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Author's Note

THIS IS A work of fiction. If you believe a character to be someone that you know, trust me you don't. But publicized historical events and, unfortunately, the science and mechanics of terrorism, are accurately described.

Lies In Progress was completed just days before the attacks on New York City and Washington, these making necessary minor descriptive changes. Hopefully, government actions will cause the weapon described in this book to remain fanciful.

I thank my brother, Leonard, for his long support and helpful suggestions.
Comments are welcome.

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Author's Note to the Digital Edition

IT HAS BEEN nine years since I completed writing *Lies In Progress*. Since then, little has changed with regard to terrorism. The threat still exists though, thankfully, the event described as CATAclysm in this book has not occurred. Hopefully, with enough luck and vigilance, it never will.

While editing this edition, correcting a few typos from the printed version and changing occasional words and punctuation marks, I again became riveted by the experiences of LeeAnn and The Major: a teenager confronting greater peril than anyone should; and a deeply flawed man seeking redemption. I hope that your emotions will be equally stirred too.

As always, comments are welcome.

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FOREWORD

THE TV NEWS droned on as he explained my poisoning. Torn refugees and smartly dressed soldiers; then an eleven year old baton twirler whose loose costume anticipated my diminishing curves.

Later we viewed a documentary of the husband who disposed of his wife's body fragments in a stream. Hopefully she was dead before chipping began. If guidelines for lovers still exist *that* should be the first!

Or is murder now acceptable when a great political career is at stake? When certain things must simply be done and not considered.

BOOK ONE

LOVE, AND AFTER

Beginnings

CHAPTER ONE

“HIS THING WAS BIG AND HAIRY.”

"Well aren't they?"

"Some," her friend responded with a knowing smile. Not laughing since their geometry teacher, though he was in his sixties, wasn't yet deaf or unobservant. Both girls stared intently onto their worksheets with lips barely moving.

"What else?"

"You can read it," the seventeen year old said to her younger classmate, passing the letter across the small space separating their desks.

It was four pages and was written in a stream of consciousness style as if the writer had been trying both to communicate and to understand her experience.

"We met in Media Play's parking lot after work. He asked if I was hungry and I said that I didn't eat since lunch and he said that he had food in his City apartment but never learned how to cook and I said that I could. We went in separate cars and he drove fast so I had to drive fast too which scared me but I was more scared of losing him.

"He was smoking when I parked but put the cigarette out when he saw me—I HATE smoking. But it doesn't seem to matter so much when you're in love. Maybe he knows how I feel and is trying to stop smoking.

His apartment is on East 50th Street by the river. The doorman smiled like he wondered if I was his daughter or his niece but I smiled as if I belonged there which maybe now I do.

"The apartment has two entrances: one into a small foyer and the other through the kitchen. The refrigerator and stove are old fashioned and he said that he was lent the apartment by a friend and didn't change anything since he only sleeps there when he works late and his wife never comes. I guess he noticed that I felt funny when he said wife cause he put his arm round me and I felt warm and the funny feeling went away.

Then he said that it was time to feed me and smiled which I love to see and we went to the tiny kitchen and found ham and cheese and bread and he said that we could eat in bed.

"I knew we'd have sex since the first time I felt him hard against me but wondered who does what and when? But everything went easy! He said it's fun showering together and I smiled and said OK but I had to pee and he said I should and I did and then I called him into the bathroom and we took off our clothes and went into the shower and he soaped

me and I soaped him and his thing was big and hairy. Mom coming. More tomorrow."

The sixteen year old slipped the note back.

"Seeing LeeAnn tonight?"

"I'll be at her house on Friday—come!"

"I'm baby-sitting but call me!"

Her friend agreed and both looked up into the scowl of their teacher, feeling relief when he didn't demand to see the note. Twenty minutes later school was over and the girls walked to their Scarsdale homes, deep in conversation and barely acknowledging passing friends.

"Where did they meet?"

"He needed someone to teach him how to use his computer and her father volunteered her."

"For what?" the grinning sixteen year old asked. In response, she received a painful grip on her shoulder.

"No one knows but you and no one else will!"

Her friend reassured her and their discussion turned to the new, expensive, and little used teen center in this wealthy community. Though formerly a Jewish enclave it now held considerable Christian population, they having been attracted by the excellent schools and manicured fantasy of sobriety. Here, students who worked were motivated by the desire for independence and not poverty.

The Media Play where LeeAnn worked was a factory like cavernous building. Its unfinished beam ceiling enclosed a carpeted area of book, record, and video game displays, armchairs, and snack bar.

Once, at her last job, she sat and aimlessly turned index cards, having finished the available work but being unwilling to leave early and lose pay. Suddenly her shoulder was patted by the smiling boss who said, "doing great." Even Media Play was better.

