



Love Lost Adventure



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Prelude

Tampa, Florida
January 23rd, 1998

“Oh, the glory of being a Senator’s wife ...”

She stood by the windowsill in her bedroom and watched the black limo pull up the driveway.

The traitor is home ...

Three sheets to the wind, the fifty-four-year-old woman turned around, clicked off the evening news, and threw the remote on the bed. She headed over to the mini bar in the corner of the room, a stunning rare Civil War piece of furniture currently occupied by near empty liquor bottles, grabbed her cocktail and took a sip.

Her face flushed red at the sound of the front door latch clicking open. Bags dropped to the floor, and a set of keys clang as they landed on the foyer table. Her senses heightened as she listened to the slow dance of footsteps creaking up the spiral staircase that led to her bedroom door.

How dare he ...

Sarah Prescott would have given Scarlett O’Hara a run for her money. A proud, shrewd, cunning, calculating, mean woman - a real old Southern bitch. The pulchritudinous woman took pride making sure everything in her life was perfectly in place, and if it weren’t, she’d make it appear so.

Just a few sacrifices here and there that’s all ... some big, and some not so, but it was worth it, right? After all, things needed to be done in order, to achieve goals. Daddy knows best ...

A flash from her mom’s kitchen swept over her. She was just eighteen years old, and her father was shouting, “I don’t care what you want! Things have to be done in

order to achieve goals!” Her father often spoke those words whenever he needed to justify the horrible things he wanted her to do. And just like the good girl that Sarah was, she always did them.

Daddy’s little girl ...

A pained expression came over her face. Sarah’s perfect world was in turmoil and Daddy wasn’t there to make it right. Hints of the Senator’s infidelity had been all over the news, and tonight’s headlines were especially bad. A questionable video of the Senator and his secretary filled the airwaves.

The bedroom door handle turned, Sarah’s heart pounded.

Speak of the devil ...

She braced herself like a boxer readying for the fight, and with one big swig, she emptied her glass. The door opened.

“HOW COULD YOU?” she blasted.

Senator Andrew Blake Prescott, a six foot three distinguished looking man in his late fifties entered.

“You’re drunk.” He snapped with disgust.

“YOU and that WHORE were all over the news AGAIN! I hope you are happy with yourself Mister.”

Blake walked over to the bar and picked up one of the empty bottles, “For God’s sake Sarah, how much have you had?”

The Senator took off his jacket revealing a shoulder holster and gun, which he unstrapped and placed on the bar. He reached into the cabinet and pulled out another bottle, and poured himself a drink.

“EVERYTHING we have worked for is gone, Blake! DOWN THE DRAIN!”

“Calm down Sarah everything will be fine. You always do this just stop it.” With the look of contempt, Blake glared at her, “The video is misleading. Believe me, there is nothing going on—She’s married for God’s sake.”

“Oh really, I’m supposed to believe that there is nothing going on,” Sarah’s eyes grew wide, her expression turned crazed. “Do you THINK I am STUPID—The

WORLD *is* STUPID?” She got up in the Senator’s face, “Mister-Big-Shot-Politician, you think you are so smart—You just couldn’t stop, COULD YOU?”

“Just calm down it will be fixed in the morning, Paddy’s taking care of it—” Blake reached out to touch her, but she quickly pulled away.

“YOU BLEW IT! You can’t fix this Blake. Kiss your chance at the presidency goodbye mister, Kiss-it-GOODBYE! It is OVER!”

Scenes from the evening news of her husband and a tall blonde, kissing in an elevator came to mind, she shrieked, “There is no WAY this is going to be FIXED!”

All my dreams are gone. They are gone forever. Everything that I have worked for is RUINED. The sacrifices that I have made, ALL OF THEM - WASTED! All because of this son of a bitch and that whore!

“How dare you—*You* BASTARD!”

Sarah spun around and grabbed the heavy cast iron lamp. She ripped it from the wall, and with years of pent-up anger—*FROM THIS ADULTEROUS BASTARD*—she hurled it at the Senator’s head hitting him dead square in the center. He flew back against the wall and was instantly knocked out.

“GET UP! GET UP!” Sarah walked over and kicked his leg.

“Be a man you *COWARD!* GET UP!”

She stared in disgust, a twisted look appeared on her face, and she began to circle him.

“Mr. Wonderful, handsome Blake, look at you now.”

