

THREESOME

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WHERE SEDUCTION, POWER AND BASKETBALL COLLIDE

BRENDA L. THOMAS

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If ever there was an angel, my sister Gwen Brown was she.

July 1947 to December 1996

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All Praises to Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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If love were perfect, then it wouldn't be love.
B.L. Thomas

PROLOGUE

SASHA

MAY 1998

I thought I heard a noise downstairs, but figured it was just my imagination. No need to investigate – it was the same noise I always heard when I was here alone. Always thinking somebody might be sneaking into the house. I didn't have to worry tonight, though, because he was here with me. Maybe not for the whole night, but he would be here for a little while. His three, maybe four hours were usually enough to hold me over until the next time. And if someone did enter my home while he was here, then he'd be able to protect me, which is all I really wanted.

But there was the noise again. I lay there hoping it was the house settling, but I knew that this old house had long since settled. I turned to look at him; both of us had been unable to say anything since he'd come from inside me. Sometimes it was like that. Our lovemaking was so strong, so intense, that it took our words away, leaving us unable to talk about it until the next day. As I looked at him in amazement I heard the creaking of the stairs. Someone was definitely in the house. Before I knew it, she appeared in my bedroom doorway.

PAULETTE

I knew they were together tonight. I'd followed him there myself instead of having my cousin do it. I knew the house because I'd slowly driven by it on numerous occasions once I had all the evidence. Tonight I watched him ring the bell, instead of using his key. The lights were on downstairs, so I could make out through the slightly open blinds her greeting him with a kiss. Then I saw him sit at the kitchen table, and I sat motionless watching her shadow move about fixing his plate.

I'd always known he cheated, but I usually reasoned that all men did it, my husband being no exception. I knew he was busy, I mean with two jobs and his various community activities, he was always gone. Things were still the same at home though, the bills were paid and he treated us good but at times he just seemed happy about something that I wasn't part of.

I mean I had a busy life too. With my job, our son's activities and all the things I was involved in at church. I was often tired and distracted. I knew our marriage wasn't perfect, but it was solid. We had a comfortable home and were part of a decent community. I prayed he would return to church but he continued to profess to being Muslim. I didn't argue because at least he believed in God. My husband was always home for the holidays and each year he would agree to celebrate our wedding anniversary however I chose. But still I noticed.

Then our lovemaking changed. All of a sudden he didn't seem to mind when I didn't want to have sex and often I found myself

having to initiate it. And why, I wondered, was he suggesting different things for dinner? Salads, fish, pasta, even dessert when it wasn't a holiday. All the time talking about being healthy, taking vitamins and going to the gym.

They were just little signs. Nothing obvious, like staying out all night. I mean once in a while he would come home late, at three or four in the morning, but it wasn't a big deal. What confused me the most was the *unobvious*. Did he or did he not smell slightly different? It wasn't another woman's perfume, just the faint scent of another woman's aura surrounding him.

Then he purchased a pager, and for a while he had a cell phone. I knew he talked to her on the phone at home because his facial expression showed it. I once tried to rig the answering machine to tape his calls, but it didn't work. I even attempted to follow him but gave up because I felt stupid and knew that if he noticed me, he would think I was crazy. So eventually I rationalized that I didn't have any real evidence and let it go.

Two years went by and even though his pattern didn't change, I knew he was slipping away. I found myself reading my Bible for answers, yet I would lie in bed full of anguish, scared to confront him. But I prayed and held fast that the Lord would work it out.

Finally, I needed to be certain. I went to my cousin and explained to him what had been happening. He seemed to know what to do. First he began following Cole, that's when he got her address and a picture. Then he had a friend who worked for Bell Atlantic come to our house and put a recording device in the phone. Two months later he came to me with the evidence. It was then that I took the package, went to my mother's house, where I wouldn't be interrupted, and there I listened – listened to my husband loving another woman.

COLE

After six months with her, I had to ask myself: What the hell was I doing? I knew that I'd gotten in too deep. When I'd met her I thought she might be fun for a while, like the others had been. Hell, she was single and had her own crib on the other side of town. Just what I needed. I met her driving by on the street. I was walking towards my truck and she was driving past me in her Honda Accord when our eyes met. I mean I'd caught the eyes of a lot of women on the street but something was different about those eyes.

I motioned for her to pull over and she did, but before I could even turn towards her car, she pulled off again. I figured what the hell, jumped into my Suburban and began driving down Broad Street. After only a few blocks I saw her making a U-turn in the gas station, I blew my horn and motioned for her to pull over. This time she parked and I knew the shit was on.

When she stepped out her car in a brown linen suit I was impressed with how tall, slender and brown she was. Not my usual pick of women, who are light-skinned, with long hair and built like shit. No, her hair was natural, full of kinky locs and she had this look of freedom to her. A little makeup maybe but I really couldn't tell 'cause I kept looking at her smile. Once we introduced ourselves I could feel my dick start to get hard. Damn, she was fine.

