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What others are saying about The Queen's Escape

“Reading the Queen's Trilogy has been an experience that was unique. It was a surprise to read about the life of the amazing Paula! She is much more than a writer; she is a philosopher, a survivor, an enigma, and most of all, a woman of the World!

It is a powerful, exotic, sexy document that has so much depth. Because it is true, the power is magnified beyond one's expectations. Her grasp and understanding of relationships, history, Yoga and spiritualism, left me wondering where the energy came from that was required to complete this demanding collection. Beyond the energy required there was also the research, analysis and coordination of a multitude of diverse concepts and experiences. The underlying thread revealed an amazing intellect.

I will be surprised if this Trilogy doesn't surface as a Best Seller. It is worthy of such a status. It was an honor to be allowed to read this Trilogy. Thank you Paula.”

- Gary Little (retired Superintendent of Schools)

“What a rollercoaster of a read! It's fun and it's exciting! Once I started with this educated, entertaining and honest account of the writers adventures in Middle America I couldn't put it down. We get to know Paula Liebe as a fearless seeker of truth and light, for which she doesn't hesitate to use her body, her imagination and whatever sacred medicine she can get her hands on. We get intimate and touching glimpses of her youth and the dark secrets and tragedies she continues to escape from We must admire the heroine as a woman who does well in anything she puts her mind to, like starting a singing career where she amazes her audience with her strong voice, humor and beauty. In all her books Paula touches many esoteric and exotic subjects. She paints the big picture, connects the dots and awakens our interest. Her courage inspires us and she delights us with her sensual, free spirit. A continuous theme throughout this trilogy is the writer's sexy quest for true love and we get spicy accounts of the searches for her soul mate in many different places. I highly recommend that you read all 3 books and I am sure that after the last page, although many of your questions will have been answered, you are still hungry for more writings of this fascinating and talented woman.”

- Hannie van Dantzig

“I absolutely adored it! I love that it is non-fiction that could read as fiction. Only I know that those stories really happened. I remember each and every one of them like yesterday, however to the casual reader, it could be a work of fiction. I love you crazy Paula, you are too talented...”

- Cindy Burke

“I am so very impressed. It’s such fun to read. So you want to sing and you sing like a bird. You want to write and you write like 50 Shades. Good for you Chica.”

- Gary Wendt

THE QUEEN'S ESCAPE

MEMOIRS OF A LIGHTWORKER

by

PAULA LIEBE

BOOK 1 OF THE QUEEN'S TRILOGY

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Discover other titles of the Queen's Trilogy by Paula Liebe:

Book 1: The Queen's Escape

Book 2: The Queen's Boudoir

Book 3: The Queen's Destiny

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PART 1

1st PROLOGUE

“Where is the fucking dope?” Michael screamed at me while pushing the Uzi further down my throat.

Cold and malignant was the look in his icy blue eyes, but the only thing I could think of was the hard steel damaging my teeth. I had absolutely no idea where he had been hiding his stuff this time around and after a couple of futile attempts to extract some meaningful sentences from me, he soon realized that I was further from knowing the secret storage of his shit than anybody else in his dealer circle.

“Stupid bitch!” he barked.

With a loud bang the door closed behind him.

The sudden silence left me defeated on the old stained mattress. I felt so empty and so alone. Half intoxicated I dragged my skinny and neglected body towards the dirty sink. Through the broken mirror I stared into my hollow eyes for a long time. Then my attention strayed towards my arms. They were covered with needle marks. My God, what had led me towards this disgusting and destructive existence? Where had it all started?

My thoughts traveled back to the beginning of my American adventure, into which I had thrown myself two years before. America, the land of infinite possibilities and a country far, far away from the sickening influence my father still had on me. A few weeks before I had made the great crossing I had planned to celebrate my 22nd birthday with friends at my goodbye party. But something would prevent that celebration.

To earn the final part of the money I needed to finance my trip to the United States, I worked evenings in my father’s restaurant ‘Charcoal’.

As always I had prepared the ‘mis en place’. Empty bottles were replaced with new ones, the cutlery was polished and the many candles were lit on time. In short, everything was perfectly prepared to receive our guests in a most hospitable way.

