

## CHAPTER ONE

It had been a long tiresome ride on the bus, all these long hours heading away from the confusion of Times Square, but it was almost over now. At least it hadn't been as bad as she had expected. She hadn't had to sit with him anyway. He was just across the aisle on the seat ahead so she could watch the back of his head, his thin narrow shoulders and his profile. He was proud of his profile. One good sock in the nose would spoil it but he'd never had that — yet. Just like he hadn't had enough of most of the other things that made a whole man out of a half punk. She had been able to sit and study him and wonder what the hell she had really married him for. Had that lousy waitress job under the El really been that bad? Well it had, especially now it was summer.

She had let the guy sitting next to her rub his leg against hers because it sort of gave an answer to that question. He was big but not as big as he thought he was and not in exactly the right places. She let his hand sort of lie on her knee instead of his own not because she ever thought she'd get any kick out of the likes of him but because it helped her think a little. She was trying to do something that was a lot harder than anything he'd have to offer. Trying to think ahead. Think of what being married to anybody meant, especially to a sample like the guy across the aisle one seat ahead. A guy who talked about poetry and his family estate. This hunk of male animal with the hot hand and the diddling fingers alongside her reminded her of what she was riding away from. A five-buck guy at best, with a movie and a western sandwich thrown in. And a bottle of muscatel, maybe. And the El train roaring outside your dirty window to order you back to work in the morning. After a night with a guy who felt five bucks ought to get him Cleopatra, the Queen of Sheba and Hedy Lamar all in one bed.

The thought made her twist a little in her seat. The guy next to her grinned at her in the way Adam had at Eve after the first bite of apple. His hand guided hers, willing to let her feel how he felt. As if she needed to on a hot day like this. His sport shirt showed hair on his chest as well as the fact that it needed a change. His voice had the thick huskiness