

Bad Decisions



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Bad Decisions

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ISBN: 1-55410-033-X

Cover art and design by Martine Jardin

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Published by eXtasy Books, a division of Zumaya Publications, 2003

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DEDICATION:

So many to thank for allowing me to be me, and not expecting anything else.

All the gals at 4-women, Fallen Angel Reviews, my writing partner in crime, Diane,

My mom, who always encouraged me to write, and Daddy Gene who told me years ago to try to get my stuff published because I had a gift.

Thanks to my family who allows me to take time away from them to do what I love and to the following friends who did such a killer job on the web page-Jenny and Connie.

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Chapter One

Dakota looked at the girl, shrugging his shoulders. "Look, I never told you I loved you. I never promised you anything."

She just stared at him. "You know, when my friends said you were a son of a bitch, I didn't believe them. I said you were different. Man, was I wrong."

Dakota looked at his watch. "Well, next time, listen to your friends."

She slapped him across the face. "I hope some girl breaks your heart. I hope she hurts you, and I hope you pay for the things you do. You are one selfish bastard."

She slammed the door as she walked out.

Dakota looked at the clock. He had enough time to get to the bar and find another woman. His face stung from the slap, but he laughed it off. Women were all the same. They wanted a white knight, a Prince Charming. But he would sweep them off their feet, into his bed, then back to the curb. He had no time for silly romance and love. There was no such thing as happily-ever-after. He wanted sex, he needed sex, and so did the women he bedded. Some were good, some bad, some clingy, and some were downright

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psycho. He had left a long trail of women, and of course, he loved them all.

Yeah, right.

Ross was laughing at his little brother. "Man, she hit you good."

Dakota rolled his eyes. "She sucked in bed anyway."

Ross opened the door to the truck. "Well, I guess it's back to the drawing board."

Dakota started the truck and drove off. They got to the arena and went to their dressing rooms. Dakota looked in the mirror. He had a scratch on his face. "Damn bitch."

He changed into his ring attire and sat down to meditate. He was so sick of women giving him shit. Hell, they all wanted him, so who cared if he slept with them and left them. It was a piece of ass.

He did not hate women. He loved his mother and he loved his sister-in-law, Kristen. They were two classy women, and for years he ignored the advances of the groupies. They threw themselves at him night after night. All they wanted was to say they had slept with him.

So what did he care if he got his fun out of it too? A different woman every night—no headaches, no commitment, and no visions of a white picket fence - that was the life he wanted and lived.

Ross found it exciting, too. He loved the game of it. It was like hunting. He saw a woman he wanted, he conquered her, then he never saw her again. They both saw nothing wrong with what they did. They always wore protection. The last thing they wanted

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was some bitch to say she was pregnant. They even compared notes. The two brothers even took bets on which one could get a girl in bed the quickest.

Ross walked into the room. "So, what's on for tonight?"

Dakota looked at Ross. "I say we go to a different club. I don't want to chance running into Psycho Bitch."

Ross laughed. "Oh, she left her mark on you."

Dakota rolled his eyes. "She was just pissed because she got a mouthful. I didn't pull out in time."

Ross started to laugh. "Oh, man, you suck."

Dakota opened the door. "No, she did. I thought I was going to fall into that bitch. I couldn't feel a thing."

Ross laughed as they walked out to the ring.

The girls all screamed and yelled as they took off their ring attire.

Ross walked over to Dakota. "Second row, the girl in purple."

Dakota looked over at her. "Yeah, right, she looks like Barney." Ross laughed. After the matches were over, they showered and met at Dakota's truck.

Nick, one of the guys he worked with, yelled to Dakota. "Follow me."

Nick, Dakota and Ross pulled up in front of a small club. "What is this dive?"

Nick shut his door. "This is where the girl I date works." They all walked in, and he grabbed Darcy.

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She hit him.

"Watch it, I'm working."

He sat down at the bar. "Hi, gorgeous, got a nice cold beer for me?"

The bartender, Diane, turned around. "Budweiser can again?"

He nodded. "You got it, sweet thang."

She opened his drink. "What do you guys want?"

Ross looked at Dakota and smiled. Dakota shook his head; he knew what his older brother wanted. He knew what Ross was thinking. "I want a gin and Coke."

She looked at Dakota. He thought for a minute. "A Coors Light longneck."

They paid for their drinks, then went to a table. "How long have you been coming here?"

Nick smiled. "Oh, I've been coming here for about five months now. I met Darcy at a match and she told me about this place."

Ross looked over at Diane. "Damn, she's hot."

Nick laughed. "Wait till her sister gets here. They own this place. This place stays busy."

Ross took a drink. "So what's her name, how old is she, marital status?"

Nick put his beer down. "She's twenty-six, she's single, and her name is Diane. Her sister is twenty-four, her name is Kelly, and she's single, too. Is there anything else that you two want to know?"

Ross watched her open a beer and hand it to an old man. She was hot. He checked out her breasts. He figured they were a full C cup. He definitely liked what he saw.

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The door opened and Kelly walked in. She was late again. She had stopped to get some change, because they were always running out of quarters. The place was busy. Kelly noticed Nick was there with some friends, no doubt to check up on Darcy.

Dakota hit Nick. "Holy shit, who is the redhead?"

Nick knew that Dakota would want her. "I told you she was hot. I tried to get her to go out with me at first. She shot me down. Then I asked Darcy out. That's Kelly."

Dakota hit his arm. "Call her over here and introduce me."

Nick laughed. "Hey, Kelly, come here."

I heard him yell for me. I walked over to the table. "What can I do for you, Nick?"

He looked at his friends. "I want you to meet Dakota and Ross."

I smiled. "Hi, guys, it's nice to meet you."

Dakota grabbed my hand and kissed it. "I am Dakota the Warrior. It's nice to meet you."

I wiped my hand on my pants. "Dakota the Warrior? I've never heard of you."

Diane yelled for my help, so I turned and went back to the bar. Ross looked at Dakota and busted out laughing. "Oh, man, a woman doesn't know who you are."

I walked over to the bar and sat down. "So, how's it going?"

Diane sat on a barstool. "The new bitch called in

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sick. I fired her. I am so sick of this."

I walked behind the bar. "Do you want me to work your shift?"

She shook her head. "No. I fired her, so I'll work. So, what is Nick doing?"

I rolled my eyes. "He wanted to introduce me to his friends."

She laughed. "Yeah, I met them earlier. They seem pretty cocky to me."

I laughed. "Yeah, well, most men are."

As the night went on, I waited some tables because it got pretty busy. One of the waitresses got pissed off and approached me.

"What's the matter, Gina?"

She pointed to Nick's table. "Every time I go over there, one of them grabs my ass."

I smiled. "Take my table. I'll handle it."

The guys were all laughing when I walked up. As I got to the table, Dakota stared me up and down. He smiled. "Has anyone ever told you that you have the nicest..."

Before he could finish, I turned to Nick. "This is not a whorehouse. My girls are not whores. Keep your damn hands to yourself, or leave."

Dakota smiled. "We were playing around."

I ran my hands through my hair. "She didn't want to be played with. It's apparent that you're never told no. Well, Doug, she does not want you touching her, okay?"

