

## 9. SAFE HOME

Dan's contract with the Egyptian firm is not going to be renewed. He has fortunately obtained a job in Atlanta through some friends at Tech. Dan tries to convince Amira to move to the States.

Amira doesn't want to give in, "I've got my life here. My family is here."

They are in a room together. They are close to each other. But they seem a lifetime apart.

"You've spent time in England before."

"My family missed me. I don't want to go though that again."

He doesn't want to abandon her in Egypt. She means the world to him.

He is at the end of his rope, "You're my life. I can't live without you."

She is more brutal, "You've had your fling with the native girl. Now you can go home."

He asks her, "Don't I mean more than that to you?"

Amira knows that he is everything to her. But she wants a clean break, "What difference does it make what I say?"

"We could make it work somehow."

Amira scolds him, "At least be honest with yourself. Your mind is made up. You're leaving."

"I couldn't stay if I wanted."

She spares no feelings, "We could have gotten married. You could have found another job. But you wanted to go back. Maybe it was for that girl who tracked you down here. I don't know why at all. But you turned your back on me."

He really questions whether Estelle had anything to do with it. He has barely given her a thought. He realizes how terrible that is. She has driven halfway around the world to see him. And he just took her for granted. He has been a total cad.

Now he is doing exactly the same thing with poor Amira. He wants to do something to save face. He is only trying to make himself look good. He is hardly thinking about Amira. He is just trying to spare himself the effort of really worrying about it once he is gone.

Amira adds, "I am beginning to know what you are really like. And I don't really like that man. I think I made something up from when we were alone in the desert. It never really existed."

He tries to hug her. She pushes him away. "It's not going to happen."

He is really hoping for a dramatic scene. But it will only be good to postpone the inevitable. He is leaving her permanently. He has challenged her with an impossible hurdle. It is almost evil to have treated her so unfairly.

Dan is still trying to collect his wits. Amira is ready to go. But she doesn't want to move. She is afraid to end it like this. It would be terrible to give up so easily. She has sacrificed herself for their love. She has said so much. But really, she has said nothing. She has made her think that he hardly cares for her anymore. The end is fast approaching. She wants to savor it. He wants to distill it down to something that will make him feel good. He hates guilt. He doesn't understand. He can't live that way.

Amira feels as if he has learned how to do this again and again. He feigns shyness. He

makes the girl do all the moves. Then he gets exactly what he wants. When he has to, he can make a clean break. He has been a success. And his victories build one upon the other. There is now this incredible coldness in the room. It is accompanied by a bitter stillness. Neither one can speak. He now realizes that if he tries to make love with her that will spell the end of his resolve. He just wants her to vanish. And she obliges his amateur magic,

On the plane, he feels a twinge of remorse. But this only convinces him that he is human. It lets him off the hook. He can act with abandon. He has been so careful to come out of this the good guy. He has been the unfortunate victim of circumstances. He can't look back. Egypt is already his past, and he hasn't even landed yet.

He sips on his drink. Dan feels proud of himself. He has never had to compromise to get what he wants. He acts as if he is the ultimate professional. He knows how to follow orders.

When they bring him dinner, he demonstrates his manners. He was always a little uncouth in Atlanta. He is a little older. He can put up a front of sophistication. All the flight attendants are charmed by his boyhood smile. He can do no wrong. No one is around to tell the tale.

When he touches down in Atlanta, there is no one there to meet him. He takes the limo from the airport to a hotel downtown. He'll stay there until he gets a new place. They give him the royal treatment. That will be enough for his needs. There will always be another love waiting for him.

Dan lies on the freshly pressed sheets. He is thinking about Amira. He pretends to himself that he could have stayed behind. He can taste her sweet lips. He feels her fragile body against his chest. For that brief moment, he is back in Cairo. Now, more than ever, it is fantasy, as it always was. He never really risked himself. And she gave him everything.

He could never imagine Amira crossing the Atlantic to be with him. He had already dismissed her almost as if he was sending away the hired help. She has too much pride to make a move in his direction. He had his chance, and he blew it in her eyes.

Dan makes more of an effort to bring her to life. He is again looking at those dark eyes. They beckon him as he tries to make his way through his own darkness. For months she had been the light for him. And he is casting to bring her to life for him once more.

