

4 BLUE TRUTH

At Mykonos's suggestion, I telephoned Lemuel, Paco, and Dimitri, inviting them to lunch. We all met at an outdoor café on the beach.

A busboy brought some appetizers, and Mykonos nodded toward the stage where a band was supposed to play later in the afternoon. From a door near the stage the waitress came and made her way toward our table. She was gorgeous. Her hips were wrapped in a purple sarong. Her breasts were held by a small yellow bikini top. Her athletic belly was golden-brown from hot hours in the sun. In the long braid of her blond hair were two bright hibiscus flowers, one yellow, one red.

"Yes," Mykonos said languidly, hissing the final "s" as he usually did when talking about women or God. "Yesss. She is beautiful, is she not?"

We all nodded, in our own way. Lemuel gave his usual slack-jawed, "Uh-huh." Dimitri—who told us he had gone home the previous night when he felt hurt by Michelle's affections toward Mykonos—was more interested in the fish tacos on his plate than

the waitress, though he looked up and exclaimed an enthusiastic, “Oh yeah!”

Paco, however, definitely seemed to be in some kind of mood. He stood up from our table, shaking his head and mumbling something to himself, and went to play some beach volleyball not far from where we were sitting.

I couldn’t keep my eyes off of the waitress. She seemed perfect. Absolutely beautiful. I wanted her.

“Breathe her in, my friend,” Mykonos said softly, “She is all around you.”

My attention snapped from the waitress as if from a dream. *She is all around you.* Mykonos had a way of waking me up.

“Mm-hmm. You like her, don’t you?” Mykonos asked me.

“Yes.”

“You want her.”

“Yes.”

“Look around. So does everybody else.”

I looked around. There were red-faced tourists talking about the scenery and chewing their food. Paco was playing volleyball with a group of young locals on the beach. A few couples sat at tables around us, holding hands, sipping their drinks from huge ice-filled glasses and speaking to each other in voices of quiet affection.

Nobody seemed to notice the waitress, who had stopped at the table right next to ours to take an order. She was in her early twenties, probably a college student or a surfer who was making

some extra money for the summer, waitressing at this beachside café and bar. Her skin was flawless and her nipples pressed their shape deep into my brain.

“Yesss,” Mykonos continued, as if speaking to himself, “Everybody wants her.”

Then the waitress came to our table. She was stunning. She was standing so close I could see the fine blonde hairs on her tummy. Her eyes were clear and blue, and her smile was truly happy, as if she was having the time of her life waiting tables. The slit of her sarong revealed lotion-glistening thighs all the way up to the yellow bikini bottom she wore under her silky wrap.

“Hello, my dear,” Mykonos said to the waitress, “We’ll have three pitchers of beer and some more fish tacos for Dimitri,” nodding toward our friend who looked up from his plate and smiled.

“Is that all?” asked the waitress.

“That’s it for now,” Mykonos answered.

As she walked away, I watched her until she disappeared through the door next to the stage.

“Poor Paco,” Mykonos said, gazing out toward the beach where the volleyball game was in progress. “He thinks he can play. Look at him. He thinks he’s really good.”

Paco was a lot better at volleyball than I was, and as far as I knew, he was a lot better than Mykonos, too.

“All puffed up, thinking he looks so good. One day, Paco is going to find his heart. And then ...” Mykonos trailed off, smiling as if he knew the punchline to a joke that was yet to come.

When a busboy brought our beer, Mykonos filled his glass and raised it. "To the Great One."

"To the Great One," we all joined in, raising our beer, and then drinking.

I kept looking for the waitress.

58

We drank beer, snacked a bit, and relaxed, as the afternoon grew long. Paco finally finished playing and returned to our table. Mykonos greeted him.

"You're a fine player, Paco."

"Yeah, I'm not bad. Used to be better. I used to play in college and ..."

"Would you like a beer, my friend," Mykonos interrupted.

"Sure," Paco answered, as Lemuel filled his glass.

"To the Great One," Paco toasted, raising his glass.

We all raised our glasses, and drank.

"We are all enjoying this fine day together, filled with love, and our friend here has his mind on a whoor," Mykonos said toward me with a raise of his eyebrow. He said the word "whoor" like it rhymed with "tour" whenever he was praising a woman for her radiance, her light, her open-heartedness. For Mykonos, "whoor" meant something very different than the common word "whore." A "whoor" was a vision of light, a goddess.

"Where is she now?" Mykonos asked me, looking directly into my eyes. His eyes were very dark, the deep black of an endless well.

"I don't know. Probably back in the kitchen, I guess."

“You can’t feel her now? Hmmm? Are you *bereft* of woman?” He emphasized the word “bereft” to tease me; it was the kind of word I would use, not he.

“No. I’m not *bereft* of women.”

“I said *woman*, not women.”

I looked into his eyes. He held my gaze without moving. Suddenly, everything stopped. It was as if we were in a movie, and everything froze motionless—the people, the birds, the ocean, all completely still—while Mykonos continued.

“Breathe her.”