Ross looked at Dakota. He licked his lips. "My name is Dakota, not Doug."

I rolled my eyes. "I don't care what your name is."

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Leave her alone."

As she walked off, Ross looked at Dakota. "Oh Dakota, she is kicking your ass."

Dakota looked at the bar. "Is she a dike or what?"

Nick took a drink. "No, she's not a dike. She's just one tough cookie. I have heard guys say that she is super-glued at the knees."

As they were closing up, Darcy yelled, "Can I leave?"

Kelly was counting money, and Diane was cleaning up. "Go ahead."

She smiled and put her arm around Nick. "See you tomorrow at noon."

Kelly didn't even look up. "Be careful, Darcy."

Diane put the last chair up on the table. "Yeah, and if you can't be careful, name it after me."

Darcy flipped her off. "Bite me, Diane."

The next day, Dakota was lifting weights. "I cannot get over that bitch."

Nick put down his water. "Her sister is just as bad, if not worse. Diane can fight. She knows all that karate shit and kickboxing crap. I saw her knock a guy on his ass one night. They don't take shit from no one. They are very protective of the girls that work there too. Darcy told me that one of them is always there to close up, and they make sure the girls get in

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their cars and leave before they close up for the night. I know they seem like a couple of hard-asses, but they have huge hearts."

Dakota put his weights down. "I cannot believe she acted like that towards me. Do you have any idea how many women would love to be with me?"

Ross knew that she would now become his next challenge. Nick walked off. "Well, how long, Dakota?" Dakota put his water bottle down. "So how long will it take you to get her into bed?"

Dakota smiled. "Two days. I'll have her in bed by Saturday."

Ross put on his shirt. "I'll have Diane in bed tomorrow night."

Dakota ran a brush through his long brown hair. "I take that bet, man. There is no way you are going to get that girl in bed so soon."

Ross cleared his throat and looked in the mirror. "Dakota, look at me. I am the master of sexy. I am the man of all men. She doesn't have a chance."

Dakota, Ross and Nick were all waiting at the club. Dakota and Ross were sitting with some friends. They had invited some of the other guys to listen to the band.

The band was a great mixture of country and rock. Girls kept coming over to talk to Ross, Dakota and Nick, but Dakota waved them away. He was watching out for Kelly. He was determined to get her. He ached for her. He wanted to give it to her hard.

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Never before had a woman denied him and made him look like a fool. Never would a woman do it again, either.

About ten, Diane and Kelly walked in. Diane had on a pair of black jeans and a half-shirt, Kelly, a black off-the-shoulder shirt and jeans. Everyone was talking to them as they entered. The people liked the sisters. Dakota could see the men staring at them.

Kelly was just beautiful. Her long red hair rested just above her butt. Her eyes were the color of emeralds and her breasts had to be a D cup. Yeah, he loved breasts. She could not have been more than five foot four. Compared to his six-foot-three, she was tiny. Diane was a little bit taller than her. Dakota figured Diane was five-foot-six. He never would have guessed they were sisters by their looks. While Kelly had golden-red hair, Diane was a brunette. Her hair was just below her shoulders. She had more of an athletic build. Her eyes were green just like her sister's, though. They both had a light in their eyes; they almost shone.

All Dakota knew was he wanted that woman, and he wanted her all night long.

Diane and I had just gotten back from the movies. We had both wanted to see *Hannibal*, so we went. It was a little gory, so we blew off going to dinner. The whole brain scene just did not set well with my stomach. The parking lot was packed, so we knew the place was busy, but we trusted Gina. She was working the

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bar that night.

As the night went on, I helped her behind the bar for a while, then went and sat down with Diane and Tom, our bouncer. He worked on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. We had a room over the bar that he lived in. He had free rent as long as he did his job and watched over the place. He was a nice man, and the ladies loved him. Tom was a very loyal friend and made sure we were all right.

Diane hit my leg. "Hey, there's your boyfriend."

Dakota walked over to the table. "I wanted to apologize for the other night. I usually don't act that way."

I just nodded my head. "You don't owe me anything. You owe Gina the apology."

He stepped away. "Well, I am sorry."

I smiled. "No problem, Dakota, but you really should tell Gina."

He went back to the table. Diane laughed. "You are such a bitch sometimes."

I looked at her. "He's a player."

She laughed again. "Oh, come on. How long has it been, girl? You know we all need a little every now and then."

I smiled. "Yeah, well that's why man made BOB. He keeps women happy."

Diane almost spit her beer on me. "BOB? Are you talking about a battery-operated boyfriend?"

I smiled. "Yeah, he works well and I don't have to listen to his shit." We both laughed, but soon stopped.

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Ross walked over to the table. "Would you like to dance?"

Diane stood up. "Sure, why not?"

They walked over to the dance floor and he put his arms around her. He held her tighter than she wanted, but he would not loosen his grip.

"So what do you do for fun?"

His voice was soft and sensual. She did not know what was coming over her. He just had something about him that was sexy. "I work. That's about it. Then on my days off, I take Tae Bo and karate."

He was breathing on her neck. "A sexy woman like you should have some fun time."

The music stopped and she pulled away. "Thank you for the dance."

Diane sat down. "What's wrong with you?"

She took a drink. "I don't know. Something about him gets to me."

Kelly started laughing. "Well, I know who has a date with BOB tonight."

Diane slapped her hand. "I don't even own one."

Gina yelled for Kelly, and she got up. "You are such a liar, girl. I know you have your own private membership to Adult Toys."

Diane looked shocked. "I do not. I, um...I...damn it, Kelly, I don't have a vibrator."

About that time the music stopped and the guys at the bar looked at her and laughed.

Diane glared at her. "You are a bitch."

She blew her a kiss and went to help Gina.

The next night they showed up again. Ross bought

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Diane a drink. On the way to her table he dropped a pill inside. "I bought you a drink."

She smiled. "Thank you, Ross."

He then walked back to his table and sat down. Dakota hit him. "You're cheating. You drugged her."

Ross laughed. "It's not a drug. It's an herb. All it does is allow her to act freely. It takes her guard down. If she doesn't want me, then she won't go with me. You ought to try it."

Dakota shook his head. "Hell no. She'll come to me on her own."

Ross looked at Kelly. "Yeah I can tell she really wants you." Dakota ignored his brother and walked over to the bar.

I knew what he was after. I had been around the block and I knew a player. He had been here every night since I had first met him. They probably even had a bet on who could get whom in bed the quickest. I had to give it to him. He was smooth. He just didn't know that I saw right through him. Working in a club gave me access to all different types of men, and I could read them like a book. I don't consider myself a man-hater. I just don't want to play their games. I had more important things to do in life than become a conquest for some man who thought only with his little head.

"Hi, Kelly, can I buy you a drink?"

I turned to him. "Sure, Dakota, I'll take a drink."

Gina walked up and put some coasters down in

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front of us. "What will it be?" My stomach was still queasy from the movie.

Dakota moved his chair closer to mine. "I want a Coors Light bottle. How about you, princess?"

I rolled my eyes at his comment. "Gina, I'll take a beer, too."