There is a profound irony to the experience. He is using her image even as she has rejected him. There is nothing that she really can do to take back her love. This is his supreme triumph. It ultimately shows his weakness. He is always one step behind the curve. Despite the supposed superiority of his education, he misses the beauty of this equation. Love has eluded him once again. In affairs of the heart, he is failing basic arithmetic. He smiles at his ineptitude. He feels a sense of helplessness.

Amira now haunts his nights. He cannot escape her presence. She will continue to possess him until he sets her free.

After all his struggles, he is back in Atlanta. He now has the job that could have guaranteed his commitment to Estelle. She might have married him if he had obtained this job sooner. But now his heart is elsewhere. It's not as if Estelle is ready to welcome Dan home. She doesn't even know that he is back. He feels that he can't really call her. Not now.

Estelle has decided to go out with Lily on this lovely fall night. They are heading for E-Merge again.

Lily says, "I'm not sure if I want to go there again. We go there so much that people are starting to think that we're regulars. It makes me feel desperate."

Estelle says, "I like to dance."

Tonight there is no short supply of admirers for Estelle, "I think it's your hair," says Lilly.

Estelle pats her head and smiles.

Lily laments, "I don't see any guys coming up to me. I just want to go."

Estelle answers back, "You really have it in for this place tonight. Just be patient."

Estelle finds it strange that it's Lily who loves to come here.

Ramon is in investment banking. He's also a runner. He's training to do a marathon. He is so physically assertive. Dan always hid that side of himself. From the beginning, Estelle feels that she is sure hands. He is the perfect complement for her new confidence in herself. He flatters her about her physical conditioning. He leaves little doubt about his intentions for the night. She seems almost ready to comply.

Ramon has been watching her dance with Lily. He compliments her moves. Even amidst all the noise, they are able to carry on a conversation. It could be that he translates all his gestures so well with his hands. She can already feel herself speaking with her body.

Estelle feels completely natural with Ramon. She doesn't feel pressured at all by him. She feels in control. She is telling him what to do.

His allure feels stronger and stronger, the more that he dances with her. Estelle wants to be touched. She trails around the dance floor with a purpose. She wants him to unlock her hidden desires. He knows where to touch her. She can tell. She aches for his touch. She begs for him.

A little later, they are sitting next to each other on the couch. A glance and a caress lead to a glowing kiss. There is little restraining them.

Lily watches the two of them. She doesn't want to do anything to interfere. Since she drove with Estelle, she can't just duck out.

Estelle doesn't want promises. She lets her body say everything that has to be said. In his embrace, she hears everything that she wants to hear. They let themselves float on the rhythm of the night. This song will not stop playing until morning. It will help her forget all her past hurt. She can feel that this high will last and last. She wants to expose her heart to him. She wants him to seize her right here.

Estelle is oblivious to everyone else in the bar. Then she realizes that she has forgotten Lily. She disengages from Ramon.

"My friend, I have to find her."

He is afraid that the spell has been broken. For Estelle, the break only adds to the suspense. Lily is not far off. She is getting restless.

Estelle tells her, "I can take you home."

"I'll get cab. I can see that you're getting a little action."

"It's nothing special."

She goes back to find Ramon, "I have to take my friend home."

Ramon moves closer to her.

"I could follow you. We could go have a drink somewhere else."

Estelle admits, "I am getting tired. We'll have to make it another time."

Ramon takes out his phone. She gives her his number.

Estelle hadn't wanted it to end like this. She had been proud of her daring. Now she feels a little weak. But she is trying to make the best of it. She gives him one last longing kiss. They both can savor it for the rest of the night. He stands by the couch and smiles back at her as she walks over to Lily. Lily feels uncomfortable ruining the party.

"I'm sorry that happened."

Estelle doesn't feel angry at all, "This needed to happen like this. I need to be cautious".

Lily challenges her, "You're too cautious. Are you afraid of sex?"

"I don't know this guy. I'm not going to go home with him on the first night."

Lily inquires, "But you wanted to."

"I've felt a lot of things tonight. And I could have given in to any of those feelings. But I didn't. In the final analysis, I controlled myself. And I feel better for that."

Lily asks, "You don't think that some good loving would have taken care of what ails you."

"I'm not sick," Estelle maintains.

"There are just certain things that make a woman a woman. And you need to nourish that side of your character."

Estelle says, "I'm not dying on the vine. I've got a good job. I'm healthy. I love my life. And when the right man comes along, I'll give myself to him."

"Have you had sex since Dan left? Have you even wanted to?"

Estelle doesn't say anything about Omar. She is still haunted by that experience. If anything, that would only make her insatiable. But at this moment, she realizes that she is shying away from desire.

