

The 70's and 80's were truly glorious times for the salon industry. So very many salons were located in malls, the centerpiece for shopping, socializing, and, hooking up with the opposite sex. A delightful but very candid memoir of a hair stylist who worked there. This guy makes Christian Grey look like an amateur....

KING OF THE MALL

by Wolfe Armand Scarpati

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KING OF THE MALL

THE LIFE AND LOVES OF A HAIRSTYLIST

LOVE,
LUST,
AND HAIR
IN THE 80's

WOLFE ARMAND SCARPATI

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Foreword

The 70s and 80s were truly glorious times for the salon industry. So very many salons were located in malls; those sacred cathedrals of capitalism that saved suburbia from despair, and served as the bravura centerpiece for shopping, socializing, partaking in culinary delight *and*, if you worked there, *hooking up with the opposite sex*.

I was right in the middle of it all. I was in my mid-20s, getting ready to segue to age 30, and was the top hair stylist in one of the best salons in the suburban Philadelphia area. That salon was located in one of the large malls in the King of Prussia area. It was an area resplendent with several sizable malls, and people from throughout the Northeast flocked there to shop.

I had a natural talent for doing hair, I had *the look*, and I loved women. *God, I loved women*.

What better business to be in when you were as obsessed and preoccupied as much as I was with that one thing that gave me purpose for getting up in the morning...*getting laid*. It practically dictated my entire thought process all day long.

Working at the mall and being a hair stylist at such a well-known salon, I had access to tons of good-looking females, many of whom were willing, eager, and who looked at me as if I was some kind of a god...some kind of an idol. It was almost like being a rock star.

As for being blessed with *that look*, I knew how to use it to my best advantage both behind the chair in the salon *and* out in the clubs at night looking for my latest female conquest.

You just had to know how to pose, how to approach, and how to *sell yourself*, and in the end, it was *all about the sell*.

I was out every night after a 10 or 12-hour workday, with a stash of neatly folded bills in my pocket, the result of *cash* tips from a full day at the salon. Nobody used credit cards then. All the tips were cash.

When you were out in a nightclub or upscale bar, you set yourself up *to look a certain way*, and make yourself appear attractive and worthy. It was almost like a mating dance or a ritual; your back to the bar, elbows perched behind you, legs semi-crossed, and a somewhat serious demeanor on your face with brow slightly raised, *ala Burt*

Reynolds. You would take an occasional sip from your drink, but as you did, you were still continually scanning the nightclub or bar, and looking...looking for *that right one for that night*.

If by chance women were checking you out, you wanted them to think that you weren't just sexy, but also *quiet and mysterious*. It challenged them, and they approached you.

Pounding music usually pulsated to the point that you couldn't really carry on a conversation of any length even if you wanted to, but it didn't matter...that's not why you were there.

Out on the floor was *the night's menu*...a veritable buffet of great looking girls, and you had your pick, but...you also you had to think it out; observe before you made a move.

It was like a lion stalking a gazelle. I had it down to a science. I knew how to *get it done*.

There were the girls *that would* and the girls *that wouldn't*. Many of them were out for the same thing that you were. *Sex*. You just had to figure out who was who, and who was looking to hook up.

There were just as many females out on the hunt as there were guys like me. Pick the wrong one and you would probably be told to *fuck off*, regardless of how good looking you were....maybe they were already taken, or maybe they just weren't in the mood. Pick the right one and you were probably getting laid, or at the very least, getting a great blowjob out in the car that usually ended with the half-hearted promise of your giving them a phone call the next day, which of course never materialized...*after all, what did they think this was, serious?*

You see, the way it worked was that sometimes *they* thought that they had scored too. Maybe you saw them again, and maybe you didn't. If you *did* bump into them again it was usually from a distance at *another* smoke-filled club or bar, on *another* night, a week or two later. When they saw you, they would smile from across the room, and without a word spoken you knew if they wanted to *do it again*, or not. That's the way it was.

I, and others like me, were the Kings of the Mall. We got anything we wanted, we fucked anything wearing a short skirt or tight fitting pair of jeans, and as much as we wanted *them*, they wanted *us*.

There is however, a back story to all this, and it's not just about sex...it's about growing up in a small Northeastern coal mining town, the struggles that involved coming of age and growing up, and then finally escaping and leaving for life's pursuits.