After she gave us our drinks, Dakota leaned in closer. I could smell his cologne. The man was sexy, and he smelled of a mixture of male sex and Cool Waters. "Would you like to dance?"

I put down my pen. "I'm in the middle of paperwork. Go ask someone else."

He ordered a drink. "You hate me, don't you?"

I shook my head. "I don't even know you, Dakota. Why would I hate you?"

"Maybe you hate me because you find me extremely sexy. Maybe you're playing the coldhearted bitch because you want me so badly."

I had to laugh. I just couldn't believe the nerve of this man. "Dakota, you're really full of yourself. I am not a coldhearted bitch. I am just not interested in a pompous ass."

He shoved his beer back. "You have no idea what you are missing out on, princess. I can go all night long." Dakota walked back to the table and sat with the guys.

Diane was back on the dance floor with Ross. I wasn't sure about him because he didn't talk much. I was surprised how much time she spent with him. Diane was not one to get involved with too many people. We had a real tough childhood, and we didn't trust too many people. They had to earn our trust.

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We had been beaten, abused, starved and abandoned. We'd worked our asses off to feed ourselves and not get put in foster homes. I guess what made us work so hard was our father constantly telling us as kids we would be nothing but some man's whore. We refused to let any man get in our way. Now we were financially set, because the bar brought in a good paycheck. We were strong and independent and had proved we could take care of ourselves.

After the bar closed, Diane begged me to go with her to a party at Nick's house. I didn't want to go, but I knew a few of our customers were going, so I figured, what the hell.

Nick's place got packed quickly. He turned on his radio and Diane spent the whole night dancing with Ross. I usually don't get involved in her relationships. We had made a pact a long time ago not to get in the middle of each other's business, but it annoyed the hell out of me the way she hung all over him. It was not the way my sister was. But she was a grown woman, and she was responsible for her actions. The place got hot and I went outside for some fresh air.

Dakota walked over to the swing and sat next to me. "Wanna dance?"

I had a small buzz. I figured that if I danced with him then he would leave me alone. "Okay, one dance. But I am not going in there to dance. It's too hot, and way too many people."

He put his arms around me. He pulled me close, but I pulled away. He didn't fight me. "Why are you so hardheaded, woman?" He smelled so good, and it

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felt right being in his arms. For a brief second I almost let my guard down. It had been a long time since I had been with a man, a very long time.

"I'm not hardheaded, Dakota. I just won't allow myself to be someone's conquest." The song ended and I pulled away. "I need a drink." I turned and went inside.

Ross was whispering in Diane's ear. "Do you want to leave this place?"

She felt lifeless in his arms. "No. I mean, yes." They left the party. Ross got to her car. "You want to drive?" She didn't even think about Kelly. They drove off.

Ross pulled her closer to him. "Where are we going?" Five minutes later they pulled up in front of a house. "Ross, what are we doing here?"

He leaned over and kissed her. "You know what we're doing here."

He walked her in the house. When he shut the door he pushed her against the door and kissed her. Her whole body responded to his touch. It was if she had no control. Her body had taken over her mind. "Do you want to go upstairs?"

She nodded, and he grabbed her hand and led her to his room. He began to take off her clothes as soon as they entered the door. Her body was white as snow, but beautiful. The whole time, he looked her in the eye. His eyes were so captivating. She couldn't control herself. "Do you want to know what I'm going

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to do to you?"

She could barely breathe. "Yes."

He laid her naked body on the bed. Standing next to it, he began to remove his clothes, then laid down beside her. "I'm going to trace your body with my finger like this. Then I'm going to fuck you hard. I'm going to make you scream for more."

He started at her forehead and ran his finger down her face, stopping at her mouth. "Suck on my finger like it was my dick in your mouth."

He put it in her mouth and she sucked it, moving her tongue up and down his long, skinny finger. He then pulled it out and went to her nipples. "I am going to suck on your nipples 'til you arch your back and beg me to lick your clit." He took one in his mouth and sucked on it softly, teasing her nipple, then he then went to the other. He heard a small moan escape her throat. He was so damned hard. "I'm then going to put a trail of kisses down your body 'til I get here." He smiled at her freshly shaven pussy. She arched up to feel his kisses there. He laughed. "Calm down." He then put his finger inside her and sucked on her nipple at the same time. "Does this feel good?"

She cried out. "Please do it."

He sucked on her harder. "Do what?" She moaned. He could feel her body releasing her liquid ecstasy. It excited him more than anything. He was in total control. He stopped. "Do you want me to stop?"

She cried out. "No, Ross, please."

He smiled. "Please what?"

She cried out. "Please fuck me now."

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He got on top of her, and entered her, hard. Her head hit the headboard as she gasped from his size. Over and over his balls slapped against her ass. She had never imagined she could reach such ecstasy. After she came, she rolled over. He turned her back. "Now it's my turn to moan."

He pulled her into the shower, pushing her onto her knees; she took him in her mouth her tongue licking the length of his shaft until she took his cock in her mouth. He pushed her head closer and closer till she thought she would gag from his width. His head went back and he enjoyed her tongue licking the tip of his head, tasting him. He knew he was about to explode. Ross quickly pulled her up, wrapping her legs around his waist. She cried out as he entered her again, this time with full force and mighty speed. She yelled out his name as the orgasms began to flow over and over.

Her body was exhausted. They both dried off and fell asleep.

Chapter Two

I was so pissed when I saw that Diane had taken the car. Dakota walked out behind me. "I can give you a ride home."

I turned to him. "Did she take off with your brother?"

Dakota shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know. I'm not my brother's keeper. Do you need a ride home?"

I let out a deep breath. "Okay."

We got into his truck and he took me to the bar. I noticed that a light was on. Dakota followed me into the bar. I was standing behind the bar when he walked up behind me and put his arms around me. He kissed my neck. I could feel his breath on my skin. I pulled away and got on top of the bar. I tore off my shirt. He stood there shocked. He started to kiss me. I didn't respond. He put his hands on my breasts and I didn't respond.

He backed away. "What is the matter? Do you want me?"

I looked him in the face. "Just fuck me. I figure I might as well make it easy on you. So do it." He looked oddly at me.

"Fuck me, Dakota. Do it now, and then leave. You

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want to make me yours, to conquer me, well, just do it. What are you waiting for? That's all you want, so if it takes me lying here and getting it over with, I will. I just want you to leave me the hell alone after you get what you want."

Dakota threw my shirt at me. "You are one cold bitch."

I put on my shirt. "Well, guess who made me cold? A sick mother like you. I know your type, Dakota. You screw them all, then leave. Hell, I might as well just fuck you, then at least I could get something out of it, too. I am not like the rest of your groupies, Dakota. I happen to love my life and myself. I am not a whore."

He just stood there staring at me. "What's the matter, Dakota? Never had one deny the mighty Warrior?"

Dakota turned around and walked out of the bar.

I gathered my thoughts and left. I was going to kill Diane.

The next morning, Diane walked in.

"Don't even say it." She walked to her room and shut the door.

Ross looked at his brother. "She did that?"

Dakota put the weights down. "Hell, ya, she was on the bar telling me to fuck her."