Ramon calls her a couple of days later. They agree to a picnic in the north Georgia mountains. On the drive up there, they don't say too much. She feels that they really don't share too much in common. He is attractive. But he seems too sure of himself.

After they reach the state park, things only seem to get worse. They open a bottle of wine. And they are spread out on a blanket on the grass. But he just seems boring. She wants to click her fingers and make him disappear. He is going on about his work out routine. She is sure that this kind of thing must work with some girls, but it does nothing for her. It only makes him seem more silly.

Nothing that he says makes any sense. She feels like a frustrated puppeteer. She is trying to make her speak, to say something that really seems emotionally affecting. All his gestures which are so seductive at night now seem comical. She just wants to leave. She ends getting a little drunk.

"You can drive us back," she tells him.

Her intoxication doesn't make him seem more attractive. He is just this pretty-boy goon. If she had slept with him, she'd only feel more attached to him. She'd be rubbing his arm and cooing. It would have taken her longer to see through his masquerade. Instead, she just wants to be done with this clown. She wants to see her own bed alone as soon as possible.

The drive back is excruciating. At one point, she can't take it anymore. She just passes out in the seat. When they arrive home, he tries to act all romantic.

"Are you sure that you don't want me to help you upstairs?"

“No, I’m OK.”

“I can just help you get settled.”

Settled, nothing. He can just go. His time is over.

He adds, “I’ll call you. We can get together and cook dinner. Have a quiet night at home.”

The only thing that’s cooking is his goose. She is over this before it has even begun. She just wants to get away something fierce. She smiles, gets her stuff, and rushes up the stairs. She doesn’t even look back. He is probably so proud of himself.

The next day at work, she buries herself in her accounts. Around mid-morning, she looks around the office to see if anyone there really appeals to her. She just can’t imagine bringing her work home with her. The night life isn’t working out for her. She hates to admit it, but she does miss Dan. Even after all the terrible things that he’s done, she thinks that they still had something real.

She needs to clean out her system. After work she goes for a workout. It seems more strenuous than before. She pushes her body to the point of breaking.

“This is better than sex,” she tells herself. But what would she know at this point. She has opted for solitude.”

Lily wants to meet her later on.

Estelle tells her, “No, bars tonight. It’s a Monday.”

Lily says, “Sometimes you meet the best guys on a Monday.”

Estelle says, “We’ve been over this before. These are the guys who are still nursing a hangover from Sunday. And their only remedy is to stay drunk for the rest of the week. No, thanks.”

They agree on dinner. When they meet, Estelle is hardly thinking about food. But she forces herself to eat.

“I hate to admit it Lily. But Dan’s still in my thoughts.”

Lily says, “I’m sure that you would have gotten over him by now.”

Estelle says, “I might have, but I haven’t found anyone new.”

“You’ve been setting your standards too high.”

“After yesterday, I haven’t set them high enough. I had a terrible time.”

Lily tells her, “You needed to have slept with him before you went on romantic picnics. Then you’re already in the mood by the time that you get out there.”

“He was really boring. He had nothing to talk about.”

Lily asks, “What did you ever talk about with Dan?”

“At least he didn’t grunt when he talked. Dan and I watched movies together. We cooked. We had fun.”

“He offered to take you to Cairo. You ended up going there yourself anyway.”

“That was just for a visit.”

“If you had gone with him, it would have been for life,” Lily tells her.

“Maybe that’s my greatest fear.”

Estelle thinks about getting shut in the pyramid. She feels as if she has been running away from her own pleasure. She is afraid that it is going to take her over. Just turn her into some kind of sex demon.

Egypt opened up her spirit. She felt driven. And she wanted to act on that feeling when she came back to America. Now she is only feeling alone.

Lily asks, "What are you going to do? Go back to Egypt."

"I don't even know if Dan is still there."

Lily seems shocked, "You'd go back for him. There's nothing there."

"I have nothing here. "

She could go to Egypt for something more sinister. She doesn't want to talk about Omar with Lily. That is a darker side of her personality. If she let it surface, then she'd just eat the Ramons of the world alive. She prefers her hearty diet to the rich luxuries of the Queen of the Nile. So she deals with the downside.

Dan has little time to think about romance with his new job. Most of the work is in Atlanta proper. There is so much major construction going on in the city. But Dan also travels around the state. He is made in charge of a job in Macon. It takes him away for a month.

