

***Dragonfly
Girl***

Logan Lansing

Dragonfly Girl
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*To the courageous women of resilient spirit
who have come before me, particularly the
writer Erica Jong whose book, Fear of
Flying, redefined sexual equality and turned us
on to the zipless fuck.*

*And to all the men in my life, past and
present, and the ones I've yet to meet.*

Chapter One ✨

“FUCK YOU, FRANK!”

“Nice, real nice. So what are you gonna do? Run away to your muuhh-ther’s?” He stretched out the word, as if the slower he said it, the more it would sting. “And come crawlin’ home in three days beggin’ to suck my cock?” A damp t-shirt hiked over his belly, Frank let out a deep belch as he staggered out of the 5' x 5' jail cell we called a bedroom and took two steps forward.

I backed up. “Not this time. This time I’m gone for good! I left a letter on the kitchen table. Read it. I’m filing for divorce and taking back my maiden name. Get a lawyer. I have one.”

Hot August in South Jersey but no pastels for me. Today I needed a power outfit to stick to my guns: black racer back tank, black short skirt and low-heeled, laced-up black leather sandals. I glanced at the cracked, full-length mirror leaning against the chipped paint living room wall.

Not bad for almost thirty!

“So Su...zanne, how you gonna make money? Sellin’ stale doughnuts and lottery tickets to truckers at rest stops, same as now? That’s not gonna buy you a divorce.” Cracking himself up as he slurred his words,

spit flew everywhere.

“Maybe, or I’ll round up shopping carts at Walmart. For extra I could do blowjobs in the parking lot. And I’m starting with all your friends. Look, I’m linin’ ’em up right now.” I punched in numbers and held my phone to his face.

“Hah! Your puny licks would be worth, let’s say, a dollar-fifty on the high side.”

“Puny licks? How would you know?” I said, ducking his airborne saliva. “You were always dead drunk.”

Grunting, Frank lurched toward me, forehead veins popping and arms flailing. It was now or never. I grabbed my previously packed bags, banged open the screen door and bolted. His voice rose as he yelled after me.

“Better count on something more than your pitiful, dry lips on pricks. Hey, Suz, wait a sec. What friends were you callin’? Fuck. Better not be Gary or Ray. And if it was Duce, I’ll kill ya...”

His words trailed off as I flipped him the bird and gunned the motor of my ’67 VW bus. But between the bucking, loud backfiring and swirling dust, the memorable exit I wanted to make wasn’t happening. A quick glance in my side-view mirror caught the sight of my all too familiar shit-faced husband stumbling, tripping and cursing. I hoped it was the last I saw and heard of that dickhead: Frank Wilson.



BEFORE GETTING ON THE GARDEN STATE Parkway, I took the scenic route along the ocean to clear my head and inhale the briny odor of salty sea air. The

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familiar distant cries of children's squeals, the cawing of gulls and the peaceful repetition and rhythm of waves drew me in. As I relaxed and loosened my white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel, I caught a glint of the thin gold band around the finger on my left hand—the same gold band that had been waiting seven years for the promised matching wedding ring. Jamming the gearshift into park, I jumped out, sprinted over the sand and yanked off the ring, flinging it far into the ocean—at the same time thinking I should've sold it for cash.

Yeah, that would've been the smart thing to do.



LOUD ROCK MUSIC THUMPED FROM my car radio as I pulled into the middle lane heading north to Mom's on the Parkway. Tears built up as I cranked open the window, blew out a deep breath and sucked in freedom.

But now what?

I could spend the entire trip up to Summit, New Jersey, hoping to shake the picture of Frank's beer bloated face and trying to remember why it took seven years of marriage to leave such a loser.

Or...

I could review all the things I did before I left. Laundry washed. Garbage out. Food in fridge. Check. Check. Check. No leftover guilt, no remaining regrets. Nothing. Only anger. At myself.

But I didn't want to think about any of it, not the dilapidated trailer we lived in until the house Frank promised to build was started or the dog who lovingly

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stayed by my side during the whole shit-show or the education I never finished. Not about our marriage that fell apart even before the honeymoon or all the nights of Frank's lousy drunken sex moves until he passed out and I was left hanging and alone.

Or...

I could make a plan, a serious plan for my future. After all, I had two years of community college. A good start. And Mom would be thrilled to know I'd dumped Frank and wanted to go back to school. She might even pitch in some bucks. But did I want to listen to "I told you so" a million times and her ongoing insistence that I attend Al-Anon because it had saved *her* life?

