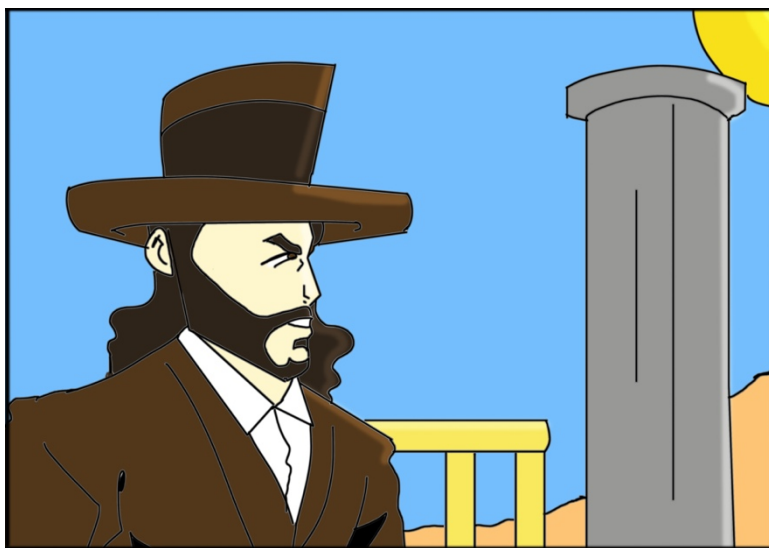


Chapter 2

“Love Always Wins”

The joyless exercise to bring back the statue from Greece proved to be more difficult than expected.

Charlie’s friends and cousins had got them off the Island of Crete and over to Santorini. The Professor loved it there and found it an exotic adventure that left space for the unexpected.



They had found The Lady with Blue Light in Her Eyes in Lato and then, were chased all the way to Crete. He hoped they’d left the gangsters behind and would get lost somewhere in Santorini, at least for a little while.

The water was the bluest he'd ever seen, and the beaches of each island were different in texture and color, ranging from black, to white, to pink. This was just the world that they were in right now. Life has a way of surprising you.

The kid had barely made it out alive when the princess had awoken from her slumber nearly cutting him in pieces. She was such a powerful current! Since then, they'd broken up and made up at least a half dozen times. Sarantos wondered where they were as he looked down at his watch. The two of them were to meet him on his balcony for breakfast. The view was breathtaking, like staring into the eyes of heaven.

The Professor hoped the kid kept The Lady safe. The research he'd done over the years to find that sculptured masterpiece of an unknown artisan almost drove him mad.

He remembered when he first found her. The wind whispered her story into his ears. Though sad and lost, she seemed glad to see him. She didn't even act surprised. She was slender and naked, but the thing that made her rare were the light blue eyes. They were a mesmerizing fusion of the still deep blue ocean and the white sky that scatters in all directions as it fades to white as you get closer to the horizon. Her clay laid devoid of color unless you got to the blue eyes that glowed as though a lifelike light of energy pulsed behind them. This loaded treasure had every archaeologist around the world mystified and trapped in awe. No one could deny The Lady.

She was his, and he needed to get back to the States to officially claim her as his own.

Before meeting her, his life was mostly black and white. But now, a candied color came into full view, all because of her. Everybody used the same God, quoted the same Bible, but the color she brought into his world was indescribable.

For years, he'd begged the world to love him for being himself, for his ability to locate and bring back to exhibit some of the most ancient and unusual artifacts. The world refused.

The Lady would change the narrative. There would no longer be love without the pain or rain that followed him everywhere he travelled. Now that he met her, love would never be the same.

Charlie came into view first, waltzing through the door like a goddess. She belonged in Greece, after all, they were in the land of goddesses; it fit her well.



She waved, and the kid followed. Some relationships need to be excavated.

Gorilla was a handsome lad, but Charlie was classy and cool at the same time. She always has something to say. She always had an audience willing to listen. As a couple, they had it harder than most because they were very different. They would have to hold on hard and work together to never let go of their love. He hoped it would work out for them, with the Baby Ruth monster child.

