


# Chapter 1



AN OLD CHEVY idled in traffic, its large engine grumbled and tapped over the refined hum of its newer compact cousins. Silver-gray with patches of reddish-brown surface rust, the car had seen better days.

Inside the car, Malcolm Flannery surveyed the twenty some prostitutes strategically positioned along the sidewalks and curbsides of Jarvis Street. A few flashed him a smile, others a view. He nodded considerably, but remained with the gridlock of cars and continued his window shopping.

Undercover with 'O' Division, the Narcotics detachment of the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), a part of Corporal Flannery secretly wished his meeting that night was under different circumstances. He inspected his weathered features in the rearview mirror and mused about the possibilities. Pushing a curl of peppered hair clear of his face, he vainly gloated over his chiseled jaw and thick muscular neck. For a man pushing fifty he was in excellent shape and proud of it.

"I don't know old man. So many flavors, so little time," he joked, aloud.

Chuckling to himself, Malcolm alternated his gaze from the mirror to the various women. There were red heads, blondes and brunettes – Mohawks, bobs and wigs. Some dressed fashionably. The plan was to attract a more appreciative clientele. Some had accessorized their physical attributes, marketing their assets blatantly. Eager for recognition, they braved the chill April air with bold exposure.

Then the car ahead of him moved forward and Malcolm quickly responded, the Chevy keeping pace.

He resumed his quest and this time recognized a pair of long curvaceous legs walking away from him. “Yes. That’s my girl,” he declared.

Dressed in a leather waistcoat and tight mini, the hem of the woman’s skirt rode just under the curve of her firm behind. The flowing swing of her hips rocked with the sultry sounds of jazz that wafted from his car’s radio speakers.

Malcolm shook his head appreciatively.

“That’s not why we’re here,” he had to remind himself.

All business, any hint of humor drained from his expression as he steered the Chevy’s tank-like frame in a beeline for the curb lane. Needless to say, he was promptly granted passage.

Malcolm gave the Chevy some gas, and the car edged the curb and cruised just behind the woman.

Tall and blonde, Genevieve Sauv e resembled more a cover girl than she did a common prostitute.

To passerby’s, she appeared uptight, edgy, eyeing over whomever came near her. Johns on the street stepped out of her path rather than confront her. Friends and acquaintances turned away from her leveling stare. She walked undisturbed for the most part, all respecting her unspoken command to be left alone.

The Chevy moved parallel with Genevieve. Malcolm reached over, and with some effort rolled down the passenger window and attempted to get her attention.

“Hi there, nice legs,” he called out.

Face forward, she maintained her stride.

Malcolm persisted. A turn of the radio’s volume dial, and the jazz band was silenced. He raised the volume of his voice, and expelled a booming holler. “I said HI THERE! You open for business, or out for exercise?”

She relented momentarily, and looked down at him.

“That’s much better,” he replied.

Recognizing him she stopped.

Malcolm braked, forcing tailgaters to make a hasty stop. They retaliated with blaring horns.

Without saying a word, Genevieve opened the passenger door and took a seat beside him. Her ashen coloration and weary features shocked Malcolm. Automatically, his skeptical nature was set on alert.

A 928 Porsche glided into position some forty-feet behind the Chevy and stopped beside the curb. Its glossy black finish complimented the sleek contours of the sports cars body.

The women took particular notice. The car’s expensive price tag aroused a buzz of excitement.

Standing closest to the Porsche was Angel, a buxom brunette. A fresh menthol cigarette smoldered between her long manicured fingers. She quickly flicked the stick away and cleared her lungs.

A seasoned veteran, she adjusted the plunging V of her form fitting sweater and then pulled the wrinkles from her skirt.

Composed, Angel seductively sashayed up to the car and leaned against its frame. She angled her torso so the driver would have full advantage of her ample cleavage. The sports car windows were blackened with a navy tint. To look in from the outside it was impossible to see anything in detail.

Still, Angel batted her large brown eyes and moistened her full pouty lips.

“Hey lover, lookin’ for a date? Angel’s got some heavenly delights for you.”

The car engine revved and the Porsche abruptly pulled away with the now moving traffic.

Unprepared, Angel stumbled forward off balance due to her thin stilted heels. By some miracle her ankles did not roll and she barely managed to regain her footing.

Incensed, she yelled after the departing sports car. “Asshole! What the fuck’s your problem?”

She then took an aggressive stance and flipped him the bird. Her fist shot forward and rolled palm up, her middle finger extending in one swift practiced movement.

The tinted windows obscured any physical response. The Porsche’s driver intent on keeping his car a vigilant distance behind the moving Chevy.

“Damn you! You-you PRICK!” Angel cursed, as she watched the sports car drive on.