I couldn’t tell if Mykonos said this out loud, or if I was remembering something he had said earlier. I noticed that I had stopped breathing. I began to breathe again. Still, nothing else moved. As I inhaled, a fragrance filled my body with tendrils of love, curling like paisleys deep in my heart. Mykonos held my gaze with his deep black eyes. The bliss of paisley was now almost too much to bear.

And everybody was laughing and talking suddenly, the birds flew and the ocean lapped up on the beach, as Mykonos broke his gaze and reached for his beer.

“Do you think she likes you?” he asked me.

“I don’t know.”

“She doesn’t even know you exist,” Mykonos said. “Lemuel, how long has your friend here been obsessed with women?”

“I never thought he was obsessed with women,” Lemuel answered.

“Oh, yes. He is obsessed with women, although he doesn’t like them.”

“He seems to like women to me.”

“Not exactly,” Mykonos said while pulling back his lips, exposing his crooked teeth. “Do you know what I’m talking about, Dimitri? No, you do not. Look at Dimitri eating. Look at how happy he is.”

Mykonos laughed and drank more beer. As usual, I tried to keep up with Mykonos, drinking whenever he did, gulp for gulp. I felt a little woozy. The air was still hot, though it was getting late.

The band climbed up on the stage and began playing. It was typical bar band music, generic and uninteresting.

“Yes! Right on!” Mykonos began shouting to the band.

I was still thinking about what Mykonos had said to Lemuel. What did he mean that I didn’t like women?

“C’mon men,” Mykonos said to us. “Let’s give the band some energy. They are here to serve us and bring us happiness. Show them you are into it.”

“But Mykonos, I’m not into it,” Paco said as he read the back of the menu.

“Paco, you’re not *into* anything. Have another beer, my friend.” Mykonos re-filled his glass.

Paco continued. “I mean it. I don’t want to fake it. This music sucks.”

Mykonos smiled wide and shook his head in mock disbelief.

He pushed his craggy face forward so his bent nose was inches from Paco’s. “This is God,” Mykonos said. He paused for a

moment, smiling into Paco's face, and then sat back, bursting out with laughter.

"Who the hell am I hanging out with? A mutant, a reject from Shaker Heights, a dolphin, and the Lord of Darkness himself! You guys are unbelievable! This is it! Right now! This is the Divine Vision! It doesn't get more divine than this!"

61

Mykonos raised his glass high. This time, he didn't say a toast. He touched the air with his beer glass, toasting silently with an unseen guest.

"I don't know. Maybe it's time to go home." Mykonos wondered out loud.

Dimitri chimed in. "We can give the band energy. Alright!" he shouted to the band. "Alright! We love you!"

I cringed. I couldn't believe how naïve and gullible Dimitri seemed.

"Yes!" Mykonos yelled right along with Dimitri. "We're with you!"

The band looked up directly at our table. They smiled and nodded. Mykonos lifted his beer to them, and smiled. "Good job Dimitri."

Paco continued to sulk. He hunched his shoulders and pressed his lips together.

"What's wrong, Paco? You can play volleyball with great energy, but you can't give love to the band?" Mykonos asked.

"But I don't love them. I don't even know them!"

"Ahh. Paco." Mykonos pulled back his lips again and hissed.

“Yesss. You don’t know them. You can only love. That’s all you can *ever* do, Paco. The band is always playing, whether you like them or not. Do you know what I mean? The lady is always showing herself to you, whether you like her or not”—I knew Mykonos was talking to me now—“and all you can do is love. Even if the band doesn’t know who you are. Even if the lady doesn’t care.

“She’s a beautiful whoor, is she not?” Mykonos asked, looking directly into my eyes. I began to feel like I was sinking, being pressed down at my heart into a hole with no bottom, spinning a little, and suddenly the waitress was at our table, refilling our water glasses. She must have come up from behind me.

“Are you having a good day?” Mykonos asked the waitress.

“Yes. It’s a little busy. But I like it that way.”

“My friend here finds you beautiful,” Mykonos said, nodding toward me. I couldn’t believe Mykonos had said that.

“Thank you,” the waitress said, without a hint of shyness. I thought she must receive compliments all the time.

“It’s a beautiful day, isn’t it?” Mykonos asked her.

“Really beautiful. I love clear, sunny days.”

“You can feel the sunshine in your heart, can’t you?”

She stopped filling our glasses and looked at Mykonos for the first time.

“Yes. I guess I can.”

“Your heart is very bright, my dear.” Mykonos continued, his deep black eyes looking into hers.

She smiled and held gaze with Mykonos. Nobody said a word. Finally, she looked down, swallowed, looked up again at Mykonos, breathed deeply, nodded, and walked off.

“A truly fine whoor, that one.”

Everyone lifted their glasses and drank with Mykonos, except Paco.

“Do you have a problem, Paco?” Mykonos asked.

“No.”

“Does he have a problem?” Mykonos asked, turning to me.

“Paco doesn’t like to be happy.”

“That’s not true,” Paco quickly responded, leaning forward and crinkling his forehead. “I just don’t like to lie.”

