

4. THE FULL BODY PRESS

Cheryl hibernates the next few days at Robert's. This is the idyllic romance that she's always dreamed about but never really found. She gets a real kick playing house with him. Cheryl feels this warm affection is almost a response to the cold war of the week before. She makes the most of it while it lasts; she expects it to last a while

Cheryl and Robert make plans. They go to see houses in Brookhaven. These are big houses with large plots of land. They speak of a lifetime together. Cheryl is a little afraid of the commitment. This is more than being with a guy. She wonders if Robert is the one. But she is getting good at pretending. He is getting better at encouraging those dreams.

Back at the Anchor, the girls miss Cheryl. Trish coaxes Stevie to go out on a Tuesday night. They are sitting at a table together. There are only twenty or so other patrons. Some of the guys are playing pool.

"You couldn't get Cheryl to come out?" asks Stevie.

"Hardly. She's married now," says Trish.

"No, she's not. She's just trying to make up for all the shit that he put her through the week before."

"So that's what it is, Dr. Stevie?."

Trish takes a sip from her beer.

Stevie has a comeback, "She better make the best of it while it lasts."

"That sounds encouraging."

"It's a fact, Trish. It never lasts. Especially with Robert. Cheryl needs to get as much as she can from him right now."

"Are you suggesting a proposal?" speculates Trish.

Stevie offers her view of romance, "Maybe, but passion is never a constant. And when it burns, you just have to make it worth as much as you can. Get something real in return."

"Never sell yourself cheap."

Stevie offer her counsel, "I hate to sound as if I'm selling something. But I know. The heart wavers. So you need a soft landing when you come down from that dream."

Trish questions Stevie's advice for Cheryl, "If it's all so hot and cold like you say, wouldn't it be better if Cheryl didn't ask for too much. Then she'd be stuck with someone who she really doesn't love?"

"He's a successful guy. Not bad to look at. What's not there to love can grow on her over the years."

Trish adds some humor, "It sounds like a fungus."

"Trish, love comes slow. What happens in one night is never to be trusted on the long term."

"But sometimes that one night can do the trick for a whole year."

Stevie tries to steer the conversation back, "I'm not talking about that."

"Stevie, I don't know if I have your kind of patience. Cheryl's got to watch what she's getting into. Otherwise, she won't have an out when she needs it."

Stevie goes along with Trish, "Something like that."

They both miss Cheryl. But they are rooting for her to finally tame Robert. That may be

too much to ask. Stevie is using the discussion to try to work out the doubts about her own situation. Trish simply wonders if Robert is all that he seems to be.

Cheryl decides to go running. It is a hot morning. But she feels that the heat might do her good. It will burn off the poisons that have taken hold inside her. She starts off with a slow stride with each foot following the other. She adapts quickly, and she is breathing comfortably. She decides to stretch out further. Each foot now moves just ahead of itself. She is still able to control the pace. She does not want to tire herself out too abruptly. But she knows that there is still a push from within. She could easily let herself slide and just accommodate to this intensity. But she wants more. She comes out of herself. She becomes someone that is hardly her. This transformation makes her invincible. She surprises herself. Every muscle is coordinated to the exertion. She can hardly think about it. This otherness is now part of her, almost coming out of her body. On other days, she would collapse at this moment. Her stomach would be pained. She would fall to the ground. But now she focuses on this feeling and draws it deep inside herself. This is her new identity that she can embrace. It has no other frame of reference. Everything is this now. This thrust allows her to shoot ahead. Her body is a dynamo; it allows for no weakness.

Once she has attained this summit, she wonders if she can duplicate it. It is as if another runner has followed her on her path. And Cheryl has stayed just one step ahead of her competition. She imagines the stealth of the phantom that has her in its sight. It only adds to her own feeling of liberation. She is learning to outrun the wind.