King of the Mall is a fictional account that is based on *real events and real* people.....the names have been changed to protect the innocent, *and* the not so innocent....including myself.

The affairs that I had with all the women as depicted in the book, all happened, and in the end, my life ended up changing in a major way for so many different reasons.

The fact of the matter is that times change and *you change*. You mature, you grow older, and then come to the realization that you could only do it for so long. Long after it all ends, you mull it over; in my case for almost *four decades*, and then...*you write a book*.

My name is Wolfe Armand Scarpati, and this is my story.

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Chapter Ten

Adrianna

The weeks immediately following our agreement to split up went very slowly and in many ways were filled with a roller coaster of emotions for both of us.

For me, it went beyond guilt, confusion, or a feeling of final freedom. There's something about divorce and leaving an established household and marriage that makes you wonder about how in the end run you are going to be labeled or judged, no matter what the situation was that brought on the dissolution of the marriage in the first place. In future conversations discussed among mutual friends and relatives, both spouses would in some way be labeled as either the hero or the pariah in that which ultimately led to the end of things, and in many cases, sides will be drawn between both families.

I had been taking my good-natured time finding an apartment to move into, as a whole new consideration of personal finances would be put into play for me.

I would have to pay apartment rent plus my own living expenses, as well as continue to support the house and a good portion of its expenses, until it was sold. Thankfully, Maria had amicably agreed to split house expenses right down the middle. We agreed to pursue a mutual *no-fault* status as per Pennsylvania divorce laws at that time. There was a national chain of mall-based legal offices that existed in the 80s...they were cheap, and expedient in what they did. The whole thing ended up costing us a mere \$180 in filing fees. It was all that either of us could afford at the time.

Both of our parents had been told that it was irrevocably over, and needless to say, they were not happy. Maria's mother seemed to be a bit more at ease with things than were my parents. She checked in with us once or twice a week just to make sure that things were proceeding smoothly, and generally, she let us alone and let things take their course. She, having been previously divorced from Maria's abusive biological father, had been through this before. She looked at divorce as there being light at the end of the tunnel after it was all over with, and a

new start for her daughter. She was also there to lend support, as would be expected.

Maria did not get along with her stepfather, Al. As things were transpiring, he was not in a supportive role of any kind, he could care less. Being as aloof and uncaring as he was, he really never acted as a father figure to Maria or her sister throughout his marriage to Maria's mother.

Not only did he and Maria not get along, but he had a buck in the bank, owned multiple rental properties, and looked at himself as *the great savior* who rescued Maria's mother, as well as Maria and her younger sister, from a possible life of living on the street with only a cardboard box for a shelter, burlap bags for dresses, and rope around their waists to hold up their clothes.

Of course, none of that would have been true, but the guy was, from the little contact that I had with him since the beginning of our marriage, an egotistical, arrogant ass.

He was a tall, gangly son of a bitch...a tough, cocky, second generation German, but frankly, I didn't give a shit, nor did he intimidate me. I couldn't stand him. He was the consummate definition of the word, *prick*.

My mother, constantly the optimist, was on the phone with me almost every day insisting that there had to be some way that we could magically pull a rabbit out of a hat, salvage things, and once again be on the road to marital bliss. There was also no doubt in my mind that to some degree, it was to save her from the embarrassment of having a divorced son, God forbid. Make note, there is embarrassment, and then there is *Italian embarrassment*; two different things entirely. If you were to look at it on a cosmic scale, then *Italian embarrassment* is the supernova of all embarrassments.

It took a little while, but as the weeks went by, and Mom saw that both my mind and Maria's had been made up to finally split, she finally resigned herself to the inevitable, and became quite supportive, urging me to get it done and move on. She wanted it over with, she wanted me to be settled again, and in the big picture of things, wanted one less thing to worry about when she went to bed at night.

It took almost 3 months for me to find a place to live. I was taking my time finding an apartment, perhaps because of having the security of knowing that I already had an existing roof over my head and wasn't necessarily pressed for time to move, but also because good apartments in a good area, and within my price range, were at a premium. King of Prussia was growing by leaps and bounds, and both industry and housing were booming on both sides of Route 276. Apartments were getting more expensive by the year, and housing prices were going through the roof. Finding an apartment within my price range was no easy task.

