

The Gypsy King

By

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Dedication

To Tania, for always believing in me.

Chapter One

Veronique Champnaey walked along her favorite path in the woods at a furious pace. She paused occasionally to light another Gitanes, smiled as the lighted match bathed her delicate chiffon dress in a yellow glow, and for an instant, she imagined being on stage, looking over an adoring crowd. A crisp red ribbon accentuated her curvy nineteen-year old hips and another matching ribbon pulled her chestnut brown hair into a tight, bouncing ponytail secured crisply with a herringbone clip.

She carried her shoes in one hand and held her cigarette between long fingers in the other. While she argued with the voices in her head, she relit the cigarette that seemed to be constantly going out. She caught herself mimicking one of her favorite film stars and managed a half-hearted laugh.

"I'm in such a dramatic mood tonight," she whispered, "I'm introspective, stubborn, angry and exasperated all at the same time! I may *look* like a film star under this moonlight, but I certainly don't *feel* like a star these days."

Veronique giggled and murmured, lost in thought, as she slowed her pace to a brisk stroll through the moonlit woods. The lights from her town were miles away now and the hills of southern France at night were hushed and serene. She heard only her breath and her dress swishing and sometimes the snapping of twigs and branches clawing at her harmlessly.

"Finally, some real peace and quiet! The woods are so perfect at night."

She sighed, thankful she escaped for some much needed alone time. As she walked pensively now, she pictured being on a film set, playing the heroine in her current favorite movie, *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

"Yes, that's me, a silver screen diva in chiffon, red ribbons, dirty feet and smoking a Gitanes. Is it any wonder nobody understands me?" She paused, twirled around slowly and pushed her hands up to cup her ears. "Can somebody tell the people in my head to please be quiet!"

The woods, leaving nothing except croaks, buzzes and leaves rustling in response, swallowed her voice. She was so frustrated she wanted to scream into the gray-black darkness just to hear something other than the roaring voices in her brain. They, along with several glasses of Cabernet and a glass or two of champagne, were pounding her into a fog of confusion and indecisiveness that was literally driving her crazy!

Veronique smiled thinking about how she ducked out of the celebration. Successfully escaping a party, especially one hosted by Leone and the Rodell family, was no easy feat. The Rodell's were known for throwing the finest parties in the town, but she wasn't in a party mood lately and especially not for another gala event at the Rodell estate celebrating the uncorking of this season's Cabernet and Bordeaux. After just an hour of what should have been the celebration of a lifetime, she found herself sashaying around the party feeling as anxious as a caged tiger. She was polite though, talking with many guests, but actually listening to very few, then feigning the need for fresh air after a few too many glasses. Wink. Wink.

Honestly, she would have said and done anything to get the hell out of there, ring or no ring. "Grrr," she growled in anger and sneaked out the back veranda doors into the quiet, lush woods that stretched for miles and miles surrounding her town.

"But not being in a party mood isn't what has me in this vitriolic mood, is it?" It was a rhetorical question and, as she pondered over it, she felt a more intense anger mounting up inside her again. Hot tears filled her eyes and the path became murky and difficult to navigate. She stopped, dropped her chin to her chest and stood, sullen, alone and a little drunk.

"I can't believe he wanted to fuck me in the wash room!" Her voice shook and she held her face in her hands as she tried to control her sobs. "On the same night he announces we're getting married he wants to take my virginity with me leaning over a cold, filthy bidet! *Merde*!" She gritted her teeth at Leone's truly asinine insult to her as his fiancé, and most importantly, to her as a woman.

"What an amazingly selfish asshole!" She was crying now and kicking dirt and roots and wishing answers would come to her. If not answers, at least some peace and quiet in her head. A late night walk usually helped, but tonight she was jumping out her skin. The prickly heat from frustration burned through her whole body until she felt like she was going to explode unless she screamed louder! She let her mind slowly wander, gratefully, toward a better memory. "I remember finding this path, this beautiful path to the river."

Veronique was hunting for Marceau, one of her family's frenetic foxhounds. She laughed thinking about his long narrow nose and wet snout. He had decided a spooked rabbit would be a better meal than the fava beans and bone marrow from dinner the night before. And he never came back. She spent a full week calling for him in these hills and woods all around her town. Veronique cried for three days straight, but the mystery of that childhood loss unearthed this lush, peaceful trail.