With that thought, he wasn't able to control his laughter.

“Doc, what’s so funny?”

“Nothing, kid. Sit down for some coffee, eggs freshly squeezed orange juice and the view and savor a treat for the palate and the eyes. You still have The Lady?”

“Doc, you’re worried about nothing. Of course, she’s safe.” He rolled his eyes as he grabbed a Spanakopita and took a big bite. “Delicious!”

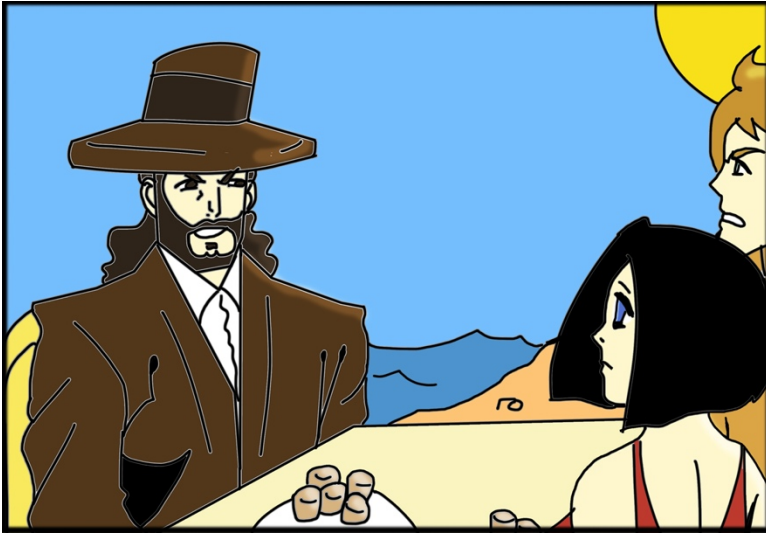
“Did you roll your eyes at me?”

“Yep. Tasty food, Doc.”

“Yes, but please never roll your eyes at me again. Got it kid?”

“Yeah, Doc.”

Charlie sighed. “It’s too early boys, please keep your testosterone in check. Hmmm, taste that fresh Greek yogurt with raw honey, fruit, and nuts. Sublime.”



The Professor sat back and looked around at the elegantly set breakfast, with virgin white linens and the blue sea background sparkling in the yawning morning sun that was perfectly viewed from their hillside position. Reality leaves nothing for the imagination.

“I might stay here forever.”

The kid almost spat out his food. “What? Quit being a bluenose, Doc. You balled up this day, that’s for sure.”

“Okay, kid. I’m not trying to be a bluenose. After we return to the States and I turn over The Lady, I might just return here to relax, find a place, and at least stay for a while.” He stared out at the sea. His mind was used to racing, so it raced.

“I would love to have another home here. Yes, that would work for me splendidly.”

“Professor, I think that’s marvelous! Life’s better in the sun and we all know we’re going to be here with you, holding on together and never letting go when we indulge ourselves in a fantastically simple life full of love and generosity from the natives. We’d come visit and probably never leave!”

He chuckled. “You’d both be more than welcome, Charlie. In fact, you’ve made me want to purchase a place before we leave. I could hire a housekeeper here or bring mine with me when I visit. Either way, I love the idea.”

“That idea’s all wet, Doc. By the way, not to intrude on your fantasy, but we’re being hunted.”

“I’m aware, kid.”

