

4. ON MY OWN

After staying with Ian for a few days, I set myself up in a motel. It all seems pretty unsavory. The other tenants are all up to no good. I'm naturally suspicious. This is cheap and temporary. I go in my room and close the door. I inhabit the artificial world of air-conditioning. This is a step down from the luxury living with my brother. I am managing.

One night I'm relaxing on the bed after a hard day at work. I can hear all kind of noise outside my door. Then there's some shooting and sirens. My neighbor has to turn down his damn TV. He's blaring some cop show. I go out to tell him, and it turns out that there's been a shooting in the parking lot. A police cruiser is there with his flashers on. This is not something that I want to see. I go back to my room and hide beneath the covers.

I am still working at the country club. Ian and I are making plans. And Brenda's pool is starting to look very clean.

"You can use that tongue for more than wagging it at me all day."

"Brenda, are you telling me that you have a little snack ready for me?"

"You're going to have to make it if you want to eat it." Her lips pucker up. The belt of her short robe trails behind her. Her shapely legs glide along the deck. She is wearing mules with a leopard print.

It may sound as if Brenda is taking advantage of me. Or I might be overstaying my welcome. But she is paying me well. And I do provide great pool service. Brenda's pool has never looked better. Even her husband is impressed by my work.

"Rocky's told some of his clients."

I tell her about my idea to branch out on my own.

"That's fantastic. Just don't forget your prime customer." She says that with a sparkle in her eye.

Brenda agrees to help me with contacts. Rocky gets in the act as well. Rocky takes a liking to me. He is a real go-getter. I can tell if he know what is actually happening. Maybe he tolerates his wife's indiscretions. He encourages her satisfaction.

I work with Ian to do some advertising. We also know some people at the club. This adds to our client base. I'm still have to work there part-time until our business is rolling. But both Ian and I are making it happen working. Ian will drop me off and get me started. Then he goes to the next job. He comes back when I give him a call.

All my patrons are gracious. They have to be. I am coming into their homes. The more that I work, the more efficient I become. This adds our reputation. Many of the houses are already equipped with everything that I need. I might bring a few brushes. We supplement the chemicals.

I am not expected to supply any extra care in most cases. Everything is fairly straightforward. I am prepared to do what I have to do. If I have to show them all my skills, I want to keep my customers. So I know how to care. I think that they appreciate that. If I didn't provide the best service, they could easily get someone else. But our business is in demand. Once you have a skill, you have to make it known. Then people just come rushing for you.

Brenda has been very conscientious in spreading the word. She uses her discretion. But when she has to put in the good work, she doesn't hesitate. She tells her friends that I am willing

to work long hours just to get thing right. Some places have been so neglected that they surely need that extra care.

Ian and I decide to really let loose.

We are sitting in a corner booth of our favorite bar. It a fairly hip place with none of the pretensions of the places where Ramon hangs out.

“This Brenda thing is getting a little out of hand.

“Not really. I’m keeping it in perspective. I only see her a few days a week.”

“It must be strange now that you know Rocky.”

“That is a little weird. I just don’t want to see him mad. He could kill with his bare hands.” I think that he probably could get a job doing that sort of thing with my brother, but I can’t tell Ian that.

Ian warns me, “But you’re having fun with his wife in his house. It’s going to blow up one day. He can’t be that dumb.”

“He works a lot. I feel like I’m performing a service. I’m making his wife happy.”

“I bet if he found out, he’d find your logic pretty funky.”

“I’m just acting as if he already knows.

I look over at a table near our booth. A girl is staring at me. I look back at her, and she looks away. I call the waitress over.

“Don’t look to me left. But I want to buy a drink for that girl in the hot pink shirt over there. The one with the dark black hair.”

The waitress asks, “What should I get her?”

“Get her a gin and tonic. That sounds universal.” The waitress smiles. Ian can see the table without turning around.

“Is she still looking over here?”

“No she’s turned away. She’s getting her drink. She’s smiling. I be that she’s going to come over here.”

I try to look as casual as possible.

“Thanks for the drink. Do you mind if we join you.”

“No, Come on!”

Her friend is with her and she sits down at our booth.

“My name is Corrine. This is Erin.”

Erin is a shy girl with short blonde hair. After a few drinks, she gets a little boisterous. We introduce ourselves.

I ask, “You girls were talking about us?”

“No, we weren’t,” maintains Corrine.