The traffic picked up; I was in unfamiliar territory. Exit signs in the 130s whizzed by for Linden and Rahway. Wait! Didn't I read in the class newsletter that Jerry Spinella was now managing his uncle's bar somewhere around here? Oh, man, Jerry, my boyfriend from Summit High School before I met that lowlife Frank on the beach at the shore and threw away my future. What *was* the name of that bar? An odd name. Oh, right, Dr. Unk's. It spelled d-r-u-n-k-s. Guess that said it all.

One drink. I'll stop off for one drink and do what I should have done years ago.

The directions on my phone led me to a brick storefront building sandwiched between two tall factories, the location basically hidden and ugly. There were only two trees on the entire sidewalk, each shading the front windows of one of the factories. With all the vacant parking spaces on the street, I slid into one, adjusted the rear-view mirror in my direction

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and swiped on some lipstick.

Stepping down from the van, I stretched, squinted into the sunlight for a moment and shoved open the humidity-swollen door that said Dr. Unk's in scratched-up black lettering. As I adjusted my eyes to the dim entrance, I put my oversized sunglasses on top of my head, pushed back my hair and blinked my way further inside. The room was wider than it looked from the outside, with a huge bar that ran the length of the place. Tables for two or four lined the edges of what seemed like a deserted dump.

My eyes narrowed as a door swung open and a backlit body of a tall man came out from the far end.

"Jerry?" My voice echoed off the dingy walls.

"We're closed. Who wants to know?"

"It's me, Suzanne Quinlan."

The figure paused. "Suzy Q? Best ass in the class?"

I laughed. "The one and only."

I stepped closer. Wearing jeans and no shirt, he didn't move. Was he still angry after all these years?

Screw it.

I ran toward him and folded into his broad, sweaty chest. As he pulled me in, a scent memory sliced through: Jerry, me, back seat of his truck. It was after he had worked out. I loved being with him then. No fake spicy men's cologne. Just Jerry.

"Hey." I leaned back and looked up into his clear steel blue eyes ringed with dark lashes. "Even after all this time you smell like yourself."

"That's the way you liked it. Manly, you said."

And there it was. His wide grin framed by dimples, spreading sunshine through the windowless

room.

How could I have given him up for Frank?

Jerry put me at arm's length, taking me all in before giving me a quick little spin. His eyes hesitated at chest level, then rested on my face. "Lookin' good, Suzanne. But come on, there's no way you were just passing through this neighborhood. Let's sit down and catch up."

As he draped his arm around my shoulder and steered me toward one of the tables, his hand slipped down and brushed my butt. I sat while he brought over two bottles of water from the bar and tried to ignore the low-level volt that hadn't left.

I licked my parched lips, gulped some water and opened up. "I made a *BIG* mistake marrying Frank Wilson. You knew it, my mother knew it, all my girlfriends knew it. But not me. I was blinded by his beach body muscles, and the fact that he had an auto body shop at the shore. He seemed like an uncomplicated, undemanding, fun guy who loved cars and had a good start-up business. Looking back, I think I was desperate for a getaway from Mom's control and Dad's drinking."

I braced myself for the usual wave of sadness that followed thinking about Dad but kept going.

"Jerry, please know it had nothing to do with how I felt about you. Anyway, you were set to go to Rutgers for the next four years. Frank's proposal seemed like the easiest solution for me. I had no idea he was an alcoholic and big bull shitter. So today I left him. It was time. Way past time."

"And you're here because..."

"Because I owe you an apology."

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His eyes widened.

“I’m sorry if I hurt you, Jerry. Really sorry.”

“I thought we had a good thing going. So, okay, I’ll admit I was upset when you left but there was no stopping you,” he swallowed hard. “Moving on, Suz, what are your plans?”

“That’s the problem. I’d go back home to Summit with my tail between my legs but I hate the thought of listening to my mother. My eventual dream is to have my own business but first I need to make some money. Big money. So, maybe I’ll...”

“So stay here.”

“Here?”

He reached across the table and squeezed my hand. His fingers strong, his touch warm.

I scanned the empty room while his grasp remained. “You’ve got to be kidding. I don’t see any customers.”

“It’s Sunday. We’re closed. But during the week and Saturdays, it’s jammed.”

