

Barbara Graham

Newman's Own

I know the moment I see him rising like Poseidon out of the inky sea that he's the One. He looks like a god—bronzed, lean, muscular, with eyes so blue you can't believe they're real. Everyone on shore defers to him, and it's no wonder: Here is a man you can rely on, a man who will never let you down, a man with the power to save you from anything, including yourself.

It doesn't matter that he's a character in an epic film played by a famous movie star. Or that I'm a gawky thirteen year old with giant buck teeth and wads of scratchy toilet paper stuffed in my training bra. I believe that when we meet our connection will be cosmic, a Big Bang of love so shattering, so filled with rapture, that my tiny breasts and big choppers will be of little consequence. I also believe that the actor, Paul Newman, and the character, Ari ben Canaan in *Exodus*, are exactly the same person.

My soulmate.

I'm ready to turn my life over to him, quit junior high school, say good riddance to my childhood, including my clueless parents and my brother—the traitor, who has gone off to college and deserted me—and all the other people who think they know me but don't. I am ready to be *seen*. And set ablaze by love.