“Why do girls always do that? You catch them flirting. and they tell you that they’re talking about the weather. Or new shoes,” asserts Ian.

“A girl can never have too many shoes,” Erin tells us.

“Ian and I just started a pool business. What do you girls do?”

“I’m studying International Affairs at UCLA,” Corrine informs us.

“I’m an architecture student. I go to school with Corrine.”

“Are you roommates?”

“Yeah, we share an apartment.”

“You both seem like serious students,” Ian remarks. They laugh.

Corrine lets us know that they can enjoy themselves, “It’s not as if we’re studying all the time. We know how to have fun.”

Erin joins in, “I only feel like myself when I’m enjoying myself.

Corrine is curious about my background. I can’t tell her everything that has gone on in my coming to the States. But she is fascinated with the details that I am able to share. She seems so gentle. When I talk to her, I am feeling guilt about Brenda. I know that won’t dissuade me. She just seems so right. So real. I have become so cut off from normal people that this is refreshing. I need to get away from spies and low-lives.

Back at the motel room, I feel a little bit of a let down. I’ve got Corrine’s number. We’re supposed to meet for lunch on my day off. But I am reminded who I am back in the motel. I know that I’ve always thought in big terms. But I really think that has been the influence of TV. Now I am seeing the world behind the facade. It is often frightening.

I am drinking a coke and sitting on my bed. The TV is on without the sound. Tonight is a quiet night.

The next day Brenda is in fine form. I have Corrine on my mind. But when Brenda writhes next to me, I just lose myself in her perfume. Her body will not stop. She still works her magic.

After love-making, she brings me sandwiches. It’s a good thing that I take care of my pool maintenance first. I don’t think that I could do much else after this. Brenda works out at the gym every day. She can really do things with her body.

In turn, she complements me, “Benny, I love your young body.”

I think that she is really taken by me. She’d never leave Rocky. But she needs my youth to make her feel confident. I wonder if anyone knows. Am I the subject of gossip. I don’t want it to get back to Rocky. Oh well!

She has already arranged for me to see another client tomorrow. I just hope that it isn’t this exhausting.”

Sharon is a tall voluptuous red-head. She has that same devil-make-care attitude as Brenda. She seems a little hesitant as I start my work. Her pool has not been well-maintained. This first visit is going to require a lot more work. Even the deck needs to be taken care of. Since she’s rather shy, she leaves me on my own.

I work constantly. I know that it will only be right after some repeat visits. The chemicals will need time to balance. I have to super-chlorinate the pool to start.

Sharon asks innocently, “Benny, is it true what they say about pool boys?”

“Brenda said the same thing to me. What are you talking about?”

“What they say...”

“I don’t know. What do they say?”

“How you’re all studs.”

Sharon’s intentions are clearer now. My main reasons for doing this business are to maintain a clean and orderly pool. But if I have to use my people skills, then I’m surely the man.

“I’m not really a stud. In fact, I’m sort of bashful.”

“No, you’re not!”

“Yeah, I am.”

“That’s funny, I’m sort of the same way. My husband always says that I’m a little timid in bed.”

“Maybe he doesn’t give you what you need to get you going.”

“What could you possibly mean?”

“When you’re vacuuming the pool, you can’t let all the hose just hang there on the deck. You’ll trip on it and get all entangled in it as if a snake is attacking. You have to let it float in the water and get all wet.”

“Benny, what are you talking about?”

“When your husband is making love to you, he has to take it slowly. Give you time to warm up.”

It’s funny. With my little experience, I am talking like a great lover. I have become overconfident with Brenda. I’m not going to stop.

Sharon wonders, “How is my husband supposed to do that? How can he warm you up?”

“You need to get a little worked up. Give you a taste of satisfaction.”

She tells me, “I need you to show me. Give me a little kiss.”

She hardly gives me a little kiss. She rubs her lips around the rim of my mouth. She gives me a few little pecks. Then she just buries her tongue down my throat. Her passion is overwhelming. I had felt something with Brenda. But Sharon seems so giving. She is never ending. As I embrace her, her robe comes open. She isn’t wearing a suit underneath. Her body is so appealing. She’s a little younger than Brenda, and more athletic, her belly button is pierced and she has a tattoo on her inner thigh.

Sharon is born to make love. Once you strip this veil of fear, she is a wild animal. She is so caring. She just devours her lover. The last time that I was with Brenda, I imagined Corrine. But Sharon is all-consuming. I want more and more of her. I work to make it last.