In the winter, her trail in the woods was thin and splotchy like a soiled and slippery white ribbon blotted with patches of dirt in the snow. But in the summer, on a night like tonight, the smooth well-trodden dirt and clay trail felt like a warm animal beneath her feet. She followed it for over an hour, winding her way through the woods and eventually to a fork where she had to make a decision. One way led up to a rickety footbridge, several hundred feet above the River Chamois. The other led to a nice cool walk along the river's edge. Not feeling energetic enough to make the climb up to the footbridge in one of her nicest party dresses, she opted for a walk along the river.

Veronique recalled playing in the Chamois as a child, skating on its runoff ponds in the winter and walking out onto the teetering footbridge spanning one of its widest points over the river. The view from high atop the forest floor and over the river became her personal reward for successfully navigating the somewhat treacherous, but always exhilarating, climb. More than one bone-bruising slip on the sometimes dangerous trail taught her to pay careful attention. Long ago she memorized every root, half-hidden stone and even watched her favorite trees grow through season after vibrant season along her secret path, which was as lush as any garden in her town.

She relaxed a little more. Walking here was one of her favorite ways to get away and think, and the only place she could really let go of her inhibitions and let her mind, and curious hands and fingers, wander freely. Deep in these woods is where Veronique also enjoyed her first lover. "Well, my *imaginary* first lover," she corrected with a sly giggle, "My first forest fornication."

She looked up to the dimly lit heavens and smiled as she felt the surge of wetness spread and heat up her inner thighs, making her glistening and moist. Years ago, she realized that being alone in the woods turned her on immensely. The complete privacy of surrounded by nature so thick and pungent she could almost hear the trees and river breathing, never failed to arouse her. It was thrilling to walk alone for hours and pretend she was going to meet her lover in a secret rendezvous location. It was even more titillating to wait, sometimes another mile or so, before she imagined finding him hard and waiting for her where she could finally succumb to his hungry embrace.

As she walked in the night under the warm moon, still a bit wobbly from the evening's festivities, she purposely strolled past last week's rendezvous point while reliving the entire scene in her mind—from the food, to the wine, to the embrace, to his succulent kisses, to the perfect mind-numbing orgasm wrapped in his arms. Although she had a strong, sometimes bittersweet imagination, Veronique found that her fantasy lovers never failed to bring a warm trickle to her tender lips and soft delicate folds. It was even better when she teased herself.

She found an important part of the game was never picking the same location twice. This added even more tension since it made her wait to find just the right spot before she settled into the lush vegetation and treated herself to one, two, sometimes many more if she had the time, releases. Her mind danced through some of her best orgasms as she walked and smoked, cried and smiled while she struggled with herself and her voices.

Veronique thought about the time she had spent looking for a perfect spot and she laughed at how the little things became critical once the name of the game became *pleasure*. When she managed to get away from work for a morning or even an afternoon alone, she would stroll and look for hours sometimes, until finding an ideal location for her naughty, deliciously selfish enjoyment. Perhaps it was a small area completely covered with lush ferns and ivy, or a thick, solid tree that provided an impressive shaft of shade from the midday sun. She would stop and listen intently for several agonizing minutes until sure she was alone.

Satisfied, only then would she innocently

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pretend to be startled by him out alone in the woods. Of course, he wasted no time with small talk and embraced her quickly, picking her up off the forest floor and passionately driving her back helplessly against a tree, or throw her down onto a thick, mossy embankment. Once discovered, she would feign shame and, if she felt really jazzy and jumpy, would show him her demure, submissive side. Once she was forced to acquiesce to all her lover's desires, she imagined him bold, but gentle, demanding, but giving, and his pleasure quickly became her own.

As her magical imagination went to work, Veronique smiled and walked along the moonlit path while her frustrations and irritations slowly faded away. She flashed back to last Wednesday morning in the woods and found her pace slowing to a crawl. She stopped, lit another Gitanes and let her mind run wild again, just her, alone, in a forest of trees and light.

She had been walking for over two hours when she finally collapsed against a thick, mature pine and caught her breath. Veronique looked up through the forest canopy, began taking deep breaths, closed her eyes and let her hands discover her fully flushed body like it was her first time. She floated up and hovered, then looked down with pleasure at what she and her lover were doing with each other. Her breasts ached and heaved as he ran his hot palms and finger over her nipples, then squeezed her in his hands hungrily, sometimes even hurting her a bit with his passion.

