

The Game of Chase

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The Game of Chase

I was fifteen when I realized I was immortal. I was chasing Chase Montgomery up a conifer, trying to catch him and make him kiss me again. I always liked Chase - he was cute as a button, with short brown-blond hair and soft blue eyes. As we climbed a storm came out of the west, but the blackening skies didn't deter me. I just went up that tree after him, even if it did ruin my dress.

Chase was seventeen and betrothed to Alice Springfield, a friend of my family, which was how I met and fell for Chase. He always humored my love for him, my desires to kiss his beautiful face, but he always treated me like a sister, much to my consternation.

We were picnicking, and an argument between Alice and Chase caused him to storm off and so of course I followed him as he went to blow off steam.

It wasn't my intention to seduce him, and really, I didn't know what exactly that word meant, but that is exactly what I did. While in the forest, we made love on a bed of moss and ferns and it was everything that I had ever desired, everything that I wanted it to be. It was like we were meant to be. We became one as we came together, his body within mine.

Afterwards, a game of chase ensued. He climbed high into the evergreen to escape my clutches and I was right behind him. I knew he really didn't want to get away, but he had

to make it look good. As the limbs thinned, he slowed and turned to the west, staring out over the expanse of trees at the burgeoning darkness.

I joined his gaze, seeing the effects of the wind as it came roaring over the forest like a wave. He yelled for me to hold on and then it hit us. My dress caught the wind like a parachute, billowing outward and dragging me from my perch. Chase grabbed for me, but the wind took him as well. I watched the horror on his face as we fell together. Then pain and blackness.

I awoke some time later on the forest floor, the rain and wind buffeting my prone form.

I lived.

Chase, whose body I found shattered at the base of the tree, did not.

Alice, devastated, blamed me for the death of her betrothed and for killing the father of the child in her womb. She never knew that Chase and I had made love that day, and I never told her. My love for Chase destroyed me and for months I mourned his death. Longer than Alice ever did.

My family soon moved to Johnstown, down south in Virginia and I put the death of Chase behind me. Or tried to.

Those were dark times for me, knowing you're immortal and no one else is. The love of your life is taken from you in a heartbeat. That is the pain I felt. When I came of age, I left my family behind, never to look back. They knew that I had lost so much already. Thoughts of death and my inability to achieve it were constantly on my mind.

They say that everyone has a doppelganger, one who looks exactly like them. I found Chase's double in Caleb, some forty years later. By that time I was fifty two and still looked like I was twenty five. I never aged. No extra pounds, no wrinkles, no scars. Nothing. I still looked as fresh as a virgin. That was 1779.

Caleb, it turned out, was Alice's son, but had been given his father's last name. The boy born of the fruit of their illicit union proved to be my savior.

I didn't let Caleb slip away; I married him and led the dutiful wife's life until he turned fifty. We never had children, in fact, I never will. I don't have the internal organs like normal people do, just the pleasure receptors thankfully. Caleb always wanted a

child and when he was fifty two, I discovered that he had had a son to some slut down in Philadelphia.

The mother died of tuberculosis, but in my anger at his betrayal, I refused to raise the boy. After sending the child off to the mother's relatives in Virginia, Caleb soon died of the same disease that took the mother, contracted by their attempts to have a child. I moved on, marrying to get an identity because as a woman I only had to do so to get a new name. I never stayed married long.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, I saw a Chase's ghost in a bar in Lancaster. A printer, he had moved up from Virginia to open a new business. Black with ink, he was the most beautiful creature on the face of the planet. His name was Jonathan Montgomery. Yes, he was the son of Caleb. I never told him why I cried when we first met.

I didn't marry Jonathan. I befriended him, became the love of his life. When he struggled with the concept of my inability to bear him a child, I left him, arranging surreptitiously to get him and a mutual friend drunk. He fucked Marisa that night and she bore a child to him – a boy. They named him Adam.

This child I watched from a distance, watched as he grew up. Through different channels, I gave him an education, I gave him a life. I kept him from war; I kept him close until I stepped into his life.

I believed his mother recognized me, but with the passing of time comes the failing of memory. Adam was the spitting image of his father, grandfather and great grandfather. I don't know why Chase's progeny look the same as him - it is like his own gift of immortality. Never the same personality, but close. Always the same look and feel when my body is close to his. I swear I am fifteen again.

I don't know why I told Adam of my gift, my immortality. But it impressed him how I had loved his father, his grandfather and great grandfather. It was like we were meant to be one, with each holding an aspect of immortality, but separated by fate.

Since I didn't age, questions became pronounced when Adam entered his sixth decade. His health faded and I was close to facing the long years ahead alone. I became his 'niece' to dissuade the servants, yet spent every night in his bed.

Near death in the fall of 1801, Adam called me to his side and told me of his own secret.

“I am close to death,” he rasped. “You have given me a life of love and desire.”

“Quiet,” I told him. “Save your strength.” I was close to despair.

His hand reached up, touching my face. “You’ve never aged a bit in all these years. You’re so beautiful.” He looked away from me and towards the door. “Robert!”

I didn’t know who he spoke to and I thought him mad. Then the door opened and a young man entered. It was evident that this was his son, for he was a spitting image of his father.

“Evelyn, this is Robert Montgomery, my son,” Adam whispered to me. I was shocked at the revelation and somewhat betrayed. “After I turned forty, I realized that there would come a time when I would no longer be around for you. For us to be together alone would end my line and leave you wallowing in misery. That I could not have.” Unlike Caleb or Jonathan, he had thought of me first. This boy was his final gift.

“Who?” I sobbed, not out of betrayal, but at such a beautiful gift.

“There are those that would bear a child for the right price,” he whispered. “That child stands before you. He will take my place in your arms.”

