

### 3. A MAN OF CLAY

Jenna tells herself that she wants a career. She's not the sort to dawdle around in a dead-end job waiting for a man to rescue her. Things like that just don't happen. But in the back of her mind, she wants something more. She sees herself as the focus of spotlights, and she doesn't want to settle for anything less.

For the time being, she works at the cosmetics counter at Bloomingdale's. And her dreams are big thing. When she helps a woman transform herself with the limited palette available, Jenna feels that she is inviting the camera to open up the world to a new starlet. If she can do that for someone else, she can surely do as much for herself.

She takes acting lessons part-time. She has wonderful improvisational skills. She knows how to bring a character to life. And her face is full of all the expressiveness that communicates the secrets of emotion to an audience. Her natural appeals are already enough to engage the average viewer. But her acting ability offers so much more. There is a honey sweetness to the tones of her delivery that seduce even the most disinterested parties. They want to know her. They want to love her.

Besides her penchant for acting, she has a more serious side. This is what gives her depth of character. This is what keeps her sane. She is studying to be an accountant at a local community college. She has a very mathematical mind. In the computations of numbers, she is able to create a world in conversation. This is where our dreams are actualized. Whim becomes realized as a sum in her accounting ledgers. And the relentless drive of demand eats up the delights of supply in the give and take of our daily economies.

She does not leave her analytical skills with the school books. It becomes the measure that she applies to her emotion. She is a very acquisitive girl. She sees men as the rewards for her constant efforts to improve herself. She is always breaking down their relative worth in the hope of finding the perfect partner to help her garner her just desserts.

Sammy has always claimed that she saw him first. They are in line at Chick-Filet. But when he take one look at Jenna, sparks fly. It's as if Sammy is on another planet. He stares intently at Jenna.

Jenna has a comeback, "Didn't your Momma tell you that it's impolite to stare at girls?"  
"You're not a girl, fine young thing. You're a goddess."

Jenna blushes. Sammy does her best to work her way back into the scene. It's to no avail. She doesn't stand a chance.

Clayton can already feel himself locked in embrace with Jenna. He stumbles over his words as he introduces himself. She helps him out. She is guiding him along. She can feel his touch on her body.

"Are you going to order or what?" Jenna is first in line, and the clerk is screaming at her. She gets her order and fries and waits at a table for Sammy and Clayton to come over and sit down. They both arrive around the same time. Jenna has eaten half her sandwich.

"You've wasted no time," says Clayton.

Jenna's mouth is stuffed. "I was hungry. It was hot," she mumbles.

He gets a kick watching her eat. It makes his goddess seem more human, almost approachable.

Sammy is still trying to get the perfect angle on Clayton. He still only has eyes for Jenna.

Jenna uses Sammy to run interference, "Clayton, you met my friend Sammy."

He looks almost disdainfully at her, "Yeah, we met."

"You know we always go everywhere together."

Clayton isn't sure what that means.

Sammy tries to be more explicit, "We're best friends. We tell each other everything."

Jenna has her own version, "Sammy wants to tell you that we share everything. But there's some things that we just can't share!" Jenna has a twinkle in her eye.

Sammy is so close to Clayton that she is almost on his lap, "Yeah. We share." He is still pretty oblivious to her antics."

"Jenna, we're going to have to do some things together," Clayton tells her.

"I need my car washed and my oil changed. You think that you can take care of that."

Clayton can't tell if she's kidding.

Sammy sneaks in with her own tidbit on life, "I love it when you sleep over at some guy's place, and you come out and he's washed your car. I mean, what a weenie!"

They all laugh at her joke.

Jenna questions Clayton, "Are you going to eat that food or just look at it?" He's been too caught up in just staring at Jenna. She is taking advantage of the situation. He becomes preoccupied eating his meal.

Jenna remarks teasingly, "I guess the ratio of cute boys has gone up this year."