“Seriously? What’s the draw? This place is dark and, uh, seedy. Don’t like to hurt your feelings but just sayin’.”

“Watch.” Jerry slid his hands away from mine, then walked over to the sidewall with that solid, athletic stride of his and flipped several switches.

Whoa! A disco sound system kicked on in sync with revolving white and colored lights that flooded the entire bar. All the scuffed furniture and graffiti faded away. The rundown place took on a newer, almost high-end, look.

“Ohmygod, Jerry, It’s beautiful. I’m impressed.”

“When my uncle died, family asked me if I would

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help save the place from going under. I agreed because they didn't want to let the liquor license lapse. I thought it would be short term but after I put in the lights and built a DJ booth," he pointed to a small stage on the side wall, "and hired some girls who could dance, the rest is history. My aim is to turn this from a bar for tired factory workers into an upscale gentleman's club for all men."

"I'm interested but what would I do? I've never bartended, and I sure as hell never stripped or danced around a pole."

"You're pretty." He leaned forward and smiled as I imagined seeing wheels turn behind his eyes. "That's a big plus. So what are your other talents?"

"Organizing and managing people. So far in my life I've sold myself short and played small. Now I want to change. And as you remember," I said in a joking, well, okay, flirty way, "I do a fairly decent blow job."

Did I just say blow job?

"Couldn't forget that, Suz." Jerry's grin grew as the memory sunk in. "Here's the deal," he cleared his throat. "What you're willing to do is going to determine how much money you'll make. Talk to my manager, Julia. She'll fill you in." He hesitated. "But I have a few ideas of my own. And I sure as hell could use a blonde around here."

Chapter Two ✨

A BIG-CHESTED WOMAN, she was tall, maybe six feet. Despite her almost wrinkle-free face, her graying hair restrained in a tight bun made her look stern and older than her sixty-something years. When Jerry introduced us she surrounded me with a giant bear hug; any tighter and I would have lost consciousness. But she had large, brown, spirit-filled eyes and a smile that drew me in and kept me there. Couldn't help it, I liked Julia from the get-go.

Was I wrong?

She had worked at Dr. Unk's for over twenty-five years. First, as a cigarette girl and bouncer when it was a beer and shot type place, then manager for Jerry's uncle, and now for Jerry. No prude, Julia changed her attitude with the times. She was fiercely loyal; her face glowed with pride when she talked about the new look of the bar and especially the talents of the dancers. Whether stripping, working the pole or lap dancing, "my girls," as Julia called them, felt her presence and felt safe. "No funny stuff in the main room," she'd say. "Take the rest to the private rooms upstairs."

"What do you consider 'funny stuff?'" My curiosity piqued.

Her serious tone took over. "Fucking or sucking

dick on or anywhere near the bar. Everything else is a go.”

“What if you didn’t know it happened?”

“It better be quick,” Julia came back with a deep laugh, “because I see everything. My gut sense always knows when something is up.” Her laughter morphed into a girlish giggle. “But in here we hope that everybody *is* up—in one way or another.” More giggling. “Please don’t take offense to anything I say of a sexual nature. Booze is our business. But sex sells the booze.”

“That makes perfect sense.” My eyes squared on hers so she knew I was listening.

“Jerry tells me you need a job.”

I opened my mouth for further discussion, but she jumped in first. “We get a big lunch crowd and need a waitress. Salary and tips okay?”

Oh man, a job. Jerry saved me!

Again, I couldn’t say another word before she spoke up. “Jerry had a great idea and I agreed. We are going to have you wear a French maid’s outfit—you know, short black, low-cut dress with a little white lace apron and headpiece, looking sexy. It’ll give this place some class. You’ll get lots of tips. Interested?”

“Very, I—” She cut me off before I could ask questions.

“Good. Can you stick around until morning? The seamstress will measure you at ten.”

“I’ll make sure to be here.” Seamstress? For a strip bar? This place is nuts. Nuts! Julia, who connected every word to sex, would probably say in here our customers usually have two.

“If you need a place to sleep tonight, we have

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blow-up mattresses in the girl's dressing room."

"No thanks, I'll camp out in my van."

Julia made a face. "Doesn't sound very comfortable."

"It's a restored VW bus, and it's more comfortable than the trailer I lived in for the past seven years."