When he comes back, he starts to look for a house. He doesn't enjoy apartment living. His job is starting to seem permanent. His family wants to help out with the down payment. He needs the security.

As he walks the empty rooms of the houses that he is looking at, he thinks about Estelle. Amira was just a dream to him. Estelle was real. Even when she showed up in Aswan.

He preferred the Nile fantasy with Amira. He was with her at that moment. He couldn't have just run back to Estelle's arms.

One day, Dan is in a bookstore on Peachtree. He smells perfume, White Clover. He looks all around and doesn't see Estelle. He thinks that his mind is playing tricks on him. If she was here, she is no longer in the store.

He can still feel the warmth of her presence. He walks the aisles until he finds the place where the perfume is the strongest. He just stands there and tries to breath her in. His lips feel kissed by his memory.

He looks up at the book shelf. He finds a book of poetry that is slightly out of place. It still bears the traces of her touch. He believes that her perfume has dusted the pages. He wants the book. It is his reminder that she has been close to his heart once again.

He looks over at the parking lot. It seems like Estelle, but the woman is too far away. She disappears.

Dan tries to be clever. He goes over to her old apartment. He thinks that she might be home. He knocks on the door. A woman with red hair answers. It's not Estelle.

Part of him feels relieved. He is not ready for the meeting. On the other hand, he needs to find her.

Dan has considered calling her. He needs to get up the courage. There he is in the car with the phone in his hand. This has all been too ridiculous. He can't wait. When he calls, he gets a message saying that the phone is no longer in service. There is little that he can do now. He assumes that her new number is unlisted.

At home, he tries to use his internet skills to find her. He is having no luck. He is only becoming more discouraged. Why does he really want to see her again? He has been a repeat offender with Amira. Does he really expect some kind of forgiveness from Estelle? Can she really make things OK for the both of them?

Then he considers the worst. She has moved in with another man. He doesn't want to imagine that possibility. He should have been more earnest when he moved back to Atlanta. He is doing so well at work, but none of this feels real for him anymore. He had really messed up his life. Sure, work is great. But what does it really mean.

It's not like him to pine away. He has met other girls. They are impressed by his success and his worldly ways. But they all seem to want something from him. None have the independence of Estelle or Amira.

For the time being, he doesn't let it affect him. He will solve his quest somehow. He even meets a girl who seems right for him. Jeanne is still studying at Tech. She has plans for success in her own career in business. She is also creative. She does photography on her own time. He really isn't expecting anything. That just seems all for the best.

Dan continues to frequent the same bookstore. It is in Estelle's old neighborhood. It can't be simply coincidence that he saw her in there.

Sure enough, she walks in one day. He is just leaving.

"Dan!" she says. "I didn't know that you lived here now."

He gives her a big hug. He feels vindicated.

"I moved back."

"Wow!" she gasps. "I wish that I had known."

"I've been back a few months."

"You should have called," Estelle expresses a little remorse about their parting.

"I tried. Your number has been disconnected."

"I had troubles with a guy stalking me. I just changed numbers."

"Oh." He asks her, "Did you move?"

She smiles, "Yeah, I just needed a new place. I was going to buy a condo. I'm just not sure. I didn't want to borrow money from my folks."

He wants to see her again, "We have to go out for dinner sometime to catch up."

Estelle is not sure that she wants to get together with him. For so long, she lived her life waiting for him to come home. She has just met someone that she really likes. He's a designer at the Cartoon Network. His name is Rich.

Rich seems to have a full life. He enjoys his work, but it's only a small part of his artistic personality. She can't go back to Dan.

Estelle can feel this breeze waft past her when someone opens the door. It reminds her of all her journeys. She wants the romance. Is Rich offering her the romance?

Dan and Estelle agree to meet for lunch. They feel that they both owe each other as much. But it has finally been enough time for both of them to put their love behind them.

At lunch, Estelle can't help staring. He seems like a ghost come back to life. She is wearing the magic amulet. She touches it to bring back that old feeling. What she says seems to contradict her nostalgia.

"It's ironic that you came back to Atlanta. It might have been a big deal a while ago. But life just has a way of putting everything back in place."

Everything about her seems so final. He doesn't even give it a second thought. He would give up Jeanne to be with Estelle again. He realizes that he is so fickle.

Estelle is full of devotion for their time together. It has taken her so long to get over him.