Sammy plays along and gets a dig back at Clayton, "It was looking really good until a couple of dogs moved in."

Jenna gets it, "I actually heard them barking in the night."

Sammy tags it, "I bought some bones that I'm going to throw their way."

"Or you could just throw them your leftovers from lunch." Jenna titters.

Clayton is eating his lunch. He feels that he is the brunt of the teasing. He hopes that this doesn't ruin his chances with Jenna. He can hardly accept Sammy as the consolation. Nevertheless, Jenna continues to taunt him.

When Sammy gets up from the table, she cuts close, "Sammy has a crush on you. You can tell."

"We've just met."

Jenna has the perfect comeback, "We've just met, we've just met. But you haven't been able to quit staring at me. If I was a bird, I would have snapped off your nose."

He defends himself, "I can go. I don't have to take this kind of duress."

"What kind of duress do you have in mind?"

He recognizes that she has tossed him a loaded question. He wants to be polite. But he also sees it as a further in.

"The kind of pain that you can only work out in the dark."

Jenny feigns confusion, "A dog bite? They say that if you sleep on it, the pain goes away."

"Are you serious? Have you ever been bit by a dog?"

Jenna tells him, "Just a little critter."

Sammy comes back, "Don't I look great."

Jenna eggs her on, "You look fantastic. You ought to be able to get any guy in here."

"There's only a few guys who really interest me here." Sammy stares at Clayton.

He won't give her the time of day. He knows that she plays a mean game. And he's holding back in the shadows.

"It's getting a little hot in here," Sammy says.

"I'd say someone is smoking!" says Jenna.

Sammy jokes, "It could be me!"

"Not!" replies Jenna.

Clayton sits there helplessly and continues to eat. He realizes how Jenna is playing him. It only makes him want her more. He looks in her eyes, and she looks away.

"I'd say a boy has to buy me more than a Chick-Filet sandwich if he wants to get my interest. That would only be fair."

Sammy adds, "Do you notice how cheap guys are these days. They won't even take you out on a real date. They show up hoping to have sex all evening. Then they cut out when they're done."

Jenna finds Sammy's raunchy humor useful to her own ends. On the other hand, Clayton is not amused. That suits Jenna just fine. It makes him work harder. She's not some sandwich on the menu that he can order and take home. If Clayton wants his goddess, he is going to have to do a man's work.

Sammy doesn't realize that she is being used as player in Jenna's game. She is saying enough to infuriate Clayton. But none of it is really working in her favor. But she won't stop. Jenna just encourages her more. And she can't see what is really going on. She can only think about Clayton back at her place under the covers.

"It just ain't going to happen!"

"Who said that?" asks Sammy.

"Just a little bird somewhere!" Jenna replies.

They both burst out laughing.

"You didn't think that you were going to have to take on two girls, says Jenna.

He only considers Sammy a pest. For the time being, she is making him try harder. Jenna settles back in her seat and just coasts. This is too easy.

After finishing eating, they all exchange numbers. He wants to hang out. But Jenna figures that he needs some time to let his desire marinate in its own juices.

"He's really hot!" Sammy tells Jenna.

"He's all right. He's a little cocky for barely having a pot to piss in."

"Jenna, what are you looking for?"

"A prince, maybe!"

"I thought that you got over that years ago." Even Sammy has forgotten Reggie. There have been other boys. And now she has her sights on Clayton.

Jenna doesn't have the heart to tell Sammy that he hardly has any interest in her. For her own part, Jenna can hardly give in to some guy that she met at a fast food stand. She still expects her prince to pick her up in a luxury carriage.

"I guess that you're waiting for the limo, Jenna." Sammy suspects that Clayton may simply not be good enough for her.

Jenna makes sure that Sammy is with them when they all get together again.

“Do you want to go to Alabama Adventure?” asks Clayton when he phones Jenna.

“I’m not big on amusement parks. I went there when it was Visionland. They have a really cool roller coaster.”

