

A Chronicle of Intimacies

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CHAPTER TWO - MAY, 1991

I was like a small boy looking forward to Christmas. My secretary, Kate knew of our date and commented on my new-found happiness. Those two weeks, those fourteen days seemed to pass ever so slowly. When that long-awaited Saturday finally arrived, I decided to dress casually, though, hopefully still looking reasonably smart. On our first two dates, I had worn a suit and tie, but felt that, for this day, beige slacks, white trainers, white sports shirt and casual jacket would be more appropriate. I put plenty of my Chanel after-shave on, combed my hair into what would, hopefully, look reasonable for a man in his forties.

As I walked along the platform after alighting from the train at Chester, Carol saw me, walked up and gave me a big hug and kiss. I was pleased that she did not mind showing her affection in public, since the inhibitions of my earlier life had now disappeared. We walked out of the station hand in hand and headed for Carol's car. Once in the car, we kissed and cuddled before driving to another part of the city. Carol knew of a car park close to the city wall, where we could leave the car for a few hours. Once there, we walked around the wall, for most of the time holding hands, and talked of our past lives.

Carol had been divorced for a few years after an affair with a married man. This disclosure immediately raised many questions in my mind, which I dare not ask. What had become of this other man and what were Carol's feelings for him now? If she had chosen to answer my questions, I probably would not have liked the answers she may have given. I did know that, although this other man might still be in the background somewhere, it would not affect my feelings for Carol, nor must it spoil our enjoyment of each other. After all, if she had any strong attachment to this man, then she would not have joined an introduction agency and accepted my date.

I told her of my own marriage, of how my wife and I had simply drifted apart over the years and how this resulted in our separation and subsequent divorce. I found something very comforting about Carol's company and it was not just sexual anticipation.

Although Carol knew the area well, she was not aware of the Water Tower, which was obviously intended as a tourist attraction. We went up the few steps into the reception area where, after paying our entrance fee, we were each handed a small, electronic receiver which was designed to hang around our necks. The first room we entered was darkened and, through lenses mounted in the roof of the tower, an image of the surrounding area was projected on to a horizontal white board in the centre of the room. After looking at this for a few minutes, I pulled Carol close to me and gave her a deep, passionate kiss. I imagined us making love in that strange room, but knew it was not a practical idea. This was proven as we separated on hearing someone else climbing the stairs.

We then walked down some more steps to a circular room with several alcoves around its perimeter. Through small earphones attached to our receivers, we were able to hear a different, dramatised commentary in each alcove. We both agreed that it had been very cleverly designed and sat in every alcove, holding each other close while we listened to this potted history of Chester. The next stop after the water tower was a bar, near to the river, where Carol had an extra dry Martini and I had a whisky and soda. The bar was not very pleasant and the service was slow, but at least it provided us with some refreshment on a warm, May day.

Eventually, we reached the end of our journey around the wall and headed back towards Carol's car. She drove to a car park near to the theatre and, from there we walked to a small restaurant off the first floor walk-way so typical of Chester. This was where I had to admit to Carol that my eyesight was not good enough to read the menu. I felt so useless at having to ask my partner to read to me. She did not seem to mind, but I knew that this would trigger off many questions about the extent of my vision.

Carol had asked if I would sit opposite her at the table, rather than by her side and, after a while, she asked, "Can you see me clearly, darling?"

"Yes, I can see you quite well, because the lighting in here is fairly good, but there are so many factors which determine how well I see, that it is difficult to explain." I knew that this was not a completely satisfactory answer, but found great difficulty in comparing vision with anyone else, since my eyesight had never been good. From birth, I never had any vision in my right eye and that of my left had deteriorated gradually over the years through a condition known as retinitis pigmentosa. In everybody's eyes, there are millions of light sensitive cells on the retina. In a person with normal eyesight, these cells are constantly dying off and being regenerated, but, in my case, no new cells are being created. This results in a gradual blurring of

vision as more 'dead spots' appear on the retina.

I knew this could eventually lead to total blindness, but also knew there was no point in dwelling on this probability. It was far preferable, I felt, to get on with life and not to let it spoil my enjoyment of the world and everything in it. I had to accept that this unwanted inheritance would make me less attractive to women and, since I was certainly not handsome, my chances of attracting anyone were extremely remote.

