

Ebook by Rhupert Ray

'Paprika'

Chapter 1

As you know today was like any other day, get dressed and go to work. Now it's the evening and I've managed to get some time to myself and decided to go out. Just a night on the town all by myself. I didn't think I would meet anyone. Just wanted a couple of drinks. Watch a few people without them recognizing that I was looking. I wanted to try this new drink. It was made with milk and some other additive. The bartender knew what I wanted but I could never think of the name of this drink.

I looked over to the left and who do you think I see? One of those friends that you no longer speak to but never run into anywhere until tonight. I was already tired, and this is going to make me stretch out over the bar. I was

sipping in the crowd like no one could see me because I wouldn't let them see me. (hahaha) Suddenly, my favorite song started to play. I jumped out on the dance floor and waved my hands around like I was trying to catch loose hair from my head. It was fun while it lasted. I finally walked over towards the exit and was about to leave. I saw someone I had never seen before. Not here, not anywhere. I had to get my attention together and snap out of this dream universe. Like you only see this on tv. But, this was not me. I've been trapped in one of those relationships before and I was not going to let anything else happen, not this time.

I walked out and went over to this little hot food stand. They fix the best tacos and snacks there. So I bought one and walked down the street heading home. My phone had rang a couple of times, but I didn't answer it. Tonight was my night to spend. I saw a band playing music on the corner and dancers dancing. It was weird, but exciting.

Chapter 2

I got fired today. I don't know why, but I got fired. On top of that, I had to move out of my house for renovations and repairs to get done. Extensive job, lasting for months. I guess today is not my day. You think? Anyway, I did what anyone else would do and went to a temp agency. I was laughing at myself while I was on the bus. (hahaha) I guess so, then again maybe not. I'm scheduled to start work next week. So I got on this health kick and bought alot of products. I wanted to make a good impression. Maybe they would keep me. I was finishing up my first paycheck and noticed some one in one of the offices. Weird I thought, but I didn't say anything. Besides, who would remember someone they met at a club and run into them at a job across town. I don't even believe this crap my self. Too weird.

I went into the break room to get my lunch bag and said bye to a couple of people as I was leaving. I had a text on my phone to meet someone at the grill restaurant for a quick drink lunch and chat in the evening. I had to get dressed, it was more casual. I went over there and talked to a couple of friends I hadn't seen in 2 weeks maybe 3. We all

left and went to the club for a dance or two. Just music you know, it's the weekend so it's no big deal.

One of my friends was beaten up outside. We had to call the medics to come pick him up. I didn't know what happened. We were all talking and one of my friends went outside. And we followed probably about 15 minutes later. What the heck could happen in fifteen minutes. Just take a look, that's what could happen. We all went to the hospital and stayed there until Sunday morning. What a weekend this was. I wanted to take care of some junk and I'm at a hospital scared half to death with a friend in a gurney, another in a waiting seat, and me looking at everything like what the 'blank' is this????

It's Monday morning and I walked through the door. Presentation set, follow up information and briefs set, I was good and ready. The meeting is over and every one is fine. I'm getting a raise this week coming up and I thought that was cool. At least

that was in my mind at the time I was talking to a couple of people. Well, I get back to my desk and I'm un-assigned for the next week coming up, and won't be assigned for a month and a half. That's ok. I need some time to myself.

Chapter 3

She walked over to me, and asked me to have a lunch some time over the weekend at this local patio cafe and slipped me a phone number. A pre written phone number. It was a number and her name. With a design of penmanship under it all. Paprika. Paprika is her name. This sounds like a stripper's title or something. I laughed to myself a little. So you know this had some thought to it. I said ok thanks, like I was busy but had just enough time for you. That was my exit. I left and thought about going to another city for a party with a friend. So I sent a text message back to say I would be ready in a couple of hours. But I thought this time, no hospitals!

She was with us, Paprika...this girl. We all were on the way to a friend's house to stay for the weekend. The party was the greatest planned. We had tickets to get in to a big event party.we had to stop at a diner on the way. I was

growling and every body was silent listening to their devices and the car stereo was playing a song older than my backpack. We walked into the diner and looked at the menu. We ordered and sat and talked, laughing here and there. It was time to leave after about an hour and fifteen minutes, then we walked back out to the car. The tire looked low, so we went to the gas station on the other corner and filled the tire with fix a flat. Just in case something was slow leaking, we wouldn't have a problem. It was only a 2-3 hour drive. Jen, Ray, and Paprika.