"Suit yourself. See you tomorrow." She moved toward the door but turned back and waved. "Glad you're with us, Suzanne."

As Julia walked away I could see some tendrils had loosened themselves from her taut upswept hairstyle. The delicate swirls surrounding her face gave her a softer, younger look. Maybe I'd tell her that in the morning. Or not. Probably overstepping.

I drove my van into the bar's rear parking lot. Scrubby bushes lined the back property that separated the bar from another street of large factories. Low-hanging trees shaded a small area in one corner. The remains of scattered litter made me think it was a spot used for the dumpsters that were now wedged closer to the bar's back kitchen door. I pulled in and parked. A perfect fit for my VW bus. And for privacy.



IT TURNED OUT THE SEAMSTRESS, Bella, was the mother of Isa, one of the dancers. Why a mother would want her daughter's career choice to be a go-go dancer in a strip bar was beyond me but I wasn't going there.

Abracadabra! After the measuring, the sewing was finished in one day. Bella, Isa and Julia nodded their approval of my new skimpy outfit and led me to a full-length mirror.

"Wow! Look at me, a real live bar room Barbie."

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My whirling and twirling was cut short as I caught Jerry's reflection in the mirror.

"One word," he said, flashing me a megawatt smile. "Bombshell!"

I turned and threw my arms around his neck, weaving one hand up and through his thick and tousled chestnut-brown hair. Without warning he pushed back and unwound himself. His actions landing like a gut punch. Isa and Bella fled the room. Jerry followed.

Julia grabbed my arm. "Listen, Suzanne, that had nothing to do with you. Isa's been sleeping with Jerry, and hearing his reaction to you brought out some jealousy."

I sucked in. "Does he sleep with *all* the dancers?"

"This is no Sunday school, and Jerry's no choir boy," she clipped her words. "A little advice. I know you used to date Jerry but stay out of his business now. He tends to hump and dump. I've never seen him be serious. And you know men: nothing like new pussy."

So that settled that. Hands off Jerry. Served me right. I sold him out for that shithead Frank years ago. In a way his brush-off was a gift. Gave me more time to concentrate on making money.

But still...

Chapter Three ✨

AFTER THREE WEEKS OF WAITRESSING in fishnet stockings and high heels, my feet and back ached and the corners of my mouth hurt from continually smiling. Total sum of salary and tips saved: a few hundred dollars. A math major in high school and not stupid, I knew that amount wouldn't get me an apartment any time soon. Further evidence I was a loser. There must be something else I could do to make more money. After all, Jerry said my willingness would determine how much I could make.

In downtime between serving lunch and dinner, I watched how Julia not only acted as a bouncer, taking no shit from the aggressive and disorderly types, but also managed the girls, ordered the food and booze and took care of all the paperwork. It was a job I felt I could handle. But it was taken.

The dancers and strippers made more than their salary from tips shoved down their G-strings while gyrating on the bar or pole, from doing lap dances, and of course those upstairs rooms where they did all kinds of who knows what else.

That's it. Time I asked Jerry what other jobs were available. But secretly, I wanted to talk to him, look at him, be close to him. The problem was he only came

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out of the kitchen or DJ booth for a short time after food was served to say hello to the lunch and dinner customers. I checked the clock behind the bar. Five minutes to go.

“Jerry, wait. Can I speak to you?” I used my sexiest voice, made sure my hair was casually perfect and reapplied my lipstick carefully, playing up the Cupid’s bow in my top lip. Jerry always loved my full, pouty, kissable lips.

“What’s up, Suz? I’m busy,” he said with his back to me, clearing last night’s dishes from the tables.

“Jerry, please, I need to make more money. What else can I do?”

“Guess you could be a bottle girl,” he said as he took off toward the kitchen, never even glancing my way. “Can’t talk now. Too busy. See Julia.”

That stung! He sure as hell hadn’t been too busy to put his dick in my mouth in that beat-up truck of his in the high school parking lot. Now he couldn’t even talk to me?

Julia, Jerry’s self-appointed bodyguard, hurried over. Man, that woman didn’t miss a trick.

“What’s going on, Suzanne? Didn’t I tell you not to bother Jerry?”

“He told me I could make extra money as a bottle girl—and to talk to you.”

“Okay, but ask me first next time, not Jerry. We have a no-nonsense policy here.”

No-nonsense policy? What the hell was that?

