

play. kiss. dominate. laugh.
sing. tease. cry. open. feel.
breathe. sigh. moan. vow.
deny. tease. think. cry. crave.
do. lie. beg. hold. see. speak.
consume. pull. submit. push.
close. pray. bleed. shudder.
weep. tend. soak. revel. kiss.
swing. rock. tell. sway. hum.
surrender. stand. eat. offer.
push. burn. resist. spread.
promise. revel. accept. soothe.
play. kiss. dominate. laugh.
sing. tease. cry. open. feel.
breathe. sigh. sing. moan. vow.
deny. tease. burn. cry. crave.
do. lie. beg. hold. see. speak.
consume. pull. submit. push.
close. pray. bleed. shudder.
weep. tend. Rachel. revel.
kiss. swing. rock. tell. sway.
surrender. stand. eat. offer.
push. carry. take. be. spread.
promise. revel. accept. soothe.
play. kiss. dominate. laugh.
sing. tease. touch. open. feel.
breathe. sigh. gasp. moan. vow.
deny. give. think. cry. have.
do. lie. beg. hold. see. speak.

Songs of Dominance
Three

CD Reiss

Songs of Dominance

(Rachel)

by

CD Reiss

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you don't want to---*

Caveat

It is not necessary to read this story to
understand the rest of the series.

It is strictly supplemental.

This should be read after Burn, and
before Resist.

Rachel.

*Do people like you ever
have wishes, Jonathan?*

What does that mean?

People like me?

*People who have
everything. Was there ever
something you wanted, but could
only wish for?*

I hated the word *festooned*.
Festooned implied some

kind of old-world family dancing
around with ribbons, draping them
over lamps and doorways,
catching the flowers as they fell
out of their hair. It brought to mind
musical theater and swaying skirts.
It felt Swiss Family Robinson.
Mary Poppins. The Waltons. Good
night, Jon-boy.

Despite the sour taste in the
front of my tongue and the bitter
one in back, *festooned* was the
only word that suited the house on
this, the day of my engagement

party. I wanted to drink far more than I had. I wanted to take that bottle of Jameson's I knew my mother hid under her bathroom vanity and sit in a corner to finish it. I wanted to suck it dry. But I didn't do that anymore. When I drank, I held a glass and sipped until the ice melted, never finishing before. Then I waited and eventually got another. I hadn't been drunk since I was sixteen.

And if I did drink that

bottle? Who would care but my fiancé, Jessica? Or more to the point, whose opinion did I value besides hers? Who else did I serve?

She wanted this event, and she got it. I couldn't deny her anything, and really, it wasn't such a big deal to throw a party. It was nothing to gather a team of people from Hotel A to *festoon* my parent's Palisades house, send invitations to the right people, and make sure there was food. My

staff were experts at managing women with exquisite taste, such as my bride-to-be. It was no burden to me whatsoever.

The burden was having the engagement at my father's house. The burden was explaining to him that the wedding would be at the my future in-law's residence in Venice, and his presence was not requested.

There were reasons for all of it, of course, spite not being the least of them. I understood spite,

even enjoyed it on occasion, poured over cold cubes of guilt with a chaser of regret. But this spite was too old and too ugly to enjoy.

“There you are,” my mother’s voice came from behind me. I’d been looking out toward the yard, watching subsets of staff ready it for the flood of people.

“Have you seen Jess?”

“She’s out with my sisters getting her feet and fingers done. Something tasteful, I’m sure. No

need to worry.”

Mom slipped her hands over my shoulders, her hands brushing the fabric free of some imaginary lint. “Are you happy?”

“Why do you ask?”

“You’ve seemed down. Is it Jessica?”

“No.”

“The thing with your father?” Mom didn’t look concerned as much as benign. She’d perfected that look of harmlessness over forty years, and

she wore it well under light makeup and a strawberry blonde chignon.

“Yes.”

“He’s come to terms with it.”

“Is the bar up? I need a drink.”

