

17. CARA SINGS

Cara has just published a novel. She has agreed to help me with my writing. I seem to have run out of ideas.

“You’ve got a scene in a hotel room. The woman prepares to go out. She lays her dress on the bed. It’s a clingy silver-material. It makes her well-toned body look fabulous. Even that is not enough for her. She feels so out of place. She is just becoming someone for the night. Making herself available. It’s not as if she cares about any of this.”

“She wants something to happen tonight. She puts on her new shoes. They are open in the back with a seductive little strap. It says that she is ready to go. She slides her hands up her legs. This really feels good. She is telling herself this. Her make up is on point. Everything seems perfect. The room is soaked with the heavy scent of her perfume.”

Cara feels as if she is getting lost in my story.

“I’ve got a life. A guy who cares for me. You’re trying to sap all my energy.”

“I’m not just taking. I’m giving as well.”

“I’m not really open to that kind of giving.”

“You never know what you’re missing.”

“It all begins with such a bang, but it ends up with just a whimper.”

She has made her point. She wants to talk about my writing.

“You read the chapters that I sent you.”

“You have those long passages where you confront Mr. Spencer.”

I feel the need to correct her, but I let her talk on.

“Mr. Spencer appears to be a writer who has achieved more success than you have. And you find some way to confront him face to face. Then you threaten him. Do you have any idea what this is all about?”

“None whatsoever.”

“It’s a little bit of a perversion on your part.”

“Oh really.”

“You’re acting out your desire to hurt him because he has the one thing that you want but can’t have. He is a published author. He is accepted by others for his accomplishments. You are trying to get people interested in your silly little story ideas. He can paint a picture with his words. You can’t tell a consistent story. Always a new interruption. Or a cliched sex scene. And they’re all the same. He goes down on her. She goes down on him. They fuck. They see heaven. The world shakes. They become spirits, and they fly. How boring! You just use the sex as an excuse to include more violence. After all that is what is behind your scenes with Mr. Spencer.”

She keeps on, “I’ve never read his books. I hear that they are good but rather confusing.”

“They are very clever. I’m reading his new one now.”

“The one about the porcupine?” She laughs. She has tried to make a joke.

I play along, “It is rather prickly if that’s what you were wondering.”

“If you were actually having sex, you wouldn’t feel a need to write about it.”

“Maybe, I’d like to report on it. I hear that only makes it better. You keep trying to top yourself with the next encounter. I suppose that you wouldn’t know about that since you are with

a guy.”

“So you use your writing to get naked with your reader. That’s just another way that you can hide from yourself. You’ll only be able to face yourself when you realize that you’re nothing. You’re a failure.”

This is the sorriest book that you’ll ever read. It’s about the mess that you’re life is in. It’s a colossal waste of time.

The only fear is in your mind. The guy’s a stranger. He’s never going to talk to you. And if you spend your time thinking about it, you’re more hard up than he is.

“Cara, I’m just getting too close to your soul. You prefer your protected world.”

“It’s not artificial. I just need some security if I’m ever going to get time to do anything that I want.”

“I did a very bad thing.”

She plays along, “What are you talking about?”

“I was watching you. I was looking at you through the window.”

“I know.”

“I was touching myself as I watched you.”

“I left my curtains open for you.”

“What if someone else was watching instead of me?”

“That’s all part of the risk. But my window faces yours. I knew that it would be you.”

“I’m glad that you took the time to watch. Do you want to see more?”

“What more can I see? Haven’t I seen it all?”

“It was from a distance. How much can you really see?”

“As much as I need to get myself going. You’re very good with that exercise routine of yours.”

“I’m glad that you like it. It’s more like a dance.”

“You seem like a dancer.”

“A private dancer. You could dance with me.”

“You like to dance?”

“That’s all that I like to do. We could dance close. You could feel the heat of my body.”

“I did a naughty thing. Don’t you want to punish me for that?”

“There is ample time for that.”

“Are you running out of ideas? You’re pretending that kinky sex is part of a dance routine.”

