

## DEATH AT THE BLUE MOON

"Irene just loved boutiques, she spent most of her time shopping. So one Saturday Phil was driving her around town, while she looked for a 'special' something. They'd already been to Wanda's, Flora, and Peaches and Cream, spent \$500, and Phil was silently going crazy, when they pulled up in front of the turquoise colored shop downtown.

Phil was happy because Irene was happy, you know he just doted on her, and . . . what? Why am I telling you this? Well, because this is how it all started--and I'm a friend of Phil's and don't want to see him hurt anymore; yes, a good friend of Phil's, in fact, his best friend. You could say that I really love him, but of course he doesn't realize that. And if you keep interrupting, you won't get to hear the whole story. Just the way Phil told it to me.

Anyway, so there they were, walking into the Blue Moon. I guess Phil was still trying to impress Irene, you know he never stopped trying. He was self-conscious about his looks, I don't know why, he's as handsome a man as I've ever seen . . . well, he's blond, about medium height, and has a terrific smile--not a movie star, of course, but certainly handsome enough for her; and he gave her more than she's ever had, materially, that is.

He used to work his ass off for her at the radio station, and I used to talk to him late into the night, on the phone, from my apartment in the City, when he said that he'd do anything for her. He wanted to make her so happy. But that's part of the problem, he's so passionate--he's a Scorpio. Yes . . . Yes!

I guess he created everything that happened, because he wanted so much out of life. He used to tell Irene that she could go out with other men if she wanted, as long as she was open about it. But he wasn't really a swinger. I know. I think he said things like that just so Irene would think that he was contemporary.

What? OK, back on the track. So they walked into the boutique, and here's this tall, dark, handsome, curly-haired man behind the counter. Right, a man. Yes, Martino. And he's staring at Irene, and she's staring back. I guess Phil figured he'd be "contemporary," and let whatever was going to happen, just happen. Irene started trying on dresses, and Martino actually opened the dressing room door to hand them to her. And he made small talk to Phil at the same time.

Well, Irene finally bought this stunning blue dress, everything in the shop is blue, and in the process of writing up the purchase, Martino asks Irene, and Phil, if they'd like to come up to his house in Sausalito that evening and party with him and his roommate. It's a beautiful house I hear, with a hot tub and pool and everything, and it's the roommate, Victoria, who owns it. She owned everything.

So--Martino was so pleasant, and crafty, and he'd really caught Irene's eye by then, and Irene said 'sure,' and Phil like a fool went along with it.

Then Phil and Irene go home to Phil's beautiful home in the redwoods, and they dress up for what they both think is going to be a *sensational* evening, and Phil takes Irene to dinner at 'Ondines' first.

And there's one thing that Martino wouldn't have been able to do for Irene. Why, Phil used to take her to dinner two or three times a week, nothing but classy places. But this Martino, this rat, he couldn't afford to buy her a cheese sandwich at Perry's. He just pretended. He had everyone duped but me. I mean, I could tell from Phil's description of him what he was all about. I'm glad he finally got it the way he did!

Where was I? Oh yes, they drove up to this beautiful house in the hills in Sausalito, Victoria's house, and Martino was the perfect host. They had caviar and wine, Victoria sets a beautiful table, and then they really started partying, and they ended up in the hot tub. Stoned, I mean stoned out of their minds. Yes, they had some lines, and some blotto sinsemilla, and who knows what else. And Martino tells them he's Russian. I think, however--no, I never met the man--but as he was described to me, I think that he looked like he was Greek, or Persian, maybe.

When you're that handsome, however, it doesn't matter where you're from.

They partied for several hours, and all this time Martino was acting so generous with 'his' house, and food, etcetera, although like everything else, it must have been Victoria's, and Martino was really planning to stick it to Phil in the end. That's when Phil made his second mistake. Victoria's very pretty, and Phil finally noticed it. So they're just heavily flirting, just 'grokking' each other, as Phil would say, and suddenly Irene and Martino have vanished.

'Phil was thunderstruck--he and Victoria just stayed in the hot tub for hours it seemed . . . no, they didn't do anything. Phil is not that type--he just likes to think he is. Finally Martino and Irene show up, and they don't say anything, and they get back into the tub, just when it's time for Phil and Victoria to get out because they look like lobsters.

I know what I would have done in that situation. In fact, it never would have gone that far with me. I would have had Irene away from that bastard in an instant, and taught him a lesson, really taught him a lesson.

But Phil didn't, he's just too polite. And that's why it's so utterly silly to think that Phil could've hurt Martino. There's not a mean bone in Phil's body, even when another man's seducing his woman in front of his very eyes.

So Phil finally realizes the trouble he's in, too late of course, and he graciously tells Martino and Victoria what a wonderful time they've both had, and grabs his lady . . . you know she didn't want to go . . . and they leave, better late than never. I guess you've heard what happened after that.

Yes, the next day it starts. Phil returns home and finds Irene out. She used to make such a big deal about having dinner ready for him when she first moved in. And Phil figures out where she is, even though when she gets in later, she tells him she was shopping--with his money, I can't believe it! And they ride around on this merry-go-round for several weeks until he finally gets mad, and goes down to the Blue Moon to talk to the creep. But he wasn't there, and that's when Phil called me.

And that's when I said that I'd take care of it for him. Actually, I was going to talk to Martino myself, but I was out drinking that night, and didn't make it. Right, the night he died.

You know, one of the tragedies of this whole affair is that it didn't end quickly. But Irene didn't want to move, she had things so sweet at Phil's, and she realized that, for all his talk, Martino couldn't take care of her in the style in which she had become accustomed. She also knew the asshole wasn't going to leave Victoria for the same reason. So it became this terrible affair and all these lies, which just devastated Phil. Something had to be done, and I helped him in ways that he'll never know. I just wish Phil realized how strongly I feel about him, but he's living with Victoria already--yes! C'est la vie.

You know the rest. Monday morning the owner of the Blue Moon opens up the shop and finds Martino slumped over the counter, dressed in a blue negligee. And it takes several days for the police to find out that Phil has an airtight alibi. I hope it's over now.

Me? Like I said, I was going to talk to Martino that night but I never made it. I suppose someone else did, though. No, I can't tell you exactly where I was, although I must have gone to several bars, because I got drunker than I ever have.

But I can tell you where I was the next morning--safe in bed, sleeping off the best hangover of my life!"

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