As the weeks and months went by, it didn't take long for word to spread like wildfire in the mall that I was in the process of getting divorced, and with that, the inevitable happened. I was besieged with an absolute shit-load of females throwing themselves at me, all of whom had gotten wind of the fact that I was finally available. Many of them had no qualms about making me aware of the fact that they knew it. It was precisely what I needed to get my ass in gear and find an apartment. My head was spinning, and to put it in simple terms, the women were *coming out of the fucking woodwork*.

I finally settled on a beautiful one-bedroom apartment about two blocks from the mall.

Are you kidding? *Me*, finally turned loose with no wife, a.k.a., *stone around my neck*, and my own place? It was like when they finally let Morgan Freeman out of prison after having been incarcerated for 30 years, in the movie *Shawshank Redemption*. The very first thing he did when he got out, was to look up at the sky to see The Sun, *and it was still there*.

If my status of being one of the so-called *Kings of the Mall* had to any degree lapsed during those months of both work and marital related trial and tribulation, I was without a doubt about to reclaim my crown, and in a big way.

Over the years that I had worked in the mall, I had bedded quite a few of the *crème de la crème* of females who worked there, but not all of them.

Obviously in a mall, which is primarily a retail environment with tons of fashion stores staffed primarily by females, there is a constant

turnover of store staff, and new girls are coming in all the time. You just had to *make them aware* that you were there, who you were, and *what you did*.

Without question, as one of the top hairstylists in the area, and also working in one of the area's best salons, I *always* stood a hell of lot better chance of getting laid than did a young twenty-something male geek who might, for example, be the manager of a *video game* store. While he might be busy getting a new piercing in his nose every week and embellishing his wardrobe of gothic black, I on the other hand, had *the look, and the experience*, and I knew how to use it. It was never even a contest.

Now that I had my own apartment, I was running wild. The approaches to me were plentiful, and I was with someone different almost every night; I literally lost count. Christ, it was like *The Running Of The Bulls, in Pamplona*.

They were all one-night stands. Maybe in some cases, I saw them more than once, but the fact of the matter is that they were the last vestige of what could best be termed my *hit list*; the ones that I simply did not get to for one reason or another, while I had the hands of an unhappy marriage choking me around the neck.

For that matter, at least half of the girls on that list, after I had finally been with them, were rather direct in telling me that they too actually had *me* on their own list of sorts. It was quite a switch on things; me as *the prey*, instead of me as *the hunter*. Frankly, I didn't give a fuck. Mission accomplished, no matter how you cut the cake.

I had a client by the name of Adrianna who managed one of the boutique clothing stores in the mall.

I had been doing her hair for close to 5 years. She had an absolutely gorgeous face, and was right up my alley size wise...about 5'1, 110 pounds, with short, very dark brown hair, and a body like a Greek goddess. She was of a rather exotic ethnic mix...Italian, Black, and a bit of Portuguese. It was a combination that gave her both facial and physical attributes that were nothing short of striking.

When she came in for haircuts, we always flirted with each other and inevitably the conversation almost always turned to sex in a kind of humorous, tongue in cheek way. She was not only a great client, but

also, over a period of time, had become a very close friend and confidante. She was fun, she loved to laugh, and somehow all of those attributes overshadowed any lust that I might have developed for her. We occasionally hung out with each other at the bars, went out to lunch together in the mall, and were able to talk freely to each other in a truly personal one on one manner, during those periods of time when I was going through so much marital and job-related angst.

She in turn, confided in me about occasional boyfriend problems and all of the usual relationship anguish that females experience and go through. She was quite remiss about not being able to find the right guy, let alone a guy who cared, and who would become a true soulmate, as opposed to just being a lover.

Let there be no doubt that we had developed a trusting relationship with each other, and had no problem sharing many intimate details concerning both of our lives.

She of course, knew my wife by sight, from having been in the salon as well as occasionally seeing us out together. Maria, in turn, had seen her in my chair innumerable times as a client, but they didn't really know each other personally.

On one occasion she said to me, *"You know, I've seen you guys together now for Lord knows how long...as long as I know you, and I just don't get it. It seems like you're both from two different planets."*

Call me naïve, (which is hard to believe) but for some reason, I simply didn't give any thought to what may have been an underlying motive in that statement, especially given *my* experience in reading women.

I should have picked up on it immediately, but the fact of the matter is that sometimes when you are *best buddies* with a female, your vision and your thought processes can become clouded.

