



The Feeling

**SUBURBAN SECRETS:
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS**



CAROL-ROSE MARSHALL

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A novel by Carol-Rose Marshall

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Dedicated to all women who follow their feelings!

**“REACH FOR THE STARS ...
DREAM A DREAM ...
AND THEN -- WORK IT!”**

Carol-Rose Marshall

Author

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ABOUT THE BOOK

The author, Carol Rose Marshall grew up in New York City and relocated to the suburbs of Long Island during her marriage.

She was inspired to tell an untold story and unveil intimate events in this non fiction work called *The Feeling*.

The Feeling is a unique book, representing the exposure of a secretive narrative that has been waiting to be told for over thirty years. It tells the story of Rachel and Michael Sanders, a couple living a suburban New York lifestyle in the 1970s who appeared to be as happy as the family on *The Brady Bunch*. Behind closed doors, they were anything but that.

Michael’s remorseless cheating interludes are linked to his unceasing anger and volatile moods.

Rachel unlocks her husband’s illicit affair, but her prime concern is to guard this secret, as she presumes it is her humiliation. It was a time when women’s voices were hushed. Her spot-on “Pearl Harbor” attack directed to his mistress is wildly bold.

Elements intriguing the reader are not limited to anger turning to rage, fear, cheating, sex, family, manipulation, and loss. What appears to be a normal family to others is not that way at all!

The story is an in-depth exploration of how feelings — simple and complex, acted upon or not — can change life’s outcome over the years for those caught in their web.

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himself opposite Roz. Without blinking an eye, and unmistakably disregarding Roz, he blatantly pushed his head behind the newspaper and resumed reading.

Roz was used to this type of treatment and knew in an instant that her daughter had probably encountered a difficult night. It was not unusual, for when Mike was mad at Rachel, he would not speak to Roz either.

Roz had mixed feelings. Against her better judgement, she actually wanted to slap his face and tell him off. On second thought, she knew all the havoc that would create and how it would make her daughter's day all the more difficult.

"Oh well," she thought, *"another weekend like this."* It was best to walk away!

In the past, she'd repeatedly told Rachel not to let him get away with this behavior and often reminded her how Aunt CeeCee had been right so many years ago.

She muttered under her breath, "A . . ." and proceeded to go upstairs to the children's bedrooms.

Roz concealed her feelings by immersing herself in planning her grandchildren's activities. *I think I'll take Rachel to lunch with the kids and let him get over his crazies.*

She called to the kids, "WHO WANTS TO GO TO THE RESTAURANT LATER? THE FIRST ONE READY GETS AN EXTRA ICE CREAM."

A barrage of happy chatter filled the atmosphere, with sweet childlike tones chanting, "ME, ME, ME, ME—NANA!"

She'd show the *sulker. Stay alone! Brood! We are off and running!*

"Pink Team, Blue Team, be ready at noontime. We're going to have a fun day!"

Chapter Three – Sports Car Syndrome & Wet Wood

NOVEMBER 1976

It was Saturday morning in November; a welcome weekend reprise from carpools and homework, when suddenly, Rachel heard loud voices.

Wow, what's up? she thought. Something exciting was going on outside the Sanders home. Connor was calling, “Mom, mom, look in our driveway. Hey dad, give ME the first ride, please, please.”

“No, ME Daddy—ME first,” yelled the twins.

Rachel looked outside from the second-floor front bedroom window, and saw that Cameron was in the passenger seat of a fire-red, two-seater convertible sports car, which was backing out of their driveway, with Michael driving.

So, he finally did it, Rachel thought, the perfect two-seater, a PRACTICAL vehicle to transport four children, for a family of six with credit cards galore. All he needed was a racing cap. “This was great responsible thinking,” she said aloud to herself. She sighed and then muttered, “I just CAN'T catch a break!”

Their household had a relatively quiet tone to it recently, and she was grateful for small favors. She went down the stairs to the first floor, into the kitchen, and peered through the back window into the backyard. She wondered if she should ignore this commotion. The choice was to either go sit on the back deck, or go out front and OOH and AHH? Gazing at the backyard, her thoughts started to wander, remembering the incident involving the building of the deck.

SHE REMEMBERS: WHAT? WHAT? WET WOOD?

