

CHAPTER TWO

BAD COMPANY

"Living, life and health are insults to those immersed in the possibilities of death and disease. Especially when the disease is the slow moving, life dissolving kind, If or when death and disease cannot be limited or reversed, life must be polite and grateful to the dying, for degeneration provides our universe with the components necessary for generation.

"Bad men are interesting. Everybody loves a bad man or is at least intrigued by him. Bad men have such extraordinary power, temporal, actual and spiritual. There would be no books without bad men. Writers and villains make books happen, no? We define our lives in terms of bad men and we love them. But we loathe bad women. We have no sympathy for them, no compassion for women villains. Therefore all sane women, desiring to be respected want to be good. A man searching for the respect of his peers is just as likely to earn it through villainy, rather more likely actually, than through sainthood. All good men are crucified on the cross of their own goodness," she said. "Good men are boring."

I tried to defend you and your ilk, tried to say, from the wisdom of my years, that my husband was indeed quite nice, certainly tolerable, fairly well behaved and a useful sort of person to have around. She countered me with a most direct question: Were you good in bed? Well, I said, I've only had one glass of champagne, maybe you'd like to ask me again in a few thousand miles, after dinner, and perhaps after a good bottle of wine. I drifted, musing on how I used to say a similar incantation to you while we were courting, do you remember, my darling? And you would find me a delightful Beaujolais. And then we would picnic along the Charles if it was sunny or in your turret room, on the plaid blanket, if it was not. And we would dream our dreams together and think our thoughts aloud and manifest our love. Oh my, that seems so very long ago. Do you think when I get home that we could picnic? Take a bottle from the cellar and a blanket to the attic, because it will be dead winter before I return, hie ourselves to paradise?

"The bad woman is a pornographic but not a sexy image, used flesh, not the delicious mixture of malice and discontent which defines bad men. But, in actuality, bad men are not as sexy as we assume. In our heads one thing, in our beds, quite another. Bad men can create excitement through crisis and that can become a substitute for true sexuality, the tension of fear masquerading as the tension of desire, but generally good sex, good sexual experiences elude bad men. They come too soon. Or not at all. They enjoy pain. Or have too many girlfriends. Or too many guns. Burdened with too much paraphernalia in every sense. They never know as much about your pleasure as they do about their

own. They contrive situations because spontaneity terrifies them. They are obsessed with one form or another of death or disease. No, contrary to myth, bad men are terrible in bed. Why do we persist in believing this glamorous image of the rake?

"Bad girls are only somewhat less maligned than bad women.

"Totally awkward, desire. In some Eastern countries women are castrated, their clitoris' cut out so they will not experience those appetite-like passions. Often women perform the operation on their own daughters. The textbooks would have us believe that these women, the ones who perform cliterodectomies on their children, have imbibed the poison pedagogy of patriarchy. But I think that some of those cliterodectomists think that they are sparing their daughters from the awkward, no, terrifying and incontrovertibly dangerous, ramifications of female sexual desire."