What I *didn't know* then, is that we were also about to become lovers, and it happened in the simplest way possible that two people who were such close friends, and who knew each other so very well, would end up in bed together.

She was in for her usual 8-week trim, and asked me if I had found an apartment yet, in which case I told her that I had, and she then asked when she would get to see the place. I mentioned to her that it was only

two blocks from the mall. I had nothing on tap that particular night, and, since we were friends who hung out together so frequently, I told her to come over that evening to see the apartment, and that we would have a few drinks, talk, share a few laughs, and maybe watch some TV; nothing out of the ordinary for two good friends to do.

Adrianna's beverage of choice was always sparkling Italian wine, something that I knew from buying her drinks during those long nights of one on one conversation at the mall pub, where we would just sit at the bar and talk of life, love, and happiness.

As soon as I finished up at the salon that night and exited the mall shortly before closing, I ran over to the liquor store in one of the smaller plazas that was right by my apartment, and picked up two large bottles before making my way home. I was expecting her about half an hour later, as she too had to finish up work at the mall.

Almost 9:30 sharp, there was a knock at the door and it was Adrianna, bearing a beautifully etched bottle of imported Italian Anisette which she knew was one of my favorites. I was never much of a drinker, and always preferred the mellow high of cordials like Anisette or Amaretto. I occasionally indulged in good wine or brandy as well.

As she entered, she immediately made herself right at home, kicking off her shoes and heading to the kitchen. Looked around, she commented on how large of a space it was for it just being a typical one-bedroom apartment, and how beautiful the newly installed plush rug was.

She said *"Let's tie one on, I'm fried,"* and began to tell me about what apparently was a rather rough work day, as her Regional Manager had apparently popped in unannounced. He then put Arianna through an absolute day of hell, nitpicking every little detail in the store.

We poured our drinks, and before I even got halfway done with mine, she was pouring herself a second glass of wine, having downed her first one in a few gulps. We made our way over to the couch and turned on the TV, making light conversation.

There was something different about her that night, and at first I couldn't quite put my finger on it. She appeared to be in an almost dreamy, somewhat mellow mood, despite having had a bad day at

work. It was as if she was looking to quell her anxiety, and wanted nothing more than to relax, unwind, find solace from the stress of the day, and put herself in some other place mentally.

As I was half reclining, half sitting up on the corner of the couch with my feet up on the coffee table, she positioned herself a bit closer to me, commenting that I needed a haircut, and began to twirl a section of my shoulder length curly locks in between her two fingers, making little spirals out of what was already existing curls. I looked at her, somewhat stunned.

In a way, it was no big deal, given that we were such close friends, and it was the kind of physical contact that I didn't necessarily consider out of the ordinary. Nonetheless, it was unusual for her, and a bit surprising to me. I didn't really know her as being the touchy-feely type, even though she was such a close personal friend whom I had spent so much time with on so many occasions in the past.

As I turned my head towards her, she continued moving closer, and by that time, our eyes had locked. I could immediately see that she had *that look*. It was a look that I had seen before, on so very many occasions, and with so many other females in the past. They were times when my own intentions were quite different; times when *I was the provocateur*, and when the circumstances as I planned and dictated them always led to a physical joining when I was with a female.

If there was any irony to that night, it is simply that it was the furthest thing on my mind with her. It was nothing more than a casual *nothing to do* type of night to be spent with a good friend.

She was not only getting a bit tipsy and glassy-eyed from having downed two glasses of sparkling wine in about 20 minutes, but without question, was also getting horny as hell. I could not only sense it, but I could also see it. She just had *that look*. Leaning in ever so slowly towards me, she kissed me on the lips...slowly at first, and then, more aggressively.

I was actually taken back for a moment....shocked to say the least, but still, almost as if by instinct, I began to respond in kind.

Without a doubt, I think that at that moment our minds, as well as a mutual feeling in our loins, met in unison. It was like *physical telepathy*, if there is such a thing.

The kiss that happened between us that night might best be described as an *eternal kiss*. Beyond the beginning of mere foreplay, it was one of those kisses that you never forget, think about not just in the moments immediately after it happens, or perhaps for days after it happens, but rather *for years after* it happens. It was a kiss, the memories of which, you will take to the grave with you as your last thoughts flash in your mind, and you take your last breath of life.