This made it all the more incredible that I was now with a woman who obviously had fairly strong feelings for me. Equally, my feelings for her were already very strong and I found her warm, attractive, good company and very desirable. As she smiled at me across the table, I felt such a thrill and thanked God that fate had brought us together.

In making our choice from the menu, we each chose a different starter, allowing us to share them. We sat at that table happily feeding each other, completely oblivious to anyone else in the restaurant. Carol kept me sexually aroused for the whole of the meal, by stroking her bare toes up and down my legs. This simple action meant so much to me that I felt quite overcome with emotion. As with the first course, we chose different sweets with the intention of again sharing them. When the waitress brought them, she asked who was having which sweet. Carol and I looked at each other with a questioning smile.

The waitress understood our looks and said with a knowing smile, "Ah, you're sharing them, are you? We nodded in acknowledgement just as if we were two, small children and once again, spoon-fed each other. It would have been very obvious to anyone watching us that we were lovers, but neither of us felt the slightest inhibitions.

We had taken our time over the meal, so that we could walk straight from the restaurant to the theatre in good time for the start of the performance. On this occasion, Carol had chosen the theatre and booked tickets. The small theatre was quite full for the play about an Italian couple whose marriage was destroyed when the husband had an affair. Carol commented that the theme was a bit too near the truth for comfort, but I restrained myself from asking any probing questions. Although I was curious about her relationships, I was determined that I would let Carol tell me what she wanted and in her own time.

We did follow the play, but derived more pleasure from each other's company. We held each other close, petted and enjoyed the occasional passionate kiss. The fact that the people around us could see our obvious displays of affection for each other did not bother us at all.

After the show, we walked around Chester for just a little while and then returned to Carol's car. It was ten-thirty and Carol had booked a taxi for eleven o'clock, to take me home. We decided to take advantage of the remaining time to enjoy each other within Carol's car. Since we were in a car park in the centre of Chester, there was a limit to what we could get up to without being observed, but, short of actual intercourse, we took full advantage of the time available to us. Carol had very sensitive breasts and derived great enjoyment, as indeed I did, from holding each other close, bare breasts to bare breasts. As I fondled her, she sighed with erotic pleasure and said, "Oh, darling, I want you to do that all night. As soon as we can have the whole night together, please do that for me."

These words were both surprising and magical to my ears. The thought of spending the whole night with Carol increased my excitement and I replied, "I will, my darling, I will." The experience of being so intimate in a car and, in what really was a public place, was yet another first for me. As a middle-aged man, as I had to admit I was, I was now experiencing what most teenagers took for granted, many of them going the whole way within their car. I still had difficulty in believing that this was really happening to me. It must be a beautiful dream from which I had yet to wake up at some stage and, yet, everything was so real. The warmth of Carol's slender body, her deep, intense kisses, the darkness of the night, the sound of people walking nearby was all too realistic to be just a dream.

That thirty minutes passed far too quickly and, when my taxi arrived, we gave one last, lingering kiss and then parted company. On the journey home, I ran through all the events of that day over and over in my mind. I knew that my feelings for Carol were getting stronger with each meeting, each kiss and each touch. Was it sexual or something much deeper? I had not set out to fall in love and certainly never expected to fall so quickly. Everything about Carol felt so right. She was slim, petite, intelligent, very warm hearted and had many interests in common with me. I realised that it must be love when I found that she was constantly in my thoughts from awakening in the morning until falling asleep last thing at night. I looked forward even to the sound of her voice on the telephone. It had such warmth and sincerity that I could never tire of hearing her voice.

Before I met Carol, I had booked to go to Paris for a short holiday and now wished I had not. I asked Carol if she would be able to go with me, but I knew what the answer would be.

"I can't, love. There's no way I can leave the children - not for that length of time."

Occasionally, the children did stay with Carol's ex-husband, Alan, but that was usually for only one night.

"You go on your holiday, darling, and we'll see each other soon after you get back."

The following Friday, I took a taxi to Manchester Airport and made my way to the information desk. Since I was now unable to read signs and notices, I had discovered that the best way to enjoy a holiday, was to inform the airport of the potential difficulties and they would provide assistance. I hated drawing attention to myself and my visual impairment, but, if it was done with a little sensitivity, a personal courier through the airports was, by far, the best solution. This type of assistance did not mean that security was relaxed and I was thoroughly frisked as I was passing through the area where hand luggage is checked. I did not mind this, since they had taken my word for it that I had anything wrong with my eyes. My escort, a pretty young woman, chatted quite happily as we went through the airport and she did not leave me until I was safely in my seat on the DC-10. Throughout the short, uneventful flight, the stewardesses were attentive and helpful. I did realise that, if Carol had gone with me, none of this special treatment would have been provided, but I would have forsaken it all for the chance to be with her. I knew that a few, romantic days in Paris with Carol would have been perfect, but this was not to be possible.