At first, Clayton isn’t too keen that Jenna brought along Sammy. But she claims that they all met at the same time, so they should try to be friends.

When they get on the coaster, Jenna is sure to make Sammy sit next to Clayton. She doesn’t want Clayton grabbing at her as they go down one of those scary drops.

Sammy is the perfect rider of the Rampage. She loves all the spills and death-defying descents. As she feels her guts being ripped from her, she grabs for Clayton’s knee. Even in the midst of his panic, he is getting turned on by the girl. She exudes pure physical pleasure. And there is little that he can do to protect himself from her under the circumstance.

When he gets off the ride, he has to brace himself. He imagines going somewhere dark and making out with Sammy. Just like the roller coaster, it’s a downhill ride without brakes. Woo!

Clayton makes every effort to adjust himself. He moves closer to Jenna. She will have none of it.

“I just hated that. Every minute of it. How could anyone consider that fun?”

Sammy purrs, “I got a little turned on by it all. I could barely restrain myself.” She wants to tell Clayton that she could have stuck her tongue down his throat. She knows that he would have obliged if only he could keep his balance.

Now everything has changed to how it was. He’s not as mean towards her. But he is again staring Jenna’s way.

“She’s never going to do it with you,” Sammy gives Clayton the real dope. Jenna has gone off for popcorn.

“What are you talking about, Sammy?” Clayton wonders.

“She’s not that kind of girl. She’s saving herself for some special moment.”

“Is she religious?” he asks.

“Not in some excessive way. That’s not it. She’s just old-fashioned. And a hopeless romantic. It’s going to be the death of her.”

“She’s never been with a man?”

Sammy tries to be discrete, “I’m not going to say that. I really don’t know. I would know. Let’s just say that she’s not a party girl.”

“I’m patient. I can wait.”

Sammy has her own observation. “You may have to wait until hell freezes over.”

He mimes a yawn, “That’s nothing! I’m waiting for heaven to get over its heat wave. Ever since I saw that girl.”

“I could show you some things that you’ve never seen before.”

“I’m sure that you can, Sammy. I’ll pass on that for now.” He is actually turned on by her offer. Jenna radiantly returns with her popcorn.

“Do you want some?”

“Let me take a piece from your mouth,” he suggests. She’s not going to give in that easily.

“You are cheap. It’s my popcorn and my mouth. What are you offering in the deal?”

He smiles, “My kisses don’t come cheap.”

“You’ve been offering them for free all along. How are you going to sweeten the deal?”

She doesn’t want him to get vulgar with her. “We could go neck in the funhouse.”

“There is not funhouse here.”

“Yes, there is.” He points in the general direction of another ride.

“I think that I’ve had all the rides that I can take. What do you think Sammy?”

Sammy has been trailing them as they walk ahead.

“I wouldn’t mind doing the roller coaster again. I think that I learned its secret.” She looking at Clayton’s body. He has his shirt open. She wants to run her hand against his chest. He is doing what he can just to stay next to Jenna.

On the drive back, Jenna is pretty quiet. Sammy is as lively as ever.

“Let’s get drunk tonight. We could play some dirty games.” She realizes that she is not going to get Clayton away from Jenna. The roller coaster ride is a dim memory.

“I’m feeling a little sick,” says Jenna. “All that popcorn and soda has been churned around inside of me. I feel like I’m going to puke.”

Even Clayton can’t make a pleasant sight out of that. He strategically drops off Sammy.

Sammy jumps out, “I’ll call you later, Jenna. Thanks, Clayton.” She gives him a peck on the cheek.

When they arrive back at Jenna’s apartment, Jenna hesitates to get out.

“I really can’t ask you up right now. I’ve got all my papers spread out for some project for school.”

“I understand,” he says with some discomfort. He wants to kiss her. She is edging towards the door and not giving her much opportunity.

“I really like you. We’ve got to spend more time together.”