She knew that I was stunned, and there came a point of brief hesitation. We pulled apart slightly, looked at each other for a moment, and for all practical purposes, came to a dead stop; yet with that there wasn't a word uttered. We were undoubtedly having the same thoughts: *Do we really want to do this, and completely fuck up a beautiful friendship?*

So much of that night is indelibly etched in my mind, not just in the physical time frame of *how it happened*, but also in a virtual mental replay of everything *as it happened*.

It led to what was absolutely the best night of sex I had with any one female up to that point in time, and I remember it all. Without a word spoken, a mutual and consensual joining of hands as we moved to the bedroom, the both of us slowly undressing each other, and our eyes locking and not losing their focus for so much as a second. I don't think that either of us could believe what was actually happening. If anything, I think we both wondered why indeed it took so long.

She had one of the most magnificent bodies I had ever seen on a female. Her breasts were perfect...not overly large, but whose size was accentuated and made to look somewhat larger by tiny pink nipples that jutted straight out a full inch. She had flawless light brown skin, and much to my surprise, she was completely shaven down below.

She was the very first girl that I had been with who was completely shaven. At that time, it was a new trend for females, having begun in the late 70s and was just starting to come *in vogue*, as evidenced in many of the more popular men's magazines such as Playboy and Penthouse. Prior to that, most girls might have trimmed, but did not shave completely. I simply couldn't wait to get at it, and as I gently touched and caressed her there, I commented, "*My God, you're so smooth, it's like feeling silk.*" Whispering in my ear, she asked me

rather directly if I liked it, and I responded by telling her that I intended on *showing her exactly how much I liked it*.

As we stood there for a moment, gentle hands explored each other and we kissed. I could feel her shudder as I placed my hands behind her, and using my fingers, made a slow moving track of circles from the small of her back and progressing down to the cleft of her ass between her cheeks; a kind of standing foreplay, where mere minutes seemed like hours, and which you simply didn't want to stop...all before putting thoughts and actions into motion.

By the time we moved to the bed, what had initially been an evening of my having been caught totally by surprise, and not having any expectation level whatsoever, became one of complete lust. I was literally drunk with sensation, with her body, with the fragrant scent of her skin, and the way that she felt.

I was overwhelmed with her presence, and the sight of her naked in front of me. It did not take long for all of our physical motion to become one of our both moving in unison, as I gently laid her on her back, kissing her softly. I began to move slowly from her mouth, to her breasts, and then down to her belly button, teasing it with my tongue in such a way so that she would know that which was coming next.

Her response to my going down on her was almost immediate as I placed my lips over her clit and began to lick and tease it with gentle flicks of my tongue, and although she winced at first and took in a deep breath, I could tell that she was beginning to feel somewhat euphoric from the sensation; the heat, the wetness, the physical rush that comes from the visual, as she lifted her head off the pillow to watch me as I did it, and perhaps purposefully make herself more aroused. She let out a simple "*Oh God*", and began to moan. Without question, watching someone that you want so very badly perform that most personal and intimate act of love on you, could in itself be the catalyst to the ultimate orgasm.

But if I remember any one thing about that night, it was the manner in which we were both so physically perfect for each other and the way that our bodies melded together...*the way that we fit*...curve for curve, bare skin against bare skin, and the absolute perfection of how our lips

came together, and without rushing, consummated that which was almost five years in the making.

We moved in a harmony that could best be described as a physical symphony of sex that was like a classically composed masterpiece.

If nothing else, sexually we were perfect together, and beyond that, we were truly *making love*. It was slow, it was purposeful, and neither of us wanted it to end. We had sex for several hours before falling asleep in each other's arms. By 3 A.M., we awoke, and she told me that she had to leave.

I begged her to stay, but it was only several hours until the start of a new workday at the mall for both of us. In my mind. I knew that even after she walked out the door, I would be consumed with thinking about her...that my every thought would be occupied with her, and that getting up the in the morning and beginning my day would surely be nothing short of multitasking, as I thought about her while trying to get ready for work and make my way to the salon.

We began to see each other every day, and every night. The sex lasted for hours, and was nothing short of exhausting...fuck for two hours, take a shower together, fuck another two hours, and then shower again. At times, if circumstances permitted, and with my apartment being so close, we would even take an hour or two in the middle of the workday to leave our respective jobs at the mall, meet at the apartment, and simply fuck our brains out.