Blood streamed down his face from the wide-open gash on his forehead. Sarah hovered over his limp body and whispered, “I only married you because father said you would be something.” *You turned into something all right—*

“A no-good-lying-cheating-piece-of-shit something—HA!” She stood up and kicked him again mumbling to herself, “*lying bastard.*”

She walked over to the bar and picked up his drink. “Cheers,” she toasted and guzzled it down. The Senator began to move. Dazed, he struggled to open his eyes.

Sarah paced back and forth, “I had DREAMS—*I had dreams too...*” her voice trailed. She appeared to be searching for meaning, “...things I wanted to do, but YOU ...*and father*, you stole MY dreams!”

“ALL that I gave up ... For YOU ... For *HIM* ... FOR WHAT?”

For nothing ...

Sarah’s face contorted from the honesty of her words; her breath hitched, abruptly she stopped.

Never again ...

She reached for the holster and undid the clasp holding the revolver, removed the gun, pointed it at the Senator’s head.

“Never AGAIN!”

She pulled the trigger.

All the lies ...

“The lie.”



The Whirlwind

Hollywood, Florida

It's seventy-four degrees. An orange-reddish morning sun poured through the front window, a sight only seen in this particular house during the wintertime. So warm and comforting, it's the type of day that beckons those visiting South Florida to fall in love, and move to. And as peaceful as this may sound, this day was anything but; instead, the day was a typical Teddy-day.

PLOP!

“*CLEO*, where's my plane ticket?”

Teddy's head popped up from the large black leather handbag spread open on the counter. Wrappers, napkins, hair ties, scattered everywhere.

“I don't know Teddy. What did you do with it?” Cleo hovered over the morning dishes, scrubbing and rinsing each one until spotless, and then systematically placed them one-by-one on the dish rack to dry.

“It was right here next to my wallet. *WAIT!* Where's my wallet?”

Frantically she searched through a pile of mail, tossing several on the floor.

“*TEDDY* for *GOD'S* sake I *JUST* cleaned!” Cleo swatted at her, but Teddy paid no attention and continued on her path. In a matter of minutes, the entire kitchen was upturned. You could say she short circuits on days like today; days Cleo likes to call her ‘Adventure Days.’

“Teddy you'd lose your mind if it weren't locked inside that thick skull of yours.”

“I love you too my *DEAR* sister.” Teddy rolled her eyes and reached for the next pile, “Now where *is* it? It's gotta be here somewhere.”

The Hayes sisters were as different as night and day; and while they bickered constantly, and drove each other crazy, the truth was they absolutely adored each other.

Cleo was a forty-one-year-old new divorcee with three children. With her strawberry blonde hair, bright emerald eyes, and the kindest smile that kids and dogs just loved, most folks just thought of her as the sweet caretaker.

Her younger sister Teddy, short for Theodora, was a whirlwind of a person. A reckless, adventure lover that insanity and drama just seem to follow wherever she went. At thirty-six years of age, she looked twenty-two. She was tall with shoulder length thick coco brown hair that beautifully cradled her face. Her cat shaped eyes were the deepest golden brown and had been known to catch a heart with just one look.

Teddy liked to think of herself as a carefree bohemian, she'd never let her love life be decided by the typical boring conventions of marriage, race, color, or even sexual preference for that matter; instead, Teddy proudly states "I fall in love with passion." However, recently on a warm September evening during a full moon, she had an epiphany:

Humph...

"You know Cleo, I think I might have made the biggest mistake of my life."

She stood by the window mesmerized by the beautiful Harvest Moon that filled the window frame.

"*Oh* yeah, how so?" Cleo sat on the couch half listening and scribbling her way through a crossword puzzle.

"I think I might have walked away from the love of my life."

Cleo tapped the pen on her lower lip, and contemplated her next word, *eight-letter word for 'extreme foolishness or irrationality?'*

"It was my *ONE* chance at happiness," murmured Teddy.

"—*Your ONE chance at happiness,*" confused Cleo looked up. "What on earth could you possibly be speaking of my little sister?"

"Cole."

“Who?”

“Cole O’Keefe.”

“O—Who?”

“You know... the artist?”

“Oh God not another artist why couldn’t it be the gym teacher?”

“I never dated the gym teacher. He was creepy, he had *ALL* those things everywhere.”

“Those things are called muscles, and you didn’t like him because he was normal. Such a shame too, he was so nice and sweet, AND he just adored you.”