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Ross laughed. "Well, I would have fucked her."

Dakota shook his head. "She pissed me off so bad I just left. That woman has some major issues. I mean, she has problems."

Ross laughed. "So now you even have a bigger challenge?"

Dakota shook his head. "Screw that. I'm not even worried about her anymore. I left there and got me a girl and screwed her brains out."

Ross laughed. "Yeah, but who was it you were really screwing?"

Dakota hit the bench. "Damn her."

Dakota looked at Ross. "You took her to your house?"

Ross nodded. "Yeah, why do you ask?"

Dakota looked at him and shook his head. "We don't take them to our house, remember? Then they know where to find us."

Ross just ignored him. "Well the way I see it is this. I'm going to take her there a lot more times."

Ross talked Dakota into going to the club for a beer. Dakota had picked up some girl at the matches and brought her with him. They all walked in. Diane was sitting at the bar doing some paperwork.

I looked at Diane. "Lover boy is here." She turned and saw Ross. She quickly turned around and did her paperwork.

I saw Dakota put his arm around the girl and sit down. His eyes were fixed on me. I knew his game. I

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didn't pay any attention to him.

Ross walked over to the bar. "Hi, Diane, how are you this lovely evening?"

She smiled. "Hi, Ross, I'm just great."

He sat down. "Care to join us?"

She wouldn't look in his eyes. "I have this paperwork to do first." He grabbed the drinks and walked back to the table.

Dakota took the girl out on the dance floor. He had his hands on her ass. I laughed to myself. He was really a prick. Diane looked at Dakota.

"I still cannot believe you did that."

I laughed. "Oh, I did."

Diane smiled. "What would you have done if he had fucked you?"

I shook my head. "It's the hunt he likes. He likes to conquer. Look at that girl. Hell, he probably doesn't even know her name. But damn it, he knows mine. Want to see him get pissed off?"

She laughed. "Yeah, go for it."

I walked over to their table. "Hi, Steve." Steve was a trainer for the guys. He was a good-looking man.

He looked up. "Oh. Hi, Kelly."

The band played a slow song. "I was wondering if you would like to dance."

He stood up. "Yeah."

Dakota cringed as we went to the dance floor. Ross started to laugh.

Dakota grabbed the hand of the girl he had brought with him. "Let's dance."

He pulled her close to him and kissed her. I put my arms around Steve's neck. Steve just danced. Dakota

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kept his eyes on me. Diane was at the bar, laughing.

Dakota tapped Steve on the shoulder. "Care to trade?" Steve shrugged his shoulders.

Dakota put his arms around my waist. "Trying to make me jealous?"

I laughed. "You really are a pompous ass if you think anything I do is about you."

He smiled. "You're just playing hard to get."

I laughed again. "Excuse me, but you had your chance last night. Remember?"

He shook his head. "You're just like me, you know. It's all about fun."

The music ended and I grabbed his face. "No, honey, I don't play games. I grew up a long time ago." I then walked off.

Ross didn't say a word as Dakota sat down. He was pissed.

The girl sat in his lap and he stood up. "There are chairs over there."

She sat down. "Why don't we leave here and have a private party?"

Dakota was watching the bar. Dakota looked at Steve. "Why don't you take her to your private party?" Steve was game, so he talked to the girl and then they both left.

Kelly brought a round of drinks to the table. "What happened? Did your girly like Steve better?"

Dakota ignored her.

"These are on the house. It must hurt to get shot

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down twice in two days."

Dakota grabbed my arm. "You are messing with fire."

She laughed. "You know what they say about fire don't you, Dakota? It's pretty easy to put out if the flame isn't big."

Ross took a drink. "Man, she needs to be spanked."

Dakota shook his head. "She's killing me. That woman wants me, and she wants me bad."

Diane joined the guys a little while later. "So, what did you want?"

Ross dropped his napkin and bent over to pick it up. As he did he whispered to her. "I want your body." She felt chills all over her. They danced a few dances, and he talked sexy to her. She could not control her body around him. It was as if he had a spell on her.

As the bar was closing, he reached for her hand. "So, do you want a ride home?"

Diane looked at the bar. "I don't know."

He grabbed her face. "Do you want to come with me or not?"

She nodded. "Yes, I do." Ross left Dakota at the bar.

Someone walked in. I didn't look up. "We're closed."

Dakota sat down. "Can I use your phone? My dumbass brother left me here."

I laughed. "Well, you should have let the girl stay around. Then you would have gotten a ride."

Hollie Davidson

He rolled his eyes. "Ha ha, you're funny. But she's the one who would have gotten the ride. So tell me, why are you such a prude, and your sister gives out?"

I bit my lip. "I don't know why she's sleeping with your brother, but I'm not a Greyhound. I don't give ride after ride."

I handed him the phone. He dialed a few different numbers and then stood up. "What's the matter?"

He turned to me. "I can't get a hold of anyone."

I pushed the phone to him. "Call a cab. With your luck it'll be a woman, and you could still get your fix tonight."

He started to walk away.

"I'll give you a ride, Dakota."

He turned to me. "I don't want to put you out."

I locked up the bar. "I always give drunks a ride home."

Dakota got into my car. He turned on the radio. "What do you like to listen to?"

I rolled down my window. "I don't care what you listen to. Where am I going?"

Dakota pointed to the freeway. "Get on highway sixteen and exit Lake House Drive."

We pulled into his subdivision. "You can drop me off here."

I started laughing. "I forgot about that one. You never tell the girl where you live. You don't want her to chase you. Because once you get in her pants you leave, and she is left alone, brokenhearted."

Dakota pointed up the road. "I live there."

I pulled in front of the house. "Rich boy. So, did daddy buy it for you?"

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Dakota opened the door. "I bought it." He shut the door. "I bought it with my own money, Princess. Daddy did *not* help." Dakota threw some tickets into the window. "Here, you can go to the matches."

I smiled. "Oh, thank you so much. It's what I have always dreamed of."

Two weeks went by. Diane went to Ross's house on the weekends. He became her master, and she was his slave. He was a forceful lover and she did everything he commanded.

Dakota and Ross got talked into taking their nephews to the carnival. Their brother David had two sons and they really did enjoy spending time with the boys. It was great they could spoil them then take them home. They were the best kind of kids to have.

They were shooting darts when Ross hit Dakota on the arm. "Isn't that Kelly?"

Dakota looked over at the little roller coaster. "Damn. I can't even go to the carnival without her here. This is killing me. I have not been laid in two weeks, Ross."

Ross laughed. "Well, use your charm."

Dakota shook his head. "That girl is like ice, man. She is so damn cold."

I felt someone behind me and turned around. I was shocked. "What are you doing here?"

Hollie Davidson

He smiled. "Oh, this is a great chick hangout."

I rolled my eyes. Ross and the boys walked over. The littlest one smiled. "Hi."

I smiled at him. "Hi, who are you?"

He put out his hand. "I'm Davey and that is my brother, Jackie."

I looked at Ross. "They must be your brother's kids."

He nodded. "Where's Diane?"

I turned back to him. "Hell, I don't know. Maybe she had a hot date."