At Charles De Gaulle airport, another pretty, young escort joined me at the aircraft and made the process of passing through customs and baggage collection so easy. She spoke English with a delightful accent and I felt in a good holiday mood, ready for whatever the next few days had in store for me. She found a taxi to take me to my hotel and wished me a pleasant holiday.

I had never been to France before and could not speak the language, but had bought a 'When in France' cassette a few weeks earlier. The few words and phrases I had learned in that short space of time would, I hoped, be sufficient to make myself understood and find my way around. This was based on the assumption that many French people could speak English. My expectations, however, were a little bit too high and only the occasional person, such as the hotel receptionist, was willing to converse in my native language.

This did make things a little more difficult, since I had to rely on my memory rather than resort to phrase-books or maps. The hotel room was quite small and basic in terms of quality, but it served the purpose. I vowed to myself that, if I was fortunate to take Carol to a hotel, it would have to be of much better quality.

On my first afternoon in Paris, I thought I should explore the area after settling in at my hotel. I found a major road with many shops and cafes not far from my hotel and spent a while walking around and looking for

landmarks. When hunger gained the better of me, I chose one of the many cafes and entered, hoping that I could avoid ordering something I did not like. As I sat at a table near the window, a waitress, wearing a brightly coloured skirt and very low-cut blouse approached and offered me a menu. I asked if she spoke English and quickly discovered that she did not. She soon realised that the most sensible idea would be to find someone else who could understand me. Another similarly dressed waitress appeared from the kitchen and helped me to choose my meal using a very broken form of English.

After a quite enjoyable, though not very filling meal, I felt confident enough to walk a bit further away. The first thing I had to do was find a large landmark. Near to my hotel, there was a metro station and I felt that this was big enough to use. My plan was to walk a rectangular route with the entrance to the metro forming one of the short sides. It was when I was trying to complete the rectangle that I went wrong. The streets in that area of Paris were anything but parallel and, as a result, unknown to me, I was getting further away from my starting point.

When I did not recognise any of the surrounding areas, I realised my mistake and felt extremely stupid at being lost on my first day in Paris. I was not particularly worried, since I knew that I could not be a great distance from my hotel and just needed to find a taxi to get back. Eventually, I discovered a cab, but was charged over the odds when the driver realised I was English. I would have to be better organised for the rest of the holiday.

On the Saturday morning, a coach with a well-spoken Tourist guide collected me from my hotel and took me on a conducted tour of the main sights of Paris such as the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triumph, Notre Dame and the usual tourist attractions. While it was interesting, I did find the sheer volume of tourists spoiled the experience. Still, I was, myself, one of those many thousands of tourists eager to see France's capital city, so I could not complain too much. I had made friends with an American on the coach and found it useful to stay with him if only to make certain that I could find my way back to the coach.

In the afternoon, I went shopping with a mission in mind. Whatever else I did while in France, I was determined to buy a present for Carol. She was constantly in my thoughts and I missed her desperately. I really wanted to give her something which she could treasure for many years. When I became lost the day before, I had noticed a large shopping area, but this time I made certain I could retrace my route. I found a shopping arcade in a building which housed a metro station and spent a while scouring the area for the right type of store. After a difficult time, trying to determine which kind of shops I was passing, I found a little lingerie shop called

'Sylva' and nervously entered. I felt certain that someone here would speak English, but to my dismay, found this not to be the case. I felt that my limited knowledge of the language was insufficient and left the shop empty-handed. Thinking that I might stand a better chance in a department store, I walked a few blocks away, making a careful mental note of the numbers of crossings and corners. I found a huge store and felt certain they would have a lingerie section. The thing I did not anticipate was the size of the shopping complex I had just entered. It was spread over several blocks, each connected by high-level enclosed bridges. This made the task of finding what I wanted even more difficult and I had visions of getting lost within this marble and glass maze. Worse still, I could not find any assistants who spoke English. After a while of walking along endless passageways, I gave up and decided to leave the store. I still do not know whether it was good luck or management, but I succeeded in finding the entrance door from which I had started my tour.