Through the flickering of the many flames I saw the stocky silhouette of my father striding down the restaurant. Having a well-developed sense for his unpredictable mood swings and observing how he neared me, I was forewarned of impending problems.

With critical scrutiny he had surveyed the interior of his restaurant and quickly had noticed a few details he did not approve of. Immediately he called me over and angrily started summing up all the little things that, in his eyes, showed an absolute lack of interest for ‘his’ business.

Powerless, I allowed his hurtful criticisms to engulf me. Slowly but steadily all the pent up anger of many years of injustice started to spread through me until it exploded outward in a fiery stream of words.

“It’s never good! Never! It’s never good enough!” I screamed through my stifled tears. “No matter how much I try, no matter the attention I place in carefully preparing everything, you only notice the things that slipped my attention. You only criticize! Why can’t you just for once give me a compliment?”

“Because it should be the most natural thing in the world that you pay the utmost attention in the restaurant of your father!” he said with his innate authority. “And especially with my own children, such a thing is expected without me having to point it out to you.”

“But you didn’t even notice all the tables I set with so much care!” I cried out theatrically.

His ominous face revealed a slightly amused look when he noticed my so-called hysterical behavior, a typical female ailment in his eyes.

“Yes, as always, just ridicule me! Asshole!”

The next moment, a full fist hit my face with an unexpected force. Instead of cringing in pain and fear, his appalling violence surfaced fury in me.

“You have to beat me up again?” I roared, “Here! Hit me!”

My powerful reaction touched an emotional volcano of impotence and rage that he could not control. The next blow was even more forceful and my left eye swelled up until I could hardly see. I didn’t feel any pain, only hate and rage.

“And another one!” I screamed hysterically. Through his murderous eyes I saw another blow hit my face.

“And another one!”

I don’t know what would have happened if the cooks had not intervened. They pulled him away from me and I ran out of the restaurant sobbing uncontrollably. Emotional panic overtook me and I dove into one of the restaurants a few doors further down the street. I was desperately gasping for air when a terrified young waiter brought me a glass of water. I couldn’t utter a single word. All I could do was try to get my breath under control and calm the emotional chaos in my head.

The guests at the restaurant were at a total loss with this pitiful scene, uncomfortably glancing my way. I wanted to get out of this place, away from yet more judgment. Hesitantly I asked if they could please call me a taxi.

“Oh no! He did it again?” my brother asked incredulously as he opened the front door, a worried look on his face. Tears streamed silently down my swollen cheeks. What could I say? Was there anything to say? Drenched in helplessness, I felt the biggest injustice had been hurled into my face. My respect was trampled and beaten into pieces. I felt humiliated to the bone.

With a cold washcloth I tried to bring some relief to the throbbing bruises on my battered face. By now my right cheek was the size of half a tennis ball and covered with a big blue purple contusion. The eye socket around my left eye was swollen. The cold cloth did little to relieve the pain.

Slowly the numbness of the humiliation that had been pounded into me started to melt. Aided by a cup of hot tea, little by little, my sense of worth crept back and started to warm my body and emotions. At the same time the most hateful and revengeful thoughts started to seep into my brain. Always there was one single question that prevailed over the mash of realizations. ‘Why? Why daddy, why?’

For a long time my brother and I talked about our father and the inescapable influence he had on our lives. During our conversation many painful memories surfaced that, through the years, had descended into the caverns of forgiveness and forgetfulness. Those sad recollections were pulled from under a blanket of understanding and placed into raw

reality. No matter how sad and abusive his own childhood had been, no matter how easily his temper was ignited, no matter with what kind of idealistic life's vision he wanted to raise his children, nothing could justify his violent and manipulative actions. That was a fact.

Never, never again did I want to feel his stocky frame pacing towards me, to see his bloodthirsty eyes piercing through me, to feel lukewarm piss running down my legs or to feel his nauseating violence. No more could I tolerate his constant criticism of everything and everybody. No more could I endure the ever-present threat of his unexpected outbursts. No more would my behavior and my emotions be affected by his unpredictable moods. If I couldn't make him disappear from my life then I would simply disappear from his.

CHAPTER 1. LOOKING FOR SUN KISSED BUTTOCKS

I had made it! After a messy delay in Washington and a sleepless night in Miami, I finally had arrived at the airport of Cancun, my final destination.

