

Darla Monica

By Sheila Naranja

## Chapter 5: Afterglow

After hanging up with Carry Grant, Greta Garbo contemplated her date the night before with an airheaded boat boy. She liked them skinny and stupid. Last night's lay had been easy pickings thanks to the flood of recent high school grads on local college campuses. Greta's hairdresser liked to turn tricks at frat parties. Greta liked to play her wing woman. It gave her the opportunity to fraternize with really stupid trust fund babies. The guy she landed the night before was the son of a Naval Intel officer who could not have gotten into U.C.L.A. without paternal largesse, A.K.A. bribery. The dumb schmuck even bragged about it after too many beers a few nights before.

As today is Wednesday, you may wonder about the logistics of Greta hooking up with a guy she met at a Saturday frat party. She had slipped him her business card at the party with a promise of an opportunity for advancement. She didn't tell him her intention was to advance her own sexual satisfaction, but he took the bait. There was a message from him on her office voicemail the next day. She knew enough to wait until Tuesday before calling him back. They made a date for that evening. He wanted her to return to campus for the meeting, but she insisted on neutral ground. She knew of an appropriate venue in Santa Monica. Could he make the excursion? After a few hours of making travel arrangements, he phoned to announce his presence at a restaurant that employed movie actor wannabes to dance on the countertops.

Meanwhile, down north in San Francisco, Brad arrived at the public library shortly after opening time. His research work was already cut out for him. He headed for the third floor stacks where the wisdom literature was located. Today would be yet another day spent with Plutarch, a significant inspirer of William Shakespeare. His secondary volume was an introduction to Aristotle (to be replaced by some medieval travel literature). Shouldn't a wisdom school founder be familiar with such things before getting started? Hardly. They were gravy compared to Brad's basic meat and potatoes background.

Greta's boat boy had selected the restaurant with a little help from his frat brothers. He asked around for recommendations and the name of the place popped up more than the others. As a trust fund baby, his finances were tightly controlled. During his high school years, he had learned to adapt by taking advantage of public transit. That would get him to Greta's specified meeting area and to the recommended venue. He explained it all to her after she joined him at the joint. When she arrived, she spotted him in Brad's booth, but seated opposite to the Brad seat. This meant she could do the honors of taking Brad's place.

As Greta reflected on their first date over her morning cuppa Joe, she pondered the things she had failed to do. Perhaps another occasion would arise. He stayed long enough at her place to give her a good tongue lashing, but she kicked him out before he could overstay his welcome. He took great care not to stray anywhere near her precious hymen. Most of his oral massage centered on her clitoris and inner labia borders, which were exquisitely sensitive. She gave him pointers along the way because of his obvious ineptitude with the lady parts.

What could she have done differently at dinner? For one thing, she could have had a great deal of fun with the whole history of the Brad booth and the stories of Wiener schnitzel and chicken-fried steak.

The guy was too airheaded to appreciate such subtlety, but it would have made great fodder for a future telling. She was a big fan of Brad's story telling *je ne sais quois*.

Brad's interest in philosophical literature dates back to his high school years and his first brush with Existentialism. Of course, his math skills also contributed to his interest. Many humanists pay short shrift to math because of a misperception of its role in wisdom work. They associate it with magical distractions such as Gematria. There is also a distaste for the esoteric aspects of wisdom work, thanks to a focus on the Peripatetics. Brad's studies at the library opened up a variety of critical issues that academics remain in the dark over.

Wisdom schools kept certain key ideas hidden from younger students for good reasons. They had a great deal of experience to go before they could grasp the full weight of the esoteric stuff. They needed to climb out of the cavern of endarkenment before learning the more important stuff. Academics fail to perceive the fact that they are still trapped in the dark.

As Brad engaged Plutarch, Carry settled behind his desk with the window to the world behind him. It was time for his regular email session, a typical business ritual. There were the usual notices from various departments on the Fun Macro debacle. One in particular caught his eye and got him thinking. It was from a Sci-Bass support lady with an inside channel of their legal battles with Orbuncle. She said that one of their top infrastructure guys had nailed the source of the viral attack, but had yet to unravel how its damage could be repaired. He had extensive experience with virus detection and correction. His prognosis was not good. A fresh reinstallation with the most recent pre-patch backups looked like the best work-around.

Carry picked up the phone to let Greta know the latest news. His call went to voicemail because she had already jumped into her red Cabrio for the trip into the office. Carry's message was the usual "Carry Grant paging Greta Garbo." It was the kind of humor that would bring them together over time.