I made my way back to Sylva's in the hope that I could make myself understood. When I entered the shop, I caught sight of an advert on the counter. It was of a woman dressed only in bra and knickers. When the young woman assistant had finished attending to her previous customer, she showed recognition at seeing this curious Englishman again. I pointed to the knickers in the advert. At last, she understood - sign language still has its uses. She asked, again by pointing, what colour of knickers I wished to buy. Black was my choice. She then spread several pairs on the counter, allowing me to make my selection. After a few minutes of indecision, I finally chose one very sexy pair and handed them to the assistant. She realised the importance of presentation of my purchase and spent several minutes gift wrapping the knickers. I thanked her for her help and happily left the shop with the parcel inside a neat little carrier bag advertising Sylva's.

I headed back for my hotel and, miraculously, found my way without too much difficulty. On my journey, I met a couple of English women who were lost and even managed to help them find their way back. Their hotel was on the same street as mine, the Rue de Berne. We parted company and I entered my own hotel, where I had a shower and change of clothes. I felt that I should try and find a better restaurant for my evening meal and asked the receptionist for advice. He told me that the local restaurants were not very good and said that, if I could wait until seven o'clock when he was off duty, he could show me an excellent place to eat.

A few minutes later, another guest asked much the same question. He was from New Zealand and was with his wife and daughter. At seven, we all followed the receptionist, while he led us a somewhat tortuous route for about twenty minutes, until we, at last, arrived at a very pleasant restaurant. By this time, I was chatting quite

happily to the New Zealand family and was asked if I would join them for the meal. I was very grateful for the company and enjoyed a superb dinner. By the end of the evening, we had made good friends of them and they had invited me to visit and stay at their house in New Zealand. I did not know whether I would be able to take advantage of the offer, but greatly appreciated their gesture. Back at the hotel, I talked for quite a while to the helpful receptionist, making arrangements for the rest of my holiday.

Sunday morning was spent quietly, walking just within a few blocks of my hotel. A coach arrived in the afternoon to take me to the Palace of Versailles. When I saw the magnificent extravagances of this period of history, I could understand the reasons for the Revolution. Within a few minutes of arriving at the Palace, I had found a charming English couple from Cheshire. We got on quite well and stayed together for the tour of the Palace and its gardens. For some strange reason, I had found it much easier to make friends since my separation. I certainly found it quite easy to make conversation and was, I suppose, less inhibited than I would have been with my former spouse.

After an enjoyable afternoon, I returned to my hotel to prepare for my evening's entertainment. With a shower, a clean shave and my most presentable suit, I felt ready for whatever the evening may have in store for me. At seven thirty an empty, forty seater luxury coach arrived at my hotel and I was the only person to be collected. As I relaxed in the comfort of the wide seats, this sleek, impressive monster glided through the narrow streets of Paris, stopping at several hotels to pick up other guests. When everybody had been collected, the coach was still only about half full, but it then made its way to the embankment of the river Seine.

The passengers were escorted to a boarding point where we went aboard a wide, modern river cruiser. Our English-speaking courier escorted us to our appropriate dinner table. Many tables were already occupied and the air was filled with the chatter of the cruiser's occupants. A complimentary glass of pink champagne was offered to each guest and, in my case, I had two glasses. I had met a very pleasant couple from Boston, USA, on the coach and they were sitting opposite me at the table. I had the impression that they were newly-weds and the young woman offered me her champagne. It struck me that she was being quite sensible in avoiding too much alcohol, assuming she wished to remain reasonably sober.

I was probably the only person on board without a partner and felt particularly sad that Carol was not with me to enjoy this romantic, candle-lit dinner while cruising on the Seine. The newly-weds were sitting side by side, opposite me and I thought it prudent not to disturb their enjoyment of each other by talking too much to them.

Apart from anything else, the level of noise on board, just from people talking, was too much to hear conversation across the wide table. Another couple on the other side of me had made the mistake of sitting opposite each other, making it difficult for them to converse. It was the woman who was sitting next to me and we soon found it very easy to talk to each other. This helped to reduce the feelings of loneliness I had earlier experienced. It took a while for everyone to be served and for the cruiser to start its journey. I think part of the delay was deliberate to ensure darkness before leaving its mooring. Powerful floodlights were attached to both sides of the cruiser and these were projecting large pools of light onto the river banks. Since the inside of the cruiser was now lit only by candle-light, the effect of the reflections of the floodlights on banks, bridges and the river itself were quite stunning to both occupants and onlookers. A small jazz band on board provided background music for the evening, which added even more to the overall effect.

