

## Allen Sutterfield / AT PHARAOH'S

SEE YOU AT PHARAOH'S  
reads the ad of yesterday  
WHERE WATER AND CORDOVA MEET

Water was black, short for a favorite fruit of the southland now available everywhere, strange fruit. So big a growing in the garden. Not natural that fruit, one little seed then THIS. Water played and sang bass. Cordova had once liked Imogene Cocoa but never looked like her though in her mind Cordova seemed a name that should. She actually thought of herself as Minnie and was often surprised when surprised at home especially alone to be called Cordova because she always was Minnie at home. But Cordova wasn't a stage name, she sang, it was her real name, and actually Minnie was a stage name, if you thought about it, although she never used it on the stage only Cordova, which she never used at home, meaning alone, though others did. In fact Water and two others maybe three only knew Minnie. She wasn't outwardly surprised when Minnie at home and somebody said "Cordova!" she covered, but inside she was shaken. Then she began to get used to it, though sometimes it still happened. She wasn't sure but what it wasn't good that it still happened. What if it didn't happen?

Water and Cordova met at Pharaoh's and continue to meet there, no secret about it. It says so on the sign, even. They were well known the Big Black Man (Boogie, yeah!) and Cordova. Liked? Who cares. Many came to see and hear. They were impressed that Cordova did not look like Cocoa. (No one should look like Cocoa, everyone silently thought.) They were surprised. They never thought about Water looking any different. Awe-striking. A monument, this human body! Huge. Black. Those muscles! That sheen! The ripples! A little eddy of muscles under his left shoulder blade, Minnie saw these more than any. Shallow shoals between his ribs, smooth over the bedrock sternum.

Water was all Minnie's man. Cordova didn't let on, except just enough, so that everyone thought they knew. In reality of course no one did but everyone agreed not to mention it. Thin and Arthur thought they were different in this but they weren't. They didn't know about the little eddies under Water's shoulder blades. Minnie, Minnie.

Water takes the shape of any container and when they were alone Water took the shape of Minnie, Cordova was strictly somewhere else, but Water did not have to change his name, he never did, he was always the same, he was always Water.

Of course he wasn't always the same but he Water did not know this and so he was, just the same. He did not know it and he would certainly refuse anyone trying to tell him, he did not want to know, he knew. That's when the sudden whirlpool you would see as all Water's forces rushed rapidly to his face and you knew: Danger. Don't take your boat there. Don't fish in those waters. Danger: back away. Water was not a knower. Water was Water and he took the shape of Minnie as they were alone and other times he took the necessary shape or the one he wanted but the shape he wanted most was Minnie's and Minnie of course was in her best shape with Water.

Minnie was not Water, Minnie was an earth shape, Water took Minnie and Cordova went out into the city. Cordova went off by herself at those times, hoping of course one day to be allowed to stay with Minnie when she was the shape Water did take. But when she was not she went out into the city, away from the bar where she was known, any of those bars, and found naturally someone, more or less anyone, rawbone she preferred and they would go to a room. In the room there was no taking of shapes, Cordova was not interested in that, she only wanted Minnie's shape and to be taken by Water.



Here she allowed herself to be taken in the form of whoever but she really did the taking: she enjoyed taking him and knowing he was thinking he was taking her but really she was only taking him to be the shape of Water though he did not know, Water did not know, Minnie knew sometimes but not when she was with Water, but Cordova knew all the time and that is how she enjoyed it, he undressing her but she using his hands to take the shape of Water, laying herself on the bed for Water, who had no shape, but Cordova providing a shape for Water to fill, to take, to fill out to full, to almost burst — she chose Rawbones because you can work better with crude materials, there is more to be done, they don't mind as much, the rawbones did not know what Cordova was doing but they felt it good, they liked it, they got what they wanted "and then some, Man, that chick!" and Cordova liked what she was doing though she did not like them, each time she made them into Water's shape and with each doing she made herself into a shape Water could take, in her mind she did this naturally her body was involved though it was doing and not the knowing, she knew how to make her body do, she was better in the body even than Minnie, she thought, but Water never saw Cordova and Cordova would take the rawbones and smooth them out in savage heat and sometimes, even often she got what she wanted at the moment and would fall into Water's shape, would feel herself taken by Water only when she was going downstairs afterwards she would then feel just Cordova and know it had been a quick dream she Cordova had had and not the dream of Minnie.

But Cordova sang and sometimes the Rawbones would be there, once and more than once there would be the quick glint of knives, angry red slashings, the club would throw them out, but she never attached herself to the Rawbones, except the one way, as she desired and they knew that and she knew that but they did not know why and Cordova did. That is how she knew she was stronger. But she was weak when alone, Minnie would take shape and she would go away, often without remembering, until again she would, when going down the stairs. Water simply never knew. He did not want to know, he did not really want to know what he did not know, he knew he wanted the Minnie he was privileged to see, not PRIVILEGED but it was in a way. Well. Water and Cordova met at Pharaoh's but Minnie is alone, Cordova.