On her run, Cheryl has again acquired her independence. It has nothing to do with Robert. It reminds her of all the things that she does that give her this feeling of self. Even in being with him, she has given up little of that to him. That is how she wants it. But there is still something that she would like to share with him. She can't. He won't let her.

She is covered in sweat. She loves the feeling. She is still running only her pace is a little slower. She is coming down. There is a touch of a breeze moving through the trees. She enjoys how it touches her forehead. Her body still is loose, and the muscles have stretched comfortably. Even with the breeze, she does not tense up.

When she gets back home, she takes a long shower. The water rolls off her skin. She can sense the tautness of her muscles. She confidently lets the spray splash off of her. She turns to let the warm water run on her back. It is so comforting.

There is a wonderful burning sensation that radiates from deep inside her muscles. She lies down on her bed and lets this feeling wash over her. Even though she is tired, she feels strong. She extends her body fully. The movement seems to continue on in space. She stretches herself out forever.

She breathes deeply. There is no discomfort. She is totally open and relaxed. She doesn't know what to make of the experience. It is so overwhelming. So affirming. For a while she feeds off that high.

She wishes that she could offer something of her appreciation to Robert. Sometimes in his embrace, she imagines that closeness. But he can barely verbalize. So she is satisfied with that solitary belief.

Now there is no doubt. She does not need someone else to remind her of her power. It rages inside her. She can let the fatigue take over. This is the next step. Her relaxed state gives

over to an intense tiredness. Her body needs to rest. Cheryl closes her eyes and lets sleep take her over. As she settles in, there is no distraction. All her disquiet has been sent far far away. Even in her nap, there is a marvelous sense of comfort that has surrounded her. She awakens totally refreshed.

Trish has felt the exhaustion of the past few days. On the verge of selling a couple of houses, the deals fall through at the last moment. She is still confident about finding buyers, but all the stress has taken its toll. An acquaintance recommends a good masseur to her. She just files the card away. But now she is holding it in her hand. She goes over to his office and is prepared to give herself up to his strong hands.

The masseur first opens her up by moving his fingers along her neck. He more or less unlocks the key to her spirit. All the deep fatigue of days is given over to his steady hands. From the heights of her tension, she can feel herself falling. She just lets go. He progresses from a gradual tenderness to a brisk intensity. A gentle chill runs over her body as she can feel all the tightness in her muscles dissipate.

He lays both his hands flat on her back and works them deep into her flesh. His movements are so smooth. He almost slides through water. She lets herself go as the feeling overwhelms her. She is coming alive to his touch. There is no risk here. She can give herself completely.

Even as she has given herself over to him, there is a part of her that still holds back. As much as the touch is foreign to her, she cannot yield completely. Even in her liberation, he can sense a resistance. He tries to break it down with his gentle encouragement. She can feel the invitation.

She wants him to touch her deeply. She wants to give it all up. It just seems so unnatural. The towel seems to speak of that line. She can sense it narrowly clinging to her body. She wants to embrace her nakedness. She wants him to break down that final inhibition. This all seems too much.

His hands aggressively stretch the flesh of the lower back. She experiences an intense warmth already pulsating within her. The heat increases and affects her in a very extreme way. She shudders as a wave rolls over her.

Now she knows that nothing can hold her back. She wants what follows. She is telling him to do as much. But then she wonders if this is all imagination. The feelings are already so heightened that she can't tell what is really going on. She is almost drugged by what is happening.

He is just doing his job. He barely shifts his emphasis. He continues to mark off squares of her flesh where he completes his business. He is doing his job. How far will he go. She wants it to mean more. She wants him to touch her deeply. To let her know things about herself that she hides all the time. Things that she won't even share with a lover.

She opens her eyes to look around the room. She regains her bearings. She is still in the haze. She again settles on the table. He hesitates a brief second as he notices her readjusting. Then he takes up where he left off. His motions become more insistent. Relentless. The waves now pass over her in succession. She is washed by these tides. She can't hold back.