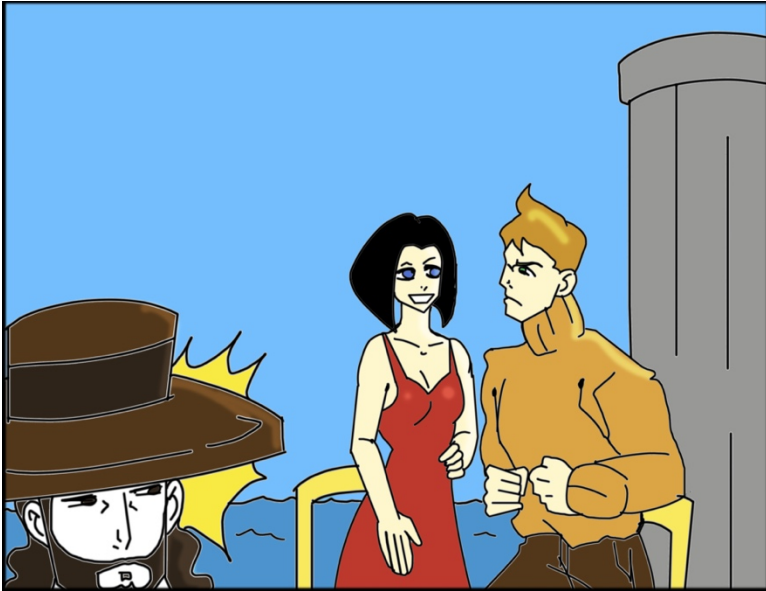
“What are those, Doc?”

“Spanakopita, and I have to say I’ve eaten about a dozen of those tiny pastry egg dishes.”

The kid grabbed a couple and popped them into his mouth, one right after the other, hardly chewing.

“Kid, you miss the enjoyment of food when you inhale it without chewing. Slow down and breathe in the world, kid.”

“I do, Doc.”



Charlie laughed. “Like hell you do.” You don’t have to attend every argument you’re invited to.

“What?” The kid’s face dropped to his chin. He glared at her over scraggly hair that hung down, covering half his eyes.

“Sorry, Gorilla, but it’s something you need to work on, darling, that’s all.”

“Oh, is it? Well, I’ll get on that right away.” The kid smiled sarcastically and picked up another spanakopita, taking a tiny bite then chewing for at least four minutes. It was impossible any remnants could’ve been left in his mouth. Next, he repeated the steps until twenty minutes later when he finally finished consuming the one small spanakopita.

Sarantos and Charlie just watched and ate their breakfast like they were in the theatre enjoying the movie.

Charlie curled her lower lip, something he hadn’t seen her do in a while.

“That’s not really a dingus, Gorilla. Chewing a hundred times on one tiny bite of food.”

“Oh, I differ with you on that, my fair maiden. I enjoyed each fleeting flavor that hammered away at every tiny taste bud in my mouth. Now, I can say I’m officially enlightened, or fancy, or posh, or clever. Whatever you Brits might call it.”

Something shifted in the air.

“Baloney! You’re a goof!” Her eyes narrowed and threw harpoons toward his head. Oh, yeah, she wanted to penetrate his skull with said weapons.



Sarantos interjected, “Charlie, you’re a little sadistic. Can’t you two ever get along and realize love always wins, not hate?”

She pivoted her wrath towards him. It is sad how quickly the script has flipped.

“Really, Professor, breakfast was your great idea.” Her voice purred like a sweet baby kitten but held the undertones of a lioness.

Sarantos grabbed his head. “Ouch, that hurt. Quit with the darts, daggers, and spears. It could eventually cause my head and the kid’s head to explode. It’s painful. Oh, I know love without pain is no love, but we’re trying to have a good time here. You are most definitely kind of killing our vibe here.”

Her pupils grew smaller, but her mouth slowly turned up and into a grin. “Okay, Professor. Fair enough. Let’s call it a draw.”

“Yeah, Charlie. I understand now why I have headaches all the time now. You minx, always sending me pain via those dangerous eyes. I think you’re a spy working for the government...”

“You are the cat’s meow, sometimes, Gorilla.”

“I know, and that’s what scares me. Your cat’s meow is more like a hiss, scratch, and bite.”

The three of them roared with laughter until their sides hurt. The struggle is difficult, but it doesn’t mean you’re living wrong.

“Well, kids, it’s been fun, but I need to find a place to live when I come back to Greece, so tally ho.”

Gorilla and Charlie swallowed their hate and sat there cooing back and forth. The Professor walked away pretending he was gagging and vomiting in their direction.