During the conversation with Sherry, the woman sitting at the side of me, she became aware of my poor eyesight. As a result, she was really helpful in pointing out the landmarks I had difficulty making out. The good food, wine and good company made that evening one of the most unforgettable of my life. I was, by this stage, quite intoxicated from the effects of both the champagne and wine, but still quite coherent. After a sweet of nougat and fresh raspberries and a drink of cognac, I felt very comfortable and relaxed. At about eleven-thirty, the cruiser arrived back at its starting point and all passengers disembarked. I thanked Sherry for being such good company and, with a squeeze of her hand, wished her goodnight. Our original courier directed the American couple, myself and several others back to the coach we had arrived in earlier that evening. It then made more calls at other hotels in Paris, picking up more passengers. When all the passengers had been collected, the coach headed out of the city.

I was already feeling quite tired, even though there was more entertainment to come. When I had organised my excursions, the receptionist had told me of several cabaret night spots. I had asked for his recommendations and he said that the Crazy Horse had the reputation of being the most erotic in Paris. Since I may never get the opportunity again, I had decided to opt for the Crazy Horse in preference to the Moulin Rouge or the Lido. To our surprise, we all had to stand on the pavement outside a very ordinary looking building for at least twenty minutes. I had the impression that the timing had been miscalculated and we were waiting for the end of the previous performance.

Eventually, we were allowed to enter the club and led into a fairly small auditorium with seating arranged as in

a theatre. There was more than usual space between the seating and shelves were attached to the back of each seat to provide space for a glass and ash-tray. The young couple from Boston were sitting at the side of me and we all wondered what the show would be like. Our courier told us that, within the price of the ticket, each person was allowed two free drinks. He gave us a warning that, if we chose either wine or champagne, there would be an additional charge and it would be expensive.

Not wanting to miss the opportunity for a free drink, or, at least, drinks I had already paid for, I chose a whisky and dry ginger. The taking of orders and serving of drinks did seem to take a long time and, all the time, there was just background music playing, but the curtains remained closed.

While sitting there in a strange night club in the early hours of the morning in Paris, I began to wonder just what I was doing there. Would I have gone there if Carol had been with me? No, I'm certain that we would not have gone there together. I also knew that I was not a middle-aged man who liked to ogle near-naked women. A fear that is increasing in strength, the older I become, is the possible complete loss of eyesight. It is this very fear that is driving me to travel and gain new experiences while I am still able to see them, even though the images would be somewhat blurred. I know that I am fortunate in being able to afford to satisfy these urges.

At long last, the curtains opened to reveal a fairly small stage. Several long-legged, scantily clad girls began to dance to what seemed to me to be very loud recorded music. Much use was made of projected pictures on to a screen behind the girls to create different backgrounds. The dancing was fairly suggestive though, I must admit; I did not find it the least bit erotic. I suppose it could have been described as

artistic, but I felt a certain amount of disappointment. I did realise that I might be missing some of the effect with my restricted vision, but I certainly could not ask the American couple to describe what was happening.

The big mistake I did make was to have too much to drink. I felt terrible to wake up and discover that I had slept through some of the performance. In a way, it was quite amusing, really, to have slept through what was hailed as one of the most erotic shows in Europe. The night air felt clean and sharp as we left the club to rejoin our courier on the coach. At three-thirty that morning, I arrived back at my hotel feeling very drunk and exhausted. I was not able to sleep late, since I had made arrangements for another special excursion that Monday morning.

After just a few hours of restless sleep I was disturbed by the phone. It was reception with my alarm call. Sleepily, I showered, dressed and ate a brief breakfast. At ten o'clock, I went down to reception and, after a few

minutes, a young, dark-haired woman entered the hotel. I went up to her and said, "Good morning. Are you Sonia?"

She looked relieved at having found her client so easily. "Your chauffeur will be here in a few minutes. Until then, perhaps we could discuss your requirements?"

Her grasp of the English language was excellent and, as usual, English spoken with a slight foreign accent sounded much better than that spoken by most British people. After some discussion, we went outside and found the French chauffeur sitting in a brand new Metro. He could not speak any English, but that was not important, since my escort would give him all the instructions.