The arrival of the fall season generally brought them indoors and like magic, half the work of maintaining the house was erased. That past summer, Mike had built a gorgeous deck in the backyard, so strong that surely only an A-bomb could take it apart. Everyone raved about it. However, Rachel was glad when it was finally finished as it had only represented more stress. The automatic sprinkler system had been turned off during the construction, and so it had become Rachel's job to water the lawn. She accomplished this by dragging a sprinkler around the perimeter of the deck and throughout the back, while carefully shielding the new project under construction.

One day in the heat of the summer, somehow the sprinkler had been turned around. Instead of carefully watering only the lawn, it mercilessly sprayed the back of the deck as well. At 5 p.m., Michael had arrived home, planning to finish cutting the wood that would be positioned at the back portion of the deck. He immediately discovered that it wouldn't be possible, as the sprinkler had carefully soaked the wood.

His temper had lunged into high gear as he'd screamed at the top of his lungs that Rachel had ruined his whole night and the progress of the deck FOREVER.

He became even more incensed when Rachel answered, "Here we go again. Sorry, take the night off, relax, and do it tomorrow."

"That's not the issue," he responded. "You did this, you PURPOSELY did it! You have no regard for how hard I work. You didn't take the time to CAREFULLY set the sprinkler, so it didn't touch MY wood."

He had started to sound as irrational as the main and clearly deranged character, Captain Queeg, in *The Caine Mutiny*. Rachel didn't understand the justification for this outburst, and kept saying, "Do it tomorrow. There is nothing I can do, short of standing with fans and blowers to dry your STUPID WOOD."

She'd walked away from him and warned him to stop his unnecessary tirade for something that was NOT a life-or-death matter. "No one got killed, hurt, or maimed. What is wrong with you?"

She knew what was wrong with him, and what would ensue, as it was the same old thing.

This tantrum caused a two-week silent routine from Mike, which included the kids and Roz, as only the passage of time could calm his unreasonable behavior. The argument had mushroomed into a new routine for dinnertime, as Rachel started to feed the kids dinner before Mike got home. When asked why by the kids, she told them, "Daddy has a bad headache, so he can't talk." She knew the boys didn't believe her, but it was easier than the truth, and a made-up headache was kinder for all involved.

The early dinner served a purpose, even when Mike was in a pleasant mood. The sad fact was that without their father at the table, they did not have to endure Michael's constant demands that they finish every morsel of food (even if they choked on it).

So yes, the deck turned out beautiful, and she'd been glad once it was finished, but it had also come with lots of unhappy moments. She was happy to retreat indoors for a cool, quiet winter and not look at it anymore.

THE GYM

When he got over his *crazies*, so labeled by his mother-in-law, Mike had announced that he was ready to do two things that he'd wanted. His choices would be a gym membership and the purchase of a new second car.

In Rachel's estimation, joining a gym would be a positive aspiration. She'd felt that an exercise program would calm Mike's nerves and bring some peace to the house and encouraged this commitment.

He started looking great, regained his shape, lost weight, and generally had a happy and calmer demeanor. Their home was running smoothly, and even Roz saw the difference in his attitude.

Mike was never one for fashion statements, and at home was most comfortable in jeans and T-shirt. Then he'd expressed an interest in purchasing tighter-fitting clothes to show off his new *gym shape*. And surprise, surprise, he even wanted to go shopping, which was usually an unwelcome chore for him.

Rachel had seen this as another step in the right direction and encouraged him. She even went out and bought him several new casual shirts, which he loved and immediately put on. This was a welcome respite from his business attire, which was more formal, requiring a tie and jacket during work hours.

It seemed like this new relaxed Mike was in a better place. She'd read that exercise calmed the mind, and she was all for that.

SPORTS CAR SYNDROME

She'd heard the roar of the sports car returning, bringing Rachel back to the present. She put on a happy face while standing outside to inspect their new acquisition, and thought, *if you can't fight them, join them!* It would be her new adopted motto. *After all, Mike was past forty and wasn't this a rite of passage for men?*

She reasoned, *Mike said we needed a new second car, so I guess this is it, and it could be worse.*

She walked toward Mike with a smile, "So, Mario Andretti, what kind of car is this?"

Michael laughed and said, "Get in, you can have the second ride cause Cameron was here first.

This is a TR6, a Triumph. It's great. And I know what you're going to say about the convertible, but it comes with a hardtop as well."