LeeAnn was barely sixteen but her height (five feet ten inches) and gravity of expression made her seem older. She was quiet and paused before speaking, as if considering spontaneous speech unwise, even dangerous.

Her straight blond hair extended halfway down her back. This seductive element was, however, unmatched by her behavior for she wore no makeup and, her friends insisted, had worn a skirt only twice since kindergarten: for class graduation ceremonies. Yet her persistent concern for others, as reflected in the favors she volunteered, caused no one to doubt her femininity. She was a girl who looked like a woman and thought like the mother she had become for her two younger sisters.

LeeAnn felt guilty. Not about having sex which she felt was her decision to make. But for lying to her parents who believed that she had been working late doing inventory. Even if everyone was asleep when she got home and, as usual, they asked no questions the next day.

Her mother slept late. Her father returned home from work between midnight and three, when their frequent arguments began. These didn't last long since he took the seven fifty train to New York City. LeeAnn wondered how he functioned at his law firm with so little sleep and where he spent his evenings.

The Monsters (her five year old twin sisters—the result of a poorly placed diaphragm after a drunken party her mother once confided) had now chosen their clothes for the first time, in an acceptable but creative fashion. Then they glared at LeeAnn because her lateness made it impossible for her to dress them as she usually did.

Choosing her clothes wasn't a problem: a shirt and jeans. Nor was underwear, a girl in the locker room once suggesting that she could manage with a tight T-shirt instead of a bra. She wasn't really flat but her breasts *were* small. Like her vagina which Ralph liked. Or maybe he just said that he did.

LeeAnn thought how differently women and men related to sex. Only now did the phrase of her friends, "sex starved," make sense. She realized that she had sex because Ralph was understanding. Possibly another man, from some bizarre curiosity, would have insisted that she pee in front of him. But he had sensed the timidity beneath her confident smile and responded to it. Why *had* he wanted her? Not because she was a good lay or from being horny for he could certainly find a more experienced woman with his looks and money and he had a wife.

These thoughts caused her to miss the last step and her books went flying as she grabbed the banister. The Monsters quickly stopped laughing for she hadn't yet made them breakfast.

While driving to school her sisters chatted about their teacher's cupcakes and scary stories. Being good readers and nosy, LeeAnn prayed that they hadn't found her letters.

Despite protests she accompanied them to their classroom though this made her late. No way would she leave them at the building's door as her mother did.

Her first class was English and this teacher didn't comment on lateness, choosing to avoid unnecessary confrontations. Twenty nine years before she had argued about a trivial matter with a teenager who committed suicide the next morning.

Though it was impossible that her words caused this, she thereafter hassled students only about important matters, making her the most popular teacher in the school. Even being voted by a senior class as the one they would most value being marooned with.

She had never married despite the promise of her name (Bea Frootful), this having aroused an insider joke which students affectionately shared with newcomers.

LeeAnn's crotch itched. She squirmed in her seat, hoping that it would help but it didn't, and she wondered if the sex caused it or some disease. Once, after a boy fondled her, she found white spots on her thigh and frantically

called Penny who suggested that she wash the soap off.

LeeAnn wondered if she looked different as a non-virgin and smiled as she remembered having once believed that others knew when she was menstruating.

Bored with the class work, a review of grammar for that week's exam, she wrote another note.

"You were right—it didn't hurt. He slept for a few minutes and we had sex again when he woke which was fun but not as much as the first time. I fell asleep and when I woke he was getting dressed so I got dressed and we drove home but slower. I didn't see the doorman which I was glad of and told him. He said that with the size of the Christmas present he gives him he'd better be polite. He kissed me before leaving and said that he'd call me.

"Am I his girlfriend or his sex buddy? Will I teach him computer again and can I be sure what he's paying for now? If for sex, more than thirty dollars I hope! I won't know for weeks: he's going away. More next."

The bell rang and LeeAnn joined the throng surging through the halls. Penny was in her biology class and she would slip her the note to her there.

This teacher, Mr. Haskley, raved at late students, deprecated all, and generated numerous complaints. But he was too near retirement for disciplinary measures to be effective. Decades before, to arouse sympathy, a principal implied that his behavior was caused by a war injury. But the ensuing sympathetic effect soon disappeared as student suffering continued.

LeeAnn's concentration flagged after giving Penny the note. But it momentarily became acute upon hearing the word "insides." Then she had a thought: maybe sex was a deeper experience for women than for men because their body was *invaded* during sex.

The boy behind whispered in her ear, "What would you do if two guys raped you?"

LeeAnn usually ignored dumb comments. Now, realizing the depth of the sexual experience, her response had greater vehemence than she had intended.

"*I'd Bobbitt them,*" she replied.

End of Chapter One