She lets him take liberties. She doesn't say a thing. She almost expects it. She just gives in to his maneuvers. There is nothing forbidden in his touch. It is all so graceful. She realizes a

unity of the body. She needs this. She needs to cast off the shame.

There are no constraints. Nothing to stop him in his pursuit. And he dissolves these barriers as if they were never there. Her whole body gives up to his touch. And he touches everywhere. Even deep inside, in her mind, she can feel the soothing touch. She doesn't even give it a second thought. She lets herself fall under his spell. And he keeps on his task. There is no change in expression on his part. He is doing his job.

"You let him do what?" Diane howls.

The girls are all gathered for a session at the Anchor. It's been a while since they were all together. Even Cheryl has come out of hiding

"It was no big deal," avers Trish.

"Let me get this straight. You let this masseur touch you sexually," Stevie wonders. Her eyes are filled with a prying curiosity.

"I don't think of it that way. It was all so natural."

Cheryl gets into the act, "But he touched you everywhere. That's perverse."

Diane adds her perspective, "He violated you. You were vulnerable. You were there to be protected. And he did this thing to you. He took liberties."

Trish defends herself, "You make it sound so dirty. It wasn't like that. I wished for it. I allowed it to happen. There was no questions at all. It was how it was supposed to happen. I felt it was necessary."

Stevie wants details, "He just groped you."

"Stevie, it was so gradual. There was no grabbing or groping. He knew what he was doing. It wasn't like some drunk guy at the bar."

Diane is more cynical, "It wasn't like one of your dates?"

"Not at all, girls. His touch was caring. But he didn't ask for anything from me. He wasn't taking anything for himself. It was all so giving. I've never known anything like that before."

Trish isn't even drinking tonight. Everyone notices that.

She describes her feeling, "I've never known anything like that. I've been touched before. I've had guys give me massages. But everything always seemed so directed to a purpose. This was totally about the tenderness. He didn't expect anything. I didn't feel obligated or used by him. I wanted everything. It was surprising. I felt that he could read my mind."

Diane feels envious. "I need a drink just to settle down.

Trish doesn't respond. She continues to drink her water.

Cheryl asks, "Where did you find him?"

"A friend recommended him."

Cheryl has more questions, "He didn't say anything afterwards?"

"He didn't say anything about what happened. I paid him with a check. And I talked about making another appointment."

Stevie is still curious, "You didn't feel weird about what happened. I would feel really weird."

Diane has her new drink, "I wouldn't feel weird about it. I'd feel electric. You just have to go with things like that. I'm just surprised that he can get away with something like that. Why hasn't he been arrested?"

Trish has her insight, "It is all so discreet. I think that the women know."

"So does he charge all that?" Cheryl asks.

"It's no more than a normal massage. It's just more thorough."

Stevie adds, "I would feel as if I did something wrong."

Diane corrects Stevie, "You always feel as if you did something wrong. I bet you're feeling ashamed sitting here having a drink with us."

"Quit teasing me!"

Trish sums up her experience, "We all need something like that. It helps quiet us down. I just feel wonderful right now."

All the next day Cheryl thinks that the massage might just do the trick for her. She still finds it very naughty. She likes that. Some of her ardor for Robert has cooled a little. She questions herself. Can he really offer her what she needs. She wishes it was all so simple. Just to show up at appointment and have someone take all the cares of the day away. A man to turn on and off. Guys do that all the time. She wants the same.

No wonder Trish felt so great about what happened. There wasn't the eternal drag of an insecure guy. Cheryl likes that fact of not having to bear the burden for someone else. She loves Robert. But he has such a way of making her feel guilty. And he only seems to be there when he wants to unload his problems. Otherwise, he is conveniently missing.

