

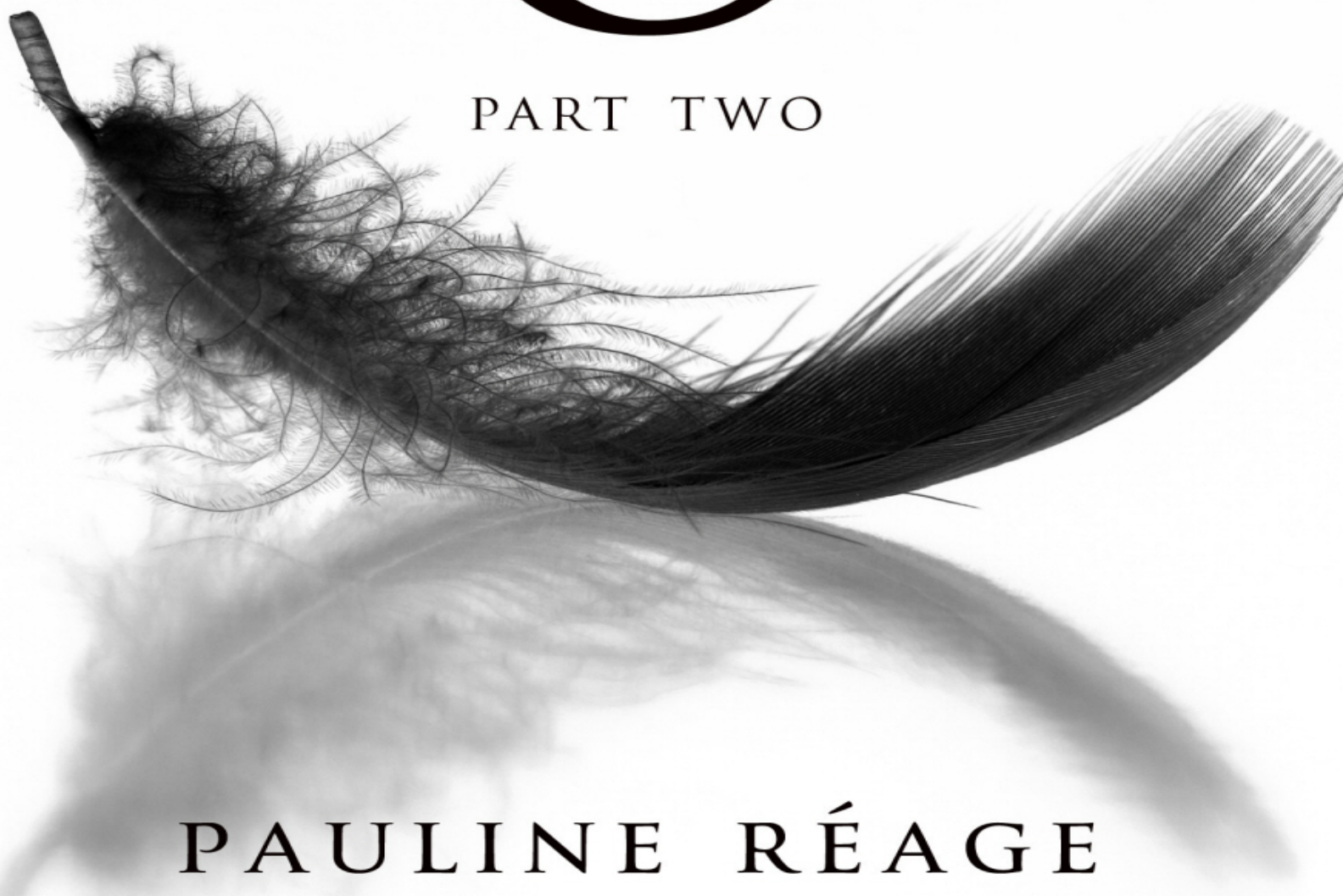
Before *Fifty Shades of Grey* there was...

story of

O

PART TWO

PAULINE RÉAGE



## About the Book

Parisian photographer O returns to the place of her sexual initiation - the elegant chateau Roissy. Here, she submits completely to the sexual whims of one man . . . her lover. This is the sequel to the classic French erotic bestseller, and a darkly seductive story of dominance and submission.

Read it if you dare . . .

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About the Author

Also by Pauline Réage

Copyright

Return to the Château

# STORY OF O

## Part II

*preceded by*  
A Girl in Love

Pauline Réage

Translated from the  
French by Sabine d'Estrée

*A Girl in LOVE*

One day a girl in love said to the man she loved:

‘I could also write the kind of stories you like ...’