The whole thing went on for weeks, but as sexually compatible as we were, unbelievably, there came a point where things just simply began to unravel. *We had begun to stop talking to one another...*that is, *talking as we used to talk* prior to that first night that we had been together, and had broken the cardinal rule of being just friends who knew each other inside out.

She was pressing me to make a major commitment on a daily basis. It was apparent that it was what she had been looking for all along, and on my part, it was simply unknown to me, going back to the beginning of our friendship. *I was the chosen one*. I just really didn't figure that out over the 5 years that I knew her, and she never pursued it because I was married....she simply waited patiently for the right time

an the right circumstances, almost as if she knew I would at some point get divorced.

I was simply not ready for it, especially in light of my having just gotten out of an eight-year marriage that made me rethink permanent relationships and the lack of freedom that always accompanies them.

When it ended, it ended with nary a word spoken, much as it had begun. We remained friends, and I would see her occasionally in the mall, as well as out in the clubs and bars at night, but our relationship had now changed in a big way.

In the weeks after, the few times that we saw each other and conversed, whether it be in the mall during the day or when out at night, our conversations were just not the same, and the manner in which we even looked into each other's eyes was different.

At times, I swear I saw the beginning of tears in her eyes. I don't know if it was guilt or sorrow, but the reality of things was that in the end, it turned out to be all about the sex, and nothing more was to come of it.

I often think it could have been more. Perhaps if I would have allowed things to take their course and had shed my both my paranoia and fear, today we would be married. There is indeed every possibility that truly, she was my soulmate, and I just stupidly let it go and did not recognize it for what it was. However, fate had dealt its hand. Conceivably one could say that it was the *right girl* but at the wrong time, and for me, it was indeed the *wrong time*.

Ruining that deep friendship had a profound effect on me. I was starting to get tired of it all. I was tired of the whole lifestyle, even in light of the fact that my initial reasoning for not following through with a full-blown relationship with Adrianna was the potential lack of freedom, and of being trapped again. I was now having second thoughts about my entire way of being, and of my relationships, or lack of, with women in the past. Logic is sometimes not only buried deep in your mind, taking a while to come to the surface, but in your soul as well.

Although I was not ready to settle down again, my mindset was changing dramatically, and for the first time in years, I took a break from the whole scene, as well as a good long hard look at myself.

I actually went a number of months without any intimate female physical contact after my breakup with Adrianna, and if I went out to a bar a few times a week, it was to just sit quietly, enjoy a drink, think, and reflect on things, as I watched other *would-be kings*, confident that they were master of all they surveyed, go about their games of conquest, much as I had done....the pitch, the pose, the talk. In watching them, I was looking at my former self. Most of them were mere amateurs by my standards and experience, and from what I saw and observed, they didn't stand a chance of getting laid.

As I would listen within earshot just a few bar stools away, I could only think quietly to myself, almost as if I was a would-be mentor. *Christ, you're doing it wrong. Is that the best you've got? You need to say this; you need to say that. You're blowing it, pal. She's going to tell you to fuck off, and you're going to end up going home by yourself tonight, you dumb shit.*

What these guys didn't know is that somewhere along the line, things are going to change for them, *but have your fun now, because although you don't realize it, youth is fleeting, the clock is ticking, and nothing...nothing stays the same.* It's all going to come to an end, perhaps in five years, or ten years, or maybe it might even happen out of the blue next week. *This thing* somehow just hits you and you decide right then and there that it's time to pack it all in, that it's all bullshit, and that secret somewhat domestic and monogamous side of yourself finally makes an unannounced appearance, and tells you that it's time to be with just one person, and one person only, and to do it the right way.

I was now in a self-imposed pattern of chaste behavior. I had literally put myself in prison, and without question, it served the purpose of clearing my head. The only question now was, how long would it last?

April, 1983. Spring was in full bloom. I had stepped out of salon management, was still traveling with the national education team, but of my own doing, was not traveling with the same frequency as before.

We now had salons in almost every state in the country and although my travel had slowed down substantially, what little of it I was doing, I still loved. The company's expansion continued to take it

to many other major metropolitan markets on both coasts, and with it, the opportunity on my end, to travel to new cities.