After the fired-up romance, Cheryl goes back to her place. She ends up spending another couple of nights with Robert before the weekend. But she needs to be on her own for a little while. She can't see herself standing up straight without his support. That is a problem

She wants a guy like the masseur. She wants Trish's elation, but she also wants so much more. She wants paradise. She wants a man's touch to take her out of her mundane existence. She has to give so much of herself just to get Robert to offer her a little. He seems so tight-lipped all the time. Her only hope is the promise of that grand home and living in style. She is willing to exchange one form of happiness for another. Is that enough?

When will her struggle stop? Will she only feel more lonely trying to bring Robert close in an even bigger surrounding? She can feel the echo of the rooms as she looks in their hollow for the love that she needs.

As she relaxes on her couch after a long day at work, she realizes how much she enjoys being on her own. Maybe if she just met someone more understanding. But she's giving so much of herself just to get a little acknowledgment. But it's not as if she's going to break up with him. She doesn't want to consider the prospect of being on her own.

She knows that her dreams can't be fulfilled on her own. Sure, she finds some satisfaction in work. And in her workouts she has that feeling of confidence that she is getting somewhere. She beams with that pride in her body. She senses that she is even stronger than when she was in her teens. But that's not enough.

Cheryl hates to believe that she is doing all this for someone else. It's not like that. Hanging out with friends is great and all. But it will never give her the feeling of being complete. To come home alone to an empty apartment has this sense of lingering emptiness. She can sense that she is turning in circles. On the one hand, she is relishing her independence. On the other hand, she is reminded how little that matters in the long run.

So her race continue. Even when she is standing still, she is chasing something. She's

tried to explain it to Robert. He believes that he is the problem. And in an unfortunate way, he is.

When things are at their worse, she is a total stranger to his touch. She surrenders her body. But she can't let go of her heart. She realizes the risks at such moments. She feels herself almost provoking a fight. She doesn't say a thing. She won't give in. She acts out her frustration in silence. Then she retreats to her place and finds solace with her friends.

When the music of Anchor hits her, she can feel that she is in full swing. A couple of drinks, and the spirit takes control. Where is it all leading? Is this her now? And that's her fear/that she is postponing the inevitable. Waiting to break up with Robert just so that she can find another guy who's just the same. She is paralyzed.

It's an energetic Thursday night. The girls are giving in to the longing for the weekend. There is only the weekend and the time in between when they recover.

Stevie leads the charge, "Trish and I came out the other night. Cheryl, you needed to be there."

"Robert and I were having a great time."

Trish offers her analysis, "You don't believe that."

"I believe it because it's true. It's real."

When Diane adds her perspective, she feels as if they are ganging up on her. "Cheryl, you'll never stay with Robert. You're just playing a game with him."

"We're going to get married. We've already been looking at houses."

Trish knowingly teases her, "You've been looking at houses and you haven't asked me to be your real estate agent."

"You know that we've been looking in the city. In Brookhaven."

Diane offers a prediction, "I don't want to jinx things but I bet you'll be broken up in a year."

Stevie, wants to be more generous, "I'll give you two years."

Sara has come over to the table to get the glasses. It's a busy Thursday. She has overheard the conversation. "You're girls aren't serious. Cheryl, I'll give you a serious wager. If you stay together for over five years, I'll give you the bar."

"What do you get if I lose?" asks Cheryl.

"The pain of a break up. What could be worse?"

Diane joins in, "Sara, you're not really going to give her the bar. You're not being serious with her."

"I don't have any kids. My husband's dead. I have more than enough money from all these years. I'd love to give the bar to someone who loves the place. One of the family."

Stevie feels a little slighted, "That's no fair. Why does Cheryl get it?"

Cheryl states her point of view, "I don't really expect anything."

Sara revises her offer, "OK, a serious wager. The first one of you four girls to stay married for four years gets the Anchor."

Diane wonders, "Why do you expect us to be married? Wouldn't a single woman have more time to devote to the place?"

"I'm not saying that marriage is going to make you a better person. Or a better bar manager. But it might make things clearer."