She refuses to be vulnerable again. Rich is real. Dan is a fantasy,

Dan talks to her about his new house. He wants her to see it. But she considers it bad luck. She notices that she is tuning him out. She has been doing this quite a bit lately. It just gives her the feeling that she is finally living for herself. If something interrupts her dreams, she can think about something else.

Dan is so distant now. He is energetic. But his zeal only make it harder for him to affect her. They are no longer together for a reason. She doesn't want to go back in time.

When they part, he hugs her. There is a little bit of that same excitement. But they are just remembering what they had. He doesn't want to let go. He wants to see her again.

"Dan, it's just not the sensible thing to do. I couldn't tell Rich about it. I would feel unfaithful to him."

The blood is rushing in his head. He needs to be with her again. He would give her the world. She doesn't give it a second thought. She disappears once more in the afternoon sun. He feels as if she was never there.

Estelle feels proud of herself. Sure, she loves Rich. But they haven't been together very long. His sense of humor is so endearing for her. But she believes that there is something too polite about their relationship. Both Dan and Estelle share the mysteries of Egypt. They know about this other world even if it has proven self-destructive.

Estelle has waited months just to get over Dan. If she rushes back to him, then she has no independence. All her effort to reshape her identity have been wasted. She cancels a date with Rich. "I'm not feeling well."

She meet Lily for dinner. Estelle relates her meeting Dan

"Go to it, girl!" is Lily's response.

Estelle is cautious, "I don't feel so great about it. I like being with Rich. I don't want to break up with Rich."

"Who said anything about breaking up with Rich? Live a little. Keep both men."

Estelle seems shocked. "Lily, this isn't helping."

"What do you want me to say? You can't just pick one guy and hope for the best. If you do, he could just dump you in a week. How long have you been with Rich?"

"That's not the point. It would be so easy to be with Dan. I just don't want to be easy."

Lily criticizes her, "You never do!" But it's in your own best interest."

Estelle cannot get over her discomfort at Lily's suggestion. If she is going to go back to dan, then it has to be forever. And she will have to tell Rich good-by. But she can hardly run back to Dan the way that he's treated her.

Lily adds, "Just consider everything that's happened with Dan as water under the bridge."

Estelle asks, "What's that supposed to mean. What bridge?"

"If you go back to him, you can't worry about what happened in the past. It has to be because you really like being with him. And if you feel that magic, go with it."

Estelle tries to state it clearly, "That means that I tell Rich that it's over."

Lily tries to warn her, "Don't tell Rich a thing. Just live a little."

"Lily, what if Rich finds out."

"You break it off then. But not before."

Estelle hates that, "It's so dishonest."



Estelle feels that she is drifting apart from Rich. But she is doing everything that she can to hold on. The voice of moderation is telling her to stay with him. If she goes back to Dan, she's open to all that dramatic upheaval. That's not her.

Being with Dan has made her excited. She needs to relieve all that energy. She meets with Rich the next night. She tells him nothing about seeing Dan again. As far as he is concerned, that is all part of her past.

They are in bed together. Dan pulls her over for a kiss. She loses herself in his body. But he is not Rich. This time he is Dan. She is wearing her amulet. She can feel her desire come alive. There is a feeling of abandon in her caresses. She doesn't hold back tonight. She is overcome by the risk.

Rich has this look of delight on his face. He accepts her caring. She won't let go. She does everything that she can to satisfy.

"That feels so good," he says.

She can't speak. She is preoccupied in his pleasure. Afterwards, she takes a sip of water from her bottle by the bed, and she swallows. He has a good-natured smirk on his face. This is only the beginning. She dives deep in these waters and swims as if there is no tomorrow. He appears to suspect nothing. He had always known her to be so reserved. Tonight, she is an animal.

Before they fall asleep, he comments, "You were like a monster tonight. But I felt sort of weird. I felt like you weren't really here."

"What would give you that idea?" she asks.

"I don't know. It seemed as if I wasn't even here. You were just driving ahead with such ferocity."

"I recall you getting pretty aggressive yourself. Mr. Man," Estelle offers her perspective. Already, it doesn't seem to be about any intimacy. It is raw desire. This frightens him even more. There is none of the preparation that he expects. He feels that he barely knows her, and she is pushing out so far. In the end, this can't be good. She will come to value pleasure for its own sake. And when a better offer comes along, he'll be on the sidelines. Tenderness is still important. Now she seems afraid to be tender. She is using the sex against him.

Dan both calls and emails Estelle that week. She ignores him. But she is quickly drifting apart from Rich. One evening he confronts her in her apartment.