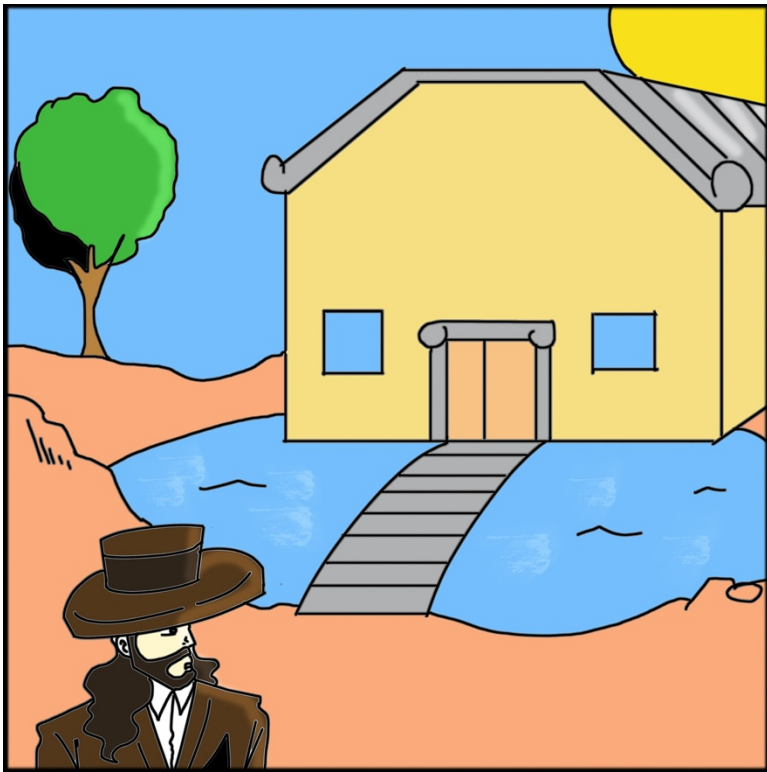
Charlie laughed. Her eyes had a purity and a street poetry to them.

It was almost 11pm. It didn’t matter. The Professor banged on the kid’s room.

He’d found and purchased the perfect villa for a song and dance. It had a clean white brick exterior with a tasteful terrace and a quaint pool that overlooked the sea on a cliff-side of flowers and charm. It was not a huge place, but they

built it around the outside enjoyment of the surrounding area. Three bedrooms, a private dining area, devoted kitchen, and dutiful bathroom. He planned on using the extra bedroom as a study.

The pool wrapped around part of the house and offered a bridge to enter the home. So medieval, yet modern in its approach, to satisfy the homeowner with a luxurious feel.



He banged again.

“Coming.”

“Kid, it’s me.”

Gorilla opened the door with some hesitation. Looked like the love nest was alive and active. No matter.

“Kid, you two want to join me for the night in my new villa?”

“What? You actually did it, Doc?”

“Sure did.” He flashed the aged bronze keys in his face.

The kid jumped up and down. “Charlie, the Doc did it, he really did. Bought a love nest, let’s check out of his place!”

The two of them haphazardly packed up their belongings but the kid held up The Lady to show The Professor he wasn’t forgetting it.

Charlie said, “I’m so excited, I can’t wait to see it! Hurry Gorilla.”

“I’m going down to check us all out. Meet you two lovebirds out front.”

Gorilla loved the new hotel they’d found after staying one night at the bar hotel. He deserved the best and intended on having it.

As the Professor walked into the lobby, the woman seemed annoyed she had to work at that late of an hour to check out guests. Her bosom heaved up and down in agitation, much to the Professor’s delight. He couldn’t shake his eyes from the large, partially exposed breasts as they moved. He leaned in closer. Was that a nipple that popped out on the heave?



Her dark eyes softened. “You see something you like?”

For a moment he stuttered, and then composed himself. “No, sorry.”

Her gaze cut into his chest.

“I mean yes, but sorry.”