She looped her arm into mine and we walked outside.

My father hadn’t ever actually come to terms with

anything in his life, ever. He sat and waited until opportunities presented themselves. He was utterly non-aggressive in the way a cat is utterly still outside a mouse hole, waiting for the rodent to either forget he was trapped or get hungry enough to risk everything and leave.

The party setup was going smoothly, people in tuxedos and black dresses gadding about with purpose. The hedges had been trimmed, the tennis court locked.

The pool had been cleaned, repainted and decorated with floating flowers. No one asked me a goddamn thing about anything and I liked it that way. The bartender, an actor from the looks of him, was setting up glasses in neat rows. Behind him, the majesty of the Pacific Ocean stretched into a haze where sea met sky.

“He told me he understood,” Mom said, continuing a conversation she assumed I wanted to have. “Business deals

sometimes go bad and someone gets hurt.”

“It’s fine, ma.”

“You should talk to him about it.”

“Hey,” I said to the bartender. “Two Jameson’s, rocks.”

“I’m not having any,” Mom said.

“They’re both for me.”

She smiled and punched my arm. “Jon. Always the joker. Listen to me. This radio silence

with your father isn't productive. I mean, he did agree to have the engagement here."

"You insisted."

"To save him embarrassment. This thing with him has put me in the middle and to be truthful, it's stressful."

She knew how to feel stress, my mother. The management of anxiety was an art form with her, necessitating the use of a cocktail of medications and hospitalizations when she

misjudged her secret alcohol intake. Poor Mom. Really. A willing captive in a house as big as an island nation.

It was my turn to flick an imaginary piece of lint off her shoulder. “He took my future in-laws for everything, blew a chunk of it and passed a few million back to them. Not enough for them to get a decent lawyer.”

“It was twelve years ago and it was a legitimate business deal.”

“Legal. It was legal. Not legitimate.”

Despite earlier denials, she took the glass of whiskey, holding it but not putting it to her lips, as if it was a prop. I remembered she drank wine in public and whiskey in private. I was getting muddled already.

“I know they’re your family now, the Carneses. But don’t forget where you came from, young man.”

As if I ever could.

The last family party my father and I had attended together had been seven years earlier. Sheila's birthday had an unfortunate proximity to Christmas, so every one of her birthday parties became Christmas parties. Her house in Palos Verdes perched on the edge of a sheer drop to the ocean. For a mile in each direction, a beach as wide as a sidestreet ribboned at the base of

the cliff. But toward the end of that year, the beach disappeared under rushing tides as it rained for twenty days straight.

Children toddled underfoot, with nannies running bent-kneed behind them. Extended family on top of extended family, most drunk or on their way there, myself included, even at sixteen. I did what I wanted, like all my friends. Nothing could happen to us that money couldn't fix, so no one paid attention.

I had no self-control at that point. I was a loose cannon of temperamental fits, drunken rages, and risky behavior. The last incident had been driving my father's new Maserati into South Gate to drag my friend Gordon out of a meth house. I'd thrown him into the driver's side and hit the gas from the passenger's side to wake his sorry ass out of a stupor. We'd sideswiped his dealer's Escalade, four-thousand-dollars' worth, and in the end, Gordon had

gone right back to using, but my addiction to nearly dying had been sated for a month, at least.

Then, the week before Christmas, Sheila's birthday. Los Angeles had already had twenty-two inches of rain since school started. There was a rumor Death Valley would have a once-in-a-lifetime bloom, come spring. My friends and I were planning a road trip in Charles's Hummer just to mow our path over fields of poppies.

I was drunk already, bullshitting with my cousin Arthur over which Ivy League schools we were going to stroll into. Which had the best clubs, where the legacies were. Arthur was a douchebag. The last time I'd driven down Sunset with him, he leaned out of his BMW to make some noise at a girl, which was bad enough. But when she flipped him the bird he shouted, "Man, I bet there's some guy out there so tired of fucking you."

