



The Bitter Nest #3 of 4: Lovers In Paris

1987

Acrylic on canvas

96 inches by 83 inches

(243.84 centimeters by 210.82 centimeters)

1. The Bitter Nest: Part III. Lovers in Paris. Celia's life was devoted to her father, whom she saw as an unfortunate figure, a giant of a man, imprisoned in the house of a mad woman - her mother. She wanted to free him from her. She tried to interest him in activities that would exclude Cee Cee, like lectures and musical concerts. But the doctor loved Cee Cee and would go nowhere without her.

2. She even tried to interest him in a romantic tryst with a beautiful friend of hers, an ex-chorus line dancer named Mavis Lewis. But the dentist used the introduction to ask Mavis to give Celia a party to introduce her to some eligible young men in the hopes that she might find one to marry and have a family of her own.

3. Celia met several young men who were charming and eligible for marriage but compared to her father, they were shallow and uninteresting. Except for Victor Bell, a young attorney from

Washington, DC. Celia fell in love with Victor at a party. They danced and talked as if they had known each other for years. It was really love at first sight.

4. They worked home in the early morning holding hands and laughing and promising one day to spend the rest of their lives together. It was the most fun Celia had ever had. He told her that he lived with his invalid mother in Washington, DC, and that she was very demanding of his time. So, between her and his law practice, it might be several months before he could return to New York to see her.

5. He mentioned a summer vacation in Paris he was planning and invited her to come along. He had some artist friends who lived in Paris. She could stay at their flat and his friend would show them both around Paris. If she felt uncomfortable about going to Paris with a man, she could take Mavis along as a companion.

6. At the last minute, Victor's plans changed. He would not go over on the ocean liner with Mavis and Celia. Instead, he would meet them in Paris a week or so later. He had urgent business to attend to in the States before he could leave for Paris. They should go on and he would be there as soon as he could.

7. He sent the address of his friend's flat and directions on how to get there when they arrived in Paris. Celia and Mavis arrived at Victor's friends' flat and were greeted by a Frenchman. He let them in and told them Victor's friends were on holiday in the south of France and that he would show them around until Victor got there.

8. While Celia unpacked, the French man took Mavis on a tour of the Left Bank shops and cafes. Once alone in the apartment, Celia undressed standing in front of a large full-length mirror. While admiring her well-shaped body, she noticed the appearance of a man in the doorway of the adjoining room. It

was Victor. He was wearing only a beret.

9. “Parlez-vous français, mademoiselle?” he said. At once shocked, frightened, embarrassed and delighted, Celia stood glued to the spot. “How did you get here?” she finally managed to stammer, “I thought you were in the States.” “But I am here with you,” he said, taking her in his arms. “But I don’t understand,” said Celia.

10. “You will my love,” Victor whispered in her ear as he slid her down on the large bed. “Did I ever tell you how much I love you? You were what I need to make my life complete. I will not let you get away from me this time. Celia, will you marry me?” Before she could respond, he was on top of her. This was the first time Celia had ever made love to a man.

11. It was wonderful. Now she knew what she felt for him the first time she met him at that party many months ago was real. She did love him, and he loved her, and he wanted to marry her. It was alright if they slept together. They were too much in love not to. Now everything was perfect, like all her life - except Cee Cee.

12. How could she think about Cee Cee at a time like this? But what about his mother? She was an invalid. She was dependent on him. Well, she would just have to get used to the idea that Victor has an invalid mother. After all, wouldn’t he have to get used to Cee Cee? Mavis and the Frenchman stayed out of their way for the next couple of weeks.

13. The Frenchman lived in the next flat, so Mavis stayed there with him. Things could not have been better if they had been planned. Suddenly, one morning, Victor was gone as he arrived, without warning. On his pillow was a note: Dear Celia my love, I couldn’t bear to tell you but Mother’s condition has taken a turn for the worse. I must go to her. I am so afraid that she may not be with me much longer.

14. I love you so much, I cannot wait to see you again in the States. These weeks with you in Paris have been the happiest days of my life. 'Til we meet again my beloved Celia. My wife. Lovingly yours, Victor. But Celia never saw Victor again.