Malcolm missed the disturbance behind him; his attention split between Genevieve and the street. Genevieve kept close to the passenger door not having spoken a word since taking her seat. He was bothered by her appearance and took it upon himself to initiate conversation.

“I missed you last Friday. I figured you had reconsidered my offer and decided to drop out of sight for a while.” His voice had a soothing bass tone, contrary to his growing distrust.

“Too much happening,” she replied, her voice wavering. “I couldn’t risk contact until today.”

Hurting, Genevieve hunched slightly, she was more concerned with a cramping that spread throughout her midriff.

“So what do you have for me?” he asked, disturbed by her strange behavior.

She stalled, in hopes of allaying the creeping spasms in her stomach. “Not here. Some place private... There are too many eyes and ears. I think someone is following me.”

Genevieve avoided his inspection by pretending to look out her window.

Malcolm routinely scanned the street for a possible tail, but the dense traffic made it impossible to single out any one car. His instincts told him she was holding something back. It fed his trust issues and he studied her out the corner of his eye, curious to know why she had called this meeting.

“Are you feeling all right? You look like hell,” he asked, genuinely concerned.

She shrugged her shoulders, and tried to down play her obvious discomfort. “You always know how to flatter a girl,” she answered, making a weak attempt at humor.

Malcolm could not be bothered to reply. He saw nothing humorous in her answer.

Genevieve read his sully expression. “I’m fine. Stomach’s bothering me, all right?” she groaned.

An awkward moment of silence followed.

“I’ve got a roll of Tums in the glove box. You’re welcome to them if it will help,” he offered, becoming lukewarm to her condition.

“No!” she snapped. Her voice was louder than she intended, so she collected herself. “It’s a girl thing. It comes and goes. I’ll be okay in a minute.”

Again, Malcolm said nothing. His constant expression conveyed his feelings.

Again, Genevieve shied from making direct eye contact with him.

Malcolm drove and watched her as closely as he could. He knew there was more to her ailing stomach than she was admitting.

The black Porsche shadowed six car lengths behind the moving Chevy. It maneuvered with the fluid agility of a predator shark. Drifting from lane to lane, it followed the traffic easily, never attracting suspicion.

Cloaked within the tinted cab of the sports car, the driver watched Malcolm and Genevieve. The pair sat as far apart from one another as was comfortably possible. They looked like a bickering couple and maintained a frosty three-foot gap between themselves.

Then the Chevy turned left onto Adelaide which shortly merged with Eastern Avenue.

Along the street, the landscape gradually transformed. It lost its metropolitan look and design, and took on a more industrial character.

To the right, there was a scrap yard filled with mountainous stacks of discarded vehicles. Burned and broken shells, they resembled dinosaur bones excavated from another millennium. Cramped for space, the pieced carcasses defied the laws of gravity by remaining upright. A sheet metal fence framed the boneyard and hid most of the clutter, barely adhering to the city bylaws.

A few small factories followed. They belched smoke and other pollutants into the atmosphere, distinguishing the section by odor. The smell was non-caustic and easily ignored. A characteristic as well established as one of the old brick buildings.

All of this led to a large expanse of parking lot.

Genevieve perked when she saw the long vacant lot.

“To the right,” she directed. “That’s a good spot... We can talk there.”

Not quite what Malcolm had in mind, he nonetheless steered the car down a side street that corresponded with the lot. He had an uneasy feeling. His sixth sense was like an alarm and it rang a loud

warning in his ears. He heard the bell, heard it well and yet he still chose to foolishly ignore it.

A gate left open was more than enough invitation for the Chevy to proceed. Malcolm drove through.

Randomly placed throughout the lot were light-towers to aid one in finding their way. Malcolm drove towards the back of the lot. The car moved through pool after pool of light, as it made its way to the farthest corner.

The Porsche drove past the parking lot as the Chevy passed through the main gate. The sports car continued for a short distance up the street and then made a sharp U-turn. It circled back easily, extinguishing its pop-up headlamps. The lenses lowered to a forty-five degree angle, just below the hood/fender of the Porsche's sloping front end.

The sports car moved up to the chain-link fence and stopped in the middle of the entrance. If it were not for the rumble of its idled engine, the car appeared a lifeless machine.

When the Chevy parked close to the back corner, the Porsche eased forward.

Malcolm killed the car's engine and snuffed the lights in a blackened section of the lot, about thirty-feet from the southwest corner. Tucked far enough away from the street, the night made for a natural camouflage, cloaking the car.

Malcolm looked around uncomfortable. "We're alone so what's the story?"

Genevieve tried to put him at ease, "Relax, there's no hurry. I found out everything you wanted to know."