“Arthur, really?” I felt like getting out and apologizing to her, but the light turned green and we were gone.

“What, Jon? Look at her. All legs and shit. Fuck her.”

That was the last time I went out with Arthur. But at a family party, as long as we kept to schools and baseball, I could hold a conversation with him.

Sheila’s party graduated from family thing to some kind of pre-Christmas fuckall event, and

the kitchen got crowded. I was less and less inclined to move. People I knew came in and out, most not related to me at that point, and aunts and uncles kissed me goodbye and left.

I don't even know what I was drinking. A bong went around. It was lead crystal and totally illegal, even if the bud wasn't, and the liquid inside was chartreuse absinthe.

Just because.

The movement of the party

shifted down the hall, through the library and into the living room, where I saw my father was still there.

And Rachel had shown up.

Was there ever something you wanted, but could only wish for, Jonathan?

I wish I wasn't raised by crazy people.

Something for the future. That you want, but don't think

you'll get.

Yes, I—

*Don't tell me. That'll ruin
it.*

Jessica was nowhere to be found. She didn't answer my texts or calls. Margie, who had taken her out for the “girl thing” with three other sisters, said my fiancé had left the spa in her Mercedes the hour before.

“Did she have an accident?”

“I don’t know little brother,” Margie said, grabbing a glass of wine before the first guest arrived. “She seemed fine. The usual.”

“What does that mean?” I felt a stab of anger. Seven sisters. A couple were bound to dislike my wife.

“Charming and polite. Warm, even. But not.”

“Howdy!” Leanne came across the empty backyard, grabbing a glass as soon as the bartender poured it. The emerald

of her dress brought out the fire engine in her hair. “You should see Jess’s nails. She got a French with an airbrush. So cute.”

“Did you see her out front?” I asked.

“Nope. Are those the cufflinks you’re wearing?” Leanne fixed the flowers in her hair by the reflection in the window. She wanted to make clothes, so Dad had bought her a factory. Another money-losing proposition. Next to Deirdre, the still devout,

chronically depressed Irish poet, she was the most creative in the family.

“No,” I said. “I just wore these to offend you.”

“He wants to know how Jessica looked.” Margie said.

“Cool and collected. She’s a rock, you know.” Leanne squeezed my cheeks. “You did good.”

Leanne, who was habitually single at twenty-six because she was a workaholic, had no business judging, even when I agreed with

her.

I was fifteen, and Rachel was a year and a half older when we began seeing each other, if that's what you could call it. Discretion was absolutely necessary, so she didn't come to any family parties. I didn't want her near my father, period. End of. She knew why. I knew why. No one else did. Her old affair with my father when she was too young

and impressionable to know better was a secret bought and paid for with jewelry and electronics. I kept it for her because she wanted it that way, and though I would have loved to tell the world about what kind of animal my father was, the understanding between myself and a few of my sisters, was that Mom would break into a hundred pieces if what she knew in her heart was confirmed. My father was, so far, the luckiest son of a bitch in the world.

Rachel and I were rarely seen in public together unless she went to a Loyola ballgame I pitched, or if I happened to show up at a play she was in. It was hard to stay away from her, but necessary. We didn't talk about a future past the possibility that we could attend the same college, provided she got a scholarship.

We met in my car, late at night after Mom was passed out. Dad was gone often and he would have let me out the front door

anyway. The staff didn't care, or expected no less: another irresponsible rich brat, in a society full of them, slipping out to debauch himself on school nights.

Rachel had a harder time of it. She had a tough home life. Her stepfather went into a controlling fits, locking her and her mother in the house at night. The windows were barred and the deadbolts had inside keys he slept with. In her closet, Rachel found a trapdoor to the crawlspace under the house. I

met her on the corner. Seeing her walk even a block in the dark in that neighborhood twisted my stomach in knots, every time. I never got used to it. Usually, when she got into the car, I laughed from released tension and the sight of cobwebs in her hair.