She is overcome by my prowess. She helps me discover powers that I never knew that I had. I warm to her entire body. All of her is on fire. Just as a lull sets in, there is more. I cannot stop with her. I am working way beyond my years. She has found my maturity, and is using it to her advantage.

The afternoon is long. I save nothing. She sucks me dry. I am totally spent. I want to sleep in her bed. I know better. Her husband could come back at any minute.

“You are amazing.”

“Benny, you’re a great partner.”

I am a little confused. This seems like more than sport. I know that she is married. But I want this to be more. I engage her for another one of her kisses. She holds back nothing.

When Ian picks me up, I am virtually speechless. He takes me back to the hotel where I collapse. I see him at the club the next day.

“Corrine is a cool girl.”

I had almost forgot about my lunch date. I need to call her today.

“She was really nice.”

“Benny, you seem a little lukewarm.”

“I’ve just had a lot on my mind with the business.”

“I think the only business that you’ve been thinking about is monkey business.”

“Quit teasing me.”

I'm thinking about how I need to get over to Sharon's to check those chemicals. I don't want Ian to know that I'm stopping by. I decide to get a ride from Rob, one of the college kids. I know that it's going to be a little late to head there after work. But I need to make a call.

"Ian wasn't able to come by. But I left some chemicals that I needed to add."

She leads me out to pool. As she slides past me, all that I can think about is our time together. I check the chemical levels. Then I add some soda ash. I go back in the den that is just off the pool. I call her, "Sharon!"

She floats into the room. "Benny, what is it?"

"I've finished up." We stare at each other. Neither of us can move.

"My husband will be home in a half hour."

I can no longer hesitate. I grab her in my arms and pull her over to the couch. I side my hand under her blouse. She wearing a skirt. I work my way underneath until I pull her panties off. She is so into it already. I massage her lightly as she coos.

"Benny, I want you, all of you."

I smile. It all seems so silly. But it is as if I am outside of my body. I just move so automatically with her. I don't want to leave.

It is Sharon's body and Corrine's soul. I want both of them. That thought is in my mind as I talk to Corrine. I feel that my time with Sharon has allowed me to know Corrine in a new way. Corrine still maintains this wall. It is more intentional than fear. This is her personality. She will not surrender in the way that Sharon does. She will hold so much of herself back. I love to be with her. But it is not the same. It cannot be.

I am under the illusion that I can have something more with Sharon. I am acting that out by being with Corrine.

"Benny, you seem to be elsewhere," Corrine wonders.

"I was. It's all my worrying about work. You told me that you moved from Michigan."

"It snowed so much where I lived. It drove me crazy. I always dreamed about moving to LA. I want to travel. I want to get to know the world," she shares her dreams.

"I think that I live in this artificial world created by American television. It's always been my dream. I'm trying to live it."

"I commend you for that. I just hope that I can stick to my dreams with the same degree of commitment."

"Sometimes it gets tough."

"Do you ever want to go back home?"

"I can't. I miss my parents. My mom used to work in the British consulate. Years ago. That's how I learned English so well. And I watched so much TV."

"TV can be OK. I read a lot."

"My brother is the reader. I like magazines. I like the quick punchline. I think that I want it all at once. That may be my downfall."

I am really torn. Sharon is dominating my thoughts. I still have my loyalties to Brenda. Corrine is so appealing. I can't let her know.

When we separate, she gives me a little kiss on the cheek. I want to kiss her lips, but she is too hesitant.

I haven't been to Brenda's in almost a week. I call her up.

Brenda wonders, “Sharon told me that things really worked out. I hope that you still have time for me.”

“I’ve still got you down to two hours a week.”

Today, she exudes sex. Her whole body is arousing me. I can barely finish my work. Afterwards, I come to her bedroom already in the mood. She is surprised by my boldness. I have such energies deep inside me. I will not stop. Everything flows from me to her.

At this point, I feel that I have not truly known Brenda. There was always a side of her that she hid. But now she gives that to me. Her hardness melts. Her toned body, her glamor, her sheltered life, all this fades. She is completely raw. She is new. More than ever she wants to be with me. This is not about the sex.

“Benny, I think that I need you.”

I have only so much to give. But she has been such a free spirit for me.

“Brenda, you have done so much for me. My brother just had me going. You’ve help me get free.”

