

Long before there was a Las Vegas, there was a Shelby Beach. A century-old summer resort, Shelby Beach was eventually destroyed and replaced with a middle-class suburb. Sex, murder, and intrigue led to the transformation. This novel describes it all.

The Cottages at Shelby Beach

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## **The Cottages at Shelby Beach**

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# **The Cottages at Shelby Beach**

**Ethan Tyler Anderson**

“It’ll take me a while to cool off, though,” she said with a big smile. “I can’t tolerate all that sun. My skin will turn bright red.”

I knew who she was. She was Mrs. Torino, my supervisor’s ex-wife. She had bright red hair, and skin that had a reddish tinge to it. It was heavily freckled. She was wearing a gigantic white sun hat when she came in, and she took it off and put it on the stool next to her. She wore a white, nearly see-through, sun blouse over her dark black two-piece bikini. She wore the blouse unbuttoned. She wore big sunglasses when she walked into the restaurant, but when she sat on the stool she removed them and put them into her large straw beach bag. She was beautiful, strikingly beautiful.

“Can I leave this here?” she asked as she put the beach bag on the stool next to her.

“Ha! There hasn’t been a customer here in half an hour,” I replied. “Not a problem.”

She gave me another big smile. Her teeth were shiny white, especially when contrasted with the reddish hue of her skin. Her eyes were green, a beautiful green.

“What can I get for you, ma’am?” I asked.

“Well, the first thing you can do is not call me ma’am,” she said without losing that big smile. She extended her thin arm across the ice-cream bar and introduced herself, “Hi, I am Janet Torino.” Her white blouse extended about halfway up her forearm. Her arms were thin and long.

I wiped my hand on my bathing suit quickly and awkwardly, and I shook her hand. Embarrassed, I tried to excuse myself, “sorry, you know, with the ice cream and cooking and all. Dirty hands.” I gave a meek smile.

She continued to smile, but she nodded her head down a bit in a little laugh. “Not a problem.” She looked up again, directly into my eyes, “not a problem at all. What is your name?”

“Jacob,” I blurted out like I had to hiccup. “Jacob Wessel.”

“Hi Jacob,” she said through that beautiful smile. Her green eyes were mesmerizing. I was beginning to feel some churning inside. I was not accustomed to having a woman this age and this beautiful talk to me for this long.

“You can get me a coke, Jacob, ... with ice, please ... and a straw,” she said. She reached into her beach bag to get the money.

She must have known at this point that I was struck with her beauty because I was fumbling around like ... well, like a fifteen-year-old gawky boy.

I managed to give her the coke without spilling it on her. When I placed it on the counter in front of her, though, I couldn’t help but notice her breasts. Actually, I couldn’t help but notice them because I think they were resting on the counter. They were bulging out of the thin black top that was supposed to cover them. They were red and freckled like the rest of her body, but just above her black top, they were very white, ... very, very white. The combination of the red and the white bulging flesh, ultimately covered by a thin, tight, black bathing suit top, certainly captured my attention! I probably stared at her breasts a little longer than I should have. I suspect that she noticed my staring.

“And the straw?” she said, interrupting my staring.

“Huh?” I said stupidly.

She smiled at me broadly, stared into my eyes with her green eyes, and asked again for a straw, “I like to drink my coke through a straw, Jacob. Could I have a straw, please.”

“Ohh, ... ohhh, .... yes ...” I said stupidly. I fumbled to pull one of the straws from the container. I nearly knocked the whole container to the floor.

I handed her the straw, and she smiled and gave a very coquettish, “thank you.” She removed the paper covering from the straw, and she crumpled it into a ball. She looked at me again, smiled, and held the straw in her mouth, “I like to chew on them as well.” She gave me a little wink with one eye.

I felt myself losing my breath. I tried to keep my composure. I tried to smile. “Yes, ... yes, ma’am,” was all that I was able to say.

“... Janet,” she said to correct me. She did not take her eyes off me as she sipped a little coke from the straw.

“Ohhh ... Janet,” I said. Uncomfortable with calling her “Janet,” though, I quickly corrected myself, “Sorry, Mrs. Torino.”

“... Janet, ... or Jan,” she corrected again. She said this firmly, but the smile did not disappear. I am not a “Mrs.” I am not married.”

I just nodded to show that I understood.

“Did you know that I used to be married to Carl?”

“To ... to Mr. Torino,” I impulsively stammered. “Yes, ... yes, I knew.”

“How old are you?” Mrs. Torino asked as she continued sipping the coke through the straw.

Remembering what Owen had told me about not telling people that I was under 16, I awkwardly sputtered, “Seventeen...seventeen, ... soon to be eighteen.”

She smiled at me knowingly, and then she looked down at her coke to take another sip. I was hoping that someone would come in to

order something. I felt simultaneously very excited and very uncomfortable.

“Well, Jacob, I appreciate your company,” she said, looking up while she sipped her coke. I could see at once the emerald green eyes and the bright red chest and the bulging white breasts. I didn’t know where to look. I felt like I needed to turn away, but I felt captivated by her. “You are certainly a very respectful young man.”

“Thank you ... thank you,” I said. I could usually feel it when I was blushing. My face would get all red, and I would get very hot. I felt that right now, and I was sweating. I needed to escape. “I had better clean up now, I guess. I had ... better clean up.” I grabbed a towel and started to wipe the other end of the counter. While looking at the counter, I muttered, “Owen will be here soon, or maybe your husband. My shift is about over.”

“He is not my husband, Jacob. We are divorced,” she repeated sternly. The smile was no longer there. “I have the kids all week, and he has them for one day ... today. I will be bringing them back to Waterbury shortly.”

“Sorry, ... I am sorry,” I replied, still wiping imaginary crumbs from the counter. There was a long pause. She broke it.

“Have you ever seen the cottage where Carl lives, Jacob?” Mrs. Torino asked.

I thought of all the days that I had been in the Shelby General Store picking out comic books and magazines. I had always wondered what the Downs’s apartment looked like.

“No ... no ... I haven’t,” I mumbled, still wiping away imagined crumbs. “I have been downstairs in the old General Store many times, but I have never been upstairs where the Downs’s used to live.”

“Would you like to see it?”

I didn't answer. I kept wiping the counter for imaginary crumbs. I was wiping now more feverishly than before.

"Jacob!" she stated firmly, as if to wake me from a stupor.

I looked up and down the edge of the counter. She was now turned in her swivel chair to face me. One of her long arms was extended on the counter and the other was by her side. One of her breasts was now pushed up by the counter such that her nipple was barely covered by her bathing suit top. The white of her breast stood in stark contrast to the black marble top of the ice cream bar and the red skin of her upper chest. Her blouse on that side was pushed under her right arm. The other breast was partially visible and partially concealed by that white, sheer blouse.

"Would you like to see it, Jacob?" she asked sternly, as if to cut through the fog that seemed to envelop my brain.

"Ma'am?"

"...the cottage, Jacob?"

"Yes," I mumbled. "Yes, I would," I said again, as if in a trance.

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