I wanted to see if I would get a reaction out of him. He just shook it off.

I had been watching Candy, my daughter, ride the kiddy roller coaster. She was just not ready for the big one, even though she tried and tried to get me to let her on. I simply showed her the sign saying she had to be so tall. If she was anything like me, she had to wait to get to ride it when she was a teenager. I was short, and my daughter would be too.

The kids started getting off the ride. I heard Candy start to cry because she could not get the belt off. I tried to get it off, but it was too hard. Dakota walked over and took it off. She smiled at him. "Thank you."

Dakota lifted her out of the ride. I smiled at her. "Go get another token."

I turned to Dakota. "Don't ever touch her again."

He looked down at me. "I was helping her out of the seat. What do you care?"

I shook my head. "Just stay away from us, okay?"

The little girl ran back. "Mama, I want Tweety."

I picked her up. Dakota stood there in shock. "Did

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she just call you mama?"

I put her down. "Go and get me one."

I was mad. "Yeah, I am her mama. She's four. Five years ago I met a guy like you. I fell for his shit and I got pregnant. I will never do that again. So now you know I have a kid. Maybe now you will leave me alone forever." I walked off.

Ross hit Dakota on the back. "Okay, she has a kid. Move on to another woman."

Dakota walked off to the bumper cars with his nephews.

Candy ran ahead of me, and I caught up with her. "I want that, Mama."

I shook my head. "Honey, I can't get that."

Dakota walked over and grabbed the mallet and hit the square. The ball went up and set off a loud ringing. He looked at the guy. "I want the huge Tweety."

Dakota handed it to Candy. Her eyes lit up. "I'm not as bad as you think."

I sat her down with a Coke and followed him. "Because you won her Tweety, I'm supposed to think you're some prince? Come on."

He turned around. "Look, you're right. I wanted to get you in bed. Okay, yeah, I sleep around. Is there anything else you want to know?"

Hollie Davidson

I nodded. "Yeah, I do want to know something. Why? Why do you hurt all those women?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Because that is what they want."

I shook my head. "That's sad that you think so little of yourself. So sad that you have to hurt others to make yourself feel better."

I grabbed my daughter's hand and walked off.

Chapter Three

I walked into the house and laid Candy in her bed. I looked at Diane. "Is Ross a nice guy, or what? His brother is the biggest jerk I have ever seen."

Diane looked up from her book. "Ross is okay. Why do you let Dakota bother you so much?"

I sat down. "They were at the damn carnival with their nephews. Dakota acted all big and mighty and won a huge Tweety for Candy. I was so mad."

Diane put her book down. "I think you want him."

I shook my head. "Diane, I could have him any time I wanted. I don't want him. He is such a jerk. He reminds me of Candy's sperm donor."

Diane sat up. "Ouch, that hurt. I didn't think anyone was as bad as Johnny."

I looked at the clock. "I'm going to bed. Talk to you later." I went to my room and lay on the bed. Then I started remembering.

I met Johnny when I was nineteen. He was so smooth. He swept me off my feet. I was thinking white picket fence and kids and a two-car garage. He was thinking, get Kelly in bed and brag to my friends.

I would *not* sleep with him. I was going to wait 'til I was married.

Hollie Davidson

He was very adamant about sleeping with me. I shook off his advances at first, then he told me he loved me, and that he wanted to marry me.

So stupid me slept with him. He told me he worked out of town, so that explained why I only saw him a couple times a week. Talk about stupid. I turned up pregnant. He told me flat-out that he was not going to be a daddy. He showed up at the house with some money. He told me to get an abortion. I hated him. I soon took off my rose-colored glasses and saw him for the player he was. He had a different woman every night.

When he wasn't with me, he was with someone else. It made me angry to think how young and naïve I had been. Johnny took something from me that I could never have back. Something I felt was special, a part of me. To him I was just another lay, another dumb girl who fell for his whole 'I love you' act.

I worked up until I went into labor. Then my daughter was born. I swore I would never ever let another man hurt me like Johnny did.

After she was born, I got pissed. I had seen him at a bar with some girls. I walked over to the table. His face went white when I said I wanted to talk to him. We went outside, and I told him that he was going to pay child support. He shook his head. "Like hell I am."

I smiled. "Well, you can pay it, or I'll take you to court."

Well, the next day he showed up at the house with a check and some papers. He told me that if I would allow him to sign all rights away, he would give me

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the check.

I remember looking at the check. I knew his daddy had given it to him. The check was for two hundred thousand dollars. It was no way near enough to pay for her life, but I didn't want him in it and I needed the money. So I signed the papers, and he signed them. That was the last I had ever seen or heard of him.

I bought the bar. Diane and I became partners. I figured two hundred thousand for a lousy fuck wasn't bad. The bar took off on its own. It soon was a very popular joint. We always had a steady crowd. We made enough to stop working and hire others. The first couple of years were hard, but we survived. Candy was a darling little girl; she was my life. She had long strawberry blonde hair, green eyes and the cutest dimples. On the day she was born, I vowed that I would spend my life taking care of her and to always be there for her.

We were having a benefit BBQ at the bar that next Saturday for a lady who was a regular at our bar. She had been hurt in a wreck. She needed help, so Diane and I bought all the food and sold plates to help get her some money to pay her medical expenses. One thing about our regulars was they always looked out for each other.

The place was packed. It was a perfect day and one of the bands that played sometimes for us volunteered to play for free, so we donated that money, too.

I had brought Candy because there were a lot of kids. It was like a huge backyard BBQ. She was

Hollie Davidson

running around, playing with her friends.

Dakota and Ross showed up and sat down. Ross walked up behind Diane and leaned down. "Miss me this weekend?"

She turned around. "Oh, were you gone?"

He smiled. "Be bad and see what happens. I have a new idea."

He then walked off.

I had gotten up early, and hadn't eaten. I was rolling the dolly, getting some beer iced down when I started feeling dizzy. I put the beer in the bins and put ice on them. Candy ran up. "Can I have a Coke?"

I looked at her, and the world started to spin. "Candy, go and get Diane for me, okay?"

She stood there looking at me. "Mama, what's wrong?"

I grabbed the bin and fell to the ground. I could not do this in front of her. "Candy, *go and get Diane.*"

Candy ran into the crowd. She was crying. Dakota saw her.

"Sweetie, what's wrong?"

She looked at him. She remembered him from the carnival. "Where is Aunt Diane? Mama fell."

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Dakota looked at Ross. "Go find Diane."

Dakota knelt down beside me. "What's wrong?"

I could barely breathe. "Go away."

He put his arms around me to help me up. "What's wrong?"

I shook my head. "Just leave."

I was gasping for air. Diane ran up. "Move out of the way, Dakota."

She grabbed my arms and lifted them above my head. "Ross, behind the bar is her purse. Go and get it."

Ross ran behind the bar and grabbed my purse.

Dakota looked at her. "What's wrong?"

She looked at him. "Hold her arms up like this."

I pulled away. "Get him out of here. I don't want him here."

Diane ignored me. She reached into my purse and grabbed a bottle of pills. "Dakota, get behind her, because she may pass out when she gets this." She put the pill under my tongue. Luckily, I didn't pass out.