She attended Marlborough on a hefty financial aid package which was still a stretch for her parents, and was required to maintain a GPA of 3.75 or face the budget cuts and substandard

educational opportunities of the LAUSD. She was in the home stretch. Smart, diligent, studious, and yes, beautiful; she would be the first in her family to attend a top school and get a medical degree. I'd have followed her anywhere. Business schools were a dime a dozen, and Dad would buy me entry to the university of my choice, even if I never told him why the choice was made. In this case, Rachel and I chose University of Pennsylvania and

crossed our fingers, she for Perelman School of Medicine, and I for Wharton a year later. It was Ivy League, which was easy for me, and hard for her.

All this meant she didn't have the time or permission to drive around in my Mercedes, or run into hotel rooms with me. But we were young, and infatuated, and on the cusp of freedom, or in her case, death.

*What do you mean by
“wish” then, Rachel?*

*Like, hope you get
something you know is
impossible, but hope anyway.*

*I wish I could be with you
like a normal person.*

*What’s normal to someone
like you?*

The backyard buzzed with activity. Fiona, never one to miss an opportunity to invite Deirdre’s

scorn, had managed to book psychics, tarot card readers, crystal healers and a hypnotist for the cocktail hour.

The black baby grand had been brought onto the patio, and the four musicians Dad had plucked from some music school in central LA set up stands and instruments. Piano, two violins, and cello. Except the first violinist wasn't tuning a violin. She was tuning a viola. Hardly worth making a fuss over, except she

was stunning, with full lips and long, dark hair. She had to be fifteen in flat feet, with a chin that pointed upwards as if daring the world to hit her on the jaw.

“She’s magnificent, no?”

My father’s voice beside me, admiring a girl who was probably in high school. I looked away quickly.

“Jail bait, dad. Ever hear of it?” I turned to face him. In his late fifties, he was still a good-looking guy. His red hair had turned

completely silver five years earlier, and stayed fully attached to his head. The girls loved him. And when I said girls, I meant just that. Girls.

“You’re avoiding me. I was looking for some common ground.”

“Uh-huh.” I didn’t know where to start with him. Common-ground wise, we had Rachel. That was awkward enough. I glanced around. We were relatively alone, a situation Mom never let slide if

she could.

He spoke quietly, barely moving his lips. “You never stop wanting them that age. Every man fantasizes about the dew on the flower.”

“You’re sick.”

“Were you not just looking at that girl? She can’t be a day over fifteen. On the evening of your engagement, no less. It’s time to accept reality, son. The need is biological. You can fight it your whole life if you want to, but it

will be a fight.”

He looked like he'd wanted to say that to me for a long time. Like it was some kind of big talk every man gives their son, and it had been denied him by my avoidance and Mom's intervention.

“We aren't having a meeting of the minds on underage girls.”

“Except the one,” he said as if we had some delightful shared history.

“I'm going to need you to

stay away from my wife, and if there are children, especially if there are children—“

He got that look. The one like he was being electrocuted. It was hard rage directed forward. I'd only seen it once before, days after I found out what he was and I saw him touching Theresa's arm when he spoke to her.

“Do not ever presume that I don't have boundaries, son.”

Much as an animal won't shit where they eat, he'd never

touched any of my sisters, but when I flew at him I didn't know that. We may have been evenly matched the day he laid a chaste touch on Theresa, but at my engagement party, I was older, taller, and less fearful.

“You will never be alone with my children,” I said. “Those are *my* boundaries.” I took a gulp of my whiskey. Too much. The drink would never last if I kept doing that. But I needed to do more than let the liquid touch my

lips when I stared at him over the glass.

“I wanted to just elope somewhere far away,” I said, seeing Mom coming up behind him, “so there would be no problems with Jessica’s family. But it wasn’t possible. I’m sorry you’ve been insulted in the process. Truly.”

