



The Feeling

**SUBURBAN SECRETS:
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS**



CAROL-ROSE MARSHALL

The Feeling

SUBURBAN SECRETS:

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

A novel by Carol-Rose Marshall

Copyright 2022 Carol-Rose Marshall. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-66783-963-9 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-66783-964-6 (eBook)

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

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.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE — AN ORDINARY DAY, SEPTEMBER 1976

CHAPTER TWO — ROZ & THE KIDS, OCTOBER 1976

CHAPTER THREE — SPORTS CAR SYNDROME & WET WOOD, NOVEMBER 1976

CHAPTER FOUR — HO-HO-HO, DECEMBER 1976

CHAPTER FIVE — GOTCHA! JANUARY 1977

CHAPTER SIX — THE AFTEREFFECTS, FEBRUARY 1977

CHAPTER SEVEN — A SURPRISE VISIT, MARCH 1977

CHAPTER EIGHT — TEN YEARS LATER, 1987

CHAPTER NINE — DIVORCE

CHAPTER TEN — TWELVE MORE YEARS, 1999

CHAPTER ELEVEN — FEELINGS

CHAPTER TWELVE — EPILOGUE, 2022

Chapter One – An Ordinary Day

SEPTEMBER 1976

There was something *out* of the ordinary, in what appeared like a usual, ORDINARY day to Rachel Anne Sanders.

As she zipped through her morning routine, she recalled the strange events of the night before. Her husband, Michael, had called and said that he would be home late. She had started to FEEL uneasy! Mike explained that his boss was demanding a late dinner and sales meeting at the office.

This was nothing out of the ordinary, but something about it was off. It was a FEELING she had. Perhaps it was the way Mike rushed off the phone. Perhaps it was the tone of his voice. Rachel's stomach was doing flip-flops.

That night, Rachel fell asleep watching the *Johnny Carson Show*, and woke up around 2 a.m. with the TV blaring. She searched her darkened room for any sign of Mike, and then got up and quietly checked her sleeping children. Realizing Michael was not home yet; her thoughts went into panic mode.

Could something have happened to him—did his car break down, was he in an accident? It was unusual and strange not to have heard from him. “Stay calm!” she ordered herself.

She couldn't go back to sleep, and finally at about 3:00 a.m., she was relieved to hear the whirl of the garage door opening with its usual clunky sound.

So often Mike would say he had to fix this or that, but never did. Breathing a sigh of relief, she calmed down, as thankfully, he was home. Back in her comforting, warm bed, Rachel watched in silence as Michael entered their bedroom, and felt his way around the dark room. He was getting undressed and unceremoniously dropping his clothes on the floor as was his usual MO.

She startled him when she loudly said, “HELLO, YOU ARE SO LATE.”

He answered quietly, “Yes, busy night, very tired . . .” as he proceeded to go into the bathroom and close the door.

Rachel heard the shower go on, and after about thirty minutes, she quietly opened the bathroom door and peeked inside. Michael was literally scrubbing himself vigorously with a bath brush and totally unaware of her presence. Tiptoeing back to bed, Rachel thought, *this is odd behavior*.

When Michael got into bed, Rachel turned on her bedside lamp and asked, “Where were you that you got so dirty?”

Michael got offended and yelled in his loudest, most intimidating voice, “GO TO SLEEP, IT’S LATE,” he said, totally dismissing her question.

The next morning, before leaving for work, he was incommunicado.

Rachel looked him square in the eye, and said, “It looked like you were trying very hard to scrub something off your body last night. What was WRONG with you and why were you so late?”

Michael, in his usual fashion, turned the question around on her, and yelled, “CAN’T A PERSON SHOWER—WITHOUT A THIRD DEGREE?” and then stormed out of the house. He was a master at avoidance.

That strange FEELING came over Rachel again, and she felt uneasy. While sipping her morning coffee, Rachel started to recall Mike’s peculiar attitude and sharpness with her over the last few months. It was clearly his unspoken “punishment” to those in his home, when it was HE who was either guilty or at fault and didn’t want to be called out. It was a blight in his personality that Rachel had endured over the years.

Michael’s mother, Adrienne, had warned Rachel about Mike’s moodiness and anger during his childhood years. Adrienne had said, “It wasn’t easy raising him, as he would go on hunger strikes and it drove me crazy. I would secretly ask my neighbor Fran to invite him to dinner with her son, so that I knew he was eating. But in our home, he remained on his hunger binge to punish me when he didn’t get his way.”

Rachel started remembering incidents some twenty-odd years ago, when her mom hosted an engagement party for them.

Shortly before the engagement party, Aunt CeeCee had a BBQ at her house and invited Michael, his parents, and aunts and uncles, so that the families could meet. At the party, Aunt CeeCee noticed that

Michael was not speaking to Rachel, and she took her niece aside to find out what had happened.

CeeCee was the sister of Rachel's mother, and Rachel was always very close to her.

There was CeeCee knocking herself out to welcome this family, and the groom-to-be was refusing to speak to his bride-to-be and in addition, making no attempt to hide his rude mood swings.

Rachel explained that the night before she and Michael had gone to the movies. During intermission, Michael decided to go get something at the candy counter and asked Rachel if she wanted anything. Rachel had replied, "No, thanks."

However, when Michael returned, the treats had been appealing, and she said, "Okay I'll share that with you."

Michael silently watched as Rachel took a box of candy from his grasp. He then angrily proceeded to pull the candy back from Rachel's hand, while yelling, "YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT ANY!"

From that moment on he'd refused to talk to her. They left the movies, went home, and the next day had driven to Aunt CeeCee's in silence. Mike spent the entire day with both families and never uttered a word.