Beads of perspiration surfaced on her upper lip and forehead. Her gums began to ache and an irritating prickly heat attacked her pores. She wanted to peel her skin away as she raked her fingers down the side of her neck.

"Do you find it warm in here?" she asked, as she unzipped her jacket.

"Not particularly," Malcolm answered.

He now watched her with keen interest.

Genevieve reached behind her head, and pushed her fingers through her damp hair, trying to separate it from the back of her neck. Her movements pulled the jacket open, displaying her lace bustier.

Malcolm was unready for her impromptu exhibition. His eyes opened slightly after glimpsing her pert breasts. Convinced she was in the throes of drug withdrawal, he was overcome with feelings of betrayal.

“Take your jacket off. I want to see your arms,” he ordered, gruffly.

“What?” she replied, stunned by his request.

“The jacket Genny,” he ordered, once again. “You’re a little young to be menopausal, so I’ll be damned if you aren’t coming down off something.”

She knew by his glaring stare that arguing was futile and complied. Filled with animosity, she removed the jacket and threw it against his chest.

Malcolm did not react, and let it drop to the seat. He just sat there and waited, staring directly into her eyes the whole time.

Genevieve thrust her naked arms towards him, and rotated them so all angles would be exposed. The firm pale flesh was flawless in the evening light.

Malcolm then searched through her jacket pockets. He found a well-used tube of lipstick and some loose chewing gum in one of them. There was a pair of Ramsey’s lubricated condoms, and his dog-eared business card in the other. A part of him was glad he had found nothing incriminating. But it was little relief for his nagging intuition. He handed her back the jacket.

Genevieve snatched it up in a huff. “Satisfied?” she quipped. “Or do you want me to strip off my skirt so you can give me the once over?”

“You are my snitch, and nothing else,” he answered, in a controlled voice. “I don’t like junkies. They’re nothing but trouble.”

“And you’re nothing but a pimp with a badge,” she countered, insensitive to his feelings.

A tense silence filled the car as the two wrestled with their heated emotions.

The Porsche parked far enough behind the Chevy that the driver had an unobstructed view of the car’s back window and the occupants inside. The car’s color blended the vehicle seamlessly with the background and the Porsche’s driver quickly killed the sports car’s engine, unnoticed by the bickering couple.

Malcolm was now really fed-up and did his best to fight anger fueled impulses.

“Look...” He paused for a supporting breath. “You volunteered for this. So let’s hear your piece and we can call it a night.”

Genevieve persisted. “I’d say blackmail would be more accurate.”

That was enough for him.

“Let’s cut the bullshit,” he growled, and then quickly muzzled his temper. “You propositioned me first. Remember sweetheart?”

With that final comment she did, and her attitude took an abrupt turn. “Yes, I do,” she answered, distracted.

Genevieve pulled at the zipper between her already visible breasts, and slowly peeled back her bustier.

Malcolm could not believe her extreme behavior. He grabbed her arm firmly, wanting to put an end to this nonsense immediately.

“What the hell is your problem tonight? If it isn’t drugs what is it then?” he demanded.

She twisted her wrist free, and reversed the grip, locking his extended arm in place. Unable to break her hold, Malcolm was stunned by her incredible strength.

Genevieve then leaned forward and groped his bulging manhood with her right hand. “Ooo, now I know why they call you horsemen.”

Exasperated by his inability to stop her, Malcolm made a maximum effort to pull himself free. Genevieve was undaunted. In response, she squeezed his testicles, her grip becoming more than loving.

“Ahh!” Malcolm cried out. “What’s wrong with you?” he gasped, through clenched teeth.

A twisted smirk bent the corners of Genevieve’s mouth as she took sadistic pleasure in tormenting him.

Malcolm’s brain raced to quell a rising panic. If he tried to move even a little, Genevieve’s grip tightened. He could not believe how easily she had taken control, and her unpredictable behavior was now scaring the hell out of him.

She had finally attained a physical balance and a predatory confidence rung in her voice as she spoke. “You were right about the ‘Afterlife.’ The Vipers are using it as a depot for their drug distribution. Half the dealers in town regularly visit to pick up their deliveries there. I know the times, dates and contacts...” She



suddenly grew tired of the game. “It’s a shame you won’t be able to use any of it.”

Malcolm’s spine jerked straight as Genevieve’s fingers clamped down in a vice-like fashion. A searing bolt of pain rocketed through his nerve endings. Blood rose to the surface of his slacks as her tapered nails pierced flesh.

Screaming, Malcolm struck out, and smashed his large fist into the side of Genevieve’s face. The punch did not even register.

Scrunched tightly in the palm of her hand, Malcolm’s testicles popped like two over ripe grapes. The fleshy sack of his scrotum contained the pulp.

The pain was too much to endure and a black slate with bursting pins of light obscured his mind.