He smirked, because he knew the kinder tone and change of subject must have come for one reason. He and I had come to

blows after Rachel's accident, and I'd taken a handful of pills. Mom didn't let us alone in the same room if she could avoid it. Over the past seven years, she'd run a pretty tight interference. I had to admire her aversion to conflict. It had kept her in a state of blissful, drunken ignorance that my sisters and I had sworn to protect until death.

Dad took the opportunity to clap me on the back just as the string quartet started warming up.

“No worries, son. No worries. It was just business. Can’t win at it and make friends, too.”

I smiled, not mentioning the tens of millions in payoff money that had drained him to the point where only shady deals kept him afloat. Nope. It was all smiles when Mom reached us. Dad put his arm around her and I made it a point to shake his hand like a gentleman so she would enjoy the rest of the evening.

“Jonny! Come over here?”

“Come on!”

“This is perfect!”

It was the sound of a gaggle of sisters. Four rushed up in green dresses and varying shades of strawberry chignon. Margie, Sheila, Leanne, and Theresa. Their voices became a cheering chatter.

“You have to see the hypnotist.”

“He’s going to relax you.”

“You’re too tense.”

“A teepee and a wigwam!”

“It’ll only take a second.”

The drink was taken from my hand and I felt myself being pulled to a guy in a fedora and handlebar moustache sitting by one of our chaise lounges.

“Hang on, hang on...” I held my hands up in surrender.

“What?”

“It’s fun!”

“Chicken.”

“Bok bok bok.”

They were beautiful, each one of my older sisters. A huge

pain in my ass, each in a different way, but all precious. And annoying.

“I need to use the restroom. If he relaxes me too much I’m going to have a problem, if you know what I mean. That’s all.”

Margie, the oldest and most practical, who didn’t believe in anything but money and death, took charge, spinning me by my shoulders. “Go. Then you’re back here or we’re dragging you out for a crystal cleansing.”

I walked to the house, making a point of not looking at the stunning brunette plucking her viola. Not easy. She had the kind of face one stared at. But I glanced over, and there was Dad, talking to her, leaning over in a way that seemed respectful and dignified, getting her comfortable. I wondered if he did it to spite me, then remembered he simply and shamelessly liked fucking girls too young to drink legally. It had nothing to do with me. Which

meant I'd be unable to get him away from her. I couldn't say, 'Okay Dad, you're right, high school girls are hot. Now can you step away?' because then he'd take her to bed for sure. I couldn't try and cut in or he'd make a light hearted competition of our pursuit. And I couldn't cross-check him through the windows or I'd ruin my own party, and I'd have to explain to my fiancée why I was protecting the honor of an underage girl I'd only glanced at.

I got past them and into the house. I needed another drink, but my excuse to Margie had been real. On the way to the hall bathroom, I spotted the pianist from the quartet. A blonde with faded acne and an odd, melancholy confidence.

“Excuse me,” I said.

“Yeah?”

“Your friend? On the viola?”

“Monica?”

“Tell her no flirting with the

guests or hosts. Understand?”

Her look went from offense to curiosity, as she craned her neck to see past the sitting room windows. The set up for the quartet was just about visible.

“Oh, crap.”

“I’m serious.”

“She’s not like that really,” her words ran together. “I mean she’s just started seeing my brother, but she’s not a flirt like that at all. She’s barely even friendly.”

Caught between the desire to know more and the desire to run away, I simply walked quickly and rudely down the hall before I heard another word about that woman.

Girl.

I never let myself truly fall for Rachel. I'd always felt bad about that. I'd trapped her, protecting myself from that moment I'd see her and my father

in the same room. Unfortunately, all that guarded emotion didn't pay off. At Sheila's party, Rachel had shown up with Theresa, and Dad was still there. When I saw them together, I felt like my spine was being ripped out. She was giving him what-for with her finger extended and mouth demanding something through gritted teeth and intense, burning eyes.

He took whatever verbal abuse she was dishing out with the serious air of a guy who didn't

give a shit. This man was impossible to understand unless you saw him work a room, his uncanny appeal, the way he didn't look like a fifty year-old man in a party full of kids. The way he melted into any situation. The magnetism I never understood was illustrated over and over again, even as he refused advances when Mom was around, and always left open a maybe as soon as she turned her back.