“I’m not going anywhere. Just call me!” She hops out of the car and races upstairs. She finds him cute. She doesn’t want to rush things. She can’t tell if he’s the one. It’s more eagerness than anything else that she detects in his manners.

When she makes it upstairs, she doesn’t want to do any work. She just needs a long shower. She lies on her bed and goes over all the dreams that she has for her love. She just can’t imagine that Clayton is that dashing lover that she is waiting for. Maybe she finally needs to follow Sammy’s advice. Just get it all over with. Follow through for once. And if it doesn’t work out, she’ll be wiser for the wear. She hates thinking about herself that way. She knows what she wants. She doesn’t need to be coaxed.

Jenna still can’t figure out what ungodly desire possessed her to invite Clayton back to her apartment. Once she has him all alone in the confines of her den of sin, is there any earthly power that will prevent him from realizing his devious plans for her? Just the very thought of it sets her on fire.

Jenna can hardly wait for the appropriate moment. She finds that she is expending every effort to inflame his passion. There is little that he can do under the full pressure of her allure but surrender. He has never known himself to be so deeply affected by a creature of such intense loveliness and single-minded purpose.

In a moment of unbridled foolishness, she is sitting on the couch making out with him.

Her kisses are furtive and exploring. There is little that she can do to hold back. He is even more persistent. He can sense his goal within his grasp.

She finds his intensity a little rude. She has invested this moment with all her romantic illusions. She wonders if he has only resolved their contact to a more physical basis. She pushes him away and sits up.”

“This might not be the right thing to do.” He is somewhat shocked by her uncertainty.

“You seemed so into it a second ago,” he maintains.

“I’m just not sure.” She gives him a pouted look.

She tries to adjust herself to look as if nothing happened. She can imagine her mother watching her. She wonders if her performance is worthy of a proper woman. Her lips have the trace of a smile as if she is up to something.

Clayton was a swimmer in high school. His upper body still bears the sculpting of constant workouts. He walks with a confident gait that reflects physical strength and agility. When Jenna looks at him she notes that healthy glow of his presence. She wants to reach out for him; she wants him to wrap his powerful body around hers. She can feel herself floating in his charm. But Clayton’s attributes are hardly sufficient for the mature Jenna Ravenswood. Heaven knows she is stirred by that spark that burns beneath the surface. But the adult Jenna will not allow herself to be swayed by the romantic illusions of childhood. There are no fairy godmothers to turn frogs into princes, and if a young man’s prospects are not evident in his twenties, then years of tribulations lie ahead.

Clayton feels that his opportunities for the future are more than passable.

“Where’s your fortune? What do you have in hand?” Jenna asks him casually. She knows that she can protect herself from the risks that he encounters.

“I’m not doing that badly for myself.”

“You live in a shoe-box apartment. Your car’s always in the shop.”

Love may have been enough for her mother. But Jenna’s family went through years of trouble before achieving any security. She doesn’t want to taste that kind of misfortune for any reason, not for love, not for anything.

“I’ve got a great job. I’m one of the top salesmen in my department.”

Her answer to him is severe and brutal, “You survive on a meager commission. It’s barely enough for one. You can hardly support a family on such an income.”

She can still feel the blush of his kiss on her lips. She is doing everything that she can to restrain her heart. His baby blue eyes are staring back at her. She can still feel his lips beckon. Her heart is racing. She needs to regain her composure. She stands up and goes to sit on the chair at the other end of the room.

He is trying to compensate for the distance. Her sparkle still shines in the room. He doesn’t want to shut off its radiance.

She lectures him, “You don’t know what love is. You aren’t willing to make the sacrifices necessary for love.”

He gestures to her longingly, “I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

She understands sacrifice all too well. That is exactly what she is doing at this moment. She wants to bury herself in the passion. But she knows the downside of physical abandon. She is doing all that she can not to satisfy a most elemental whim. She holds her head up as if to

resist the little temptations swirling around her.