“*NORMAL?* He was *BORING*, bland, not to mention *CREEPY!*” She shuddered, “I told my therapist about him.”

“And?”

“Well, I told her I’d never sleep with a guy like that, not even if he was the last man standing.”

“*TEDDY*, that is just wrong!”

“HA!” Teddy mused, “Yeah, she thought so too. It’s really quite funny when I think about it. I think that’s when she realized that I was a lost cause.”

“Did you tell her about Cole *AND* your crazy *OBSESSION* with tortured artists?”

“It’s not an obsession, and Cole isn’t just an artist, he’s a *TRUE* artist, a painter—*And*, a brilliantly damned good one I might add. He’s been on my mind a lot lately, and I think he may be the one, the *BIG ONE* even.”

“The *BIG* one?” Cleo’s jaw dropped, “I don’t ever recall anyone being ‘the one’ and especially *NOT* the ‘BIG ONE.’”

“Oh stop Cleo, he’s perfect for me. He’s my equal in every way.”

“Well, I don’t know about that.” Cleo put down the puzzle book and shrugged, “Refresh my memory please, which one is he?”

“I can’t believe you don’t remember him.”

“Of course I remember him.”

“No, you don’t.”

“I *DO*.”

“You *DON’T*.”

“I remember him just fine, so are you going to tell me or what?”

“Pfft—*Never* mind.” Teddy turned away refusing to look at her.

“Teddy, don’t be like that. It’s just that there have been so many that I get them all mixed up.”

“So many?” she scrunched her face and glared at her sister, “I can’t believe you just said that.”

“Well, I—”

“*And* there weren’t that many; maybe five, *OR* six at tops—”

“Five or *SIX*? HA! There were way more than that—”

“*ENOUGH!* No more—”

“Oh come on—”

“You know Cleo, I don’t think I like you very much at the moment.”

“Is that so?” Bemused Cleo stuck out her tongue, and laughed. “Come on Teddy you know I worship the ground you walk on - *NOW SPILL IT!*”

“Pfft! You’re *SUCH* an asshole Cleo,” and with an incredulous smile, she uncrossed her arms, and sat on the edge of the couch eager to tell.

“*OKAY*, remember about ten years ago the art classes that I used to pose for?”

“Yes, vaguely.”

“Well, that’s where I met him. He was standing in the back of the room all by himself just watching me. So hot, so gorgeous, so brilliant, and just like me full of passion.”

“*TEDDY*, those were *NUDE* study classes that you posed for!”

She spun with delight, “Yes, they were! Now you remember him don’t you?”

Cleo's eyes grew large, slowly sinking into the fluffy couch, "*Oh ... that Cole?*"

"*Yes, that Cole,*" Teddy fanned her face.

"The nude study guy?" Cleo mumbled.

Teddy looked down and laughed realizing that the nude factor might take away from the seriousness of the conversation, but then with her best yup-that's-the-one-smirk, she battered her eyes.

Oh God, NOT him, Cleo thought as her face went blank, "Yes now I remember him, 'The-One-True-Love' that drove you *CRAZY* that's for sure."

"Crazy? Ha, funny, I don't remember him being like that."

"Of course you don't—Geez, how quickly you forget."

"Well you know Cleo the heart wants what the heart wants."

At a loss for words, Cleo picked up her crossword puzzle and repeated to herself, "EIGHT-LETTER word for 'extreme foolishness or irrationality.'"

Dear God, is she out of her mind? She'll be bored after two days with this guy, AND I hate to break it to her, but no ONE has ever been the ONE. She's totally ins— "Hey, that's it. I've got it," Cleo's face lit up as she mouthed the word and scribbled in the little boxes on the crossword page:

I-N-S-A-N-I-T-Y

"Well Teddy, I don't know about him being your true love and all, but one thing that I do know is that there ain't no way in hell that you'd ever get me to pose nude showing my girly-bits to the world. That is a sight only seen by the *GOOD* Lord and my gyno—"

"The *GOOD* Lord and your *GYNO!* HA!"

Cleo glared at her in annoyance.

"What are you trying to say, Theodora?"

"I'm not *TRYING* to say anything *CLEO-PA-TRA,*" Teddy smirked finding great joy in sassing her sister. (*And the best way to sass Cleo was to talk about her sex life or lack thereof.*) "I just know of a few others that have seen those girly-bits from time to time, that's all."