I was still in Dakota's arms when Candy ran up crying. "Was it your heart, mama?"

I smiled and put my arms around her. "I'm okay."

I sat on the ground. Dakota stood there looking at me. Candy ran off. Diane knelt down beside me. "What happened?"

I took small breaths. I was crying. I thought Dakota and Ross had left, too. "They are getting worse. They are coming more often, and they're harder. Diane, the

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pain is so horrible. I couldn't breathe."

Diane put her arms around me. "We'll make an appointment in the morning."

I shook my head; tears were falling down my face. "Why Diane, so they can tell me again that I am going to die? To tell me that I won't see my daughter become a woman? I fucking know that. I don't need to waste my money to be told that."

Diane grabbed my hand. "You are not going to die."

I laughed. "Diane, we are past the denial stage, right?"

She looked at the ground. "I'm sorry. I'm scared, okay?"

One of the customers walked up. "Damn, you girls sitting on your butts?"

I wiped my face. "Yeah, we're hiding out from all the work."

I stood up and turned around. Dakota was standing right there. I could see the uneasiness in his face. I wiped off my butt. "Don't sweat it, Dakota. I mean, now you know I am sick, so you don't have to keep up with your bet. Nobody wants to fuck a dead girl." I walked off.

Chapter Four

Diane looked at Dakota. "Nobody knows. Please, please don't say anything."

Dakota turned and watched her. "What's wrong with her?"

Diane got up off the ground. "She has problems with her heart. Our grandmother and our aunt died from it."

Ross shook his head. "Can't you do anything?"

She laughed. "There is a doctor in Paris that specializes in the treatment. It is a very risky surgery and she has a fifty-percent chance of surviving. It is also very, very expensive. I told her I would stand on the street corner to get the money to keep her alive. She refuses. She says there is no sense in wasting that kind of money if she would probably die anyway. No one knows about it. Candy has heard us talking, so she will say her mama's heart is sick sometimes."

Diane looked at Dakota. "I don't know what you're doing. I hear what she tells me. Leave her alone, Dakota. She cannot take any more stress. Please, just find another girl to conquer." Diane walked off to find Kelly.

Hollie Davidson

I was so mad that Dakota had seen me like that. I sat down to eat lunch with Candy. It saddened me that I would miss her grow up. I cherished every day with her. I had already taken the proper measures to make sure she was taken care of. Diane promised to raise her for me. I knew Diane would be good to her.

I laid my head on the table for a minute. I was so tired. I knew that it would be best if I went home, but I wanted to be there for the BBQ. I soon passed out.

Candy shook me. "Mama, please wake up."

I didn't budge. She ran over to Diane. "Mama is sleeping again."

Diane got up. She walked over to Dakota and Ross. "Can I ask you a huge favor?"

Dakota looked at her. "What is it?"

She turned around. "Follow me."

They walked over to the table. "Could you carry her into the bar for me?"

Ross looked down. "Is she okay?"

Diane nodded. "The attacks just knock her out." Dakota picked me up and carried me into the bar.

Candy stood in front of him. "Don't drop my mama, or I will kick your butt."

Diane turned. "Young lady, you apologize now."

Dakota laughed. Candy had that same fire in her eyes that Kelly did. He laid me on the couch and Diane covered me up.

Ross smiled. "So, are you going home with me?"

Diane looked at him. "I have to get Kelly home."

He put his drink down. "Dakota will take her and

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Candy home."

Diane laughed. "I don't think so. She would have my ass."

Ross hit Dakota. "Hey, take Kelly and Candy home."

Dakota nodded. "Where do you all live?"

Diane looked at Ross. He whispered. "I'm not asking you, I'm telling you."

She felt her body tingle. "2132 Sunny Lane. It is about two miles from here."

She handed him the key.

Dakota picked up Kelly, and Diane grabbed Candy. Diane was not sure about having him take them, but she couldn't say no to her master. "Kelly will be fine. She's sleeping. Are you sure you don't mind?"

Ross pulled her away from the car. "Let's go."

Dakota looked at the two girls. He was about to turn into the driveway when he heard Candy. "Where's Diane?"

Dakota turned to her. "She's at work."

He went and opened the door. "Where's your mama's room?"

Candy showed him. He pulled back the covers and went back out to the truck to get Kelly. He laid Kelly in her bed and took off her shoes. Candy pulled the blankets over her mama. "I'm hungry."

He looked at her. "It's late."

She wiped her eyes. "I'm hungry, though."

He took her into the kitchen. "What do you want to eat?"

She smiled. "McDonald's."

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Dakota laughed. "Okay, come on."

He took her to McDonald's, and then they went back to the house.

She ate a few of her nuggets and fries. "Can you tell me a story?"

Dakota picked her up. "Where's your room?"

She laughed and pointed to a closed door. He threw her on the bed. "Go and get on your pajamas."

She went into the bathroom and came out with her Barbie gown. "I like Barbie. I want the Brittany Spears doll."

He pulled the covers back. "You need to get into bed, princess."

She laughed. He covered her up. "Are you my mama's boyfriend?"

Dakota grabbed a book. "No, your mama doesn't like me."

She looked at him. "How come mama doesn't like you? Did you make her mad?"

He opened the book. "Yeah, I was a jerk to her."

She shook her head. "That is not nice. Jesus does not like it when you are mean to people."

He smiled. "I know."

She sat up. "You know my mama says that whatever you do to people will come back and kick you in the butt."

Dakota remembered what the girl had said. "I hope someday a girl breaks your heart. I hope she hurts you and makes you pay for the things you do."

He shook it off. He opened the book and started reading it.

She would not fall asleep.

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Diane did not move as he tied her arms to the bedpost.

"Now what do you want?"

Her whole body was shaking. "I want you to fuck me hard and fast and all night."

He smacked her on the butt. "You want me, what?"

She quivered. "I want you to fuck me hard, fast and all night, master."

He laughed. "So do you want me to do this?"

He grabbed her legs and tied them to the bottom posts. He could see her body tense up. He was not sure if it was out of fear, or just because she was horny. He then crawled up and buried his face between her legs. His tongue flipped her clit slowly, then faster. Her juices spilled on his face, but he simply licked her clean. Inserting a finger inside her as he felt her pussy muscles clench tighter. He moved his finger faster and faster inside. She cried out from the delight.

"Ross, let me go."

He laughed and smacked her on the butt. "What do you want?"

She cried out. "Ross, please, I want your dick inside me."

He began to suck on her nipples. "Ross, stop teasing me."

He kissed her, and she returned his kiss hungrily. He then began to lick her whole body, he bit her

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nipples, he nibbled her ear. He licked the inside of her thighs and returned in between her legs. He was so hard he thought he would explode right there and then; he could not control himself anymore. He entered her. She screamed and fought to free herself from the restraints. Ross moved deeper inside her hot pussy, filling her up with his cum.

I woke up and heard Candy laughing. I figured that Diane was cooking breakfast. I took my shower and got dressed. It was Sunday, and the bar was closed. It was the day Candy and I did something special.