We found a lot to talk about, except for the fact that I was married. I wasn't about to reveal that, not before I at least had a

chance to hit that thing. So we rapped for about an hour, more than I usually did with a strange woman and then she climbed back into her car. As I leaned into the passenger window, she gave me her business card and it was then that I noticed her sliding her long sexy foot out of a brown leather mule. Now, I'd always had a foot fetish; shit, I had over one hundred pairs of shoes and probably even more sneaks. But this foot was beautiful and I was anxious to get those toes in my mouth.

I put her card carefully in my pocket, knowing that Sasha was gonna make my August hotter than my July had ever been.

SASHA

For the first year I didn't even know he was married. A relationship and falling in love were the furthest things from my mind. I'd just gotten out of a relationship three months before I met him, so all I wanted was someone to take the edge off.

My career was moving on fast-forward as I'd just gone from being secretary, to a college dean, to an executive assistant at the high-powered Philadelphia law firm of Mitchell & Ness, whose clients were entertainers and athletes. So I was too busy to realize when he wasn't available. Shit, I couldn't help but be attracted to him. He stood 6'4" tall, with a thick 240 pounds spread evenly over him. But more than that, it was the deep black color of his skin that mesmerized me.

Once I found out Cole was married I was simply too caught up to let him go. I'd tried to end it several times, but each time I was pulled back, with him offering me just enough to keep me right there. I often grew tired of living our relationship inside my house and out of state, when he could get away. I wanted us to be normal and he wanted me to be patient. But nothing could take away those lonely Sunday nights when I'd listen to WDAS FM play ...*Outside Woman, Saving My Love, Agony and Ecstasy, Secret Lover...*, all the songs that described our relationship.

He kept telling me his wife didn't know anything, didn't even suspect. Having been a wife myself I found that hard to believe, but he insisted. So I figured she was either dumb or didn't care;

hell, maybe she had her own thing on the side. Regardless, he was totally unwilling to let me go, yet he was also unwilling to leave his wife. Which I'm not even sure I wanted him to do. I didn't want to see him or his family suffer, so instead I endured the suffering.

PAULETTE

It would be easy getting into her house. I'd copied her keys from the extra ring he kept on his key chain.

I took the gun off the seat beside me and carefully placed it in my pocketbook. I looked around before I stepped out the car and then glanced up to her window to make sure nobody saw me coming. I didn't care that I'd used my own car, nor that I'd parked directly across the street from her house. In the end none of that would matter. The best part was that he had no idea that I knew he was sharing his love with another woman.

As I said a prayer, in an effort to decide if tonight would be my night, the lights went out downstairs, and what appeared to be candlelight began flickering in the bedroom. I hesitated, as the aching in my heart made me want to pound on her door to be let inside. To be let back into the life he'd shut me out of. But no, tonight I would make my move.

I walked past his truck parked in her driveway and onto the porch. Holding the screen door open I slowly inserted the key; I tried the top lock first but it wasn't locked so I used the doorknob key – it opened. My hands were shaking and I felt sweat beading up between my breasts – I was even more determined. I turned the knob and stepped inside.

I was surprised by the house's simplicity. There were dark stained hardwood floors that ran throughout the downstairs. The living and dining rooms were covered with Oriental rugs that I'm

sure were expensive. I could smell her scent of jasmine and spice and unexpectedly I was immediately drawn into Sasha's strange aura, as it had probably drawn in my husband. Yes, I'm sure she had used all of these things to lure my husband away. She was no better than Eve, who had tempted Adam.

The house was quiet except for the television, and then I heard it, the sound of my husband snoring. For 14 years I'd listened to that breathing and light choking when he sucked in air too deeply. I started towards the stairs but then changed my mind; no, first I wanted to see how she lived. See where he was so comfortable over these last five years that he didn't want to be in our home, except to pass through, as if I were the other woman. Why hadn't he ever told me about her, told me he loved someone else, that he wanted a divorce? No, he just silently kept living two lives. I had to stop myself from thinking too much, so I silently prayed.

Her house, even though simple, was tastefully furnished. I sat down on a chair in the living room, facing a large-screened television, which I'm sure was his favorite spot and I guessed that it was probably here that she sat between his legs. But I couldn't get caught up in that, not right now. There were also plants that filled her home, and fresh flowers that stood on a pedestal. And there were pictures of her grandson.

Then I went into the kitchen. This is where she probably pleased him most. My husband loved to eat and I could tell from the smell that she had been baking. There were dishes on the counter, still covered with food: chicken smothered in gravy, rice, salad and even a fresh baked apple pie on the counter. I couldn't help but wonder if her food tasted better than mine, so with my fingers I picked a piece of chicken out of the cold gravy and tasted it. Dirty dishes and leftovers, that's how I felt, like a meal he was finished with but couldn't seem to throw away – well, now he'd have no choice.

I walked back through the dining room, living room and, hesitating at the bottom step, looked up to where all my anguish was coming from. Again, I prayed. As I put my foot on the first step, it squeaked. I held my breath but realizing it was too late to turn back, I proceeded, one step at a time.