“I’m only being practical.” Jenna is entirely positive. There is little that he can do to influence at this moment.

“Do you want me to go?” Clayton asks.

Her answer somewhat equivocates, “Don’t you think that it would be better if you left?”

He is not sure what to think. As he sits here in her place, he is totally captivated by this wonder. She realizes the affect that she has on him.

“I don’t want you to think that this is anything more than it is. We were silly. We got out of control.”

He is obvious, “I want to be with you.”

She smiles back at him, “Clayton, it’s a little late for that.” She is reminding him of the evident rejection. It is fruitless to continue on. But he will not listen to her suggestion. He still notices that glint in her eye.

“You want it too.”

She cuts closer, “I may want it, whatever that might be. But I do not want you. Not now, not ever.”

He protests, “A few minutes ago, you were so much alive.”

It now feels like centuries away to her. All that she can think about is shoring up her argument. She turns away so she doesn’t have to put up with the glare of his sparkling eyes.

“You’re not very good at taking a hint, Clayton.”

“What?” he asks with a degree of insensitivity.

“I requested that you leave.”

He stands up as if he has lost his bearings. He has come here with a clear purpose in mind. She has derailed his plans.

“Clayton, it takes two to tango, and I am tuckered out. I’m sorry if I’m not the date that you hoped that I would be. I’ve done everything in my power to accommodate you. I hope that you don’t bear any harsh feelings towards me.”

He wants to salvage something from the evening. He again moves towards her. She shuffles away. She points at the door as if he needs clearer direction.

Clayton doesn’t want to leave although he now realizes that he is the unwanted guest. He feels somewhat paralyzed. Earlier in the evening, there has been no confusion about his intent. As she stands next to him, his reward seems more in his grasp. But her will is steadfast, and he is hardly going to make his way past that wall. The door seems his only option. He hates to admit defeat. She is resolute in his dismissal.

After he leaves there is an incredible vacuum in the room. This is where she finds the well of her personality. She can sound its depth just far enough to sense her resilience of character. This is why she is so stubborn not to give in.

If Jenna is not going to warm up to Clayton, Sammy leaves no doubt about her wishes. Since Clayton first started going out with Jenna, he’s telegraphed his intentions towards Sammy. He’s always seems to be undressing her with his eyes. And she’s played along by giving him all the grist that he needed to foster his fantasy. Her clothes are pulled tight to accentuate her body. She prances in a most suggestive manner. Her perfume fills the air, and intoxicates him. There is none of that heavenly air that accompanies Jenna. Sammy means dirty

business, and he is ready to roll around in her mud. He has even made it obvious to her that he'd follow through if Jenna wasn't around. At times, it almost seems that he is ready in spite of Jenna.

"I'm not like Jenna." Sammy swears. "I don't like to waste time."

She makes it quite clear what she thinks about the physical attributes of Clayton. Her eyes get bigger. He can't avoid their glower. She whispered to herself, "He's got a great butt. I just want to squeeze it." That's hardly all that she wants. For her, she's not going to let that unique possibility get away

Jenna is still Sammy's friend. Even if she wants Clayton, Sammy hardly feels that he is fair game. After all, he has made his intentions clear about Jenna. Sammy needs her in. She needs it fast.

Sammy sees him at the ice cream parlor. "I thought that you and Jenna had a great night planned."

"We did. But I got booted out before the fireworks got started. I don't know what she expects from me."

"Jenna's been taught that marriage is a sacred contract that needs to be supported by all the gold in the Federal Reserve."

"I was just looking for a kiss."

Sammy sets him right, "She thinks of a kiss like signing your name in blood."

"What about you?" He wonders.

"If I thought like she does, my blood vessels would already be bone dry."

He gasps. She is staring him dead on in the eyes. He feels as if she has just grabbed him and is squeezing hard.

"What do you want to do about her little predicament?"

She has a suggestion, "You could come back to my place and take notes."