I walked into the kitchen and got the shock of my life. "What are you doing here?"

Dakota turned to me. He and Candy were making pancakes. "We're cooking."

I set down my coffee.

"Why are you here? You should not be here and what are you doing with my daughter? I told you to stay the hell away from her."

Dakota put the spoon down. "Diane went with Ross. She asked if I could give you a ride home. I did. You were out cold. She woke up, so I took care of her. Your key is over there on the table."

Candy smiled. "We ate McDonald's last night, and Dakota read me a book. He fell asleep on my bed."

I crossed my hands over my chest. "You stayed here all night?"

He nodded. "Don't worry, I didn't touch you."

I didn't know what to say. "Mama, do you want a

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pancake?"

Dakota gave her a plate. "I have to go now, Candy."

She grabbed his shirt. "No, eat breakfast with me, Dakota, you promised."

I sat at the table. "If you want to eat with her, it's okay."

He sat down. I started taking my pills. He just watched me. "I'm not contagious."

He shook his head. "You really hate me, don't you?" I ignored him. Candy put her little hands on her hips.

"Mama, he told me that he was a jerk to you and that's why you don't like him. You *are* sorry, right, Dakota?"

Dakota smiled. "Yeah, I am very sorry."

I don't know why, but for once I believed him. After breakfast, Dakota left.

Diane showed up, and I chewed her shit. "I don't know why I did it. Ross has this control over me." I turned around and left the room.

Ross walked into Dakota's house. "Well, did you get some?"

Dakota shook his head. "I stayed at Kelly's last night."

Ross sat down. "Why?"

Dakota smiled. "A certain little four-year-old did not want to go to sleep."

Ross laughed. "I bet mama freaked out when she

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saw you there this morning."

Dakota shook his head. "She was not that bad. Well, at first she was pissed, then she calmed down."

Ross grabbed an orange. "Who is your next conquest?"

Dakota looked out the window. "I don't know yet."

Ross walked up to him. "So are you going to see Kelly again?"

Dakota shook his head. "No, I'm not going back there."

The phone rang and Dakota ignored the ringing. Dakota put his cup in the sink. "I just don't want to, okay? Damn it. Just stop bugging me about it. Just leave me alone."

Ross decided to leave Diane alone. He had not seen her in two months. He really missed the sex. She was an excellent lover. But he started looking forward to seeing her. That was the sign to leave her alone. The last thing he needed was to actually like a girl.

He never stayed with one for too long. He did not want them to get attached. But he found himself comparing other girls to her, and he didn't like that.

They were at a bar when Nick sat down. Dakota was with a girl.

They were back to their old ways. Neither one of them had gone back to the sisters' bar after Dakota stayed at Kelly's house.

Nick looked at the guys. "So what's going on?"

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They both shook their heads. "Same old shit. What about you?"

He chugged a beer. "I went by the bar, and it was closed."

Ross looked at him. "The place is closed on a Saturday night? That's strange."

Nick nodded. "Yeah, Darcy said someone was real sick, and they shut it down. She said it's been closed for two weeks."

Dakota got up. "I'm out of here."

Ross grabbed his hand. "Don't."

Dakota shook his head. "I just want to make sure she's all right."

Ross stood up. "Man, you are really setting yourself up if you go. You know nothing will ever come out of that."

Dakota sat back down. "Give me a mind eraser."

The waitress brought drinks over and they continued getting drunk. He slammed down drink after drink. All he could think of was Kelly.

Dakota woke up and put his clothes on. The girl was still sleeping. He snuck out and left. He was on his way home. He turned around and headed into the house. All night he tossed and turned, dreaming of Kelly. He had to go and see her. He had to make sure she was okay. He just had to see her face.

He knocked on the door and one of the nurses answered it. "Can I help you?"

Dakota was still half drunk. "Where's Kelly?"

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She looked at him. "It's very late."

He looked at her. "Is she here, or not?"

Diane walked to the door. "What do you want?"

He stepped back. "I want to see her."

Diane walked out and closed the door. "Kelly is very sick. She left the hospital today."

He cleared his throat. "Diane, let me talk to her."

She looked extremely tired and almost cried at her own words. "Don't you understand? She came home to die."

Dakota stepped back. "I am going to see her."

He pushed in the door and into the room.

Candy was lying on the bed next to me. She heard the door open and woke up. "Hi, Dakota. Are you going to stay the night with us?"

Diane walked in. "Get out of here, Dakota."

I looked up. "Diane, will you take Candy to her room?"

She did. Dakota walked closer to the bed.

"I look really good, don't I?" I had tubes all over me. I was pale, and had lost a lot of weight.

"What do you want, Dakota?"

He sat down. "Why won't you go to that doctor?"

I closed my eyes. "Money, Dakota, it costs money for that damn surgery. Money I don't have."

He let out a small breath. I could smell the alcohol on his breath.

"Dakota, go home, you're drunk. There's nothing here for you."

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He grabbed my hand. "What about Candy? She needs a mom."

I felt a sharp pain and I started to cry. "What do you care? Leave me alone, Dakota. Damn it, what do you want from me? Don't you think I want to be around for my daughter? Don't you think I love her? Damn you, Dakota, what do you want?"

He stood up. "I don't know." He stood up and walked out.

I threw her glass at the door. "Damn you, Dakota." She burst into tears.

Ross sat by Dakota. "You went over there, didn't you?"

Dakota took the tape off his wrists. "She's twenty-four, and has a daughter. She looks awful. It's not fair."

Ross grabbed his water bottle. "I'm very sorry she's dying, but Dakota, you have to leave it alone. There's nothing you can do."

Dakota stood up. "Remember what that girl who hit me told me? She said she hoped that some day I met a girl who would break my heart. Well, I did."

Ross followed Dakota to the parking lot. "What are you going to do?"

Dakota got on his Harley. "I won't let her die." He drove home and stayed on the phone all day.

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Kelly was taken to the hospital again that night. She had convulsions and couldn't breathe. They put her on a respirator. It was pretty much the only thing keeping her alive.

Then two days later, Dakota ran into the hospital. "I want you to forge your sister's signature."

Diane looked at Dakota. "What are you doing here?"

He threw the paper at her. "Sign it."

She shook her head. "Dakota, we are taking her off the respirator tonight."

He shook Diane. "Bullshit. Diane, please sign the damned papers."

Diane was scared of the way he was acting. A nurse walked in.

"He said you had the papers. Your sister signed them?"

Diane nodded. "What are you doing?"

Dakota had left the room. The nurse looked at her. "You don't know what he did?"

Diane shook her head. "No what?"

She smiled. "He flew Dr. Jacque here. He's in the operating room as we speak."

Diane went into her room as they prepped her for surgery. She started to cry. "Why are you doing this?"

Dakota put my hand down. "I will not let her die." He then walked out.

The surgery took ten hours. The doctor came out and looked at Diane and Dakota. He had his translator speak for him. "She made it through the surgery. That is the best part. She is very weak, but it looks good. She is still not out of the woods, but I

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think she has a good chance."

Diane hugged Dakota. "You saved her life."

Dakota went home and fell asleep. He woke up to the doorbell ringing.