Dare she ask where the hardtop would be stored? Before the words left her mouth though, Mike continued, “In the summer, we’ll store the hardtop on the living room floor. And I figure that I won’t have to spend money on my monthly railroad commute any longer, which will be a saving, and instead I’ll drive the two-seater to work.”

You have to pick your battles, and Rachel decided, *screw it; let it be the living room floor. If he had changed and was now happier because of his exercise routine and a new car—so be it. Don’t see where the saving comes in with car payments and gas, but let’s not spoil the moment.* She looked at Mike and said, “It’s all good, be happy.”

HALF A CUP OF COFFEE AND THANKSGIVING

The house was humming, and everyone seemed to be feeling good for a few weeks. Mike was a changed person and attentive to Rachel and the kids. She attributed it to his new toy.

All four of the children were looking forward to a few days off during the Thanksgiving holiday and lots of their favorite stuff to eat. It was special and there would be company too, which meant that someone would bring presents for them.

Rachel usually made the kids’ favorite desserts and special little franks wrapped in thin bread, which she said were hors d’oeuvres, and special soda drinks called *Shirley Temples*. She was busy with Thanksgiving preparations. The weather was cooperating with clear and seasonable temperatures, and for a change, there was an upbeat atmosphere in the house.

Roz had decided not to come that year, as she’d had to work the Friday after Thanksgiving, and felt that for one day, the travel would be too much. It was okay and a good decision.

Instead, Michael's parents, Adrienne and Jake, came along with Mike's sister and her children. Adrienne had said that she and Jake would get there on Wednesday so that she could help with the preparations.

Mike's sister Shari had arrived on Thursday with her two children. Shari had recently separated from her husband, and Adrienne had said, "Look, she has to go somewhere. This is an awful holiday for her, and I'll make all her favorite things. She can just come as a guest and enjoy herself."

Rachel had no choice but to agree that would be best.

Mike's office was closed on Wednesday, so there was a full house for the long weekend. Rachel shopped on Tuesday, cleaned the house, and was ready for the onslaught. She was an obedient daughter-in-law and always tried to make Mike's family feel welcome. That year required extra effort because of Shari's separation.

She knew that Adrienne was sick over the broken family and was worried about her daughter, and so, as usual Rachel opened her "hotel" to all of them.

She'd spent Wednesday morning setting the dining room table, as she preferred to do this alone. Invariably, someone always broke a plate or a wine glass during the process. She also liked to clear the table after the meal to avoid any mishap. Her mother said, "If you want it done the way you like, do it yourself. Then you can't blame anyone but yourself." Rachel finished before anyone arrived.

It was almost noon when Mike entered the kitchen. He'd walked over to the window, gazed outside, and said, "Hey Rach, you don't need me here. I think I'll go into the office and handle a few things for the day." Without looking at her, he started toward the door.

Rachel was amazed, and said, “What? Your parents will be here soon. They expect to see you, and it would help if you occupied the kids while I start cooking.”

She’d watched as Mike slowly sat down at the kitchen table and said, “I’ll have a cup of coffee.” Rachel rolled her eyes, went to the coffee pot, and poured him a cup of coffee. She served it to him saying, “Enjoy your coffee, thanks for staying.”

Mike had stood up then and pushed the coffee cup to the middle of the table and shouted, “What the hell, this is only half a cup. What’s wrong with you? Why would you pour me only a half a cup?”

Rachel had answered, “Listen Mike, you are picking the wrong day to do this. If you want more coffee, pour it yourself. Your mother will be here any minute.”

Mike had walked to the door, repeating under his breath, “Half a cup, half a cup.” He left, slamming the door behind him.

Rachel had gone after him and then saw that Adrienne and Jake were in the driveway. Mike walked past them muttering, “I have an appointment,” and got into his sports car and screeched down the block.

What was this holiday called? THANKS? Thanksgiving?

Rachel had thought, He was going to leave by hook or by crook, and he DID. Back to square one. I’m just glad he didn’t act like this with MY mother.

Adrienne and Jake walked into the house, and of course, they knew. Adrienne started her usual lament, “I just do not have any joy. What kind of a greeting was that? I’m his mother—how rude—should we just go home?”

Rachel had looked at her mother-in-law and said, “This isn’t out of the ordinary for your son; let’s get you settled. I’ve already chopped the onions, and we can start to cook for tomorrow. He’ll cool off and come back.”

The kids came running to greet their grandparents, and the entire *Symphony of Thanksgiving* dinner began its orchestration.