She leaned forward and her dark curly hair fell over her cleavage as if on cue. “I’ve seen you around here. My name’s Cookie.”

“Nice to meet you, Cookie. I’m Professor Sarantos.”

“Oh, nice a Professor. You’re from the States?”

“Yes, I am, but I just bought a villa here, so I can come back to visit more often.”

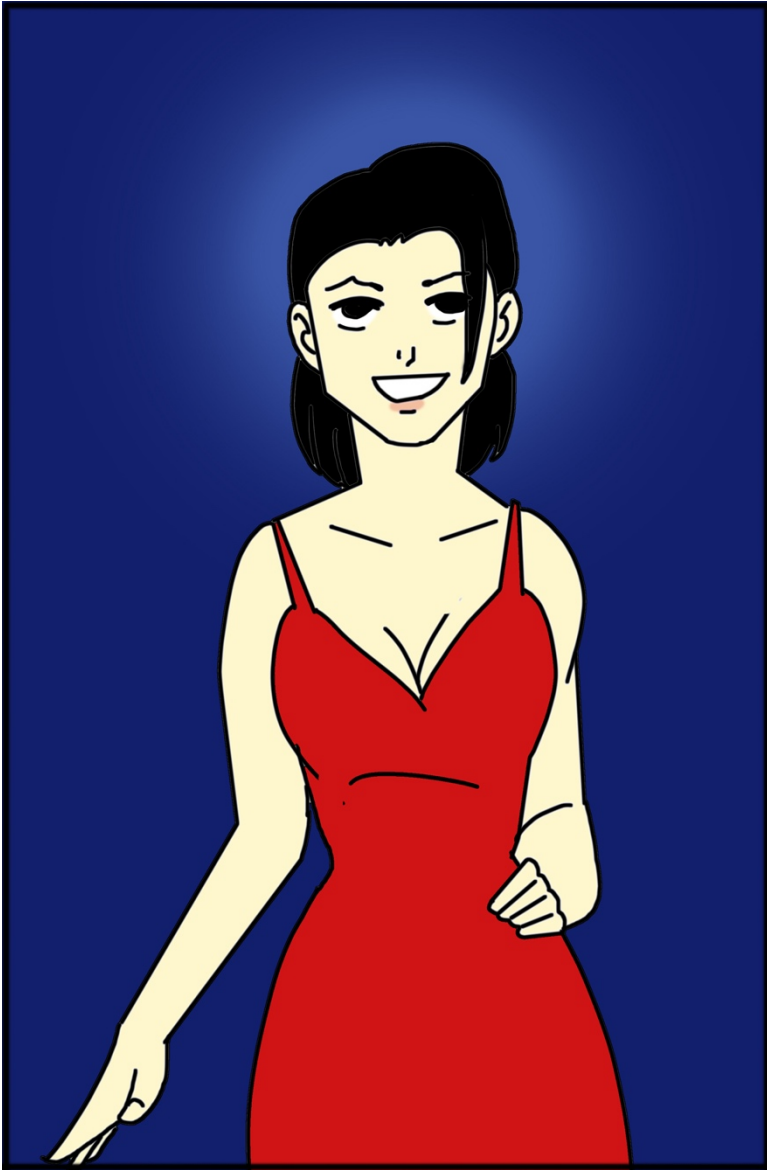
“I’m waiting for my replacement. She’ll be here in 10 minutes and then I’m off for the night. Are you having a party?”

He frowned, again being surprised. He hadn’t thought about that, but this woman was full of charm and other womanly attributes. “Yes, I think I’m now having a private party to celebrate. Do you know anyone who would like to come over? I’m curious to learn more about Greek culture and the Greek lifestyle.”

She dropped her eyes. “Am I invited to this private party tonight?”

“Yes, Cookie, I think you are.”

“I should be off in a few minutes; can you wait for me?”



“You bet. I’ll wait right outside.”

Her sweet smile sent chills down his spine and straight into his manly regions. Nice teeth, great full lips with the perfect amount of lipstick that made him want to nibble on them before moving to other regions.