“How is this possible?”

“In my will there is a package. It states that no wealth will be provided for my children should they not produce a child. That child will be raised away from this place, away from you. When of age, when Robert passes away, that child will be there for you. When Robert’s child is grown and reaches the end of his life, tell him of this so that they can see your magic with their own eyes. All things will then become clear to them.”

He gestured for Robert to join us at the side of the bed. “Robert, this is Evelyn Charadon.” He used the name I was born with. It impressed me that Adam had loved me so. “I would hope that you would take her out tonight, show her how Montgomery men treat ladies.”

“Yes, father, but I know your time is short, I should like to stay with you...”

“No!” Adam Montgomery commanded. “This is your time. Time for you to take your place in this world.” More gently, he said to his son, “Time is of the essence.”

Adam died that very night and I spent it in Robert's arms, alternating between the pain of loss and the joy of discovery.

Generations passed, I've seen the advent of the steam boat, of the car, of the airplane, of the ships that now travel through space. Adam's plan worked brilliantly for over a hundred and fifty years and four generations. During that time, I enjoyed the company of the Montgomery men, loving them, spending our lives together. Each one held distinct idiosyncrasies but each smelled and made love like Chase.

Now, it's 1952 and the war in Korea is still raging. World War II is a vicious memory and yet life continues onward. The hospital smells of disinfectant and bleach. I never understand why women come here to give birth. Before the beginning of this century, all births happened at home, never at a place where sick people came to die.

I kept Michael Montgomery from being drafted, having paid off a member of the Draft board. It cost a pretty penny, but I wasn't going to give him up to be butchered. No, Michael was mine.

Michael sat beside me, a cigarette in his hand. There was more ash than unburned cigarette. The surrogate that I had chosen for Michael lay inside the delivery room, pushing out the baby that I knew who was going to be my next lover. Michael and I would see the child off to his new foster parents before the lawyers would sign off on his inheritance.

As per Adam's plan, I was introduced as a young assistant of Michael's father during the waning years of his life. It was a role I took on willingly and Michael and I were lovers before the day was over. That was a year ago.

Every Montgomery was ignorant of why they had to produce a child before receiving their inheritance, and most of them protested giving up their child. But being as young as they were - all of eighteen or nineteen - most quickly forgot about the child until I brought it up later in life. With the wealth they received and my constant presence and sexual prowess, they were too busy to think about any child.

"Why do we have to send the boy away?" Michael asked.

"Because it is a stipulation in your family's will."

"Why?"

”You have too many questions. Think of it as an old man’s dying wish for immortality. Adam Montgomery wanted your family line to continue in perpetuity.”

“What if it’s a girl?”

“It’s never a girl. All children of the Montgomery men are boys. There hasn’t been a female born since, well, forever.”

“I don’t like just giving my boy to the Smith’s. It seems wrong.”

“The Smiths are a wonderful family. They’ve been checked out thoroughly and the boy will still have your last name. They aren’t allowed to adopt him, just raise him.” I looked over at Michael, his hand holding the cigarette was shaking. “Have you thought of a name?”

“Not yet. It’ll come to me.” He flicked the ash and drew on the cigarette. “I wonder if my father was forced to fuck some poor girl to get me?”

Michael knew nothing of me or his father’s past of the years we spent together. He had returned from schooling only a year before, a strapping man of eighteen. Three months later, his father had passed on and I took my place in his life.

“Yes, your father knocked up some poor girl just to have an heir. She was well compensated, believe me. Just as Jenny in there is well taken care of.” Ten thousand dollars was a lot of money to produce a child, even in 1952. Enough to make her forget giving her child up to a foster family - never to be seen again.

“I noticed that in some of the family photos there is a woman that looks a lot like you. Different hair, though.”

“Yes, you could say that my family has been entwined with yours for a very long time.” No sense spoiling the surprise, so I was deliberately vague. I smiled and kissed his cheek, drawing in his scent deeply. Luscious. I couldn’t wait to get him home.

A nurse pushed open the double doors and gestured for Michael. We both stood and he disappeared into the delivery room. I was genuinely anxious, as I always was during this time. Genuinely jealous of the birthing mother, I wondered what it would be like to have my own child. Would I be a good mother? Or would I be selfish because I have never had to pursue anything but my own pleasure?

All thoughts were washed away as Michael walked out with the baby in his arms. His eyes were wet with tears. I smiled, knowing that this was as close as I would ever come to being a mother.

“Isn’t she beautiful?” Michael whispered.

I didn’t hear that right. He must have made a mistake. A slip of the tongue. “She?”

Michael looked up from his child. “It’s a girl.”

The revelation hit me like a baseball bat swung by Babe Ruth. I staggered back in shock, stumbling over the chairs we had sat upon. Catching myself, I stared up at him in disbelief. “That’s not possible! That’s simply not possible!”

Michael, undeterred, lost in the beauty of the birth of his child, never noticed my display of horror. “It seems you were wrong about Montgomery’s never having girls!” he laughed. “Isn’t she wondrous?”

This couldn’t be happening! No! They never had females! Only males! Where was my Chase? I sobbed and covered my face with my hands, allowing the tears to fall. I had lost my Chase forever! The smell of his musk, the feel of his skin on mine, his hardness within me! The oneness we had! Gone! All of it gone!

“Evelyn?” Michael called to me, the voice of my love drew me out from my misery. “I named her Chase Alicia Montgomery.”

Flabbergasted, I wiped the tears from my eyes. “Why?”

“I was reading the family records and found that one of my ancestors was named Chase. I liked it a lot.”

I blinked away the tears. “Yes, it’s a beautiful name.”

I knew right then that a new game of chase was about to begin.