Unconscious, his head dropped back and rolled to one side exposing the sinewy cords of his throat.

Genevieve eased up. Her nostrils flared with each drawn breath, echoing her rising aggression. Baring her teeth, she revealed her now altered canines. Moonlight glistened off their stake-like tips. Driven by hunger and instinct, she clumsily bit into the side of Malcolm’s throat.

Her extended fangs tore at the flesh chewing their way to the throbbing artery. Its steady pulse was a beacon guiding her home. His neck muffled her surprised gasp, when the initial burst of blood erupted from the punctured conduit. It squirted directly down her throat, hot and forceful. She could taste the salt and rich iron, and it was like nothing that she could remember ever experiencing. It physically affected her. With each pump of Malcolm’s heart, liquid surged past her teeth, and with every swallow, her final transformation was made complete.

The Porsche moved up beside the parked Chevy, leaving an eight-foot chasm between the two cars. A low whir signaled the lowering of the driver’s window, and the unveiling of the stubbed twin barrels of a sawed off shotgun.

Preoccupied, Genevieve had not detected the car’s approach or presence. Blood seeped from the sloppy seal of her mouth as she had difficulty keeping up with the flow of arterial blood. In short, the pressure decreased, and like a babe taking to the breast, she swiftly overcame her virgin clumsiness.

Settled, the driver gave the Porsche’s horn two gentle taps.

The sharp notes stabbed Genevieve's eardrums instantly enraging her. Crazy with blood lust, she turned, fangs extended in vampire fury.

Thunder sounded as the shotgun discharged, greeting Genevieve with both flaring barrels.

Her window shattered in a red spray, bone and brain matter painted the Chevy's interior. Having caught the volley center face, most of her head was removed by the fanning pellets. They shredded it like a cube of meat through a grinder. The percussion of the blast flung her body out of view.

The Porsche's driver next produced a Molotov cocktail. The corked wine bottle still had an air of kerosene. He held it out from the car door in one of his gloved hands. With his other hand, he sparked a Zippo lighter and lit the cloth wick. Once the fibrous rag had taken the flame he tossed the bottle. It sailed across to and through the missing window. The glass smashed against the Chevy's dash and part of the steering column. Its contents ignited and liquid fire splashed onto Malcolm and the front seat. The incendiary solution ate into the fabric, consuming most everything it touched.

The Porsche's driver punched the gas pedal and the car leapt forward. It had traveled twenty-feet, when the body of the car shuddered as its anti-lock, disk brakes gripped. The driver cranked the steering wheel to the extreme left, and forced the Porsche into a sliding U-turn. Plumes of dust and smoke trailed behind the tires as the chassis of the car whipped around to face the flaming Chevy. The rear bumper of the car swept past the compound fence coming within an arm's reach of the chain link.

Then it was still.

The engine rumbled and the scent of burning rubber lingered in the atmosphere.

The driver reloaded two new shells. The spent cartridges he tossed to the cold asphalt without concern.

He stomped on the accelerator once more, and the Porsche launched past the unscathed side of the Chevy. The driver slowed the car, just long enough to let fly a volley at the Chevy's back fender. A thunderclap sounded as metal curled inward, and a gaping hole ruptured the rear quarter panel. Gasoline poured down from the undercarriage in weighty gushes.

The Porsche abruptly skidded to a stop once more.

The driver produced another bottled firebomb and ignited it. He lobbed the explosive high in the air, and the bottle somersaulted towards the Chevy. The rotating flask with its flaming tail resembled a Roman candle. It struck the ground hard, and the glass scattered on a wave of liquid flame. Ripples of blue-white fire rolled out to meet the spreading lake of gasoline.

“WHOOSH!” gasped the damp air, as flame and liquid merged.

A blinding light blotted out everything for an instant.

A jutting arm of fire traveled through the ignited gasoline and jetted up into the spewing gas tank. Trapped vapors combusted fragmenting the metal tank. It ripped with a deafening boom that shook the block activating car alarms and the bark of neighborhood dogs.

The force of the blast lifted the Chevy’s frame up off the ground. Within the first, other explosions followed in chain reaction. The Chevy’s door came ajar, and Malcolm’s burning form tumbled out onto the asphalt. The body splayed in a heap, its wardrobe peeling back and on fire. The interior of the Chevy had become alive with an inferno of lapping flames. The raging beast roared brightly and incinerated everything inside.

Mission complete, the Porsche engaged, and the driver forced performance from its finely tuned V-eight engine. The sports car squealed away, its ass end jogging side to side as it sped towards the lot’s entrance. The car made a hard right and vanished down the short street to the lakeshore at the bottom. Another hard right and it was on the highway and gone before anyone could be witness to its involvement.