Harry Lackey, who had agreed to pick me up from the airport, wasn't anywhere in sight. Disappointed and slightly irritated from a wakeful night I bought a phone card, called the hotel and was told he was on his way. Within twenty minutes an old beat-up Chevy rolled into the parking lot.

"I'm so sorry I'm late," Harry apologized profusely.

"Don't worry about it," I responded with a smile. "It's good practice to get used to the Mexican rhythm. It's just that I didn't sleep at all last night and I'm a little tired."

Harry introduced me to his beautiful girlfriend Pilar. One kiss on the cheek followed by a hug appeared to be the standard way of greeting in this part of Mexico.

Within forty minutes we reached Playa del Carmen and Harry parked the car in front of hotel 'Da Gabi', which looked less exotic than the pictures had led me to believe. Nevertheless, the small room they had offered me looked very Caribbean with bright colors and artistic murals. After I had placed my three suitcases in my room - the only belongings I had left in the world except for some books and photos I had stored in my mother's cellar - I went to have breakfast with Harry and Pilar at 'Pokara', a funky looking restaurant across the street. There I was, sitting under waving palm trees, enjoying Mexican eggs and a soft Caribbean breeze.

"I must admit it's really strange to suddenly just 'be' here," I started. "I mean, for months and months I've worked so incredibly hard and totally lived towards this moment and then suddenly I'm here, living in Mexico!"

"Yes, I understand," said Harry, "I've been to Holland visiting my dad and it must be such a difference."

"And what are you going to do?" Pilar asked.

"To start with... I don't know. I think I will do what I always do when I'm in a new city."

"And what is that?"

"Just walk and wander around, taste the atmosphere, feel the personality of the town and let the energy of the place work its way through me."

"You've traveled to many countries?" Harry asked.

"I still have a long list of countries I want to visit. Besides Europe and the United States I've been to Brazil and Thailand and this year I traveled to India to study yoga."

"You like yoga?" Pilar asked enthusiastically.

"I certainly do!" I responded with the same excitement.

"Then I'll bring you to one of our yoga classes."

"Thank you. That would be wonderful!"

"You're welcome," she responded with the sweetest smile.

“You know Harry, I’m so grateful to your father for offering me a room in his hotel to get myself started here.”

“He has his pleasant moments,” Harry responded tactfully.

I didn’t know John Lucky very well. In Holland my best friend Mary had introduced us, as she was tutoring John’s younger son. John was so impressed with my audacious decision to move to Playa del Carmen that he had offered to help me out with a free room in his hotel.

“He said that I reminded him of your mother.”

“I agree, you do have some similarities with my mother.”

“Listen, I’m going to take a shower and change. I’ll see you guys later okay?”

“Yeah, sure,” Harry answered.

“Yes, we’ll see each other later,” Pilar smiled.

Just before I was ready to leave my room to start exploring Playa’s streets, I heard a knock on the door. Apparently Mary had already introduced me successfully to a few Playa people, because a wide smiling Lavonna stepped into my room when I opened the door. Lavonna took care of John’s daughter Tina, who was the youngest of his three children and needed extra care because she had suffered slight brain damage during pregnancy. She gave me a warm hug and started chatting away until her cell phone interrupted our conversation.

“It’s John,” she whispered while she covered the receiver with her hand.

I nodded.

“He’s going,” she said mischievously.

“He’s going where?” I asked.

“He’s going crazy!” she laughed.

This was just a little example of the complicated relationship John and Lavonna found themselves in.

“Why don’t you come and eat with us at the restaurant tonight. You’re part of the family now. We’ll be there around seven o’clock. I want to introduce you to many interesting people. Tom and Joanne for example, are building a healing retreat in the jungle. Don’t worry, I’ll introduce you to everybody.”

“Thank you Lavonna, that’s so nice of you.”

“So I’ll see you tonight at seven?” she asked with her happy blue eyes.

“Yes of course, that would be lovely.”

After another warm hug her blond curls disappeared through the door. This was a very different Lavonna than the one John had depicted. He had compared her to a territorial street cat. It would be interesting to hear how people described John.