“He watches her from a distance, and he believes that he knows her. And to be close to her is to complete his fantasy. Even her supposed acquiescence seems to confirm that scenario. But he never has been close to her. The view from up close reveals that the distant vantage point is affected by an optical illusion. He doesn’t notice the illusion because he is so taken up with his belief in what he sees.”

“I feel that I have already touched your skin.”

“How did it feel?”

“It felt smooth.”

“Of course it did. You weren’t afraid that you’d get caught.”

“I always am afraid.”

Cara appears to contradict me, “The fear is hers. This guy is watching her. She doesn’t know him. She has no idea what he is going to do to her. He’ll probably hurt her.”

“That is silly.”

“No it’s not. It’s what really is going to happen to him. You have to invent another character to embody the threat, On the one hand, he enjoys pleasure as a peeping tom. On the other hand, this guy threatens the tom with punishment. It makes the tom seem like he’s an OK guy. He’s just protecting the purity of the woman against her abusive husband.”

“It sounds like you’ve got it all worked out.”

“Have I made a mistake? Did I forget something?”

The longer that he watches, the closer that he feels to her. He melts with the touch. She seems so gentle. Each motion is so fluid. He wants to reach his hand out for her. He does it all in his imagination. The more excited that he feels, the more her motions become intense. In her dance, she seems to be gyrating. Even from his vantage point, he can feel the heat.

“You still believe that someone would go along with that crazy fantasy.”

“It’s only logical in this story.”

“You’re really sanctioning criminal behavior.”

“I need you to do something for me.”

“What do you need?”

“Isn’t it obvious.”

“I thought that we weren’t going to talk about that.”

“If you what he was like, you wouldn’t feel the way that you.”

“It’s not in my character.”

“He’s not going to ever let me leave him.”

“You have to find some way to get away.”

“Lord knows I’ve tried. He’d follow me to the ends of the earth to stop me. You have to help.”

“I don’t know what I can do short of killing him.”

“You said that you didn’t want to talk like that.”

“Exactly. You’re trying to put words in my mouth. But that’s really no good. I still don’t feel it like that.”

“I’m at my wit’s end.”

“Didn’t he protect himself with a pre-nup? Why is he worried if you leave?”

“He knows that it’s not iron-clad. Besides, I’m his prize possession. He doesn’t want me to get away.”

“What is he going to do to stop me?”

“He’d kill me if he needed to.”

“Guys say that all the time. There is no way that he is going to act it out.”

“You can’t say that for sure. You’ve never met him.”

“Has he ever done anything to make you think that he’d really carry out his threats.”

“I can feel it. I’ve seen how he acts with other people. He has a temper.”

“Just make sure that you don’t get on his bad side.”

“That will happen for sure if he leaves.”

“So he fucks up. And he hurts her. Then he pretends that it didn’t happen. They make

up, and she acts as if it's some other guy that she's with. But it's just one guy not two. His two sides. Sometimes he's just a real prick. The rest of the time it's love off the hook. So she always goes back to him."

That night that I was with her was like nothing that I've ever felt before. She was just crazy. I didn't know where to stop. Love carried us on until dawn.

I still didn't feel that I could help her. But I was willing to give it a shot. I'm not really into violence. It's not in my nature. I couldn't see getting a gun and hurting him. I couldn't even imagine having him die in an accident. The blood would still be on my hands.

"You have to do something."

She looks up at me helplessly. She has done all that she can for me. I feel as if I have little choice. Maybe I'll follow him. Just keep tabs on what he's up to. If he seems to be an upstanding guy, I'll just leave it alone.

I know that it's already over my head. It's too much for her. Now it's overwhelming me. It's eventually going to reach a breaking point. Then we'll start to take it out on each other.

"I didn't know that dirty thoughts meant something like this. I hate it."

Indeed I do. But I love her perfume. Just being around her gets me going. She knows it. She is leading me on. Her clothes are getting more and more revealing. And there is no longer any modesty around me. Everything says sex.

"You are getting your reader trapped in the center of the puzzle. He thinks that such a girl would get close to him just because of his desire. It's the pervert's dream. The more that he wants her, the more that she wants him. But in real life, he'd just be another creep."