Trish listens and has something to say, “Or it just might make things worse.”

Sara sticks to her proposal, “All of you have been coming here for years. You worked for me. You’ve been my best customers. I want to continue the legacy.”

“I still don’t get it,” asserts Diane. “It makes no sense why a girl who is married is going to make a better owner.”

Sara explains, “But at least she won’t be distracted by all the shenanigans in here.”

Trish offers another side, “It doesn’t seem fair. Cheryl and Stevie already have guys.”

Sara doesn’t budge, “But they might not be the right guys.”

Even Stevie questions the proposal, “Marriage could be the worst thing for the wrong reason.”

Trish is thinking, “What if we just find some guy to stay with for five years so we can get the bar?”

Sara has an answer, “It’s one thing to do that for a couple of weeks. But five years. That’s going to be torture.”

Cheryl suggests another facet to the challenge. “It sounds like someone trying to get married so that they can stay in the country.”

Sara jokes with them. “And I’m going to come to your house to see if it’s a real marriage. I’ve got to get back to the bar.”

“You’re really serious?” asks Diane.

“This is not the first time that I’ve thought about something like this. It just seemed like the right time to say it.”

Sara heads back to the bar. The girls are astounded.

Diane is the first to speak, “This is silly. I don’t want to play.”

Stevie repeats the challenge, “Think about it, girls. This is the one chance we have to pull it all together.”

Trish shares Diane’s doubts, “It just seems to add gasoline to the fire. If the single life is the source of our problems, then what will it be like in five years when we’re married and in charge of a bar. Temptation will rear its ugly head every night. We don’t need that kind of reminder of our weaknesses.”

Cheryl disagrees, “I like the idea. It’s sort of the truth-telling machine that we need. If we’re with a guy for the wrong reason, it forces us to shine the light on our relationship and ask if this is really what we want.”

“Shine a light, nothing. It’s a silly idea. I’ll just find a guy and pay him just to marry me.”

Stevie contradicts Diane. “Diane, you’ll never stay with that kind of guy for very long. He’ll make you’re life a hell.”

Cheryl is persistent, “If that’s what I need to make Robert come around. I’m all for it.”

Trish still doesn’t like it. “You’re just using this an excuse to say to him what you can’t say in a natural way. Do what you need to do. But don’t get us all in this contest.”

Diane starts to consider Cheryl’s and Stevie’s side, “I could use something to bring me back to my senses. I sometimes get carried away here.”

Trish continues to hold out, “And if you’re married, that will change things. I know you, Diane. Then you’ll start to run around on your husband when he’s not here”

Stevie defends Diane, “Trish, that’s a low blow. I think that we’re all looking for something. We’re waiting here for our magic. This is the push that we need. I like Sara’s idea.”

Trish takes her turn, “I’ll go along if the rest of you will. I don’t want to get in your way. But I have my reservation about the plan.”

“Trish, it’s just an idea. Something to make us think about things differently. It’s not like we have to give in to the plan. If it doesn’t work for one of us, there’s nothing forcing us to go along with it.”

Even in giving in, Trish holds out. “I don’t feel like marriage is the right thing for me. Especially right now. Maybe when I’m older. But I don’t know when. I don’t want to say in five years or ten. That just adds an artificial element to my life that I don’t need.”

Diane’s lifestyle seems the least yielding. But she welcomes the change. “I’m not saying that I’m unhappy about my life. But I would welcome some kind of a change. I’m just not sure what it would be. Just because we’re having fun now doesn’t mean that it will last forever. Sara is wise. We’ve always known that.”

Stevie goes over to the bar in that hope that Sara might impart more wisdom about her challenge. Diane goes off in search of a challenge for the night. It leaves Cheryl and Trish to continue a conversation that they’ve had before.

“I don’t know if I’m ready to get that serious about my life.”

Trish is more adamant. “I know that I’m not.”

“But Robert and I can’t keep going on like we are.”

