

**EVERYONE
AND
EVERYTHING**

NADINE J. COHEN



**PANTERA
PRESS**

PROLOGUE

It's still dark as I walk through the park towards the water. I don't need to see, my feet have muscle memory. They quicken as I pass the children's playground, where the swings seem to oscillate no matter how still the weather.

When I reach the locked gate there are already two women waiting. We half-smile, in silent agreement that it's too early for chats.

I'm still new to this dawn business. A few months ago, I would have found the thought of getting up at fuck-off am to swim in the ocean laughable. I've always been a night person.

'You joining us, Miss Yael?'

A broad Australian accent. Cropped black hair and a red tracksuit.

Lynne, one of the volunteers, is standing at the gate waiting for me to come through.

'Sorry, Lynne.'

'Have a good dip!'

She's way too chirpy for this hour.

I walk along the concrete path and past the change rooms towards the ocean. I dump my bag on a patch of grass and peel off my shorts and t-shirt. I'm wearing one of my million black swimsuits, a gravity-defying one-piece with a low back. As I look down, it strikes me as ill-suited for a sunrise swim at a women's-only ocean pool.

In the crevices of the rock wall that buttresses the pool, a cast of crabs go about their crab business.

'Good morning, friends,' I whisper, before hopping in.

The other women do proper laps while I splash around like a child. My sunrise swims involve less actual swimming than the phrase implies.

'Here it comes!' Lynne shouts from her post and I look out to sea.

A rush of oranges and yellows roars up from beneath the ocean and slowly turns on the sky. Immersed in water as the sun announces its arrival, I feel weightless. I feel free.

It's how I imagine other people feel all the time.

And then it's over.