I loved the West Coast, California especially. When I was assigned to do a seminar there, visit a salon, or have a meeting at the corporate offices in Los Angeles, I would marvel at the culture there and all that it had to offer. It was radically different from anything on the East Coast.

Given my great love for New York City, it too, was an equal choice for a possible permanent move.

With so much free time now, I had started to go into Manhattan several times a month. I had previously been going in for advanced schooling on my own at least two times per year, but now, with so much time available to me, I was going in almost every weekend just to be there. enjoy myself, experience the city, and in many ways, clear my head.

Through those repeated visits, I developed a great yearning for its lifestyle and all that it offered. It was a combination of stimulating, exciting, and to some degree, emotionally exhausting, and New York could do it all to you within the framework of 24 hours, but I loved every minute of it.

I found out about what it takes to live and work there. Then as now, for all the young Turks trying to carve out their niche there, survival is sometimes fleeting, and in some cases requires multiple jobs to stay afloat. It could easily be said that 9 to 5 in New York City is a completely different experience, compared to what 9 to 5 is in any other American city.

New York had become like a drug to me. The city that never sleeps has a way of seducing you with its pleasures; pleasures that range from the artistic, the visual, and the avant-garde, to that of guilty and sinful. I loved to sit in Bryant Park and people-watch, but moreover, I loved watching the diverse mix of women that I would see. It filled a void for me, even in lieu of my lifestyle having changed considerably in recent months. The pleasure that it gave me instantly eradicated the occasional depression that would beset me.

Perhaps it was that I had not really been with another female since my affair with Adrianna, or perhaps I was beginning to experience

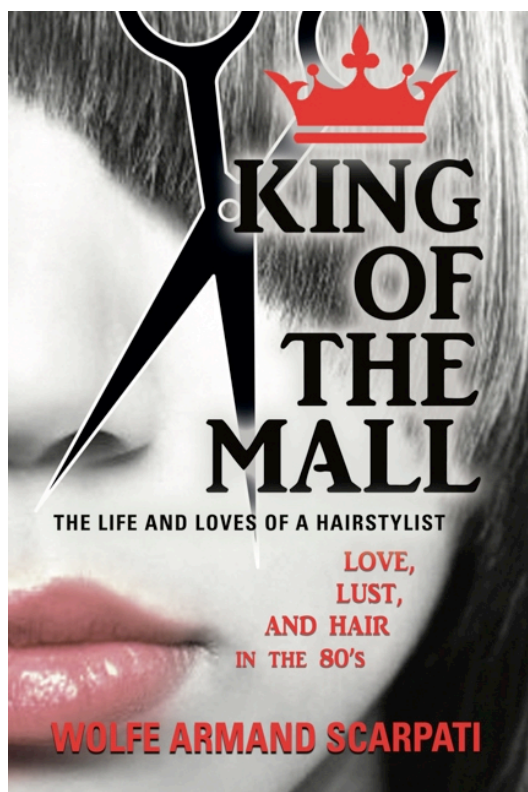
what one might call withdrawal from what had previously been my constant need for sex, as well as the imprisonment I had self-imposed on myself. With each visit, I began to feel a stirring inside me.

Although the city placated me emotionally to some degree, and in many ways expanded my thought processes about so many things, it was also starting to bring back a sexual reawakening in me, one which I knew I would have to keep under control and find a middle ground for, given all of the women that were apparently available at any given time. It was a city where just the smell in the streets was enough to arouse all of your senses.

I had found a little bohemian café down in Greenwich Village called Café' LaMond which I started to frequent quite a bit during my weekend stays, and soon began to make a circle of friends there from the eclectic tribe of regulars who made it their regular haunt...writers, artists, musicians, and people from within the fashion industry, including a bevy of aspiring young models.

Little by little, I began to feel like myself again. I had found a group of peers that shared stories of their lives with me, as did I with them. We talked of our struggles, our relationships, and of how as artists we sometimes had to suffer through the pain of anonymity and the price that we had to pay for the sake of our respective art.

It was there that I met Meeka, and I was about to be introduced to a world of pleasure that I never even knew existed.



The 70's and 80's were truly glorious times for the salon industry. So very many salons were located in malls, the centerpiece for shopping, socializing, and, hooking up with the opposite sex. A delightful but very candid memoir of a hair stylist who worked there. This guy makes Christian Grey look like an amateur....

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