We got to our friends house and something was going on and we had to wait outside. Don't ask, it was just the nice thing to do. (hahaha)
We all sat down by the pool and chit chatted for a while and decided we would go to a bar. We

walked in and some lady was singing on the stage. She was singing a song that was not too slow and not too fast. It was just a song. We looked at her for soooo long. Like she would never stop singing but we would never lose interest. Anyway, we ordered our drinks and talked while some band was playing. It was fun. My friend asked me to dance and I did dance. We were good, I thought. This other girl started speaking to my friend, and I'm looking like this might be the time when I have to say something in that direction. You know which direction I'm talking about.

We all walked out of the bar and went to the coffee house down the street. It was a nice looking place but a little weird. Bamboo and palms everywhere. It was like a small Hawaiian Island with coffee for customers. We sipped and talked. Then she started to speak giving little hints about where the interest was leading. I didn't know what to say, but you would think that I would be

saying all of this stuff. But I wasn't.
Should I be shy. Should I be aggressive?
Should I get offended and storm off?
I was laughing to my self. Like Charlie
Brown's teacher was speaking for a minute.

I walked back to the car after listening to
a few sentences that involved everybody and
Paprika and a new friend Felice came over to
where I was standing. We all talked for a
second, then my friend Jen and his girl Karla
showed up. All of us were there talking. My
other friend Jarvis, the guy that has the
house, the reason for the trip, showed up with
his friend Petie. So all seven of us were
standing there talking in front of our cars.
This other guy comes over and talks to us with
a pint of something no one wanted. He was

kind of drunk and we really didn't want to talk to him but Jarvis did. Jen and I guess that is the reason no one said anything and listened to him cackalacking nonsense jokes.

We went back to the house and put on some music. The seven of us were having fun for the 1st day of the weekend. This music was weird. I had heard this somewhere that there was eclectic music and world new age music. But it was more trance sounding. I liked it but it was very very weird. Paprika came over and sat next to me, then asked me was there anything wrong with me. I sat there and looked like somebody said something crazy to me and it would take a minute for me to figure out that this somebody was talking to me. I simply replied that nothing was wrong, I'm enjoying the music and every thing was fine.

Chapter 4

The morning was here and the smell of waffles were everywhere. I thought to my self, who in the heck goes out and gets plastered with 8 people in the house afterwards and wakes up to eat waffles? That is too funny to even think. We all were talking around and left to go out to a festival area. It was one of these areas that were set up with a few booths and performer squares that have people doing tricks, acts, music/singing, and fair props. I was playing throw the ball in the hole for a while. That is before someone, the girl now, not 'that' girl, began to speak about some things that happened. Like last night couldn't be left as last night. But they just had to be mentioned all over again. Hint Hint, I like you is turning in to I think I love you but I think you're not interested but I want to say something to you to see if you're interested. I said, I don't think last night was any stranger than any other

night even if it was with someone else. I think that was the wrong thing to say. (hahaha)

So now we have 2 couples and 4 people again. We listened to this band play some kind of music that was sort of reminding me of things I had discussed with my self that I didn't want to involve any longer. So I left and just walked around to see who was where and what was what. This is the first festival I had ever been to in this area where Jarvis lives. We usually just go to get drinks and that's it. Eventually, we ended up going back over to Jarvis' house and talking while the others were swimming in the pool. Jen then asked me if everything was fine. What the heck is this 'is everything fine' kick? I explained a few things that I thought were disturbing. I didn't mention that I knew Paprika previously from a

couple of places, and that the people she was with were not any body that any one would want to know readily. I don't know if anyone would be able to put that together before they meet someone that is really nice to meet.

Jarvis asked me a few more questions about her and I answered them but thought..then mentioned that I didn't come here to visit a psychiatrist. I only wanted to have a good time and she wanted to come along. I went back out to the pool and she wasn't there. The other girl was not there. The guy was there, but he was sleeping with an umbrella that was about to collapse. I walked around the house to see if I could find her. I didn't know what was going on. This is not our house....so we don't leave to know areas without mentioning where we are going. So I get to the corner of the back

of the house and she was on the phone, yelling at somebody. She was saying things about leaving to know some body I have never heard of then she said she was finished and she didn't want to know the truth with him any longer. Then I was sitting here like we're all about to get shot up some kind of way. I was scared, scared! I didn't let it show, but you know that's what was going on in my thoughts. Someone called me so I ran over there to say something before she knew I was listening to her.

Chapter 5

My friend said it was time to leave to go back to where we were before we came over here. I said ok, and walked in to get my things together and put them in the car. Down the street was this big SUV. It pulled around the corner and then they said to get down. I got down as fast as I could and these shots ripped out. This loud scream went bursting through the air. The girl I was with..... with..Paprika...was shot. Paprika's friend Felice was shot. And the guy and the girl that left with us from the coffee shop last night were running to the front to see what was going on. This loud gun shot sounded as the SUV turned the curb on the ending corner. I couldn't figure out why this was happening. You

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