Playa del Carmen had grown from a sleepy Caribbean fishing village into a thriving tourist town in little over ten years. According to some newspaper articles this was the fastest growing city in the world. After a little stroll down the famous pedestrian Fifth Avenue, lined with a large variety of boutiques, bars and restaurants, I decided it was time to explore the beach. In my travel guide I had read that gay people visited the northern part of the beach, which was far from the tourist crowd, and nude sunbathing was accepted. I had done nothing else in Ibiza, so this was where I was heading.

I walked past the beach clubs 'Playa Tukan' and 'Mamita's', hotel 'Las Palapas' and a few scattered cabañas before a long stretch of virgin tropical beach appeared before my eyes. The many different shades of the turquoise colored sea were breathtaking and soothing to a restless soul. I walked quite a while and still no naked gays in sight. I was determined not to sit down until I had spotted some brown sun kissed buttocks.

Finally I eyed the long-awaited bottom. He was medium built and certainly didn't look like an oversized Mexican with his grayish curls and neatly trimmed beard. At a proper distance I placed my 'pareo' on the white sand and started to read the book Mary had given me upon my departure, a channeled message from The Pleiadians. I was convinced that the middle-aged gentleman would understand why I had chosen a spot in his vicinity, lying here buck-naked all by myself.

After a while a short stocky Mexican appeared out of nowhere and carefully placed himself between the bespectacled man and me. A bold move, I thought.

"A praia e muito grande!" I yelled at him in Portuguese – as my Spanish was still non-existent – and pointed to the miles of deserted sand. With an embarrassed look he got up and left. I couldn't blame the guy for trying.

"Well done!" said the man and from his intonation I thought I detected a New York accent. We both continued to read and after an hour or so the American started to prepare himself for the long walk home. I had no intention in staying on this deserted beach all by myself, so I quickly got dressed and walked towards this tall man.

"Do you mind my company while we walk back?" I asked carefully.

"Not at all!" he responded enthusiastically and from the look in his eyes I immediately understood he was interested in anything but men. Through the surf we walked back, all the while talking. He had striking blue eyes, a well-shaped mouth and a prominent nose, which gave him a Jewish look. He was actually not an unattractive man, but absolutely not my type and after the vow I had made in Holland, days before my departure, my sexual interest for men had practically disappeared.

Benjamin was his name, a lawyer working in Los Angeles, but a true New Yorker at heart. He was on holiday for a month to recuperate from a stressful existence in the lawyer's world as well as a painful break-up with his girlfriend.

"So, what brought you to Playa del Carmen?" he asked inquisitively.

"That's a long story," I replied, "But what it comes down to is that the Universe guided me to this particular place to start a spiritual center. I have no idea what it will look like, but I know deep down inside I'm going to find that place here and that I will meet the right people."

"Listening to your passion and determination and seeing that powerful energy you have around you, I have no doubt in my mind that you can accomplish anything you set your mind to."

We had arrived at the first streets of downtown Playa del Carmen and with an almost boyish pride he asked me if I wanted to see his house. I still had some time before dinner and he seemed such a nice, charming and entertaining man that I could not refuse his invitation. We talked about books, religion and his 'cases' that were dominated by discrimination, sexual intimidation and human rights issues. As I pictured myself as the revolutionary fighter for justice, I felt a kinship to him.

Destiny ruled one of his cases to stardom and the result was the house he had constructed four years ago. The three floor L-shaped house had beautiful sun terraces, a

large round Jacuzzi and a breathtaking view of the rising sun. Thanks to the technical and artistic qualities of Arturo, the constructor of Ben's dream villa and with whom he seemed to have a love-hate relationship, his house was beautiful and stylish.

"Paula, I know a few nice people I would like to introduce you to. They would be interesting connections for your areas of interest. Actually, only the other day I was thinking that I would like a little more spirituality in my life."

"And then you met me!"

"Yes," he paused. "Exactly."

I noticed this meaningful look in his eyes.

"Hey Benjamin, I need to go."

"Really?" he said with a slight disappointment in his voice.

"Yes, I've been invited for dinner."

"Not bad for a new girl in town."

An enormous grin appeared on my face. Indeed, not bad for a first day.

"You can come by anytime. Anytime. Just call my name out loud, Will you do that?"

"Sure. I'll do that."

Like a true gentleman he walked me to the front door and we exchanged a short hug.

"Bye Benjamin."

"Bye Paula."