Sonia produced a map and showed the driver the route to take. I knew this was the best way to see Paris. The receptionist at my hotel had contacted several friends and had managed to find Sonia, a student in her late twenties, who was willing to act as a personal courier. Unfortunately, she did not drive and, for that reason, a chauffeur had to be found. As we were driving around the streets of Paris, Sonia was pointing out some of the landmarks which she felt warranted comment but not interesting enough to stop. I had told Sonia that I did not want to see the usual tourist attractions. I was more interested in feeling the atmosphere of the real Paris and, to this end, we walked through many narrow streets bordering the banks of the Seine. We strolled leisurely through areas where academics gathered and stopped in several small parks. I was still feeling very tired after the previous evening's excursions and was glad of the occasional rest.

We had lunch together in a little cafe which seemed to be frequented only by Parisians. It was a relief not to hear the intrusions of American small talk which seemed to pervade the Paris I had seen before that day. Sonia and I had a good day together, with me asking a great deal of questions and, thanks to her intimate knowledge of the area, she was able to provide answers to most of them. If I had difficulty in making out the detail of some feature she was showing me, she would describe it to me in quite good detail.

I felt sorry for the chauffeur who stayed with his car all day and was always ready to transport us to another area. At one point, we were driving along a wide, busy road with cars passing on either side of us, when I felt a bump on my side of the car as a van passed too close to us. My first thoughts were for the driver's brand new Metro. Both vehicles stopped and the drivers began arguing in loud voices. After a few minutes of letting off steam, they calmed down and agreed that the damage did not warrant any further action. There was not an actual dent as I had expected from the impact. There was a scratch, however, but this could probably be

touched up without too much difficulty.

At five o'clock, we arrived at the airport, where I paid the chauffeur using my remaining francs and Sonia with English currency. I thanked them both for a tremendous day and they wished me a safe journey as I entered the airport terminal. It was shortly after this that I had my first upset of the holiday. I gave my name to the woman on the Air Lingus desk and she told me that someone would be along to assist me shortly. A man did arrive and asked me to wait a few minutes and then he would return with a wheelchair. I felt certain I must have misheard him. Why on earth would they want to bring a wheelchair? Then I remembered something I had heard a long time before. I had heard that some French people did not know how to handle someone with a visual handicap and would, in affect, assume them to be an invalid. I had no intention of being humiliated in such a way. I went back to the young woman at the Air Lingus desk, who, I felt certain, would be more sensible. She agreed that a wheelchair was completely un-necessary and said she would have a word with the escort. He still arrived with it, however. I made it very clear to him that I had no intention of sitting in it, and, seeing my annoyance, left the wheelchair behind. He still did not have much idea, though, since he grabbed my arm from behind and tried to push me along. As politely as I could, I explained to him that, if he would walk in front of me and slightly to my left, that was all that was necessary. He nervously kept turning around, presumably to make certain that I had not fallen over. This was the first time of travelling through several airports that I had encountered such ignorance. I had to admit to myself that I did have different rules for male and female escorts. If a woman offered me her hand, I would never refuse it, but my masculinity made me feel very uncomfortable if I had to hold hands with a man.

As I entered the plane, an Irish stewardess greeted me and I said, "That is a very welcome accent, after the last few days." The flight was quick and routine and, thankfully, once I arrived at Manchester airport, a young woman was there to assist me and find my luggage. A short journey by taxi was all that was necessary to reach my home. Returning home after a holiday always seemed to be an anticlimax and I am never certain whether I am sad or glad to be back. The thought of seeing Carol just two days later was enough to convince me I was in the right place.

When Carol arrived on Wednesday night, I greeted her eagerly with a hug and a kiss. We had a drink and some sandwiches and found that we still had plenty of time before the taxi was due to arrive to take us to the theatre. We began kissing passionately and, before long, went upstairs to my bedroom. This time, I was better prepared

and had a large supply of condoms at the side of my bed. We quickly stripped off our clothes and made energetic, exquisite and exciting love. We both climaxed at the same time and lay, exhausted and happy, on the bed. We still kissed and cuddled and stroked each other's naked body, losing all track of time and were still lying, enjoying ourselves when the doorbell rang.