As I got closer to them, I got

disproportionately angry. Rachel wasn't supposed to be there. That was the rule, and it was in place because seeing her in the vicinity of my father made me consider patricide with a cold, collected calm that scared me.

My peripheral vision closed in on her as I navigated the crowd. It's possible the multiple bong hits were making me paranoid. There was zero danger of her falling into his clutches that, or any night. But I didn't want him to know I was just

short of loving her. I didn't want him to have information he could use, because he'd use it to hurt me. He'd pulled strings to keep Margie from a man he found threatening, destroying a law firm rather than have her work there. He'd do it to me, but as the only male of eight children, the damage would come faster and I'd fare far worse.

“Rachel,” I said when I reached her. Her pale brown eyes were tear-streaked, and her

beautiful mouth cut into a line of rage. “Come on, let’s go.”

My father smiled as if I was rescuing him from an embarrassing incident.

And that was the last I remembered of that night.

On our backs, in the grass of Elysian Park, where my family would never find us, Rachel and I stared at the clouds. She liked to wonder what it would be like to

be me. She thought I had not a worry in the world. Yes, my father was a fucking sociopath, but he didn't stick his fingers inside me like hers had, and he didn't scream and hit and lock me in the house like her stepfather had. And for me, whatever I endured would end when my trust fund spread its legs at twenty-one. For her, the light at the end of the tunnel had not appeared.

“Do you wish for things you can't buy?” she asked.

I looked over at her. Blades of grass sat in the foreground of my vision, slashing her face, which was turned to me. Her eyes were tobacco brown, wide and light, catching the sun inside them. “You’re fascinated with money,” I said.

“I think I am.” She smiled. “It’s made you different, you know. You’re fearless. It’s exciting, kind of. Watching you is like watching someone who’s really, truly free.”

I laughed. I never felt free in my life.

“What do you wish for?” I asked. “Besides money.”

“You make me sound like a golddigger.”

“You are, but you’re terrible at it. I think a few more years and you’ll be sleeping with the right guy.”

She flung herself on top of me and pinched my sides. I laughed and rolled her over until I had her pinned.

“Tell me what you wish for, and if it’s any part of my body, your wish will come true at the Regency Hotel in forty minutes.”

She giggled and turned her face to the sunlight. “Free, Jonathan. I wish to be free.”

I unpinned one of her shoulders to pluck a seeded dandelion out of the grass.

“Blow,” I said, holding the white puffball in front of her.

She blew hard, and the seeds went into my face. We

laughed, and blew the rest of the seeds off together, wishing her free from the constraints of her family and her scarcity. They floated away on their sinuous parachutes, like little messengers to God, saying take me, take me, take me. Set me free.

“You’re mine,” Leanne said, yanking me out into the backyard.

“Did anyone hear from Jessica yet?”

“She stopped to get you something.”

“Pepto bismol, I hope.”

A few early birds gathered around the bar. I'd be on call for congratulating and handshaking soon, so I hoped I could get hypnotized into a state of blissful relaxation in five minutes or less. Didn't seem possible.

Theresa, standing with the gaggle of green, waved me over to the man in a tweed jacket and handlebar moustache.

We shook hands.

“David Mesmer’s the name.
I hear you’re a little tense?”

“Mesmer, huh? Any
relation?”

“Great grandfather. I fell
into the profession. Lie down right
here.”

The sky was clear blue and
sunless as the day darkened into
night. I felt ridiculous lying on a
chaise in a formal suit. I felt
vulnerable and scrutinized by four
of my seven sisters. I feared I’d

miss Jessica's arrival if I wasn't by the door and if any of my friends saw me getting hypnotized the ribbing would break a bone.

“Let's get this over with,” I said.

“Said like a truly anxious man. Can you focus your mind on what's making you tense? I'm going to count backwards from ten.”