I pull her close. I want to be inside her. My whole body aches with that feeling. This is something other than physical. I am beginning to understand a harmony of the universe. I feel embarrassed by this enlightenment. As I move inside Brenda, I can feel my body leave me. I am part of something bigger. I feel the unity of the heavens. I am soaring.

“Benny, I don’t know what it is today. You seem amazing. I don’t want to get out of bed. Take a shower with me.”

In the shower, I can only offer her more pleasure. She is yelling in her ecstasy. The house is shaking. The tremors are greater than any earthquake.

As I am leaving she has a few words to share, “Benny, don’t lose your focus. Keep your mind clear. I know that you want to believe.”

I look puzzled.

“It’s really easy to get distracted by your heart.”

The climax of this passionate wandering is my next time with Sharon. I am becoming so efficient at my pool work so I can have extra time with my clients. Her body is electric. I am completely refreshed with her. With Brenda, there is still something a little naughty. Sharon seem pure. I easily forget that she is married. She does too. She has been born to offer such pleasure. She gives so much and she receives.

As we lie in each others arms, it seems a forever. Everything that I do seems to be complete in this moment. I am no longer just comic figure. I have a destiny. Both of us know that this means too much.

“I almost feel that I shouldn’t see you. But Benny, I know that I need you.”

With Brenda, I have discovered that there are no limits to my physical pleasure. I can continue to unfold layer after layer. Sharon is opening me up to a level beyond that. It is a pleasure without limits. It is a religion. I hate being so full of pride. I cannot let go.”

With Sharon, the feeling is so intense that I can hardly express how I feel. Both of us stare into each other’s eyes and know. We live as spirits. Neither of us can do anything more to change it. She is committed to her life and her husband. She does not want to turn her back on those things.

I act out this intensity with Corrine. We have become more affectionate. We touch. We

hold hands. But she has pulled the brakes on the passion. Everything seems slow. That is good.

Instead, we talk about what we have in common. If she knew about Sharon, she would die. As it is, she knows in a spiritual way. That is how it has to be. I live with her poetically. I make up for what I cannot offer Sharon.

My business has more referrals. Ian does some of the calls now. He is all about work. There is none of the associated mysticism.

“Are you seeing Erin?” I ask Ian.

“I’ve met her a few times. Nothing special.”

“Corrine talks to me about the both of you,” Corrine informs me.

“I really like her. But sometimes, it tough hanging out with her. I’m more direct about my feelings.”

Ian has been living behind a mask. It has started to seem inconvenient. He wants so much more from his life. Things seem too easy for Erin.

I haven’t seen Ramon for days. He decides to stop by the motel.

“How are you, little brother?”

I give him a hug. But he can sense my anger.

“I’ve been doing some thinking. I know how you’re trying to make this business work. I’ve got you a car. Actually it’s a truck. It’s fairly new. Only been used for a year and a half. I got it as a deal. It’s my gift.”

He also has brought by a case of beer. We sit on the bed and discuss life.

“Ramon, life is good.”

“You are looking great.”

“I feel good.”

“It’s a woman. You’re seeing someone.”

“Maybe one too many someones.”

“I need to give you some friendly advice. You can’t let your desires mess up your plans.”

“What?”

“Sex is only something that helps you get what you want. You can’t let it be the goal in itself.”

“You sound like a moralist.”

“I need to develop wisdom.” He is lecturing me.

I get back at him, “You should talk. It’s a different girl every night. Sometimes more.”

“I’ve got a focus.”

“Your dick!”

We both laugh.

“Benny, get me another Corona while you’re up.”

It seems like old times. He’s still trying to play my parent.

“This place seems all right.”

“There was a shooting here the other night,” I tell him.

“That’s crazy.”

“I thought that it was the TV.”

“Maybe it’s time to find another place,” he suggests.

“I can’t really afford it yet. But the truck is going to help.”

With the truck, it means that we can take on more clients. Ian doesn't have to come back to pick me up. It also makes me more adventurous. I guess Sharon has made me too daring. I feel that no goal is too great. It is distracting. I need to restrain myself. My client list is not an escort service list. It all could backfire.

"I've heard about you pool boys."

I can't even finish my work before Ellen does hers. She is showing me a thing or two in her living room.

"Have you ever had sex in public?"

Ellen is brazen. She licks her lips. "In a car, in a park. Everywhere."

Sharon and Brenda are much more reserved. She doesn't care. I don't care

There are no restraints. Everything is on!

I can hardly catch my breath trying to keep up with her. It is also hard to finish the pool work. She jumps into the water naked. I am forced to follow my mermaid. We come together in the tide, we lose ourselves in the flow.