At the barbecue, the engaged couple cut the cake together and opened gifts from the family with Michael's silence looming like an unbroken storm cloud overhead. (Do you think that was a clue?)

Before all the guests left, CeeCee said to her niece, "If you think he will change, it won't happen, and YOU need to think LONG and HARD about this. These moods will be something you need to deal with."

Several weeks later, at long last, the evening of the engagement party arrived. The bride-to-be was happy and spent the evening in a whirlwind of excitement and anticipation. It was all she had dreamed of, complete with beautiful gifts, music, and all their loved ones in attendance.

After the engagement party, Rachel couldn't get in touch with her fiancé for days. Mike's mom, Adrienne, had secretly called Rachel and explained that Michael had forgotten to put film in the camera. (Cell phones with cameras were a long way from being invented. This was the late 1950s. If you wanted to take photographs, you needed film.)

During the party, Mike had been busy photographing and having fun posing with his guests. He only realized that there was no film at the point of taking the film to the drugstore for prints the next day.

The only pictures they would ultimately have would be the two taken by Rachel's Uncle Henry. Mike's way of dealing with this mishap was to stop talking to his intended wife and keep her in the dark as to what had happened.

She ended up feeling insecure about her possible role in this. Silence is golden? Not in this case, for sure.

This seemed to be a pattern, and rather than own up to his mistakes or disappointments, Mike would brood, placing himself in a deep, dark unfathomable chasm. He had the ability to make her think that she was the one who should be saying, "Sorry." She should be the one to ask for forgiveness for not understanding. It was strange, as she really didn't know what she was sorry for—just that it was tormenting not to be spoken to—and easier to end the silence. "Sorry, sorry, sooooo sorry!" (Puh-lease . . . please . . . please speak to me!)

When she broached the subject of his behavior, Mike always blamed it on his parents' unhappy marriage. He said his mother had been controlling, and his father was weak, and as soon as Michael left the house, he would change.

To the bride, at twenty years old, this seemed like a reasonable explanation. It never occurred to her that this would become their way of life—one that would be painful for her.

Mike was handsome, with thick, dark wavy hair and sculpted features. He was six feet tall and was dedicated to working out. He was college educated and in addition, could fix anything he put his hands to. Rachel's mom, Roz, boasted that her son-in-law had "golden hands."

It was clear that his bride was in love with him and would make excuses for any imperfection that was ever present. She excused this personality flaw by convincing herself that *certainly, once they were in their own home, it would be different. It was CLEARLY a case of his environment!*

Rachel had been raised by a single mother since the age of ten. Her dad, Gary Lesser, unexpectedly left her and her mother, and "ran away with another woman." To make matters worse, the other

woman practiced another religion, was taller than Gary, and older than him. All these facts were more than insulting to Roz Lesser and her family.

The manner that Roz Daniels-Lesser's family explained this unnatural phenomenon (which occurred in 1947) was that Gary forever and always had been referred to as *The Bum*. That phrase hurt Rachel every time she heard it, but it just wasn't done in their circle of people. This outlandish event of infidelity within Rachel's family affected the entire neighborhood. The gossiping neighborhood was comprised of middle and working-class people not accustomed to adultery in the 1940s era. Rachel and her mom were, "the talk of the town," and it was painful. It clearly left a mark on both Rachel and her mother, who at the time was only thirty-seven years of age.

The young mother raised her daughter alone, in a quiet atmosphere, with an abundance of love. She taught her child complacency, generosity, and non-combativeness in the cloistered environment of Roz's family, the Daniels.

As Rachel got older, she was taught to always control what was hers, and ultimately, always have her own good sense dictate her final decisions. A code of ethics was instilled in her to study hard, work hard, use good manners, and be fastidious in her personal habits. The rule of thumb for Rachel was always to simply follow the rules and do the right thing while adhering to God's Ten Commandments.

Rachel had a deep loyalty to friends and family, and a talent for accomplishment as an INDIVIDUAL and NOT as part of a group. Rachel's "ONLY CHILD" status decreed all of this. It was sometimes a lonely environment, but strangely, her sheltered life allowed her to achieve a pristine growing-up process.

Despite the unfortunate debacle of her mother's marriage, Rachel had a fairy-tale dream of her own future marriage, complete with having children and owning a home with her family. She just KNEW in her heart that the result of her parents' marriage was the fault of her father. It was clear: *he just did NOT have good family traits or values.*

Her parents' unsuccessful union would never be repeated in any relationship of Rachel's. She would make sure of this. Her mom would never marry again, but despite her single status, she always encouraged her daughter to strive for a good and full family life.

Michael Sanders fit the bill when Rachel met him. His attributes were all of the following:

Religion appropriate

Age appropriate

Education appropriate

Good-looking appropriate, and

Career appropriate

Although over the years, Mike's mood swings became more difficult to live with, Rachel learned to ignore his never-ending anger until it passed. Above all, it was apparent that Mike was loyal and dedicated to their marriage, and this was of primary importance. Repeatedly, she would think, *Michael will never stray like my dad did.*

She could cope with anything but that, and so it was all worth it to her, and she kept telling herself this: *nothing is perfect.*

However, that morning, she couldn't put it into words; but she had a FEELING of unrest, of uncertainty, and she was experiencing a clear unspoken warning.

It was JUST A FEELING, no big deal.

The previous night's event was strange, but "No," she would put it out of her mind. Michael would come home, they would continue with their evening, and it would never be spoken of again.

It was an ordinary day. The kids were clearly a big part of her life, and Rachel would involve herself in the children's daily requirements.

So much to do today . . .

So little time . . .

Need to make phone calls . . .

Do laundry . . .

Go shopping . . .

Prepare dinner.

What a beautiful day this is, she thought.

It was just a FEELING!

Let's get going—IT IS ALREADY 9 A.M.!