

# Crème Brûlée

*Old Montreal, Quebec*

“So what do you have for me?” Monique Beauvais said to Curtis White, speaking with a French-Canadian accent. He sat opposite her at the round table for two by the window in one of the most talked about gourmet restaurants in Old Montreal. She chose this spot for its romantic décor, impressive wine cellar, and its distinction of being in a building that dated back to the nineteenth century. Outside on Rue Saint Paul, a car or two crept by on its narrow cobblestone surface, followed by a horse-drawn cart—one of several that were popular among tourists—surrounded by buildings dating back as early as the 1600s. For that reason, Hollywood movie studios chose to film in this area when they wanted to mimic cities such as Paris, London, or Moscow.

The nerd—who was American—finished off the last of his Crème Brûlée and stared at her like a drooling dog as though he’d never been on a date with a woman before. She knew that the right shade of eye-liner and glossy lipstick, paired with her black hair flowing onto a sexy red dress would’ve been a turn-on for him. Then again, based on the amount of dandruff that stood out on his worn burgundy-colored cardigan and his clip-on tie, Monique doubted that White had ventured beyond fast food restaurants. And he had a slight pot belly to show for it. For fun she flirted with him, even though he was way out of his league.

“We already discussed this. I don’t want to take too much time,” White replied as the sound of screeching tires and a blasting car horn outside their window caught his attention. Monique glanced out the window in time to see someone pulling out of a tight parking spot and cutting off a taxi, whose driver still managed to miraculously hang onto his cell phone.

White turned back towards her and straightened his thick glasses that sat crookedly on the bridge of his nose. “I don’t like the idea that we’re meeting out in the public like this. Everyone can see us.”

“Did you follow the instructions that you were given—to the letter?”

“Of course.”

Beauvais leaned forward and lowered her voice while she placed a hand on top of his. “Then relax. I had someone watch over you to make sure that you weren’t followed. Trust me, I wouldn’t be here if you had been. As far as everyone’s concerned, we’re just two adults on a lunch date.”

“Then why’s that man staring at us?” he replied, nodding his head in the direction of someone that Monique refused to look at. Instead, she stroked his hand gently. She could just imagine the blood rushing to his groin that instant as she watched his eyes bulge from behind his quarter-inch thick glasses. She smiled as White swallowed.

“Then let him stare. If you want my opinion, it’s because he’d rather be in your shoes right now.”

“Gosh! You think so?”

She didn’t know if she ought to feel sorry for the poor sap because he was so clueless, inexperienced, or the fact that he was most likely a thirty-something-year-old virgin. Then again, why should she feel sorry? She worked for an international arms consortium that sold illegal weapons to terrorists and dictators. The same organization helped to start wars in order to keep these sales going. Little did White know that a sniper was ready to pop his head from an apartment across the street once the transaction was done. In a few weeks her organization would have the ability to commandeer CIA drones. It would only take the deaths of several civilians in Pakistan in order to further destabilize the relationship that country has with the United States.

“You know,” she continued as she fixed her eyes onto his. “My place is only a twenty minute walk from here. Why don’t you join me after?”

“Uh, I’m not sure. I don’t want to miss my plane.”

It took her everything to remain calm in the face of such naiveté. “You’re about to become fifteen million dollars richer in the next few minutes. Trust me, you’ll be able to afford to fly anywhere you want and whenever you please.” *Yeah, right. In your dreams.* “So how about it? Let’s see what you have.”

White turned around and reached into the pocket of the cheap jacket that hung on the back of his chair, grabbed a flash drive, and handed it to her.

Beauvais reached into her tote bag beside her and pulled out a miniature laptop. She then slid her dessert plate to the side to make room and opened it. After she turned it on, Beauvais inserted White’s flash drive, and skimmed over the documents quickly. When she was satisfied, Beauvais initiated a mobile wireless transmission to her sniper’s laptop across the street.

Less than three minutes later she closed her laptop, took out her prepaid cell phone, and texted a code to an untraceable phone number. This would lead White into believing that the money was being wired to his Swiss Bank account. He would get a phony text message anytime soon.

A minute went by when his phone buzzed. White read the message that was on the monitor and smiled as though he were a young boy opening a Christmas present.

“Now that we’re done,” said Monique. “Give me a moment. I’m going to freshen up.”

“Sure, go right ahead. I mean, take your time.”

Monique got up, put her laptop in her tote bag, and left the table with it. She walked in the direction of the ladies room. When she knew that she was out of White’s field of view she headed for the entrance instead. But their waiter intercepted her before she reached the door.

“J’ai oublié quelque chose dans l’auto. Je reviens dans quelques instants,” said Beauvais.  
“En passant, mon chum m’attend à la table.” *I forgot something in the car. I’ll be back shortly.  
By the way, my date’s waiting for me at the table.*

The waiter nodded and walked off.

Less than a minute later she was walking away from the restaurant when she heard what sounded like a gunshot. She turned in time to see about a dozen people scattering in all directions.