I felt his eyes following me to the end of the street.

CHAPTER 2. GOD'S GIFT ON EARTH

I was just on my way back from an early morning run along the beach when I heard someone calling my name. It took a while before I realized that the sound came from above. Ben was hanging over the edge of his terrace.

I smiled. "Oh Ben! I didn't realize it was you. How are you?"

"Not too bad on this beautiful sunny morning. And you, you look all nice and sweaty," he continued in a flirtatious way.

"Yes, well I like to stay in shape."

"Could I invite you then for some kayaking along the shore?"

"I would love that!"

"My buddy Doug and I often go kayaking in the morning and I'm sure he won't mind your company. I'll be down in a minute."

During another lively conversation we walked to Playacar, a part of Playa del Carmen designated for the well-to-do people who could afford luxurious villas with private pools. This gated community had a little bit too much of a Florida look for my personal taste.

Doug and I paddled alongside with strong strokes, but Ben still needed to get the hang of it and looked a little silly splashing around all by himself. When we returned to the villa the house was alive with people and sounds. I was introduced to Doug's wife Kim, who was seven months pregnant and to his mother in law Nancy, who had a hilariously strong Texan accent.

"We're organizing a dinner tonight. Would you like to join us? You could come with Ben," Kim offered with a friendly smile.

"Thank you, that is very kind of you," I replied.

"Ben's best friend Ken is invited," she continued, "so you get to meet him as well. He's a very nice man, a psychologist. He has a little hotel downtown."

"And you'll love Janice," Ben added. "She's Ken's girlfriend. She's also a psychologist and very interested in all that spiritual stuff you talk about all the time."

Considering the size of the kitchen and the lavish amount of kitchen utensils and equipment, the dinner promised to be very sumptuous.

After our workout on the turquoise water Ben invited me for breakfast. We sat down at '100% Natural' where I ordered a large plate of delicious tropical fruits.

"So tell me again, why did you move to Playa? I'm intrigued," Ben continued after he had finished his smoothie.

"I told you about these shamanic ceremonies I attend, remember?"

"Yes, where you take drugs and start hallucinating."

"No Ben, that's not what I said. Listen to my words. You should know better, being a hot shot lawyer and all."

A boyish look appeared on his face.

“I said that I’m part of a group of people who seriously study sacred medicinal plants. Those monthly ceremonies are performed with great reverence for the plant teacher that resides in those sacred plants. These vision circles, as we call them, are opened and closed with prayers for permission, protection, guidance and strength, because those spiritual journeys can be very strong and intense.”

“And what did you see?”

“I’ve seen a lot, Ben. I’ve seen a lot. But what I saw that particular session was the clearest image of Playa del Carmen and the absolute knowing that I needed to live here. At first I thought that living in paradise was just wishful thinking. I mean, who doesn’t want to live in the Caribbean? But the Universe kept sending me these little messages of affirmation. Like you pick up a magazine and you open it and you find an article on Palenque, or a friend gives you an interesting book on the Mayans, you know what I mean?”

“Yes, I see what you mean. But still, it’s a big move.”

“I always knew I would end up living somewhere far away from Holland. I have too much Latino blood in me for Dutch normality.”

“That is obvious.”

“When I made the decision to make the move, I had a well paying job, a company car and a big apartment full of art and antiques.”

“You gave that all up?”

“There wasn’t much to give up. I wasn’t able to find an interesting job as an environmental engineer, so I…”

“You’re an engineer?” Ben interrupted me with a growing admiration in his eyes.

“Yes, but I was working as a consultant in the information, communication and technology business. I made business trips to Paris, Oslo and Vienna for those stupid millennium scare tests. You know, testing the systems on being millennium proof. And then I ended up at some huge mortgage firm, testing more stupid systems. Only my spiritual ceremonies kept me sane from that slave existence. So, I resigned, sold everything I had, bought myself a new wardrobe and here I am!”

“But you must have been here before on vacation?”

“No, I had never traveled to this part of the world before. I had planned to, but at the last minute I had changed my plans. I decided to go to Brazil instead and study sacred plants in the Amazons. That was three years ago.”

“So you moved here without ever seeing Playa before?” he asked incredulously.

“Exactly!”