"Are you calling me a creep?"

"You know what I mean."

"We all have our doubts."

"What do you need to convince me that he's going to hurt me? Do you have to see the damage before you do a thing? You can't let it happen."

I feel paralyzed. Her kisses seem to bring me back to life.

"Do you really think that I can do something to stop him?"

"I can make you feel really good about yourself."

"You already have. But it hasn't turned me into a killer. I'll do what I can to protect you. I just can't go out of my way."

"You can't watch me twenty-four hours a day."

"I do what I can."

Her skirt is hiked all the way up her legs. I reach underneath by sliding my rough hands up her smooth legs. She isn't wearing any underwear. I am already aroused. I let her know. I start to massage her. She begins to coo. When she is wet and ready, I bend her over and slide myself in from behind. She sighs as I move inside. She rides me with all her energy. I kiss the back of her neck. I work to hold on. There is almost a pained expression on her face. This is a total workout. I am pushed to the point of exhaustion.

"Does this convince you enough?"

"That's completely from his point of view. He's probably forced himself on her. He portrays her as if she likes aggressive sex. That seems to excuse any of his behavior. It's the same standard fantasy. The rough guy. The smooth girl. He violates her serenity. There are

really no bounds to his aggressiveness. He can always blame the husband for her mistreatment.”

“Cara, you won’t cut me a break. People like to read this. They like this portrait of abandon. It just seems natural.”

“It’s perverse. It’s important that we don’t tolerate this kind of shit. What’s next? She shows up with bruises. Or she fakes it so she can get the guy incensed at her husband. It’s all the same. It says that sort of thing is OK. Even if it’s just from a voyeuristic point of view. It’s all intense sex. Who are you trying to fool? You’re a psychotic pervert.”

“I’m telling a story.”

“By exaggerating the violence.”

He feels helpless. She clearly expects something from him that he can’t give. It was so much easier just to watch her from afar. Now he feels caught up in something beyond his control. He has no idea what is going to happen next. He has even less of an idea what he needs to do. She wants her husband to disappear. And he just be wished away. He is going to have to make an effort if things are to change.

He’s already told her that he’s not a killer. She wants to see if he can be pushed to act. She’s already taunted him. Their love-making seems more intense. But nothing is enough to motivate him. He thinks that it can go along like this forever. He doesn’t really understand her husband.

He still watches her from his window. He sees her less and less frequently. He is seeing more and more of the husband. Every time that he sees the husband up in her room, it seems as if her security is being violated. It’s the husband’s house. But the watcher already feels closer to her. The husband is an intruder of their love.

For a brief moment, he feels this intense hatred towards to husband. He wants to do something really terrible to him. But then the feeling passes. And he just stares out the window. The next time that they meet, she doesn’t look good. She is wearing sunglasses.

“What happened to you?”

“I told you that he was crazy. Do you believe me now?”

“He did this to you.”

“It’s not something that I would do to myself.”

“It wasn’t an accident.”

“He did this to me. I told you that he was dangerous.”

He pulls her close. Her caresses seem so gentle. She surrenders automatically.

“I have never felt you so intensely. You have this new energy. What’s going on?”

“I want you to be mine forever. I can’t stand seeing you with him. I hate what he’s done to you. This has to stop.”

“What are you going to do about it?”

“I’ll confront him.”

“No, you won’t. He’s dangerous. Look what he’s done to me.”

“What am I supposed to do?”

He can still feel himself inside her.

“We need a plan.”

“We are going to kill him.”

“She corrects him, “Don’t say it that way. We’re just going to get him out of the way.”

“Permanently.”

He hates the finality. He talks around the issue.

“I am going to have to kill him.”

“He’ll get in an accident. It will all be OK. No one will even suspect us.”

“An accident. It’s not going to just happen. Someone is going to have to deliver the final death blow.”

“You’re making it sound so sudden.”

“Quit the melodramatics. You know that’s what we have to do. You’re just messing with me. Acting as if we can make it happen differently. I’m going to have to take care of it. And no one will even know what happened.”