“You said yourself that you’re looking at houses together.”

Cheryl is not so enthusiastic, “I just think that it’s something that I’m doing. I don’t really care about it that way. I don’t know what I want.”

“I just don’t like Sara’s assumption that we’ll be more stable if we get married.”

“All my life I’ve believed that I was destined to meet a perfect guy and get married. Even when I had my doubts, the belief was still there.”

“We all feel that way. It doesn’t make it real,” Trish asserts.

“At college, I knew a lot of girls who were ready to get married. But they were just living someone else’s life.”

Trish doesn’t want to give in. “If that’s what you want, that’s OK. It’s just not for me right now.”

“Marriage shouldn’t be a game.”

“That’s what I’ve been saying tonight.”

Cheryl tries to modify the challenge, “Just because we go along with the challenge doesn’t mean that we really have to get married.”

“Cheryl, I still find the idea silly. I’m not really down with the idea of marriage. But it just seems like we’re making a trifle of it all.”

Trish looks up to notice that some guy is trying to get her attention. She ignores him. He keeps looking at her until he loses his interest. He goes off to find someone else.

“We can’t keep on acting out our romantic lives in this bar. There has to be something more than this!”

“I’ve gotten along pretty good like this so far.”

Trish adopts this permanent smirk that could last her a lifetime.

“What’s that for?”

Cheryl replies, “You’re taking this contest more seriously than my situation.”

“That’s not it at all, Trish. This is our wake up call.”

“I’d prefer to keep sleepwalking.”

Trish reflects back on her fantasy encounter. She can still imagine the touch burning deep inside.

Cheryl goes to the bar and buys a couple of drinks for her and Trish.

“This is going to be it for me, Trish. I guess Stevie left without saying good bye. And Diane is over there with that gang of guys. There’s got to be at least one candidate in the bunch.”

“I just hang out until the wind blows my way.”

“That sounds confident.”

“Cheryl, I don’t know.”

Trish is slowly sipping her drink. Cheryl drinks more rapidly.

Cheryl takes her parting shot, “I’ve had enough. I’m going to head home.”

“Give me a hug, Cheryl.”

They embrace and Trish watches Cheryl walk out.

Trish’s tender fantasy has encouraged her to explore her adventurous side. Neil has been watching her while she’s been engaged in deep conversation with Cheryl. Like so many guys before him, he is a little intimidated by formidable presence of the four girls together. He can sense their magic as they dominate the room. He notices how they dissect the comings and goings of every novice trying to break into the social scene of the Anchor. They hardly shirk their appointed task. Here he is trying to become a player in their vicious game. He sees an opening when Trish gets up to buy a drink. He’s never going to break into the unified front. So he takes his opportunity seriously.

Trish is just getting her drink as he comes over to her side. They’ve filled the cup to the brim. She makes a face when she accustoms herself to the strong drink.

“Potent stuff!” he tells her. She appears not to hear what he has said. This makes him uncomfortable. How can he get her attention without being too obvious?

“Do you have one of those for me?”

She turns to look at him. Her vivacious smile and honey-blond hair are such an awakening for him. He is the proverbial deer in the headlights.

“Were you talking to me?” she asks.

“Hi, I’m Neil.” He wonders if he’s wasted his best lines already. He doesn’t need to worry. She finds him kind of cute. And she’s a little taken by him already.

“So what is a Neil doing out on a Thursday night.”

“I heard this was a fun place.”

“Trish introduces herself. She puts out her hand, “Hi, I’m Trish.”

He shakes her hand. He is still a little in awe.

“Can I have my hand back?” she requests of him. He’s still in space.

“Oh, sorry.”

“You need to calm down, Neil. Get a drink and meet me at that table.” She motions to an empty table. She’s ready to work her spell, and she doesn’t want interference from the other girls. Besides, he’s nervous enough already. She can use that to her advantage. Down deep he

thinks that he knows what's he's doing. It couldn't be further from the truth. The black widow knows that she is in control of her lair.

