

Lady Marin

By Sheila Raphael

## Chapter 2: Paravalley

Greta Garbo prepared a breakfast of granola and yogurt on a sunny morning in her Santa Monica flat as she got her head into the day to come. She and Carry Grant had a meeting set up with the C.I.O. (Chief Intellectual Officer) of the famous screen production outfit, Paravalley. That firm was a good customer of I.L.M. (Industrially Lighted Maggots) which made them a target for a Musk-Koggi C.G.I. sale.

It had been four years since the fateful '99 café scene where Greta, Carry, and Brad met before heading over to Stow Rage in Ingelside. The geek factor is strong with that part of the story, so we'll leave that out in order to focus on the romantic and political stuff.

Brad Yayger was getting himself ready for a day to remember without realizing what was in store. He had dropped out of the rat race back in '99 in order to found a wisdom school. His work involved remedial education for people such as the Naval Misfits, their bitches (lap dogs), and their victims. He and Greta were meant for each other, but they would not meet again for another twenty-one years in 2024.

Brad was informed about Greg Shrub the Younger and his fake-ass excuse for invading Iraq, but Greta was oblivious. She had more important business with Hollywood industrialists. She could not care less about the world stage of international piracy. Better to keep one's nose to the grindstone and make lots of filthy lucre.

Carry emerged from the bedroom and gave Greta a big hug and kiss. "You were fantastic last night." Carry appreciated Greta's massage technique, and was hoping they could shack up together. He knew about her marital arrangement, but was hoping to make her dad a better offer. Once he made it big in C.G.I. sales, he would be more affluent than her intended. Dad would appreciate the increase in family wealth as well as his youthful exuberance.

"Thanks, Carry. I've had a great deal of practice, especially with you stopping in the night before an important meeting. I appreciate the way you take the edge off my hormonal imbalance with your excellent tongue work." Carry was always careful to steer clear of the hymen that would cost him his life. Dad had a gnarly shotgun that would blow Carry's head clear off were he to break the precious bit of membrane.

Greta put a bowl and spoon in front of Carry as he sat at her kitchen table. "Help yourself to breakfast." She poured him a cup of his favorite Algerian Roast coffee, unadulterated as the gods intended. Carry poured out a generous helping of granola and slathered it with yogurt. He knew exactly where Greta kept her cinnamon, and went straight for it as she started washing her own bowl. (She had a dishwashing machine, but preferred to hand wash for ecological reasons.)

As the two colleagues were participating in fake-ass domestic bliss, Brad headed across the street for his usual bagel with cream cheese and a large black coffee. The café across from his B&B pad was in the ground floor of an old Victorian house that the Zin Center owned. They had plans to "upgrade" the place to a tea salon, but that was years in the offing. Brad would hang out there and chat up the neighbors until his funding dried up a few years later. It was a great place for meets and greets, with loads of story

opportunities. There was even an occasion when he met an old New England colleague there, but that's a story for a different framework.

With breakfast behind them and the warm glow of non-coital ecstasy on their brows, Greta and Carry hopped into her red Cabrio for the short jaunt to Paravalley H.Q. It gave them the time they needed to prep for the sales call and get their heads in the game. "Do you remember that meal with Slim back in '99?"

"There is no way I could forget it without E.C.T. or brain-damaging drugs." Slim had ordered cheesecake for dessert, knowing full well what it meant for Brad. It was as if he were siding with Canis Personality in their break-up. Brad was suave enough to avoid bitching, but Carry noticed a twinge of pain in Brad's countenance as Slim placed the order.

"What did you think of the cheesecake incident?" Fans of the prequel series know all about how the woman of Brad's nightmares had baked him a cheesecake and that he shared it with his colleagues. Carry kept mum as he thought back on that fateful dinner in '99.

A few minutes passed, Carry ventured, "You did your own tribute when you bought that bonehead chicken-fried steak." The guy was no longer a bonehead. Thanks to his run-in with Greta, he has become a Sci-Fi fan with a passion for Bray Radbury. It was as if his role in Greta's romp had turned his nervous system right-side-up.

As they recalled their biggest sales win so far, Brad finished his meal and headed for the B.A.R.T. station. He would make his own fateful excursion into the East Bay wilderness where destiny awaited him. Park trails are his favorite venues for technical discussions and wisdom school work.