“You’re trying to explain how he can ever get her to do what he wants. He sees her around. Then he starts to look in her window. He’s a pervert. If she knew what was going on, she’d call the police. But he tells himself that it’s OK. She turns the light on, or she arranges the curtains, and he naturally assumes that it is for him. He has to create this dialogue for himself so that he can believe that she is going along with his desires. He peeps in her window. But she invites him. She opens the curtains. She makes sure that the lighting allows him to see inside. Everything on her part says watch me.”

“Of course, it’s all a fabrication on his part. And it’s just the beginning. He’s getting his jollies from watching her. From touching himself while watching her. Remember that he’d go to jail already if he got caught. But that’s not all. He wants more. He wants to invade her place. But he needs an excuse. He invents the character of the abusive husband. All that the peeper is doing is protecting her against the abusive husband.”

”What do you think is going to happen when he breaks into her apartment? He is going to feel the need to subdue her. He is the one who is going to act out the part of the abusive guy. But all the while, he is making believe that she is inviting him in there. That is his excuse for breaking in. He has to get in there in time to rescue her. But the only rescue is from the peeper himself.”

Cara acts as if she has broken my story down to a t.

He wonders what is coming over him. He is thinking about what he has to do. And he no longer feels hesitant. It is actually getting him excited. It is almost more arousing than being with her. This wedding in blood is all something new. But he accepts its fruits.

“She’s going to have to betray him. It’s only logical. That way it makes it seem that all the violence originate with her. He is simply an innocent in the affair.”

“But they’re finally together.”

“That’s not enough. They’re sucking the energy from each other. It can’t last.”

“Haven’t I intimated the same thing about your life?”

“I’ve got a man that loves me. When I go to bed at night, I really have nothing to worry about.”

“I really am glad that perfection has come your way.”

“It has.”

He is going to have to wield the sword. She has inspired him with the fire. But it is going to have to be his hands that get bloodied. He can sense this feeling of completeness as it all makes sense. This was how it was meant to be all along. He almost feels a sense of destiny.

Even if the husband struggles, he will meet the challenge. Nothing will get in his way. He feels all powerful.

Her kiss has inspired him. He has always felt so fragile in her arms. As if she could break him with a whisper. That has only made him hang on tighter to her. He is nothing without her. She gives meaning to his world. And he embraces her glory. It will be what leads him on to triumph.

He laughs at himself. He is falling for her melodramatics. But it seems to have real meaning. He can feel her blessing.

As they struggle together in the night, he is drawn to that inevitable confrontation with the husband.

“What more do you have to say? The transformation is complete. You know that if you presented the guy that way from the beginning, we’d all know that he was a psycho. You act as if this is all part of a process. There is no process to this. This is the way that he always has been.”

“That’s who you are. You can’t manage a mature relationship. You can’t find any satisfaction from the simple things in life. You’re numb to your own experience.”

After it’s all over, she makes a point of them maintaining their distance.

“There’s been nothing to connect us up to this point. We have to make sure that no one puts it together.”

“Does that mean we have to stop seeing each other?”

“For the time being.”

He is looking at her in the faint glint of the moonlight. There is something positively demonic in that look on her face. Her blouse is half-open. It is stained. He tugs at it. His hands are flailing as he moves in for the kill.

She is eager for his kiss. His tongue buried deep in her throat. His hands are rude. They make their way under her skirt. They pull at her panties.

She wants him inside her. It is their baptism in blood. She wants it more than ever. It will burn that impression on his brain. After that point, he will be hers completely. There will be nothing that he can do to stop her.

For so long, she felt useless with a man. Now she has found someone who is totally supple to her wishes. It is the opportunity of a lifetime. He can give her anything that she wants. Anything that is at his command. Anything of which he is capable.

For the time being, she allies herself with his triumph. It will be very short-lived. He has none of the staying power. But for the moment she rides the high. And he won’t come down until her old man is gone and buried.

She feels haunted. She feels that her husband might jump up and smite them both. She has to kill the ghost. The phantom is more powerful than the living man was.

She pulls her lover closer to her. She grips his butt and pulls him deeper and deeper inside him. This is their death rattle. And she rides it like a pro.