He raked his fingers over her taut, delicate skin and she jumped as each finger popped over her rock-hard pebbles, making her jerk and spasm. She watched in delight as his hands roamed underneath her dress, then slowly pulled her damp panties to the side exposing her swelling vulva to the warm evening winds. Veronique panted loudly as he scratched and pulled mercilessly at her moist fur and she felt him bite her bottom lip hard enough to draw a smearing of all around her blood. His fingers danced squirming mound and she wriggled and wrestled against him passionately as he slowly tapped her swollen clit with his strong hands and fingers, speeding up until he was spanking her lips and pussy with just the right amount of lovely pressure and slap.

He spread her lips apart and smeared her juices all over her plump, tender butt cheeks, then around and over and into her sensitive, tight ass. She relaxed and moaned into his neck as she accepted his slippery smaller finger up inside her most tender hole. Veronique winced and grinned slyly as he made it hurt a little more, pushing it just a little deeper. She ground into him harder, spread her legs wider and sank a little deeper into the lush ground to better steady her hips and thighs for what was coming.

As her imagination soared, she steeled her thighs for her first real taste of him and whispered in his ear, begging him *not* to go slow. She gasped at his hardness and girth, then purred as he split her open in one long, luxurious stroke. Veronique gave her all completely to her experienced and knowledgeable lover. He felt so delicious and so hungry for her it sent shivers up and down her spine. He always had a voracious appetite and pumped into her as long as her fingers could stand up to her own pounding and she usually until her waterlogged fingers began came cramping uncontrollably. After her collapse, she enjoyed the peace and warmth that only she and her lover shared as they listened to birds and branches whispering in the wind.

"Mmmm. Orgasms. My own *little deaths* in the woods," she whispered, putting herself back together and reaching for another Gitanes. "I soo love the feeling of my legs buckling and, if I have to imagine losing my virginity out here in the woods under the moonlight on a warm summer evening just like this, well, so be it. It's been working so far and, since my dear Leone's idea of a good time is the local toilet, this will have to suffice!"

She knew in her heart that her first real lover was going to be far more romantic and enjoyable than someone who would try to convince her to settle for getting pounded in a washroom with twenty-five drunken guests walking around a dinner party! *Bastard*! And wasn't it just like Leone to announce their engagement in front of their dinner guests, including the damn Mayor of Lourmarin! What was she supposed to say in front of her family and friends?

Veronique collapsed against a strong and stable tree trunk, trying not to feel the bittersweet anguish that came from seeing her young and promising future in front of her, knowing she was on the wrong track entirely!

"It has come to this. I've resigned myself to diddling myself silly in the middle of a forest, taking out my frustrations and anger at my fiancé who I do not love, while my family pushes me into a life I do not want."

She laughed at her childish histrionics, but knew in her heart it was all true. She just wasn't sure what to do about any of it. She continued talking to the voices in her crowded head while waving her barely-lit Gitanes in the figment of their direction.

"I'm supposed to spend the rest of my life with an arrogant, selfish man who, since he first kissed me at thirteen, has been telling and acting to the world like he owns me. Nobody owns me!"

She pounded her hand into her fist to make her point. Standing sullen, she reminded herself with as much zeal as she could rally, not to lose her control, or her virginity, so easily in the future. Tears flowed in her eyes again and she thought about how great she wanted her first real lover to feel. But her bittersweet longing magnified just how far Leone was from ever coming close to pleasing her — in love, in life or in bed.

"If there is one thing I'm not getting from Leone Rodell, it's romance and adventure!" An ash fell from her Gitanes onto her damp dress and she dashed it away in disgust. Not only did she feel disgust towards Leone, she had to admit she was a bit disgusted with her own inability to do anything about her current conundrum either.

"How does everybody know what's best for Veronique, except *me*!" she groaned. She continued walking through the moonlit woods, afraid of nothing and afraid of everything at the same time.

Chapter Two

The path along the river's edge was well lit from the moonlight. Veronique veered south and remembered how much she enjoyed feeling the dirt path beneath her feet again. She smiled, knowing the dirt would soon be mixed with the comforting sand of the Chamois and she could finally relax, alone and unhindered by anybody or anything. The loud splash startled her and irritated her at almost the same instant. She froze and listened carefully.

A bear? A big fish?

Although she wasn't particularly frightened of being out in the woods alone at night, her mind raced and she instinctively dropped to her knees. She looked out across the dark river and was amazed to see an arc of bright silver leap out of the river towards the moon, catch the light in a sweeping curve, then splash loudly back into the water. Veronique watched as another arc made its way up and back down. She gasped as it splashed on the hips and thighs of a man floating in the water!

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