“You’re not only a beautiful and strong woman, but also a very courageous woman,” Ben said with even more admiration in his voice. “I have an idea. I know you have a free room with John Lackey, but he can be a little unpredictable at times. Why don’t you stay in my extra room when I go back to Los Angeles? I don’t intend to come back for a while because I will be too tied up with some complicated cases. I never rent out my house, so it would just sit empty. What do you think?”

“It sounds almost to good to be true. I don’t know what to say Ben.”

“Just think about it. And think about coming with me to Tulum next weekend. You’ll love it.” He looked at me with his flirtatious smile. “And it’s very romantic.”

Those were not the kind of words I wanted to hear in our conversation.

“Listen Ben, I need to tell you something.” I paused for a second to emphasize the seriousness of what I was going to reveal. “A few days before I flew to Cancun I found out I was pregnant. Or at least that’s what I thought. I missed the pill on one occasion and I had lots of sex with my lover, so it shouldn’t have come as a surprise. But it did. My breasts had grown a whole cup size overnight. These breasts you see here are normally a lot smaller.”

Ben stared at my cleavage and then looked back at my eyes.

“I didn’t dare go to an abortion clinic here in Mexico, if they have any and I had too little time to go to a clinic in Holland. I prayed for a miracle. Really Ben, on my knees I prayed and prayed and prayed that it would go away. I promised God my chastity for as long as necessary,” I ended with a serious tone.

“I see,” he responded with some disappointment in his voice. “That’s a strong vow. Respect.”

“Thank you Ben, I’m glad you understand my decision. Listen, I’m going to study some Spanish now. Shall we meet again on the beach this afternoon? We can play some racket ball. I have a set of rackets that I got in Brazil.”

“I’m much better at racket ball than with those kayaks, so prepare yourself.”

“I’ve played with the best on the beaches of Copacabana, so we’ll see,” I said with a mischievous smile.

Late in the afternoon I arrived at the spot where Ben and I had met each other for the first time. I sat down on my ‘pareo’, pulled my book from my small backpack and started to read. Soon I was totally swallowed up by the spiritual teachings from ‘The Pleiadans’ and only after three fascinating chapters did I figure Ben wasn’t going to join me. I was a little disappointed because I very much enjoyed our conversations and our laughs, but I concluded that something more important must have kept him from his daily afternoon beach walk.

When I walked into my hotel room, I found an envelope on the floor that had been slipped under the door. It was a long letter from Ben. What it came down to was that he couldn’t spend any more time with me because I didn’t want to have sex with him. ‘To maintain my sanity’, he had written. Of course he also withdrew his invitation to stay at his house.

When I finished reading the pages I felt like somebody had punched me in the stomach. Sex. That’s all I was good for. I wasn’t appreciated for my personality, my character or my sense of humor. My cunt was the only thing that counted. What was wrong with men?

Still, this letter didn’t make sense to me. We’d had such a good time. We really liked hanging out together. How could that suddenly be over? I didn’t get it. I had to talk to him. He had written that I was still welcome to join him for dinner in Playacar and that he would leave at seven.

Dressed in a white linen ensemble, I arrived at his door at six, which gave us sufficient time to talk. Hesitantly Ben opened the door and welcomed me into his house. With an uncomfortable and slightly embarrassed look on his face, he offered me a glass of wine.

“Ben...” I started teary eyed. “Do you have any idea how that letter made me feel?”

“I had no... I don’t know...” Ben stuttered boyishly.

“It made me cry.”

“I never...”

A few tears rolled down my cheek.

“That was so insensitive of you to say,” I sniffed.

“I agree. That was a poor decision of me to write it that way.”

“You didn’t even have the balls to tell me in person!”

“I was actually hoping you wouldn’t come by here anymore.”

“You are worse than I thought!”

“I’m sorry...”

“If you think I want to be an aspirin for the pain you are suffering from a relationship gone sour, you’re wrong mister. I’m not a toy you can simply use to divert yourself from your heartache. Like a little boy you are punishing me. If I can’t play with your toy,” I mimicked the sound of a little boy, “you can’t play with mine and I never want to see you again!”

Ben had a sufficient amount of self-derision to allow a grin to appear on his face.

“And it’s not going to make the pain go away either.”