She wishes that this kind of thing could last. She can already sense it waning. She wants to get rid of this patsy at the first sign of trouble. The next few weeks will make that easy. The forced separation will be enough to reestablish their distance. It will make him want her more than ever. But he will be obey her. He will be paralyzed to do anything.

*It's not as if he has any access to the husband's money.
She is trying to get her story right.*

"This guy moved in the place across the way. I caught him watching me while I was changing. I know that I wanted to close the curtains. But the sash was broken. I tried to hide in the shadows. But I could see that he was looking at me."

"A few times he tried accosting me in the street. I even caught him following me. I went to the beach. I'm sure that he was watching me from the heights. He was probably doing something dirty, touching himself while he looked at me in a swim suit."

"I called the cops when he tried to break in. But they didn't catch him. This time he succeeded. He caught me with my husband. He knocked me down. You can see the bruises. Then he killed my husband. He's dangerous. I told you about him. But you never did anything. Now you know. He's the one who killed my husband."

It's been a while. He's started to miss her. She won't take his calls.

She repeats to herself, "We need to wait until the time is right. I told you not to call."

No one suspects her. There is no reason at all to suspect her. It's all the neighbor's doing.

"I told you that would be the resolution. Everything gets blamed on the Black Widow. She is the viper. She slowly stalks her prey. Then she strikes."

This jerk is really pissing me off in some bar. I call him a motherfucker to his face. When I have my back turned, he pushes me. Then he sneaks away to his friends. After the bar closes, I follow him out. I surprise him in the back by his car. I pull him by his head and knock him down. I drag him over to my car where I stuff him in the trunk.

I hear him beating on the car as I drive away. Fuck it! He's going to stay in there. I finally get him out to the country. I open the trunk and let him out. He threatens to go to the FBI for kidnapping.

"Listen, you dickhead. Shut your fucking mouth. Or I'll kill you here. I don't want to hear a peep out of you."

I think about burying him alive. I take pity on him and leave him out there. I never see him again.

"Are you really this kind of guy? Or do you just use the persona for effect?"

I'm working on my writing, and my neighbor is making all kind of noise through the walls. I need to think of some way to get even with him. I should have never moved into this apartment. And I have six months left on the lease.

I'm thinking about trying to put some poison in the ventilation system. Even put it in my place so as to throw off suspicion on me. I'd wear a gas mask to protect me. Then I'd vomit a few times to make it look as if it affected me too. I'd be the one to complain. When they checked on my neighbor, he'd be overcome by the fumes. Too late.

"All your fantasies are turning violent. Did that woman influence you?"

"It was a story."

"But it must be based on something real."

"Not necessarily. I've just seen a lot of those kind of movies."

"Why would you just remember those movies?"

"I know that's what you want to see."

"I can't stay any longer."

"I want you to stay."

"You're going to like what you're going to see."

It starts from a suggestion in movie. You almost feel haunted by what you are watching. Then it starts to echo in details in you life.

"I'm not going to go down for this crime. I really get no benefit from it whatsoever."

"We're in this together."

"It doesn't look like it. What are you going to do now? Betray me."

There comes a point where we are only this sliver of existence in our own lives. Then the projector screen flashes, and we come alive. Things are only full-blooded when we can observe them on the screen. This is the pleasure in it all.

"You didn't do it for me. You did it for yourself. You get a kick out of the violence. It's a pleasure greater than money could buy."

"That's not true. I told you that it wasn't in my character."

"But you adapted your nature when the time came. I've got to say that there's something perverse about it. It's like you used me to get to him."

"That's nonsense. You're the one who's getting the money."

"There are these gaps in experience. You need something to fill them in. Something like a story. And the greater the vision, the more it all holds together. That's what the violence is there for. It gives the impression that these random connections are part of some big pattern. That is what the Shepherd believes. That is why he is there to protect his flock.

Cara really thought that she could help me with my writing.

"You are hopeless. You keep going back to the same juvenile story. It's just an excuse to tell a dirty story. The girl in the tight skirt. The man with the wandering hands. After it's said and done, what do you have?"