“You think we are lying, is that it, Paco?” Mykonos asked.

“Well, sort of. I mean, you don’t even know that waitress, but you treat her like a princess. The band sucks, but you pretend that it’s good. Last night, you treated Adrienne like an old friend, but you had never even met her before! I just don’t feel like faking it.”

“Paco, Paco, Paco,” Mykonos said through his teeth. “Why the hell are you alive?”

“I don’t know. Maybe I shouldn’t be.”

“Paco, I think Mykonos is asking why *anyone* is alive,” Lemuel suggested.

“Yesss. What does ‘alive’ mean?”

“I don’t know.” Paco said, with a shrug.

“Well, what does being alive *feel* like?” Mykonos asked.

“Right now, pretty bad. I feel like you guys are attacking me.”

“Paco, look at these strange friends of yours here. They love you. You know it.”

“Yeah. I guess so. I just don’t want to pretend I’m happy if I’m not. I don’t want to pretend that I like the band if I don’t.”

“Why not?” Mykonos asked as he drank his beer.

“Because I want to be authentic.”

Mykonos laughed so suddenly that he spewed beer over Lemuel. Lemuel took off his spotted glasses and wiped them clean with a napkin, smiling.

“Paco,” Mykonos continued, “look around you.”

Paco straightened his spine and looked around. “Yeah?”

“What do you see?”

“The ocean, the sky, the sand, a bunch of people.”

“And what are they doing?”

“I don’t know. Whatever they are doing.”

“Exactly.” Mykonos sat back and swallowed another gulp of cold beer. His gaze was now directed over the ocean, as if he were looking at something far, far away, perhaps just over the horizon. “Volleyball. Women. Fish tacos. You’ve got to feel her right now, all around you like the colors of a flame, touching you always. Do you know what I mean? You’ve got to love her, breathe her, feel the truth of her, until she dies. What else are you going to do?”

“That might work for you, but not for me,” Paco announced sitting back in his chair.

Mykonos paused and breathed deeply. He put his hand on Paco's thigh and spoke lovingly, "You are not alive for yourself, my friend. You are not here to play volleyball and withhold your love—from us or from Erin—because you don't feel it. You are *alive* as love. This whole place is lit up as love. If you can't feel it, don't punish others for your inability to feel. Loosen up, my friend. Feel the mystery of you and this whole place, breathe the mystery—and then you tell me if this place is other than love. Hmmm? Maybe *you* are living a lie, Paco, not me. Love is the truth—of you and all these other monkeys."

"But I don't *feel* love," Paco said, almost pleading.

"Ahh, yesss." Mykonos sat still for a few minutes, looking far off toward the horizon. Suddenly he smiled hugely, and started to speak with moist eyes. "Have you ever looked closely at a flame, Paco? The reds and yellows are easy to see, but deep in the center of the flame is blue. You can easily avoid the blue, miss it altogether if you just look at the surface colors. But always blue is here, deeper than where your vision stops. Even now, blue." Quietly, Mykonos made a sound I could barely hear, and then sat in silence, still gazing far away.

After a few moments, Mykonos pointed. "Look into the sky. Look deeply. Blue. Look into the ocean. The deeper the water, the bluer it gets. Blue is the color of deep. And beyond everything you can see, deeper than all the things you like or don't like, there is a place where everything is blue, so blue, like water that does not end ..." Mykonos stopped himself and smiled.

“I still don’t see why I should try to give people love if I don’t feel love,” said Paco.

“Because, my dear friend, you *are* love. But you are trapped in the colors that possess your eyes and curl around your heart. Feel deeper than your sulk, feel deeper than what you can see, feel into the blue. The waitress, fish tacos, volleyball—everything you can see and know is more shallow than the blue truth.”

“And just what is the blue truth, Mykonos?” asked Paco.

“For you, Paco? What is the true blue truth? Whatever sets your heart free. Whatever allows you to feel deeper than things seem. If you want to curl up and pout, Paco, nobody can stop you. But it hurts you and everyone to do so, because it’s a lie, and deep down, you know it.”

Mykonos turned again to the band. “Yes!” he shouted as the lead singer hit a high note, “Yes! Right on!”

The lead singer looked at Mykonos and smiled. The band began to play with more life. The whole place seemed to come alive, to get brighter.

“Can you feel her now?” Mykonos suddenly turned and asked while gazing deep into my eyes. “Can you feel her alive as everything, or do you still only feel her when she fills your damn glass—or sucks your dick?” he asked me.

“I feel her, Mykonos.”

“Yesss. When you are ready, when you embrace her for the sake of the truth of her, you’ll know who she really is. Now you only see the tip of her flame, pulling you in and burning you up in all

this surface loving, in all these bodies and eating and sexing. She's fantastic! My friends, if you could see her surrendered over, *totally* taken by the Great One where no appearance burns at all, where it is cooler even than blue ...”

Mykonos smiled and showed his teeth. He reached for his beer, looked at each of us, and laughed. “Perhaps, for now, the blue truth is enough. Hmmm?”