"You are a naughty boy."

I show her how naughty when she is upstairs in her bathroom.

"I love a man who knows how to satisfy a woman," she purrs.

I can barely manage. But I finish everything, load the truck and head home. Another day's work.

I don't want to leave the impression that I am always having sex with my customers. I could hardly run a business that way. As we expand, I need to spend a limited amount of time at each house. Of course, I make the schedule. If it's Ellen, or Sharon, or Brenda, I now what has to get done. It's OK to be naughty. But I don't want to be a bad boy. I need to do my homework.

Jennifer is my angel. She watches from the window as I do her pool. She is lost in bliss with Phil. It is too perfect for words. Her light brown hair falls to her shoulders. I apply all my conscientiousness to my work.

It is a dull day that fades into evening. I work the hose back and forth across the surface of the pool. It becomes clean row by row. I am methodical. There is barely enough light to finish. But I watch closely. This is not something that I want to turn bad in the morning. I apply myself. I find my consistency. A few spots seem stubborn. I go over them a few times. I am seeking perfection. I will get what I am looking for. I feel at the top of my game. I am the pool I am the power. Everything flows in me.

I strip myself of all my clothes. Naked, I plunge in the waters. These are the waters that I have purified. I swim back and forth. I become one with the water. I glide.

I stop in the shallow end. I can see her in the window. I hope that she is looking down at me. I touch myself. I masturbate in her waters. I can see her silhouetted upstairs. I imagine staring into her eyes. I move the cum into the gutter into the filtering system. I backwash the system of its impurities. It is clean. I am refreshed.

I load my truck and leave. It is later in the evening. Night is coming on. I embrace the darkness. I am proud of myself. As I fall asleep, I think of my angel. Jennifer watches over me. I am more for her than Phil could ever be. She does not know it. I look deep into her hazel eyes. We will seek togetherness.

In my darkness I can hide myself. I can ask for anything that I need. My requests will be granted. Once I set my sights, I seek satisfaction. If I am persistent, nothing will stand in my way. I am gentle. I can seduce. I can make the tides flow for me.

I am not envious of Phil. He needs to be aware of me. The next time that I am at their house, I surprise Jennifer in the hallway. She jumps. I run my hand along her leg until it rides under her dress. She pulls it along so that it is resting on her panties. She feels that I am bold. She wants me to take her. As she kisses me, she bites my lip. There is a raw aggressiveness in our first contact. More than ever, I feel that I am taking something that I should not. But I will not let up. I delight in my shamelessness. As we accommodate to each other I can feel that she is swimming to me. I float in her waters. Nothing will keep us apart. She knows that she has done something wrong. She only wants it more. I keep a special place in my heart for her. I have ascended the heights. My angel has taken me away.

I wonder if there are any constraints on my behavior. I had looked at the world as existing so separate from me. Now I feel how I have to immerse myself in what I see. I am taking paradise for myself. Nothing can approach the sweetness of my kiss with Jennifer. She can no longer touch Phil with the same commitment. She hides her secret. She lets it fly when she is truly alone.

I make plans to go away with Sharon. We have become so much part of each other.

I stop by at Brenda's for some advice. Brenda works to bring me back to reality.

"Benny, you've never really been in love. You just don't know how foolish you're being. This is supposed to be for fun."

"I'm not taking anything away from you. I still give you all the time that you need."

"I feel like I've created a monster." Brenda is insistent.

"This is how I really am. I feel like it is all natural."

"You have to make sure that you don't cross the line. Your mischief could reverberate up and down the valley. It would be the worst thing for you."

"I'm careful!"

"Not enough. You're coming on to the women now. That is a mistake. You have to let it happen. Make them think that they want you. That you are almost unattainable."

"What's wrong if I make them feel good.?" I assert my point of view.

"Nothing. Just don't read too much into it."

I get away with Sharon to Vegas. It is going to be a wonderful experience. We got this deal on a luxury suite at the Belagio. I need to make some excuse to Corrine why I am going to be away. I tell her that I have to head to Vegas for a wedding.

It is as if Sharon and I have always been together. I massage her body with oils. My hands stick to the flesh. I kiss along her stomach. I lick her belly button as I turn my tongue around her ring.