"An illusion of intimacy. Maybe that sounds familiar to you."

"You can't compare our lives. They are completely different."

I hope that we have not come to an impasse with regards to our discussion. I so much wanted her input.

I've been drinking for a week. What a mess. She still hasn't called. This is too hopeless. Tonight some guy tries to push me down the stairs. What a sorry sight. He's the one who takes the tumble.

I take some pills when I get home. I pass out. I almost don't wake up. She hasn't called. I didn't want to end up like this. I need to take things in my own hands. I will show her.

"Isn't this what he wanted all the time? He wanted to challenge her. He coerced her to have sex. And now he's going to kill her."

I don't remember much of anything from the past few weeks. It is all becoming a blur. I've completely lost myself.

I can see that her light is on. She is with another man. It is just driving me crazy.

"What's the one thing that holds all the stories together?"

"Cara, you've belabored this point. So has Joy. It's the mystical power of sex. But don't you believe it yourself. That is why you're with the guy that you're with."

"I'm not like you."

“But what do you do when that mystical power wears off?”

“There’s always ways to find satisfaction in my daily life. The things that seem absent in yours. No one seems to appreciate nature around them. No one takes pleasant walks with her lover.”

“The situations are more realistic. Nature is destructive. Pestilence and disease. The characters struggle for the only thing that will liberate them from their world.”

“Crime and violence.”

“They want what they need. What they don’t have.”

“Their expectations are all mixed up. They don’t know how to enjoy basic things. So they can’t build for the future.”

He felt like he had a future. Why was it never enough for him. What was the temptation in looking at her through the window. It was that unattainable. He needed to break through two panes of glass just to touch her.

She moves so seductively. He imagines himself in her arms. Nothing will ever feel like this again. He hates to think that she has betrayed him.

He has seen the police investigating. But they have no reason to suspect him.

The officer knocks at his door.

“Do you mind if I come in and ask you some questions?”

“That’s OK.”

He walks over to the window.

“I see that you can look into that house over there.”

“I never really sit there. When I watch TV, I sit on the couch. And when I work, I sit at that desk.”

“What do you do?”

“I’m a graphics designer. I do freelance. I work at home.”

“How did you cut your hand?”

“I was cooking. I like to cook.”

“You seem to have an answer for everything.”

“Am I a suspect for something?”

“I’m just curious. You’re telling me that an attractive woman lives across the way, and you have never watched her from the vantage point of that window.”

“Officer, I’m not a pervert.”

“It’s the sort of thing that any red-blooded male would do. Have you seen her?”

“I’m not like most guys. Isn’t it illegal to peep in other people’s windows?”

“I’d get a kick out of looking at her if I had a chance. It’s better than a girlie mag. More real than porno. You probably can see right into her room. Watch her in bed.”

“I told you that I’m not a pervert. If you don’t have any other questions, you can leave.”

He’s not sure if this is even a cop. He’s seen the ID, but this would be the perfect cover to throw him off the tale. This guy has to be working for her.

“How’s it going to end? Is he going to break into her place?”

“No. Of course not. She’ll let him in.”

“And then he’ll surprise her.”

“I told you not to come her.”

"You shouldn't have sent that cop over to my place. Was that some kind of warning?"

"I have enough on you to have you sent to jail."

"Is that why you invited me in?"

"What are you going to do to me?"

"What do you want me to do to you? You leave your curtains open. And your light is on. You're just inviting me over."

"My husband is coming over."

"I thought that I killed your husband. Or he fell accidentally when I was around."

"That was some guy who was watching me. He took pictures of me naked. He did the weirdest things. I let him come over. You saw me with him. He messed with me."

"Why didn't you go to the police? Why did you get me involved?"

"My husband is a jealous man. He would have blamed me for what happened."

"Let's wait for your husband to come home."

"You're not going to hurt me."

"I have all night. I can wait until he comes back."

"He might not come back tonight."

"Then we can have a little fun at his expense. I've seen how good you can get."

"I'm not going to sleep with you."

"Just give me a hand job."

"And then you'll go."