Sammy is feeling devious. This is how she has developed her reputation. She's almost twenty, and things haven't changed.

"You know what I hate about guys. They always seem to get what they want. If we hold out, they'll just find someone else to give it to them. And they really never have to give anything in return."

His lips are close to hers. He can almost lick her ice cream off her mouth. "So that's what you hate."

She takes what's left of her cone and rubs it in his face. This only makes him more incense. With ice cream all over his face, he grabs her close and they start to kiss. The kisses are ravenous and deep. They speak of animal lust. He pulls her body close so that he communicates to her like the panting dog that he is. She forgets about Jenna. She forgets about anything. She wants him more than anything.

"We need to go somewhere!" she makes it clear.

"I'll go anywhere that you want to go."

After Clayton spends the night with Sammy, he feels a sense of shame. He wants to confess it all to Jenna. Instead, he only takes the opportunity to head back to Sammy's. This is all driving him crazy. He acts out his desire for Jenna with Sammy. He learns that Sammy has attributes that would only be lost on Jenna. Jenna's inexperience is a serious detriment. Once



he's started down this path, he's not going to turn back.

For the time being, Jenna is oblivious to it all. She has made her own bed, and now she chooses to lie in it. She really doesn't want to see Clayton as long as he remains in Birmingham. As for Sammy, Jenna needs some time away. She doesn't need to be reminded of Sammy's sensual pursuits. Jenna accommodates herself to denial and the luxuries of her piano playing. It's not as if she doesn't have enough school work to occupy her until the next millennium. She feels that she is better served by her harmless crushes. Men like Clayton have one thing in mind, and they aren't able to sacrifice to give a girl what she really needs.

She looks at the couch across from her. Only a week ago, Clayton was sitting across from her on the verge of a fantastic transport that would propel him into her arms. But she took the only course available to her. She sent him and his stupid plans on his way. So be it.

She can feel that she is getting older. And the treasure is starting to spoil. Eventually she will need to take a risk if she wants to get some return on all her efforts. For the time being, she needs to sleep it off. In the morning, things will be better. She will finally get her life in order. What does she have to worry about?

It's a while before she sees Sammy again. She learns that Clayton left town. He has been transferred to another office in Saint Louis.

Sammy comes over. She has that look of the cat who has got in the canary. That image seems perpetually engraved on her.

"I'm really sorry. I think it's my fault that Clayton left town." Sammy confesses.

"What do you mean? He left of his own volition. He got a transfer. That's what they told me in his office."

"I was sleeping with him. After you rejected him, he saw me at the ice cream parlor. He came on to me. I've always wanted him. I tried to resist for your sake. I couldn't."

Jenna feels the knife go in deep.

"I guess that it's my own fault. I really gave him a dressing down. I told him that his prospects were weak. I blamed him for living in a dumpy apartment. I taunted him. I made him feel like a big zero."

She is putting all the blame on herself. She can't get the nerve to tell Sammy to go to hell.

"We kept going at it for a week or so. And he was feeling guilty about you. I know that he didn't want to try and see you for that reason."

"Did you have fun? Isn't that all that matters?" Jenna is justifiably cynical.

"I had more than fun. I haven't been with a guy like that in a while. One of those proper types who's a raging lunatic underneath. He bites. You know what I mean. I was sad to send him on his way."

In some ways, she wishes that Sammy would spare her the details, but she needs to be reminded of her own folly. Again and again, she has the opportunity. She just wants to wait for the perfect moment. She wants heaven to open up and tell her that it's time.

Jenna wants to run back home and get her mother to tell her that it's all OK. Even if she wanted to do that, she can't now. In the intervening years, her parents have moved to Tampa, Florida.

She remembers her father's words, "Jenna, you seem to be getting on so well by yourself,

I guess it's time we moved somewhere with warmer weather. Somewhere closer to the ocean.”