We are so in to each other that we can barely leave the room. We order up room service. We wrestle on the bed. Her toned muscles glisten. She is dexterous. We engage in this insistent game of tension and release. With each successive level, we move more naturally together. Outside it is warm. In here we pass this warmth back and forth. We become liquid and swim in each other's currents. I am washed by her desire. She is bathed in my affection. I hold myself steady as I merge with her. There is no longer anything that separates us. Our passion is all

consuming.

We convince each other to leave the room on that last day. The passion is becoming overwhelming. There is nothing else in our world.

I am sitting across from her at dinner, "Would you ever leave your husband?"

"Benny, you don't understand. This is an appetite. This is just sex. I don't know how to come down with you. I would get eaten up by the pleasure. It is too much."

"But that's all the reason to make it on your own."

"Aaron gives me something secure. He's not everything. But that is why I'm with him. When I'm with you, I always have to live up to an ideal. It would just kill me."

I want to take her up to the room at this moment and just feel myself inside her. She feels the same way. But we cannot let our feelings distract us. Not at this moment.

We eat a filling meal. But it only invites us to other earthly delights. I am only quenched by her body. I cannot let up. There is no real climax. Each high rolls into the next. There is nothing artificial. Nothing to take away from that extreme. It just rings out until the tone is deafening. We give ourselves to each other. Again we are one.

We both hate to leave the city. It is hard giving up that lovely illusion. Our ride home is exhausting because we know what we are giving up. The boredom of the drive become more intense. I cannot even offer a proper good by. I drop her off and drive back to the motel. What a come down!

I take back the rental car the next day and pick up my new truck. I feel liberated. I intend to get our logo printed on the vehicle. We are always busy. It is now time just to work for ourselves. We say good by to Willy.

Tuesday evening I meet with Corrine. We are still moving slowly. I share gentle kisses with her. That is our style. I can hardly tell her what is really going on in my life.

"I heard that Sharon let you down easily."

"The next day Brenda challenges me some more.

"We had a great time."

"She said that you asked her to leave her husband."

"I was just wondering why she stayed with him."

"It's why we all stay, Benny. It's safe. Guys like you are all demanding. You could never be satisfied with someone like me or Sharon. You would drain us of all our life. I made you Benny. But I can't unmake you. Only you can do that."

She is almost condemning me to a life alone. I can pretend with Corrine. But I wonder if she can stimulate in the way that I have come to expect.

My time with Sharon has only made me more attuned to the appeals of the body. I had carried around this ideal from TV. But now I am attached to the intensities of physical pleasure. It verges on an addiction. I need to satiate myself on this honey. I know how to open another person to this high.

My most wonderful discovery has been Jennifer. With Sharon it has been this athletic context. We have stretched our bodies to the limit. With Jennifer, we use the physical to express this other nature. I have offered my spiritual self to her. I don't know if I can be with her and Corrine. They seem to conflict. Jennifer seems an impossibility. Corrine is surrounded by her innocence. But both are affecting me deep inside my person.

I keep Corrine in the dark. We go to movies. We eat dinner together. Meanwhile, I sneak around with Jennifer. She accepts the risk. Her time with me is so unlike Sharon and Brenda. For them, they can always return to their husbands. Jennifer's passion is isolating her more and more. When she is apart from me, it is hardly living. I want to help her. I continue to take her time. It is part of the self that I have become. I need to maintain. I cannot go backwards. To give up on Jennifer would mean that I have lost my new abilities. She is a plateau. I cannot go down. Only up.

Ian is becoming a better friend of Erin's. At first, he thought it wouldn't work. But she has let her emotions speak for her. When she drinks, she is untamed. He is enjoying being with her. Corrine now seems more inhibited than Erin. But I am probably keeping her in that place. It is a terrible thing that I am doing to her. I regret that I am so cruel to Jennifer and Corrine. But I feel that I am making up for the bad treatment that I received when I first came to the country.

Brenda is right. I am a monster. This is what success can do. It only makes you want more. I almost expect this kind of treatment from every woman. I am believing my own hype.

Brenda teases me, "I only wish that you were as good in bed as you think you are."

"I'm not?"

"Hardly."

For the moment I feel mortified. What am I doing wrong?

"That's what I'm trying to tell you, Benny. You're becoming so good that you think that sex is the only thing in life. You have it too easy. You've lost perspective. You really don't know what it is to need someone."

Phil is out of town, and Jennifer lets me stay the night. There is an infinite calm that I feel in her arms. She is so committed to Phil. I only wish that this is real. I would give it all up just to be with her.