The string quartet keyed up and began with Mendelssohn. Very nice, even for a group of

teenagers. Despite being from the gifted school, I hadn't expected much, especially not from the viola. No one could be that beautiful and talented at the same time. But her beauty carried to her playing, because as David counted back from ten, I didn't hear a goddamn thing past five except the viola as if there was not another instrument on the planet.

The rain on the night of

Sheila's party was near blinding.

“Stop it!” Rachel shouted, snapping away the jacket I tried to hold over her head. “I want to get wet, that's why I came into the rain. To get wet!”

I tossed the jacket to the side. “You came out here because I'm taking you home.”

“You're crazy!”

Drunk as I'd been that night, I took in the conversation as a cold, sober observer. On the night it actually happened, alcohol had

blacked me out. I remembered nothing after Rachel saw my face and stood up. My memory of the events of that night ended there, and were retold to me by the media and my parents. The hypnosis was like watching a movie in my own point of view.

“I am sick of this,” she shouted. “I’m sick of you wanting to know where I am all the time. Sick of it. You’re a control freak. You’re worse than my stepdad, do you know that?”

I knew I was getting hypnotized. I knew Franz Mesmer's great grandson had counted from ten and my body was at my engagement party, and I also knew the movie was about to play the part where I lost someone I cared about.

“What the hell did you think you were doing in there?” I growled. Though I felt all the panic and fear I felt that night, I was also my older self, who knew how it all ended.

Calm down. Get control.

My older self spoke to my younger self urgently, as if it could change anything.

“What’s going to happen when I go to college? You going to tell me who to talk to from here? Should I keep a log of what I wear? Well I won’t. Nothing. No more.” Rachel’s brown hair was soaked. She’d run out in a light sweater, leaving her jacket and purse behind.

“What were you saying to

him?” I yelled.

“You really want to know?”

I stepped forward. I was already six feet tall, an intimidating presence in the class, and in front of a young woman in the rain.

She stepped back. “I’m not going to get enough to go to Penn, so he’s coughing it up. Every fucking dime, or I’m telling everyone what a sick bunch of fucks you are.”

She and I were open about

what a sick bunch of fucks we were. We even laughed about it sometimes, but I'd always felt like she was talking about my parents. This time, it sounded like I was included. It sounded like she'd be more than happy to take me down as just another sick fuck who bedded her. What had I thought I meant to her? Did she think I'd used her? Or was it the other way around?

“Don't play with him,
Rachel. You can't win.”

“I’m not playing.” She looked more like a grown woman when she uttered those words than ever before. She really meant to tangle with my father.

I took my car keys out. “I’m taking you home.”

She stepped back, under the edge of the eave, where the water dripped in fatter, condensed streams. One splashed on her shoulder, but she didn’t notice or didn’t care.

“I’m sorry.” Her voice

cracked. “Don’t look at me like that. I love you Jay.”

“And I’m just one of the sick fucks? Did I ever treat you with anything but respect?”

“There’s too much baggage, Jonathan. I want a regular boyfriend.”

I froze. What did she mean? Instead of asking her, in my immaturity and drunkenness, I stepped forward again.

*You’re being menacing.
She’s going to run...she’s going*

to—

She snapped the car keys
from my hand.

“Give me those.” I grabbed
for them, but my balance was off,
and I was slow.

She ran.

I ran after her, but the
images got foggy and indistinct.

I was in the driveway,
looking for my car.

I was in the house, searching
through coat pockets.

I was driving in a shitstorm

of rain.

How? What did I miss?

I felt a pain in my shoulder.

I was in the driver's side of the car. It was too dark to make out much more than the outline of the keys. They seemed to stand up sideways in the ignition, defying gravity. My vision swam. Then the keys rotated on the ring, pointing toward the ceiling. Odd.

Creak.

Crunch.

I was on the ground. I heard

the beep of the warning signal and saw the beam of a single headlight, but all I saw was a car on its side, ready to fall into the whirling floods of the Pacific Ocean.