“A few others? How dare—”

“Shall I refresh your memory?”

“No—Don’t you DARE!”

She wagged her finger at Cleo in a tsk-tsk manner, “*THERE* was Stevie, *AND* ERIC, *AND Uh*, Good-Ole-Bob. Yes indeed Good-Ole-Mister-BOB - that one makes me proud.

“How does it make you *PROUD*?”

“Well, I’d like to take some credit for your behavior. I imagine I must have rubbed off on you a little because you were downright naughty—”

“Hmph, *WELL* I most certainly don’t know what you mean by that.”

“Saint Cleo, *GIVE* me a break! HA! Don’t play Ms. Innocent with me. I know where you’ve been.”

Cleo’s face scrunched into a ball as she tried her damndest to look mad, but it backfired. Instead, she let out a hearty belly laugh causing her to sink deeper into the couch, which made the two sisters burst into a howling fit of laughter.

For the next hour, the two sisters laughed like little schoolgirls replaying memories back and forth, each telling a better story than the last. Finally, Cleo grabbed at her sides, and let out a long whining sigh.

“Sis’ I have to admit that you and Cole did make an attractive couple. Just beautiful, it was like watching wildfire.”

“We did, didn’t we?” Teddy sat up straight in satisfaction of finally feeling gotten.

“... And over the years you’ve brought home all kinds, but out of all of them, he was just as carefree and passionate as you. Which of course, drove mom and dad *CRAZY*.”

“He did, didn’t he? Oh, my God, they *HATED* him!” Teddy’s face lit up with the memory, “Hey I think I’m going to give him a call.” She jumped up, grabbed the cordless phone, and headed out of the room, “I hope his number still works. Wish me luck!”

“Fingers Crossed!” Cleo laughed incredulously, *insanity at it’s finest...*

SLAM! KICK!

“*Where* the hell is it?” Teddy’s voice echoed in the distance.

Cleo looked up. Teddy had made her way upstairs looking for the missing ticket destroying everything in sight.

“If you don’t find it soon we’re going to be late, *AND* you’re going to miss your flight!” hollered Cleo.

“Shit! Shit! Shit!” Teddy opened and closed drawer after drawer.

Cleo took a few steps then stopped, an expression of contemplation appeared on her face. *You know, now that I think about it maybe it would have been better if I had discouraged her from calling him, or at least - at a minimum, pulled the plug on the phone line.*

“FOUND IT!” Teddy hollered from the top of the stairs holding the ticket high above her head like the proud winner of the lottery.

Cleo placed her hands on her hips, “Teddy you are lucky I love you dearly because no one else would put up with this crap.”

“Come on then ...” Teddy smirked, “Can’t be late.”



The Adventure Begins

It's almost noon, I-95 is insane this time of day, and to make matters worse, Cleo is a bad driver.

"I bet you have drive-a-phobia," Teddy assessed.

"Is there even such a thing?" Cleo doubted her knuckles white from gripping the steering wheel hard as she swerved in and out of traffic. Several horns beeped for her to speed up.

"Cleo you drive like an old lady."

"Damn-it Teddy! Driving to the airport is the last thing on earth I want to do today."

"*At least do the speed limit,*" Teddy playfully mocked.

With a careless smile, Teddy cranked up the radio and sang along, and boy can she sing. She has one of those beautiful, soulful voices that stop folks in their tracks when they hear it.

Bojangles, the old man grocer begs her to sing whenever she comes in. He yells, "Here comes Ole Etta! Honey, sing me my favorite song." Teddy reminds him of a young Etta James, and she is always happy to burst out a few bars just to please him. "*Child* you have an old soul, one that is wise beyond your years," he likes to confess.

Teddy pulled down the passenger side visor and stared into the mirror.

"I'm getting old," she grimaced.

"Old? Is that what this is all about?" Cleo furrowed a brow.

"No, I'm just saying ..."

“I really don't understand why you have to go.”

“I have to go, if I don't I'll always wonder what if?”

“But why—Why now? You haven't seen this guy in ages. You know, there's a good reason why the two of you broke up.”

Teddy laughed, “There are many reasons why we broke up, but one thing is for sure we did have fun. He was good, Mm-hmm ... too good if you ask me. Boy did he know how to rock me.”

“Eww Teddy! That's gross! I don't want to hear it.” Cleo shook her head trying to rid herself of the pervy images invading her thoughts.