I knew her room was in the front of the house. So once I reached the top step, I held onto the banister to brace myself. More family pictures on the wall and then on the table in the hallway there sat a picture of the two of them – laughing and happy. Even though my body cringed, I had to admit they even looked in love. But that was my love, my love she'd stolen.

Then I felt it. I felt her sense me, like she knew I'd come. But what she didn't know was what I'd come for. I took the gun from my purse and positioned it firmly in my right hand, removed the safety and placed my finger on the trigger. God will forgive me I told myself.

Initially I wasn't going to say anything, just do it, but I wanted them to see it happening, and not have a chance to stop me. Approaching the doorway I froze at the sight of the two of them, all cozy and tucked in bed. I wanted to turn away, but no I was doing the right thing. Hadn't I prayed for this night?

What better way for them to pay? They'd hurt me for so long, and Cole actually thought he was getting away with something. Did he really think I didn't know? For once I would no longer be the good girl, it was my turn to be bad.

COLE

Damn, it felt good to be in bed with her. She had no idea how bad I wished I could just up and leave my family. But no matter how much I thought it through I still came out with the same answer. It was too much work, I had too much to lose. I couldn't walk out on my son, or my wife. Even though our marriage didn't hold any excitement, I still loved Paulette and didn't want to see her hurt. Shit, I even wondered how after all these years she still didn't know. But guess what, I wasn't gonna try to figure it out either. If Paulette could only give me half of what Sasha did, then maybe it would be different at home.

I truly believed Sasha loved me. She knew how to take care her man. Whatever I needed she'd give to me. Backrubs, baths, dinner on the table when I arrived, TV turned to ESPN, slippers by the door and sex, well I got that any and every way I wanted it. Sometimes it wasn't even the sex, it was just the way she seemed genuinely interested in my life. She believed I could do some of the things I'd lost faith in doing. She was so damn interesting to me; the athletes and celebrities she knew from her job and all that shit she liked; candles, reading, writing and all that back-to-nature stuff. Sasha wasn't scared of shit. If there was something she wanted to do or try she'd go after it. She had no problem taking risks; hell, I was a risk.

I'd had a lot of women over the years, before and during my marriage but once me and Sasha hooked up I knew she had me because I hadn't fucked with anybody else. Even though I told her

I didn't sleep with my wife, I knew she didn't believe me, but what else could I say? But the sex wasn't the same; lovemaking with Paulette was the same as our marriage – routine. Sasha made me feel like a man. She not only loved me but she loved my body and would examine and make love to every inch of it, even down to my crusty toes. So what was I gonna do – give all this up?

Having Sasha was better than having a wife. 'Cause I knew after being with my wife for 14 years that wives didn't give that much. They just gave enough to stay married. That's why I also knew that as much as she wanted me here, if I were to come, to move in, she would change. She'd get comfortable and feel like she didn't have to treat me special anymore. As long as the relationship stayed like this, I could be with her forever and then maybe one day, when my son graduated high school I could make a move. And she knew; she knew I wasn't leaving and didn't often ask except those times when she wanted me so bad she couldn't take it anymore. I knew I was selfish but the way things were is what worked for me.

Sasha did deserve more – deserved a man that could be there with her in the morning and be able to count on him coming home every night, someone she could feel like number one with. But what she didn't know is that she was number one with me. I couldn't let her go, I couldn't let her give anybody else what she'd given me. So lying here tonight, after having been drenched in her love, I was in my comfort zone. The way she laid tucked underneath me like a finished puzzle, made me know that she felt the same way.

SASHA

I knew she'd come. No matter how much he denied she had knowledge of us, I knew eventually she would let us know she was no real fool. So here we were, the three of us. Even with the gun in her hand we just stared at each other, knowing it had come to this. I could see through the dimness of the evening light, that Paulette was sadly beautiful.

Who would she shoot, Cole or me? Who would she hold to blame, Cole because he was her husband, the one who'd stood before God and made the commitment? Or me because she thought I was some whore breaking up their marriage? I still couldn't move. I called Cole's name, watched his body slowly turn, saw his face look at her, look at me and before I could answer the question in his eyes...

COLE

I know Sasha thought I was sleeping, but her squirming had already woke me, so when she called my name I didn't answer right away. Then I felt Sasha nudge me and I heard my name being called again but this time it was my wife's voice. I turned over to make sure I was hearing right and there she stood. What the fuck was my wife doing in Sasha's bedroom doorway?

As my eyes adjusted to the darkness I could see that not only was my wife there but she was holding my fucking 9-millimeter in her hand. I looked from Sasha to Paulette to ask what the fuck was going on, but before I could say anything, before I could even explain, as if there would be an explanation why I was in another woman's bed, the gun went off.

PAULETTE

Sasha and I never took our eyes off each other while she called his name, and when he didn't respond, I called him. He moved, he turned, looked at me, looked at her and before he could ask any questions, I pulled the trigger.