"What is it with this sex thing?" he asks.

"I thought that you wanted it that way."

"I said I did. But not really. I just wanted you to be more open with me. I don't know what is going on now."

Estelle counters, "We're having fun. We love each other. What's the problem?"

He is more brutal, "Maybe this isn't working. I really loved hanging out with you. But now I'm not sure if I'm really being myself or someone else."

Estelle is not sure if she can take his identity crisis. She has enough worries of her own right now.

"Do you want to break up?"

He has another idea, "We have to take it slow. Maybe we'll see each other next week."

Estelle has followed Lily's advice the best way that she knows how. She has tried to

enjoy herself. But something is missing. And Rich is catching on.

Under the circumstances, the worst thing would be to run to Dan. But she calls him. She wants to hear more. They meet for dinner.

Estelle confronts him with her misgivings, "Dan, we get on so well. But I feel that you're here just for forgiveness. You screwed over that girl in Egypt. You messed with me. And I'm your only hope to make up for all your misdeeds."

"I'm not that calculated."

She looks him in the eye, "I can't believe you. You got what you wanted. Now you want to ease your conscience. I'm not here for that."

He wonders, "Why did you agree to get together?"

"I guess that I wanted to close the book for good. It's been wrecking up my personal life. I need to let go. I need you to let go as well."

"If we're meant to be together, then we should be together."

Estelle won't go along, "When I was in Egypt, I had experiences that had nothing to do with you. You could never be part of that life. I am totally somewhere else."

"But I found the same thing about myself too."

Estelle disagrees, "You found it in someone else's arms."

"I'm back here now."

"What's that supposed to mean?" she asks.

There is little that he can say to soothe her. He just wants things to be right in his soul. But he has never really embraced the turmoil inside. She has suffered for him. Amira has felt the same way. He lives in his cool world of structures and equations.

Estelle kisses him by her car. She can tell that he wants more. It is a long passionate kiss. But it is more of a punctuation than a beginning. She can't be her confessor.

As she trails off, he is haunted by her perfume in the night. The smell of White Clover invites him to everything that he wants to be. Down deep, he questions whether he is a truly deep soul. Or does he just bounce off the surface of true passion. He just likes to be entertained.

Estelle cannot let the kiss go. It burns inside her. She can't settle down to sleep. She wants that phantom lover to touch her deep.

Her last few nights with Rich have reawakened that wild being that haunted the Nile. Now she knows no bounds. But she can't return to Rich. And Dan is hardly the man for her.

The next evening she tells Estelle about her difficulties with Rich.

"You need to stay with him until you've slept with Dan a few times."

Estelle is surprised, "Until Rich finds out. Is that my cue? I'll only hate Dan more for that."

"The only reason that you want either guy is for revenge. You are using Rich against Dan. And you only want to be with Dan is because you can. So you shouldn't worry about love. You don't even care about love yourself."

She does care for love. But Lily is cutting deep. How can she be with either man who can't care for her deep feelings.

Estelle gets home about 3 in the morning. She is a little tipsy. She calls Dan.

"I've got to work in the morning."

"So do I," she says. "I just needed to tell you that you can't bother me anymore. You

have to promise me.”

“You woke me up me to tell me that.”

“It’s not like I can sleep now,” she tells him.

“I’ve got a meeting in the morning.”

Estelle is a little miffed, “You didn’t have to answer your phone.”

The next day, Estelle laughs about the phone call. Dan calls her in the afternoon.

Estelle answers, “I thought that you weren’t going to call again.”

“That was your idea. I’m glad that you called last night. It really got me thinking. I can’t be apart from you. I think about you all the time. I want to marry you.”

Estelle smiles, “You can’t make a wedding proposal over the telephone.”

Is this what Estelle has always wanted? More than ever, she feels that she is at his beck and call. But if she lets him go now, it might be forever. When will she get another chance like this? She can hardly bring Rich back from obscurity.

In the deep night, there is only one way to find the truth. Estelle has to speak with her body. And the waves of passion eventually pass over her. As he drives his way deep into her soul, the wails of passion shake the earth. For once, she can come out of herself. Dan has unlocked the phantom lover deep in her. Her eyes are like a cat’s. They glow in the dark. They light their way until the morning light.

They talk of a trip abroad. Maybe for their honeymoon. There will be time to plan a new adventure.

“We could go to Egypt and see the pyramids together.”

Estelle laughs, “I don’t want to lose you in the shifting sands.”