‘Do you really think so?’ he answered.

They met two or three times a week, but never during the holidays, and never on weekends. Each of them stole the time they spent together from their families and their work. On afternoons in January and February, when the days begin to grow longer and the sun, sinking in the west, tints the Seine with red reflections, they used to walk along the banks of the river, the quai des Grands Augustins, the quai de la Tournelle, kissing in the shadow of the bridges. Once a *clochard* shouted at them:

‘Shall we take up a collection and rent you a room?’

Their places of refuge often changed. The old car, which the girl drove, took them to the zoo to see the giraffes, to Bagatelle to see the irises and the clematis in the spring, or the asters in the autumn. She noted the names of the asters - blue fog, purple, pale pink - and wondered why, since she was never able to plant them (and yet we shall have further occasion to refer to asters). But Vincennes, or the Bois de Boulogne, is a long way away. In the Bois you run into people who know you. Which, of course, left rented rooms. The same one several times in succession. Or different rooms, as chance would have it. There is a strange sweetness about the meagre lighting of rented rooms in hotels near railway stations: the modest luxury of the double bed, whose linen you leave unmade as you leave the room, has a charm all its own. And the time comes when you can no longer separate the sound of words and signs from the endless drone of the motors and the hiss of the



tyres climbing the street. For several years, these furtive and tender halts, in the respite that follows love, legs all entwined and arms unclasped, had been soothed by the kind of exchanges and as it were small talk in which books hold the most important place. Books were their only complete freedom, their common country, their true travels. Together they dwelt in the books they loved as others in their family home; in books they had their compatriots and their brothers; poets had written for them, the letters of lovers from times past came down to them through the obscurity of ancient languages, of modes and mores long since come and gone - all of which was read in a toneless voice in an unknown room, the sordid and miraculous dungeon against which the crowd outside, for a few short hours, beat in vain. They did not have a full night together. All of a sudden, at such and such an hour agreed upon ahead of time - the watch always remained on the wrist - they had to leave. Each had to regain his street, his house, his room, his daily bed, return to those to whom he was joined by another kind of inexpiable love, those whom fate, youth, or you yourself had given you once and for all, those whom you can neither leave nor hurt when you're involved in their lives. He, in his room, was not alone. She was alone in hers.

One evening, after that 'Do you really think so?' of the first page, and without ever having the faintest idea that she would one day find the name Réage in a property register and would borrow a first name from two famous profligates, Pauline Borghese and Pauline Roland, one day this girl for whom I am speaking, and rightly so, since if I have nothing of hers she has everything of mine, the voice to begin with, one evening this girl, instead of taking a book to read before she fell asleep, lying on her left side with her feet tucked up under her, a soft black pencil in her right hand, began to write the story she had promised.

\* \* \*

Spring was almost over. The Japanese cherry trees in the big Paris parks, the Judas trees, the magnolias near the fountains, the elder trees bordering the old embankments of the tram lines that used to encircle the city, had lost their flowers. The days lingered on forever, and the morning light penetrated at unwanted hours to the dusty black curtains of passive resistance, the last remaining vestiges of the war. But beneath the little lamp still lighted at the head of the bed, the hand holding the pencil raced over the paper without the least concern for the hour or the light. The girl was writing the way you speak in the dark to the person you love when you've held back the words of love too long and they flow at last. For the first time in her life she was writing without hesitation, without stopping, rewriting, or discarding, she was writing the way one breathes, the way one dreams. The constant hum of the cars grew fainter, one no longer heard the banging of doors, Paris was slipping into silence. She was still writing when the street cleaners came by, at the first touch of dawn. The first night entirely spent the way sleepwalkers doubtless spend theirs, wrested from herself or, who knows, returned to herself.

In the morning she gathered up the sheets of paper that contained the two beginnings with which you're already familiar, since if you are reading this it means you have already taken the trouble to read the entire tale and therefore know more about it today than she knew at that time. Now she had to get up, wash, dress, arrange her hair, resume the strict harness, the everyday smile, the customary silent sweetness. Tomorrow, no, the day after, she would give him the notebook.

She gave it to him as soon as he got into the car, where she was waiting for him a few yards from an intersection, on a small street near a *metro* station and an outdoor market. (Don't try and situate it, there are many like it, and what difference does it make anyway?) Read it