

Edward Southgate



GREAT
PLEASURES

GREAT PLEASURES

“The Night I Met Gianni Versace”

Edward Southgate



BERNABEL BOOKS

“The Night I Met Gianni Versace,” from *Great Pleasures*

Copyright © 2014 by Edward Southgate

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the author except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

The Night I Met Gianni Versace

Oh, memory—you're so random.

I was walking in the general direction of home along Bleecker Street this week, and as I passed Broadway heading west, I saw the odd triangular awning above the entrance to the condo complex at 77 Bleecker. A wealthy ex-boyfriend of mine had lived in there during my senior year at NYU, and I was suddenly overwhelmed with remembering a moment that took place in that building that hadn't resurfaced in decades.

I'll say my ex-boyfriend's name was Jarad, because that's the first name that pops into my head. Jarad was an Aries, with a proud brow and upright carriage. He was beautiful, tall, snobby, fashionable, Jewish, exceedingly well-hung, and idle. He would have cigarettes delivered from the corner deli. I'm not sure he ever went to class, and I cannot remember his major. Art History? Hotel Management? It didn't really matter, as he had enough money to ensure he never had to work a day in his life, although to his credit, he had learned from his father's suicidal depression as an aimless heir that some kind of purpose in life was necessary. Jarad never had pocket cash. He bought \$40,000 works of art on a whim, but I had to buy him drinks at the bar.

What else about Jarad? He drank a bottle of vodka—in tumbler glasses, neat—every two days. I learned to drink it that way, too, and soon I could distinguish between the tastes of vodka brands with my eyes closed. Only the first sip burns.

Jarad probably had had a nose job as a teenager, as it was a little too perfectly formed, but I never got him to admit this. He would concede that he'd had his ears surgically pinned back, but he couldn't very well deny that, since the scars were visible behind his ears, usually hidden under his curls of soft black hair.

He and I lasted together no longer than three months; it may have been merely two. Our intense relationship flared up in late winter of 1991 and we barely made it into spring. At the time, I was hard-working and decidedly unfashionable, even crunchy. I suspect he was only into me at all because I was a writer and was I going through a mystical, spiritual phase that intrigued him.

Early after we met, when I was so entranced with him that I would do anything he asked, he got me drunk on expensive potato vodka, and had a friend of ours shave off my beard. But there was little he could do about my fashion sense. It takes money and interest to be fashionable, and I had neither—I was making pocket money interning at a publishing company, and I didn't see what was wrong with wearing patched jeans and an untucked button-down over a t-shirt every day.

Before our love burned out, though, I spent many nights at his spacious, modern condo, which was a ground floor duplex with a lower garden level. Jarad's roommate lived downstairs—she was a compact, snidely sarcastic, busty woman our age named something like Astrid who didn't go to school, but was as wealthy and fashion-oriented

as Jarad was. I only saw her in brief glimpses as she passed through his upper level to take the stairs to her own lower floor with its own amenities.

Astrid was sort-of dating a tall, perfectly muscular, stunning black dude who was a model and dressed like a rock star. I say “sort-of” because he was flamboyantly semi-gay. Mostly they did coke together downstairs and then attended fabulous parties. Anyway, one evening as Astrid and her model passed through the upper level, Jarad and I were in the kitchen, and the model bragged to Jarad that he was walking in the fashion show of Gianni Versace.

“Who’s that?” I asked.

Astrid gave me the most withering look I’d ever experienced. “Oh, Edward,” she moaned, as though my question summed up every quality she’d ever suspected I lacked. Jarad and the model laughed, and I felt stupid, but also self-righteous.

“Well, how should I know?” I asked.

Still laughing at me, Astrid and the model vanished to their own quarters, and, stinging from the snub self-importantly, I pushed it out of my mind.

A night or so later, Jarad and I had the apartment to ourselves, and after fooling around, we had a failed attempt at some light S&M. He hit me once on the ass with the strap of a belt, I said, “That’s enough,” and that was that. Annoyed, he went to bed.

I’ve never slept well, and I was freaking out a little over Jarad’s earlier offer to “keep me” after I graduated, which I’d refused, needing to be my own man always, so I left Jarad’s bedroom in the wee hours to sit on the couch in the living room and smoke Marlboro Lights and read a book. I think I was reading Tom Robbins, maybe *Jitterbug Perfume*. As I thought we had the place to ourselves, I was only wearing a white t-shirt and snug baby-blue briefs.

It was probably around 3 AM when the front door opened and Astrid, the muscular black model, and a short, portly man in a purple suit burst in the condo. They were all smiling the too-wide grin instigated by the particular combo of booze, coke, and an absolutely fabulous evening.

I sat up straight on the couch, suddenly remembering that I was not wearing pants.

“Edward, this is Gianni,” Astrid said.

“Hi,” I said.

“Ciao,” Gianni replied. He took in my package bulging in my underwear and grinned wider.

Then the trio breezed downstairs and I went back to reading my book, feeling flushed with titillation and terribly embarrassed.

That was the night I met Gianni Versace.

Dearest Reader:

I hope you enjoyed “The Night I Met Gianni Versace”.

The full novel *Great Pleasures* is available as both a paperback and Kindle ebook at [my website](http://www.flataffect.org/greatpleasures.html) (<http://www.flataffect.org/greatpleasures.html>).

Or you can buy it directly through Amazon or Barnes and Noble. (B&N has the paperback only).

[Amazon](http://www.amazon.com/Edward-Southgate/e/B00M89UPAQ) (<http://www.amazon.com/Edward-Southgate/e/B00M89UPAQ>)

[Barnes and Noble](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/great-pleasures-edward-southgate/1119464618) (<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/great-pleasures-edward-southgate/1119464618>)

Please check out *Great Pleasures*. Indulge! Happy reading.

Thank you!

Edward Southgate