyer. *How dare he come out with a vulgar statement like that? Who did he think he was dealing with? A penis crazy woman?* That was the end of this one-nighter. She later found out that he was married but he had kept that important fact a secret when he was “courting” her.

A stupid friend of hers in New York, once told her that she never kissed her casual boyfriends but gave them blow jobs. “It is less intimate” she said. *How can it be less intimate? Is there anything more intimate than the sexual organ? Stupid girl.* She never let her borrow her lipstick ever again. Even the thought repulsed her.

So Julia’s life in Geneva went on full swing, going out on dates, having boyfriends and searching for the right man. Her artistic career was also thriving. She had managed to give quite a few exhibitions in Geneva and the surrounding area. All In all she was quite happy but would be happier if she achieved her ultimate goal of finding a suitable partner.