Neil wants to tell her all about his job. Trish can only think of the masseur from the other night. So she is looking at Neil's hands and imagining them doing their tricks on her body.

"What do you think of that?" asks Neil.

Trish hasn't heard a thing that he says. She's just been staring at him. Nevertheless, she's quick to recover, "That sounds wonderful." Indeed it does.

He talks on as if he hasn't realized what she is up to.

"Neil you have great eyelashes. Has anyone every told you that> They really bring out your blue eyes."

Her flattery is an arrow to his heart. He braces himself on the table. He tries to complement her back, but he just twists his words. She smiles back. She puts her hand on his wrist. It is reassuring.

"Neil, it's the thought that counts."

He had felt so confident when he went over to talk to her. Now he is at her command like a just-trained puppy. At the same time, he is beaming since he believes that his charm has done the trick. Trish would usually throw such a live one back and head back to her crew. But she wants to reward herself for the effort. She is still in wonder over the masseur's touch. She wants to surrender to that same magic. She wants it all from a deep sense of purpose.

She continues to hold on to his wrist. She tugs gently on his arm so that he moves closer to her. She can feel his heat already. He feels almost on display. But he can't help himself. He doesn't care. The girls could have been watching as this whole performance transpired. If they were curious about Trish's indiscretion, this would have been even more fodder for their thirst for scandal. But they have other concerns. Neil lets his guard down. He is totally unrestrained as he starts to make out with her at the table.

The intention is so clear. What follows is just the window dressing. Little touches. The sickly sweet smiles. The cramped gestures. They both have given in to the inevitable.

Trish guides him even more, "I'm just going to go to the washroom."

As she is coming back to the washroom, Neil watches helplessly as another guy approaches her.

"Who's that guy that you're talking to Trish?"

"Just someone that I met. It's not as if I'm going to sleep with him," the clever lie does so much to inflame Brett.

"I don't want you to leave with him."

"Brett, we broke up six months ago. I do pretty much what I want now."

"You just let that guy pick you up. I saw you making out together."

Trish seems perturbed, "Have you been spying on me? My business is my business."

Brett is at a loss. All of a sudden he is the middle of a drama. He reaches for her, and she pulls her hand away. This adds to the tension. None of this is lost on Neil. He wants to jump up and get involved. He can't do a thing.

Trish feels a remarkable sense of power at this moment. Two attractive guys are competing for her. This is more intoxicating than anything that could follow.

"Brett, I'll call you this week. We'll have lunch."

He doesn't know how to respond to her quick put down. He feels sheepish. But he wants her so badly at this moment. But it's not as if he's been a saint waiting for his angel to return to his side.

When Trish gets back to the table, Neil is not around. She looks in the bar to see him with no luck. She realizes that she lingered a little long with Brett. That was on purpose. A little jealousy didn't hurt her ploy. But now he's nowhere to be seen.

Trish's drink is still at the table. She stays standing and reaches over to take a sip. She is a little taken aback as her tactic seems to have fallen flat. She considers returning to the table.

"Oh there you are, Trish. I had to pay my tab. Then I went to the toilet."

Trish breathes a sigh of relief. "I thought that I lost you."

"Not like that." She wonders what Neil means. But she doesn't let it trouble her. She gives him her hand and they head outside. She walks him over to his car.

"Let me follow you." He pulls her over and plants a big kiss on her. She abandons herself in his arms. He squeezes her tight until she can feel his body surround hers. He rocks her back and forth against his car.

When she gets to her car, she is turned on. Her body tingles everywhere. She can hardly start her car with the excitement. He zooms from his parking place over to her. She is careful to keep up with him as he leads her through the winding roads. She is trying to keep her bearings. He makes a couple of turns. He looks back in his mirror to notice that she is gone. She has decided not to risk the encounter. The ghost fades back into the darkness.