The taxi had arrived and neither of us had a stitch of clothing on. "I'll go and ask him to wait a few minutes," Carol said as she began to dress. I was quite amazed at the speed of her dressing.

She was dressed, spoken to the taxi driver and returned upstairs and I still was not ready. "I'll fasten your laces, love" she said patiently. I was fastening my tie while she did my shoe laces.

As Carol was rushing downstairs, I shouted, "Oh, darling, there's some chocolates in the fridge - would you get them, please?" I put the intruder alarm on, locked the doors and tumbled into the taxi, flushed with excitement. The taxi did not take long to reach the theatre.

The show, that evening, was Agatha Christie's *Verdict*, a clever murder story. The production was designed in such a way that only one stage set was necessary.

We both enjoyed the show and each other. It's surprising that we managed to follow the story, since we held each other close, kissed and petted for the whole performance. I did notice that people sitting on either side of us never asked to pass us and, instead, seemed prepared to go the long way round. Our souls seemed to be intimately entwined in a dream of happiness.

The one flaw to the whole evening occurred when Carol, noticing the lovesick look in my eyes, said "Darling, please don't expect too much of me." I wondered what she was trying to tell me.

True, I had fallen very much in love and far quicker than I had ever imagined possible. The impression Carol had given me was that she, equally, had fallen in love with me. The fact that she had given herself to me completely, held nothing back and the way in which we seemed to melt into each other every time we met helped to reinforce this belief. Was it perhaps the ghost of this other man which was creating some warning, some caution in her mind? Or was it perhaps that the pace of our relationship was frightening her? She even said, shortly after making this request, "I don't know what I'm doing - you're not even my type of man." This comment did hurt and I was puzzled by the reason for the statement.

"What is your type of man?" I asked, uncertain of whether I wanted to hear the answer.

"I don't know. I'm sorry. I do love you, but things seem to be happening too fast. Please just give me time."

She gave me a comforting hug and smiled at me to try and allay my worries. I did try and put it to the back of my mind, but it was a warning I could not ignore.

Even the taxi journey home was good with Carol by my side. We held each other close, kissed and petted for the whole journey home. The driver, sensing our mood, played background music from a cassette for us, completing the atmosphere of romance. Back home, we had a drink and talked happily together. I excused myself and ran upstairs, returning a couple of minutes later with a small, gift-wrapped parcel. As I handed it to Carol, I said, smiling, "I've brought a little present for you, from Paris."

She could not miss the 'Sylva's Lingerie' printing on the wrapping and probably realised the contents. Carol gave a delightful smile as she unwrapped the parcel containing the knickers.

"Darling, they're lovely. You're very naughty, you know."

"I suppose I am. You're not offended, though, are you?"

"No. Of course I'm not. At first, when I saw them, I thought, 'how dare he?' but I really do love the thought you've put into my present. As long as you don't expect me to be under any obligation."

"No, that's understood - no obligation. I wanted to bring you something personal and memorable. I knew that I could not get something the children might see, since you don't want them to know about me. I had quite a bit of fun buying those, you know."

"I can imagine." She gave me a long kiss of gratitude and said in a sensuous voice, "I'll wear them next time we meet and you can take them off me." The very thought of this action excited me and I wished we could make love again. What she said next took my breath away. "I do love you, darling. At least, I think I do. Perhaps we should go somewhere for a dirty week.." She quickly corrected herself. "er, somewhere where we can get the sex out of our system and see if there is anything left."

I knew, in my mind, that there was much more than just a physical attraction between us. The chemistry was so right that it would be a crime to do anything else but enjoy each other's company. It had surprised me that she was suggesting basically what she very nearly called it - a dirty weekend. I was not shocked, though and said, "You know I'd love to spend a weekend with you. If that's what you would like, let's do it soon."

"Soon, darling. But I must go, now."

It was late and she was working the following day, so I gave her one last kiss and wished her a safe journey home. If only she could stay for the night, I would have been on top of the world. Making love with Carol was

fantastic, but I knew that I wanted her to spend the whole night with me, holding each other close while we slept. I could only hope that this would happen soon.

We talked frequently on the phone, usually late at night, when Carol's children were in bed and, during the next few days, arranged that Carol would come to my house on Saturday, the next weekend. The arrangement was that Carol would bring a frozen meal for two and we would stay in, making as much love as we wanted. The very thought of it excited me and I waited in eager anticipation of that day. Such great sexpectations!