

Excerpt from *Provocateur* by Charles D. Martin

AUTHOR WEBSITE: <http://www.provocatuerbook.com>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Provocateur-Book/276885762381629>

TWITTER: @ProvocateurBook

Chapter 1 Prelude

Gladys and Henry had just finished an elegant dinner at the exclusive, very expensive Andrea's Restaurant at the Pelican Hill Resort, just south of Newport Beach in California. Gladys needed to visit the ladies' room before the couple would begin their drive back to their home in Anaheim Hills. Knowing that it was likely to take her some time, Henry seated himself in the bar to await her return.

He noticed a very attractive young woman seated at the bar with an older well-dressed woman, perhaps her mother. She noticed him looking at her and rose from her seat, approaching him. She sat down next to him and asked,

"May I join you?"

He responded, "Of course, but I am only here for a few minutes. I'm waiting on my wife."

"Is that your mother or a friend that you are with?" Henry asked.

"She is a business associate...actually my boss," the young woman replied. "But she is busy on her cell phone, so I thought that I would come over and visit with you."

Henry was flattered. "Well, that is nice."

Henry, a moderately affluent man in his sixties, was flattered to be approached by her and for her to engage him in conversation.

It had been a long time since a young woman had “hit on him.” He was surprised with the young woman’s forwardness but was delighted with it. She turned toward him and crossed her legs. She was wearing a short dress, and the sight of her beautiful legs was tantalizing him. It was a pleasure that took him back to his bachelor days thirty years earlier.

However, in the back of his mind there was a fear that Gladys would return and be angry, finding him with this young woman giving him adoring attention.

The woman spoke to him in a foreign accent that he thought might be Russian.

“I notice your watch is a Patek Philippe. You must be a connoisseur of fine things,” the young woman said admiringly. “You must be a very successful man.”

Her leg came in contact with his. She grasped his hand and held it up to admire the watch. The warmth of her young hand touching him caused Henry to feel a hormone rush.

Henry was a successful man by most standards. After graduating from college he was hired by a large conglomerate company.

It was a good job. Over the years he gradually was promoted to increasingly more responsible positions in the company. It provided a good living, and he was able to put two children through college. They both had good jobs themselves and were raising their own families. He could feel good about that.

Henry was now recently retired and often reflected back on his life. He had always been reluctant to make changes. He had career opportunities from time to time that could have led him to higher success. But, in each case, it would have involved some risk, a risk

that he did not want to take. So he had only worked for the same, big secure company all his life.

He also thought about his marriage to Gladys. He had married her young, just after his graduation from college. Getting married at that time was her idea. He did not enter the relationship with enthusiasm, but Gladys was a strong minded woman, and he acquiesced.

Gladys was of German extraction. She had grown to be a fairly stout woman and was quite domineering in her manner. Henry was actually somewhat fearful of her but didn't know why. He never was happy in the marriage, but, like with his job, he was reluctant to make a change.

Now life had passed him by. In his late sixties, he had put on some weight, and his hairline had receded considerably. Often he daydreamed about being with a young woman who adored him, one that was not constantly critical of him as Gladys was.

He thought back on his life and the many opportunities that he had passed up in his business life and with women. Why had he always been willing to just go along with what came to him? Why had he never been willing to take any chances...why had he never taken "the road less travelled?"

He was now enjoying the experience at Pelican Hill with the young woman, even though he knew her interest in him could not be genuine.

At that moment, he was jolted out of his sublime state of pleasure by Gladys, who returning from the restroom, found him in this compromising situation.

"Henry!!!" She exclaimed in a loud voice of disapproval that he knew all too well.

The young woman jumped off her chair and disappeared. Henry was lectured all the way home about how embarrassing it was for her and “What was a married man of his age doing with this young girl?” Henry heard little of his wife’s ranting and raving. All he could think about was the sight of the girl’s crossed legs in front of him. When they arrived home and he was undressing to retire for the evening, he noticed that his Patek Philippe watch was gone. He had been poached on by the young woman, and Gladys was sure to notice that the watch had been stolen. He was deflated...and in for more grief from his wife, but as he lay in bed that night, all he could think about, fanaticize about, was the memory of the warm touch of the young woman back at Pelican Hill.

The young woman was indeed Russian. Her name was Nadia. The episode at Pelican Hill was simply a training exercise. She was being groomed for bigger things. The older woman with her was Olga, her guardian and mentor...the Grande Dame of what she had come to know as *the agency*. Nadia’s journey had not been an easy one, but interesting passages lay ahead.