If you stay on the path, you're likely to find it. Sarantos sat down in a wooden chair in the lobby when the kid and Charlie joined him.

“Let's go, Doc.”

“Well, we're waiting for Cookie.”

“Cookie?”

“Yeah kid,” he said and nudged his head in the lobby's direction at front desk.

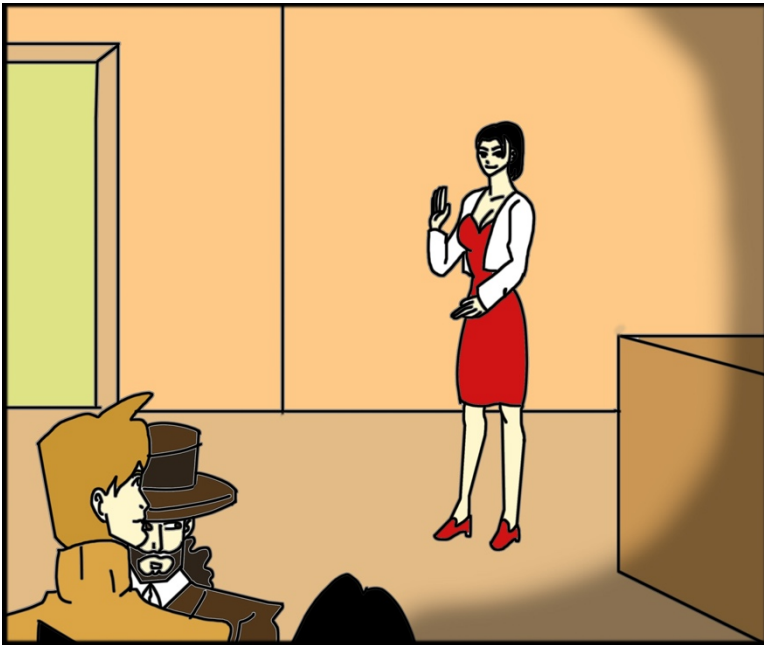
“Oh, that Cookie.” The kid's eyebrows lifted, and he nodded approval. “Oh, she's quite the sweetheart. Excellent work, Doc.”

“Yeah, I thought so too.”

“Okay, you two cake eaters, or if you prefer male bimbos, at ease. You’re in the presence of a classy lady.”

“Sure, whatever you say, doll face.” Gorilla was trying to play it cool. The kid sure had a way with words when he wanted to.

Charlie giggled and nestled against his chest.



A female counterpart went behind the counter and relieved Cookie. Much to Sarantos delight, she sauntered out from behind the counter. Her body swayed with a sexy hip motion and she aimed her Betty Grable legs straight at him.

His eyes felt like an ancient Greek God blessed them on this trip. She wore a tight skirt and even tighter sweater, and her dark black hair shone like a raven. When did she have time to change?

She approached him and swung her arm into his as he stood up to greet her. Of course, the kid winked.

“Hey, doll, anyone ever tell you how beautiful you are?” The Professor couldn’t believe what came out of his mouth. He wasn’t in control of his actions. His horny body controlled the entire experience.

Cookie smiled and tilted her head with the seduction of a good-hearted goddess. It was the isle of goddesses. “Yes, Professor, they have, once or twice.”

Lucky for him, he purchased the house fully furnished. They might need a bed tonight, but if she declined, and the wave destroyed his magical sandcastle tonight, he wouldn’t cry. Instead, he’d pick up his shovel and make sure he started over again, pursuing love... because he knew love always won.

They started walking. His heart raced. He was nervous. She made him feel like he was walking into a spider web. She then put his hand on her waist as they strolled down the

romantic streets of Santorini, heading to his newly purchased villa where he intended to reach further up into the night sky and never let go of Cookie, at least for tonight. Together, they'd find a rainbow.

She smelled of the ocean and leaned her breasts up against his chest and whispered in his ear. "Professor, I think I could love you all night long. Cause love always wins, right?"

Sarantos smiled.