“I know that Paula, but I can’t help myself. It’s all I could think about. That’s how men are. When a man wants to have a woman, he’ll do anything, he’ll say anything, anything to get inside.”

“You guys are that carnal?”

“I’m afraid so.”

“Jesus!”

“I think that he was an exception.”

We laughed.

“Remember what I told you this morning Ben? Be careful what you ask the Universe, because it doesn’t always come the way you expect it.”

“What did I ask for?”

“You asked for more spirituality. Well, here I am, telling you the truth. I’m your mirror. Know thyself to gain wisdom, said Socrates.”

“Paula, I’m really sorry I hurt you. I see my escapist behavior. Please, forgive me. Please?”

“You need to forgive yourself Ben.”

He smiled.

“Ben, I really want to be your friend. It’s a choice you can make, to see me as your friend. It’s mind over matter, or in your case, mind over prick.”

“I guess you’re right.”

“There is one thing I don’t understand Ben. I told you I only had very young boyfriends and lovers, you know, nineteen, twenty-one, maybe twenty-four year olds. Their bodies are beautifully muscular with a soft skin. I don’t know about you older men. You grow a bald spot, a potbelly and some love handles, but when you look in the mirror you think that we ladies are swooning over your appearance. Ben, you are an attractive man, but you’re not God’s gift on earth. And, for my standards, your dick is too small!”

“That hurt.”

“I know. It’s supposed to hurt. I’m saying this to turn you off. And because I’m your friend and friends are honest.”

“So, now you are comparing me with a nineteen year old?”

“No Ben, I’m pulling you out of your illusion and into reality. Talking about reality, I thought I had found a friend and in reality all you wanted to do was fuck me!”

“I think the reality is that we can try to be friends Paula.”

“I think so too Ben.”

We gave each other a long hug.

CHAPTER 3.

ANOTHER PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Within a couple of weeks I had developed a nice morning routine with sunrise beach runs, yoga classes with Pilar at 'Bodyworks' and daily meditations. At 'Café Sasta' I would drink a cappuccino, write a little in my diary and watch the stream of colorful tourists walk by. Also 'Java Joe' was a popular coffee hangout for locals, but I soon grew wary of all the gossiping and judgmental remarks from the owners about everything and everybody they knew. After my coffee and a light breakfast I would study a few hours of Spanish, sometimes by myself and at other times with Pilar, who had quickly become a good friend.

Everyday I would meet some new people. I had met Shane, the owner of what was considered one of the most original and tasteful restaurants in Playa del Carmen, called 'Media Luna'. I had met Yvon and Sandra, a couple from Canada who had recently made their move to Playa as well. Yvon was an incredibly talented guitar player, which came as no surprise as he had been a director of the Conservatory of Music in Quebec. I had also met Guus, a Dutch entrepreneur who worked in Merida, the capital of the Yucatan peninsula and who spent his weekends partying in Playa. Although his foul use of language, his burping and his big pink belly didn't work in his favor, I did recognize a guy with a good heart.

I continued to hang out with Ben, as friends. We mostly spent our leisure time on his rooftop terrace, the privacy allowing us to sunbath in the nude. We talked and laughed like good old friends and occasionally he shared an erotic story he had found on the Internet. I couldn't blame a guy for still trying.

One afternoon Ben's buddy Doug came by with his pregnant wife Kim and her mother Nancy, to admire Ben's house. He showed them around until I suddenly appeared from out of nowhere. I greeted everybody with the customary one kiss on the cheek and a small hug.

"I'll see you later. I need to see Harry about some work," I said to Ben and gave him a kiss on his mouth.

"You look all sweaty..." Doug commented with a playful tone in his voice.

"I was lying in the sun," I responded casually.

"I bet it was hot..." Doug replied with a naughty look.

It was obvious what everybody was thinking. My good reputation went right down the drain. I didn't mind. It wouldn't take long before my unusually strong appetite for sex would resurface and my true colors would be known among the community of Playa del Carmen.

This community was a strange melting pot of Mexicans and a wide blend of Europeans, North Americans and South Americans. What was consistent amongst this foreign mix of people was the sense of adventure we all possessed. I realized that Playa was a unique place in Mexico and it couldn't represent the character of this magnificent country. Playa was a young town, rapidly growing and expanding to become a large city.

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