

CHAPTER TWELVE

She poured two shots of Jack Daniels, but 'twas a waste of good liquor. After just one sip, we tumbled into her bedroom, ripping off each other's clothes. We were briefly interrupted, however, when I rolled on something hard in the bed and yelped. I held it up. A toy army tank.

"David's," Maggie explained. "My son. He's in Chicago, visiting his grandparents."

Maggie pulled me on top of her. There was no time to waste: we were both on fire, as they say. But suddenly, to my utter horror, my Blue Flame sputtered, no doubt doused by the tremendous amounts of alcohol and weed consumed earlier. This could not be happening to Danny Dowd.

"Let's just take a breather," said Maggie, lying back on her pillow. "Do you want another drink?"

"No, I've had enough. But don't worry, everything's fine."

"Oh, I know it is," said Maggie. "Don't *you* worry."

"I'm not worried."

"I'm not worried, either."

"What are we even not worried about?"

"I don't know," said Maggie. "We're resting, that's all."

We rested for a long time, trying very hard not to worry. After a while, I started kissing and caressing Maggie's voluptuous body, but it was as if Smokey the Bear himself had put out my campfire. I could tell Maggie was becoming a bit concerned, and you can only imagine how I felt. Let me tell you, the world can be a very cruel place.

Then, in some crevice of my smoldering brain flashed a spark, actually two sparks: the opening twin chords of Beethoven's Third Symphony.

"Are you playing music?" I asked.

"No," she said. "Would that help? Do you want me to put on some music?"

"No, I thought..."

At the time, in my panic to get it on with Maggie, I tried to dismiss those two E-flat majors, but as much as I tried *not* to think of them, those mighty chords became ever more insistent. When Beethoven comes knocking, there is nothing to do but let him in. And so I did.

"Let's not worry," Maggie said. "We can just...oh, my!"

In *sonata-allegro* form, the Third Symphony unrolled – no, *blazed* – through my brain. Beethoven had found inspiration for his symphony in the Prometheus myth, and what did Prometheus bring to mankind? Yes! Fire! The metaphor is obvious! And so, to that stirring and fiery music, I began, majestically and confidently, to make love to Maggie Moore.

She hardly had time to prepare. Just as Beethoven expanded from his initial theme, so did I, coordinating my movements to each new melody as it was developed from the essential motive idea, continually surprising Maggie with both my dexterity and altered tempos, turning her this way and that. Once, when she was on her back, her feet waved high in the air as if conducting a full symphony orchestra that had, without our noticing, assembled about our bed. I soon developed the thematic opening into a number of variations, and just when Maggie thought she could relax, just when she thought she could anticipate my particular rhythm, I violently disrupted the steady meter with a pattern of syncopated hemiolas, a series of powerful thrusts, the result of such rhythmic dislocation causing her to moan loudly (she was even more vocal in bed than when she was out) and after leaving her whimpering, only then did I return to a steady triple meter.

Soon we were floating to melodies gentle and lyrical, then riding hard to the beat of galloping hoofs, then returning again and again to the initial theme. After several measures came the brutal development section. The new change in music confused her – what, with the raging chords, the jumbled timing, the dissonant harmonies, the stormy rhythms – but she waited patiently, devoting this section to restoring herself, to catching her breath, trusting that her superman would return, believing I would not – could not – desert her in such chaos and doubt. *Fortissimo!* O, Dearest, hang on! Hang on! Together we shall make it over the top! Listen! Listen! In the distance, don't you hear the horns? Yes, yes, the horns! How they blow louder! The clouds are dissipating! The cavalry is coming! And Moore!

At the shocking and alarming downward harmonic sequence with which the coda of the first movement begins, Maggie actually blushed. She raised her hips during the violin tremolos, impatient, the tension resolved by the descending motives of flute and violin; she then swayed to the sweetness of another development theme, anticipated the final hemiola, and at last responded to the jubilation and excitement as the full orchestra, one by one, joined the grand finale.

Thus ended the first movement, which, you might know, is nearly seven-hundred measures, longer than many an entire Classical Era symphony. The three remaining movements were much of the same, and I – *we* – hardly paused between. Slowly, diligently, rhythmically, we ticked off

the measures. *Fortissimo, sotto voce*. Day, night. Major, minor. Sharp, flat. Male, Female. Death. Life.

When we came to the fourth and final movement – well, you really must play it yourself. It is both a spectacle and a joke. Hilarious, really. It was at this time, I unknowingly burst out humming the tunes that had been playing in my brain, imitating the rush of violins in that dramatic fanfare that announces something glorious and majestic is sure to follow. But what follows is neither glorious nor majestic. Instead, it is much closer to the soundtrack of a Tom and Jerry cartoon. Beethoven must have cracked up when he penned these themes. After three movements of intense, passionate lovemaking, the music could no longer be serious, and neither could we. Oh, what a relief it was to finally engage in such glorious, noisy screwing.

In my passionate and intoxicated state, I did not immediately realize that Maggie was accompanying me. O, what a voice! We laughed and snorted – snorted! – but we could not stop now. Nothing could interrupt our comic climax! Hoot and screw! Ever onward! Onward! Onward!

As you might know, the fourth movement, almost without warning, comes crashing downward with the largest, loudest, most thrilling crescendo in the history of music *and* sex. During those last magnificent blasts of the horns, as the strings and horns lifted us ever higher, I gazed into Maggie's green eyes – O! she was so delighted, so mesmerized, so *in awe* – that I improvised a few extra measures Beethoven never wrote, but believe me, if he were between Maggie Moore's thighs, he would have. "Oh!" she cried again and again, "My hero!" I continued the triumphant, comic conclusion, both of us singing along, Maggie in perfect harmony, for several more measures and then....ah, sweet, sweet triumph!

Afterwards, we lay there for some time, catching our breaths, laughing to ourselves, humming a few more bars, and then I heard her softly snoring.