

THE KILLING SUMMER



A NOVEL BY GARRISON FROST

THE KILLING SUMMER

by Garrison Frost

with illustrations by the author

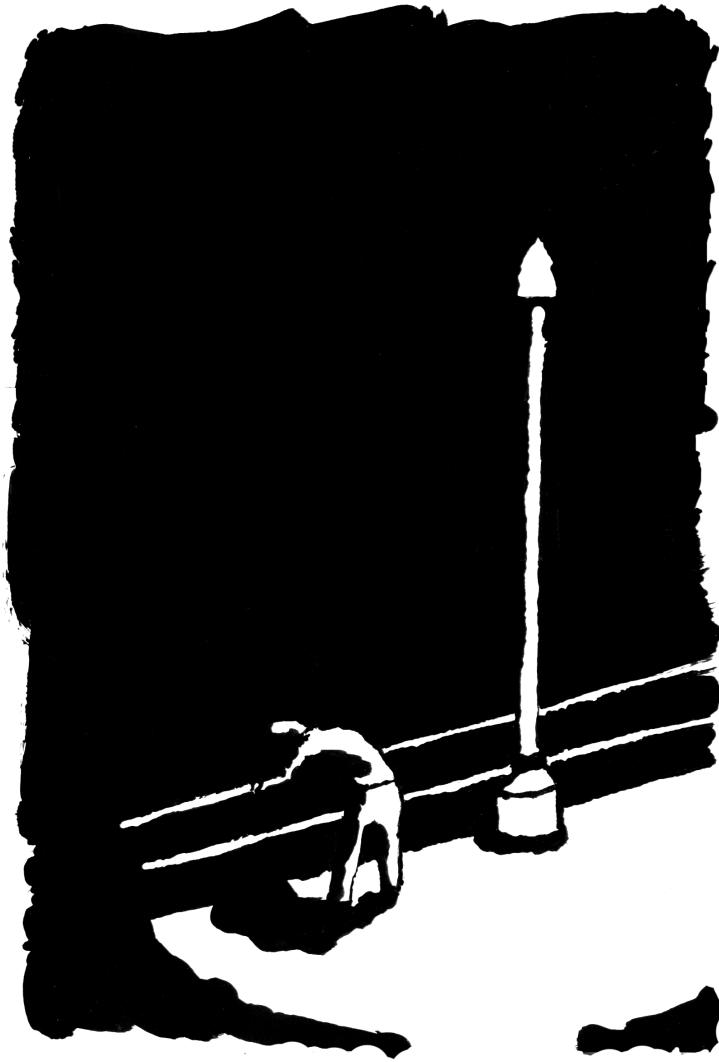
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NOTES

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This is a work of fiction. While the author has made an effort to capture the mood of a certain place at a certain time, members of the history police will no doubt notice deviations from the record. And they should do their best to get over it.

**THE
KILLING
SUMMER**



Chapter One

“Because we’re not seeing each other anymore,” she said.

The Lighthouse was in a quiet mood, and her words were hardly more than a whisper. Buck Simpson’s All-Nighters were well into their third set. The bandmaster’s singer, an ivory-skinned brunette with a husky voice, was taking a break, and Buck himself was leading the group through a slow number. Even now, well past his prime, Simpson could evoke pure sadness from a muted trumpet. Three or four couples turned on the Lighthouse parquet under the dim chandeliers. Those couples who weren’t dancing whispered to each other at their tables, only candlelight between them. The romance of the room made Aurora’s words more cruel.

Charlie Rogers slowly set his whiskey and soda on the white tablecloth as if the glass might explode.

“What?” Mock surprise. He knew this was coming the

way that people always know.

"It's not good anymore, Charlie," Aurora said. She wore a silver dress with a rose on one shoulder. Her long blond hair was pulled back from her face and fell back over her other arm.

"This is crazy," he said.

"No."

His first instinct was to talk, try to fix things. Charlie wasn't above getting on his knees for Aurora St. Claire. But now there she was, arms crossed, trying to be cold, trying to be firm.

Wham! He slammed his hand down on the table, loud enough to open her eyes and turn the heads of people at nearby tables. "I would never do this to you!" he shouted.

"Somebody had to do it." She still had her composure, but was clearly a bit alarmed.

"Like this? Here? You have to let me take you here for your birthday, treat me like shit like this? Why would you make a fool out of me?"

"You're shouting."

"Right," he said. "That's what people do when – I don't give a shit."

"People are watching."

"How could you do this?"

"Maybe I made a mistake," she looked away. "I thought it might be better here, like this. I don't know."

Everyone was staring now. Even the people on the dance floor.

"Save your apologies," Charlie spat. "You didn't even have the guts to tell me. You had to make it so bad that I

had to crawl. I had to ask you."

"I was going to tell you."

"So you say. How long were you going to wait? How long since you decided this? A day? A week?"

Her well-rehearsed defiance was now falling apart. "I'm sorry," a sob worked its way in between her words. "I didn't know how to tell you. It's hard for me too, you know."

"Yeah, seems real hard," Charlie said, hitting his fist on the table again – wham! "You don't know what you've ruined. You don't have the slightest know how good it was."

Suddenly someone's hand was on his shoulder. Charlie turned and saw that it was Ronnie Davis, one of the waiters, a guy he'd known since high school.

"Hey, you've got to keep it down," Ronnie whispered. He was all manners and tall thinness now. Far cry from the oily shit in high school who never washed his hair.

"Hell I will," Charlie said. He never liked Ronnie much anyway, and besides he wasn't going to hold back now. "The hell I'm going to keep quiet for this bunch of fucks!"

Ronnie motioned to a group of waiters and bouncers by the door as Charlie kept the heat on Aurora. "I love you like it's all there is," he said. "I can't believe you'd do this."

"What does love do for me?"

"What doesn't it do for you?"

Ronnie was back now, with three other waiters. "Time to go Charlie," he said.