For once, Jenna feels really alone. Unlucky in love, she can only commit herself to school. That hardly makes up for Sammy's behavior. Jenna reads some Edgar Poe to come up with some devious ways to avenge herself against her well-meaning friend.

She imagines a scene like on Reggie's boat. This time it is Clayton and Sammy. Jenna manipulates a giant oar to crash down on both of them. She is really digging her revenge fantasy. She remembers a lesson from psychology class. Violence results from intense sexual frustration. Maybe Jenna needs a shrink to put it all in perspective.

Jenna can only imagine showing up early for her appointment to discover Sammy and her psychiatrist doing the nasty in his office. Is nothing sacred?

Jenna can hardly blame Sammy. What else can an over-sexed nymphet do but keep herself in practice. What is Sammy doing with her life anyway?

“I'm going to head off to Tuscaloosa.”

“In your dreams, honey.” Jenna replies.

“No, I'm really going to go to the University of Alabama.”

Jenna mutters, “I hear they have a big football team there.”

“What did you say?” asks Sammy.

“I can only wish you the best up there. I'll miss you. I won't have someone to talk tell about all my romantic failings.”

Maybe things will get better with Sammy out of the way. Jenna's relationships can follow their natural course. She can screw up on her own.

Jenna actually takes some time out to help Sammy pack. This is the least that she can do for all that Sammy has taught her. Besides, the quicker that she is packed, the sooner she is out of Birmingham—hopefully once and for all.

“So what are you going to study besides male physiology.”

“I actually want to do creative writing. I have a great imagination. Remember how they published my poems in the school newspaper.”

Jenna thinks about all the great lies that Sammy has told. That is the perfect beginning for a great writer.

Once Sammy finally clears out, Jenna has this hollow feeling. She never realized how she has been inspired by their rivalry. Now she has no one to challenge her but herself. She hopes that is all for the best.

That night Jenna is haunted by a most extraordinary dream. Her pirate lover comes to her in the middle of the night. It is so real that she can hardly take it for a dream. He touches her in every place. She can feel herself submerged deeper and deeper. She feels herself slipping away.

Sammy has told her that love-making is the apex of her existence. Jenna now knows exactly what Sammy means. She feels that she is in the middle of a tornado. And she shakes and shakes. But her world quakes from the inside. It is a most intense experience.

She can feel her passion burn inside her. And the feelings roll over her in wave after waves. Her lover knows how to touch her. Even when she gives in to fatigue, he returns to refresh her. She is bathed in the coolest stream.

Her rest only makes her prepared for more. And the waves will not stop. They churn around in the inner sea. She stretches out in the current and feels herself flying. This is more

intense than the roller coaster. No wonder Sammy loved the ride so much. Now, Jenna is the rider. And she embraces the hesitant ascent. She is ready to be hurled off the precipice. She is in free fall. She tries to catch her breath. The force knocks her down again and again. She just lies there and lets the wind run through her. She screams. No one hears her.

Then she tastes his kiss again. He is not there. He is a dream. He is everywhere. Inside and outside of her. Renewal on renewal. She surrenders to something that is so overwhelming. She is already asleep. But she just gives to the feeling.

When she wakes up, she senses that her life has changed. She cannot go back to how she was. She can barely stand up. She is drained but also well-rested at the same time.

She takes a long shower to come back to reality. She can't do anything for the rest of the day. She goes to a city park, and just sits there. She watches life go past her.

Jenna wishes that there was someone that she could tell about her experience. She is only too vulnerable to any guy who might approach. For the time being, she has to remain protective of herself. There will be a time when she can realize this sensation.

For now, she scouts out the demon who can unlock that special feeling. She spreads out against the sky. She lets the sun touch her every pore. Her body is so different. It is pure touch. Everywhere, she can feel it tingling. She has been on a journey, and now she has returned. Jenna is a new prophetess. She has felt the love, this physical union.

She finds it ironic that she has been affected so profoundly by a dream. Sometimes that is what it takes to get to the root of our souls.