“You know, he's probably fat and bald.”

“Oh, Cleo you are no fun and such a prude. How did you ever get pregnant?”

“He's probably a mass murderer, he seems the type you know like one of those serial killers.”

“Don't be silly Cleo, he's not a murderer.”

“How do you know?”

Teddy adjusted her lipstick in the mirror ignoring her sister's silly question.

“So what do you think that you're going to go there, and pick up where you left off just like that?”

“Well yes, I do—just like that.” Teddy shrugged.

“Well good luck because life doesn't work that way. You can't just go back. It never works out.”

“Maybe it doesn't Cleo, but all I know is that he is the only man that I have ever loved—”

“You left him! You didn't even wait for the of flowers to die.”

Cleo pulled up to the baggage drop-off area at the Ft. Lauderdale Airport, and hopped out of the car. Teddy quickly followed.

“That’s so unfair Cleo. You know that I can't sit in one place too long. Maybe, just maybe this time will be different, and I’ll stay for once. Maybe I’ll get married, have kids, and get a house of my own. Have you considered that?”

Fuming, she tossed her bags on the side of the curb, and a young male baggage handler rushed to claim them. Teddy handed him her ticket and a few dollars. And then madder than hell, she turned to Cleo.

“*AND* besides, what do you know you’ve never taken a chance in your whole-*GODDAMN*-boring-*SAFE*-life!”

Wounded, Cleo stepped back, her hand raised to her mouth knowing that she had pushed Teddy too far—*She’s right. I haven’t. How do I tell her that I have a bad feeling about this? She’ll just think I’m acting overprotective, which I probably am. One thing is for sure if I don’t support her, she’ll never forgive me. I’ll never forgive me.*

With tears pooled in her eyes and her lips quivering Cleo took Teddy’s hands in hers, “My dear sister I’m so sorry. I’d love to see you settle down. You know I want the best for you, right?”

“Yes, I know that you do but sometimes, Cleo ...” Teddy started to cry, “You can be such a pain in my *ass*. ”

“That would be me,” Cleo laughed and hugged her. “But only because I want you to be happy and to be loved.” She looked to the heavens, “Oh how *wonderful* that would be—*AND* I want to be an aunt! You know that would bring me such joy.”

“Okay, okay, one step at a time,” Teddy wiped away the tears from Cleo’s face and then her own. “Stop crying, please. You’re ruining my makeup, and *BESIDES*, for all we know he could be a serial killer, right?” Teddy winked and let out a hearty laugh.

Cleo gasped, “Wha-What? Don’t say that! Theodora, that’s *NOT* funny!” Cleo lightly slapped her on the arm in jest.

“Aunt Cleo, you’ll be the *BEST* Aunt ever. You’re my favorite person in this *CRAZY* world we live in, and I’ll miss you dearly.”

“I’ll miss you more, and you know I will,” Cleo beamed. “By the way, did you call Cole and tell him where and when to pick you up?”

“Yes, Ms. Worrywart it has all been taken care of. He’ll be there and on time don’t you worry.”

“Okay good, and promise you’ll call me when you land.”

“I promise.”

“Go on then I don’t want you to be late—I love you more than words can say.”

“Here you go ma’am,” the baggage handler handed Teddy a claim ticket. “You’re all set to go.”

Teddy smiled and headed for the entrance. “KISSES!” she hollered as Cleo climbed into the car.

“Wait!” Cleo jumped up in a panic “Where’s your jacket! Did you bring it? I heard it’s snowing up there.”

“Only flurries no big deal. I’ll be fine!” Teddy waved and blew her a kiss then headed in. The airport was busy, and she stood in line for a bit, but just before it was her turn to enter the gate a tall, slender woman, dressed all in black pushed her way through cutting in front of Teddy.

“Where are the taxis to Hollywood?”

The agent pointed towards a sign, “That way.” The woman abruptly turned smashing into Teddy. “Well excuse me,” she barked staring Teddy up and down with annoyance and then huffed off.

“Well someone’s in a hurry,” said Teddy with a wink and gave the man her ticket.

“Yes, she is and rude too.” He checked it into the computer then handed her the boarding pass. “Gate C7, Ma’am. You’re all set. ”

“Thank you.”

She passed through the security and walked the long hall to her gate. Her eyes widened with excitement at the sight of her plane.

“The adventure begins ...”