Rachel had been determined to ignore her husband, but of course, in her heart, she’d thought, *WHERE and WHAT was so important that he had to leave now? Where did he go?*

Then, there it was, that FEELING. It had started in her stomach, but she couldn’t let it overtake her. There was a lot to do today.

Mike didn’t return home until 7 p.m. that night, and everyone was walking on eggshells, as though nothing had happened. That’s the problem. Something did happen! She deserved an apology, but good luck with that.

As usual, the family chatter kept going. And, to make matters worse, Adrienne was full of heartache about HER daughter, and that no-good son-in-law, who found, as she put it, “a new chippie.” In a distraught tone, Adrienne muttered, “We will make sure he pays for this. That’s what lawyers are for,” as she walked to the guest room for the night.

THURSDAY, THANKSGIVING

“A day to be thankful—well, I will try,” said Rachel. She was always thankful for the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade on TV. Jake gathered his grandchildren, went into the family room, and amazingly kept them busy for three hours. He would embellish stories of how he grew up, and how lucky they were to live in the suburbs, and how they should appreciate all they had.

Adrienne and Rachel worked as a good team in the kitchen, and dinner was underway, with a completion time scheduled for 5 p.m., when everyone would sit down in the dining room. Not too early, not too late—just right, like Goldilocks.

Shari arrived at 1 p.m., full of equipment for her children, who had both fallen asleep in the car. Adrienne had started ooh-ing and ahh-ing over the baby girl, “Who’s the most beautiful girl in the world?” she’d gushed over her little six-month-old granddaughter, named “Temple.” She called her “Temmie” and refused to use her given name, which had been chosen by her wayward son-in-law.

When she was born, she’d asked Tim, “What kind of name is that?”

He’d responded, “My initial, my shrine, and my prerogative.”

“Good luck,” she’d said, “she will be Temmie to me.”

The little boy, at three years of age, had a fighting chance with his name, Tyler—but Temple? When showing pictures of her grandchildren, Adrienne would explain to anyone who would listen, “Her dad named her Temple. Kids will make fun of her. He was into the *Ts*. I am so glad my daughter didn’t have any more, as who knows what he would have named that one. Maybe *Tossed* or *Toulouse* or *Toodles*. Thank God for small favors, I call her Temmie!”

Adrienne had never been one to mince words, and she and Rachel’s mom got along just fine.

They were cut from the same cloth.

Amazingly, Thanksgiving dinner had been super great. The turkey came out perfect, the kids had a good time laughing at their grandparent’s old jokes, even though they were the same ones as last year. Shari had tried to forget her troubles, and Rachel was ultra-supportive with her. Even Michael was in a responsive mood.

A highlight of the night was when Adrienne told a story!

She'd said:

So, Mrs. Jones met her friend Mrs. Smith for lunch one day.

Mrs. Smith said, "How is your son, Mrs. Jones?"

Mrs. Jones said, "Not too good! He married a witch. All she wants are **BIG** houses, **DIAMOND** rings, **MAIDS**, dinners **OUT**, and **FUR** coats. My poor boy works his fingers to the bone. She is a **NIGHTMARE!**"

Mrs. Smith said, "Sorry to hear that. So, how is your daughter?"

Mrs. Jones said, "Oh, my daughter, let me tell you . . . she married a man that is so **TERRIFIC**. He gave her the most gorgeous **DIAMOND** ring, lives in a **MANSION**, and has a beautiful **MINK** coat, a **MAID**, and a **COOK**. Her husband is **ALWAYS** working for her to have these things. Yes, I have had much better **LUCK AND HAPPINESS** with my daughter. "

EVERYONE had laughed, and Rachel rolled her eyes. She'd suddenly missed her own mother and thought, *does anyone ever see themselves?*

What an exhausting day. She'd felt like all the energy had drained from her body. Rachel had needed a hug and picked up her little niece. She started cuddling and cooing to the baby, "So sweet, so happy, and so very precious."

Tears started to sprinkle her face as she thought, *this is such a nice feeling. It is a proven fact that babies give the ONLY pure love that anyone can receive. They NEED you; they LOVE you in the very purest form. Oh, to have PURE love again.*

Another year, another Thanksgiving. She looked down at little Temmie, who was nestled in her arms.

She gave her a kiss and said, "I hope YOU have better luck little girl!"