

event was a success from the time stage and prop staff arrived, until the DJ snapped shut the last latch on his turn-table.

Ahead of me was another gluttonous night of boozing and schmoosing. While we were getting ready, Freckles received a call from Rolex and ditched me to be his date for a movie screening. Taking advantage of a free dinner, Young American invited herself to go with me to Le Festival in her place. Le Festival was one of the most popular restaurants in Cannes. Booked weeks in advance, it was nearly impossible place to get a table reservation. The front terrace was a mosh pit of screen idols, studio bigwigs, and super models. Every chair featured the name of a movie star like a Hollywood Sit of Fame. I found the Producer in the restaurant, this time with a different group of starlets and harlots. Also, several older gentlemen had joined the party. We were seated, alternating boy-girl-boy-girl, and the Producer took a chair next to me. Champagne was poured, and we carried on talking shop and watching for celebrities.

A few stems of bubbly later, amidst the rigmarole, I couldn't remember if I had asked the Producer if he was a pimp, or had told him he was a pimp. Either way, it slipped out half-jokingly, and he laughed it off to deflect my inquiry. If he was a pimp, now he knew I knew. It seemed the Producer was fascinated by me and intrigued that I had deduced he was operating a Cannes cat house. Even more peculiar was that I wasn't running away from him to save my soul. Since everything that had happened in L.A., it would have been best for me to lay low and steer clear of people operating on the fringe, but it was as if I was destined to attract trumsters and heisters wherever I went. These were ambitious, calculating, and demanding personalities involved with the heads or tails of human endeavor based on the coin of opportunity. I could have easily slid into either world. The only difference between the corporate and the criminal is the difference between our left and right hand. Something about my inquisitive and conniving nature drew us together. Savages attempt to redeem themselves through me or lead me to the slaughter house. Heavenly bodies orbit each other, gliding along the edge where one's

fantasy meets the other's reality. Sacred dance. It was still early in the game. So far, no harm and no foul, so what the hell...

Young American and I were snubbed by the other women at the table. These creatures derived their livelihood and esteem from preying on the libido of men who could afford the luxury of paying a woman, not for sex, but to leave afterwards. Any perceived competition—real or not—was a threat to their ego and economic means. We had no designs on stealing any male interest away from them. Instinctively, Freckles and I kept our mood easy going. We were keenly aware of the delicate balance of power rallying around the table like a shuttlecock. First, a chop-licking feline smile from the redhead to the baldy across from her. Then, the young blonde whispered into the ear of the aristocrat on her left. His eyes widened. Not to be outdone, the aspiring beauty queen from Texas peeled off her silk shawl to reveal a sensational cleavage. Let the good times roll. One of the gentlemen invited the dinner party to his yacht for dessert and cocktails. Young American and I declined with apologies and thanked the Producer for inviting us to dinner. We had another engagement to attend. The men tossed their credit cards on the table to pay for the bill. The women smiled, fangs and all, when we stood up to leave.

Outside the restaurant, we hailed a taxi to drive us to the estate where the MTV party was taking place. Security for the event was hella tight. If we didn't have a uniquely bar-coded invitation that corresponded with our name on the guest list and presented matching ID, we would have had better luck stealing the Hope Diamond. All who made it past the check point were allowed through the gates of the stone-paved driveway. As we approached the mansion's front portico, a wave of apprehension passed through me. The orgiastic eruption of glitz was breathtaking. There, squawking madly away, posed with drink and smoke in hand, were the lucky, the beautiful, and the clever. How did I get here again?

Upon entering the dimly-lit foyer, topless nymphs in fishnet stockings blew bubbles over us from plexiglass bathtubs which were perched on eight-foot tall blocks covered in red patent