“I give up, Julia,” I said, changing the subject, “what’s a bottle girl?”

“Come to the bar and I’ll get you set up.”

I dutifully followed her, feeling like some kid

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called to the principal's office. After Julia asked the bartender if there were any requests for a bottle, I assumed I would be delivering it to someone's table.

But no.

"We call what's upstairs the exclusive VIP Floor. There are private dining rooms and champagne rooms where lap dances are, let's say, expanded, and there are several exclusive bedrooms for overnight guests and their activities. Tonight the gentlemen in room three want a very expensive wine and some glasses. You must arrange everything on one of those silver trays found underneath the bar. Add a few fancy napkins and a handful of candy mints."

I watched her face for approval as I followed her directions but her expression remained flat and firm.

"Now go upstairs, knock once quietly and wait. Don't barge in. Even a small distraction might jeopardize how much money our girl in the room makes. Got it?" I nodded. "It's not Candy Land on the second floor so remain calm, and don't get flustered with anything you see. Remember, we're not selling Girl Scout cookies up there."

Carrying a tray with a bottle and fancy cut glass goblets up a flight of stairs in high heels was a recipe for disaster. But I made it. I stood for a second, taking in the guest room hallway. Like a ritzy old hotel it had high ceilings, tall gold-framed mirrors, dusty blue satin striped wallpaper and carpeting in an old-fashioned pattern of large and small pink roses. Heavy wooden doors with a brass number on each kept the sounds of those inside private. I passed room number one, then two and stopped at room three. Uh oh. The door was open a few inches. I peeked in. The lighting was low

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due to the heavily draped floor to ceiling windows, but I could make out a bed with a naked girl on her hands and knees between a man's legs. Her long, dark hair fell down in front of her face, covering the obvious head she was giving. Not disturbing her rapid up and down movements, the man reached out and yanked up her hair to see the action.

Oh my God, it's Isa! Does Jerry know what she's doing?

Of course he knows. She's just a piece of meat to him like I was in the high school parking lot.

Should I knock? Or leave and return when they're done? As I turned to go, another naked man walked toward the bed from the bathroom.

Oh, man, she's doing two guys!

"This one's for you, sweetheart," Man Number Two said as he crawled onto the bed. Positioning himself behind her upturned ass, he entered her cunt with one punishing shove of his monster dick and began pounding. His balls slammed up against the back of her thighs in a loud rhythmic drumbeat. "How do you like that, baby?"

With Man Number One's shaft in her mouth, Isa gave out a muffled scream, then grunted with each determined push. I'd seen some porn flicks with Frank but this was different. This was real.

Real ugly.

But I was transfixed—and aroused. A wave of heat shot through my body. With one hand, I wedged the tray into the side of my waist as my other hand drifted down under my short French maid skirt and inside my black lace panties. As my two fingers rhythmically circled and stroked my throbbing clit, I

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watched the guy's in and out thrusts.

Oh, oh yeah, oh yeah. Faster, faster. Uh, uh, ah, ah, ahhh... I'm coming...

While trying to regain my balance, I fell sideways into the room. The whole tray—expensive wine, glasses and all—hit the floor with a gigantic *CRASH!*

Man Number One getting the blowjob and Isa stopped and stared. Man Number Two got the picture and pulled his huge dick out of her and walked toward me. “Hey, you’re going to pay for this wine,” he snarled, “unless—”

“Unless what?” Cold sweat slid down my back.

“Start by sucking my cock,” he said, stroking his erect sledgehammer, pushing it into my face, “and then you can see how her pussy tastes.”

Grossed out, I pulled back. “I’m just the bottle girl. I, I’ll get fired.”

“Okay then,” he hoisted me up from a fallen heap, “stand by me and look pretty while I finish fucking Jerry’s bitch. Maybe you’ll learn something.”

I exhaled sharply. “I, I can do that.”

As Man Number One pulled Isa’s head down and jammed his dick back into her mouth, she shot me a sideward glance. Our eyes locked. Tears were pooling up and sliding down her beautiful face, landing silently onto the rumpled blue satin sheets.

Man Number Two got back on the bed, spanking each of Isa’s ass cheeks again and again with his big cock. She whimpered and squirmed as he dug into the flesh on either side of her butt like handles, pulling her toward him and slamming himself into the slit between her legs. And until he came and slumped over her back, his eyes never left my face. Not once.