It rolled and fell. There was no splash. When I scrambled up to the edge of the cliff, a car was floated in the foaming waters.

I heard her scream.

Rachel.

It had to be. She must have been belted into the passenger

side?

But how?

“Rachel!” I yelled. What a ridiculous thing to do. I could barely hear myself.

I dove into the water.

Cold.

I became aware of the viola again, just as I gulped water and felt a stabbing pain in my lungs. The real me, the me at my engagement party, the twenty three-year old who had control of his life, gasped real air and felt

water. I was coming out of it.

But the sixteen year-old me woke up to grass tickling my nose. The world swam as if I was riding the teacups at Disney. I opened my eyes. Just in front of me, so close I had no context but a few blades of grass, the dark of the rainy night, and my own nausea, was Rachel's face. She, too had her cheek to the grass. Her eyes glazed over. Her mouth hung open. Her hair stuck to her face in the rain. She blinked, and a tear fell over the bridge of

her nose.

Rachel, Rachel, I am sorry.

The sound of the full quartet sounded like a philharmonic, and I knew I was out of the hypnosis a second before I bolted straight in my chair. Jessica sat on the edge of the chaise in an ecru dress. The orchid in her hand matched the one in her blonde hair. She must have gotten it for my lapel on the way back from the manicurist. She

always thought of everything.

“Jon,” she said, taking my hand. “What happened?”

“You have to meet me halfway,” grumbled David Mesmer.

“Jonathan,” Theresa said. “Let me get you a drink, my God.”

The other sister’s voices broke into my consciousness. Jessica and I just looked at each other, barely hearing.

“You look *worse*.”

“We really need to try the

crystal cleansing lady.”

“Have the guy with the wine come this way.”

“Christ, I think half of Stanford just showed up.”

Jessica slipped her hand between mine and tugged. I got up. I pulled her away to a quiet corner between two chest-high planters.

“Are you all right?” she whispered.

“I don’t believe in hypnosis,” I said.

“Of course not.” She

pressed the orchid to my lapel and wove a three inch straight pin through it, fastening it to my jacket. Her eyes gazed at me suspiciously and with no little concern. “But you look like you just saw a ghost.”

“I remembered that night. Things I hadn’t remembered before.”

“That night? Jon, really. Which night?”

“The night Rachel died.”

She touched my cheek, and I

brought my arm around her waist.

“Tell me,” she said.

I put my lips close to her ear. “She’s alive.”

“How is that possible?”

“I remember. I woke up in the grass, and she was next to me. Her eyes were open. She blinked.”

Nothing about Jessica’s expression changed for the first second, and I watched her closely. I needed her to tell me something. Maybe comfort me, or tell me I was wrong. Maybe I’d missed a

shred of evidence that proved what we'd always known. That Rachel was dead and buried and the family tracks covered with six feet of dirt.

She put her hand on my lapel. "You know, this isn't a reliable memory, right?"

"Yes. But I also know it's right. Sure as we're standing here."

"Well then, there's only one way to know for sure." She squeezed my hand and put her lips

to my ear. “We’ll have to find her.”

A streamer floated down from a tree and landed between us, while the sound of the quartet drew my attention back to my engagement party and waiting guests.

END

Thank you for reading.

I hope you enjoy these extra scenes. If you want to talk to me

about them, you can catch me on [Goodreads](#), [Facebook](#), or email me at cdreiss.writer@gmail.com.

There's also a Goodreads fan group, [CD Canaries](#) that you can join for buddy reads, discussions and general camaraderie. I don't run the group, but the people who do are superfantastic and wicked sharp. Check it out.

Book Six, *Resist* will be out in a few weeks.

Reading Order

Sequence 1

[Beg](#)

[Tease](#)

[Submit](#)

Songs of Dominance

[Jessica and Sharon](#)

Sequence 2

[Control](#)

[Burn](#)

Resist – Due Aug 2013

Sequence 3

Cry

Sing