He looked out and when he saw his mother. He opened the door.

"Mom, what are you doing here? Is something wrong?"

She shook her head. "Your father got a call from the airport. They were wondering when you would need a flight back to Paris. Well, my first thought was you were taking some girl gallivanting around in the company plane. I called the pilot and he told me that you flew in a doctor. So I called the hospital, and Dr. Eve told me about the girl and the surgery."

Dakota sat down. "She's twenty-four."

Cindy waved her hand. "I know about the whole thing. So, is she one of your girls? I mean, from what I'm told you don't care about them, so why spend all that money on one?"

Dakota hated talking to his mother about women. She had made it very apparent to Ross and him how she felt about what they did. She was not dumb, and rumors flew around the arena and he knew that she had heard them. He felt like a five year-old sitting there. He hated to see his mother disappointed in him.

"How do you know what I spent?"

She shook her head. "Dakota, the bank called, too. I know it is your money, but when there are large amounts taken out, they call to verify if you guys are in town. Dakota, one hundred thousand dollars is a

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lot of money."

He offered her a glass of tea, and she took it. "Mom, she is not one of my 'girls'. We have never been together."

She smiled. "That's nice to hear."

He sat down.

She could read her sons well. "I heard she has a little girl."

He smiled. "Her name is Candy, and she is the cutest little thing. I didn't want her to grow up without a mother."

Cindy put her drink down. "I think what you did is wonderful, and when Dr. Eve told me about it my heart broke. You saved that girl's life. Dr. Eve told me that she chose death because she did not want to take money away from her daughter and sister."

Dakota nodded. "She didn't have it. She hates my guts, Mom."

Cindy took a drink. "Did you try and get her in your bed, too?"

Dakota looked around the room. "Mom, I really don't want to talk about this."

Cindy laughed. "You did, didn't you? And she told you no."

He nodded. "She can read me like a book. She cannot stand me."

Cindy looked Dakota in the eyes. "So did you do this to woo her over because you love to win, or did you sincerely do it for her and that little girl?"

He let out a deep breath. "I don't know why I did it, mom. The money is nothing. That didn't matter. I tell myself I did it for the little girl, and I did, but

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there is something else and I don't know what it is."

Cindy smiled and stood up. "I think you finally met your match, Dakota."

She kissed him on the cheek. "I am very proud of what you did for her. It was very unselfish and kind. I knew you had it in you." Cindy got up, grabbed her purse and kissed her son again on the cheek. "I'll talk to you later, Dakota."

Dakota smiled as he saw his mom pull out of his driveway. It made him feel good inside when his mother was happy with something he did. It seemed that lately all he did was make her turn away unhappy. But today, he had made her smile.

Ross met Dakota at the bar. "I heard she's going to live."

Dakota downed a shot. "Yeah, I called a while ago and she's breathing on her own. Diane said it looks good."

Ross downed his shot. "So what are you going to do now?"

Dakota shook his head. "Nothing. I just wanted to help her. That's all."

Four women came in and sat down. Nick smiled. "Hey, hey, hey, I smell poontang pie."

Ross looked at them. They were all wearing tight, skimpy clothes and staring at the guys.

Dakota looked at Ross. "I just don't care anymore."

Ross followed him out to the parking lot. Dakota kicked at a rock.

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"I hate this shit. I could go in there right now and get a piece of ass. But it's getting old. It doesn't even mean anything anymore." He hit the side of his truck. "I want to be at the hospital right now more than anything."

Ross sat down on his tailgate.

"Dakota, are you in love with this girl? I mean last time I checked she hated your guts."

Dakota threw the rock. "I am not in love with anyone. Fuck, I don't know."

Ross could tell he was aggravated. He had never seen his brother this way. "I can't get her out of my mind. I think about her all the time. I think of her when I am with another woman. I haven't even been with her and she drives me nuts." He screamed. "*Fuck.*"

Ross shut the tailgate. "Come on."

Dakota looked at him. "Where are we going?"

Dakota got in. "We're going to the hospital."

Chapter Five

Diane woke up when she heard the door open. "Hi, Dakota. What are you doing here?"

Ross walked in. She didn't say anything to him. "How is she doing? Has she woken up?"

Diane shook her head. "No, she hasn't woken up yet. The nurse said her heart is at a regular beat. They are very optimistic."

Ross looked at her. She looked tired. "Have you eaten anything?" She shook her head. "I am fine, I can take care of myself, don't worry about me."

The nurse walked in. "Guys, visiting hours are over."

Diane smiled. Dakota got up. "Call me if anything changes."

She got up. "Where's Candy?"

Diane looked at him. "She's at a neighbor's house. She hates it there, but I want to be here when she wakes up."

Dakota nodded. "I am going to get her. Which neighbor?"

Diane looked at him. "Dakota, Kelly will get mad."

He pulled his keys out on his pocket. "Which

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neighbor, Diane? Tell me, or I'll knock on all their doors."

Diane knew he was impossible. "Damn it, Dakota, she is at Mrs. Bab's house, the lady to our left. She has a big white Cadillac in the driveway."

Dakota took it all in and walked out.

Ross smiled. "See you around."

She laughed. "No, you won't."

He did not see any expression on her face. The whole blank look on her face angered him. Had she not really cared? He walked out of the room, not saying a word.

The neighbor, Mrs. Babs, about had a heart attack when Dakota knocked on her door to get Candy. Candy saw Dakota and ran to him. "Do you want to come with me?"

She smiled. "Yeah, how is my mama?"

He smiled. "Your mama is going to be fine."

She hugged his neck.

"Diane didn't call me and tell me anyone was picking her up." The older lady looked a little concerned.

Dakota grabbed his cell phone. "Call your Aunt Diane and tell her you're going with me."

Diane answered the phone. "Hello."

Candy was laughing. "Will you tell Maria that it is okay if I go with Dakota?"

Maria got on the phone. "It's okay, Maria."

Candy looked at Ross. "Who are you?"

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Dakota put her seat belt on her. "That is my big brother, Ross. You've met him before."

She laughed. "He is not your big brother. You're bigger than him."

Dakota laughed. Ross didn't.

They went to Dakota's house and he got her all tucked in bed.

Ross watched Dakota as he went through the routine of getting her in bed. He finally sat down.

"You're good at that."

Dakota put his feet on the coffee table. "She's just a good kid."

The next morning, Dakota called Diane to check on things. She talked to Candy then they left for the arena. All the way there, they were talking about the other wrestlers and matches coming up.

Dakota walked into his locker room and Candy followed him.

David walked in. "We have a meeting in five minutes."

Dakota looked at Candy. Ross shook his head. "Shit."

Candy walked over to Ross and smacked his hand.

"That's a bad word, and you shouldn't say it in front of me."

Dakota laughed at his brother.

They walked in, and Jack, Dakota and Ross's father, stared at his sons with the little girl.

He knew the story. Cindy whispered something

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into his ear and his look lessened. It got quiet as Jack started to talk. The meetings were always in his office. Candy grabbed Dakota's shirt.

"Dakota, Dakota."

He shook his head. "Shh."

She pulled his shirt again. "But, Dakota, I have to pee." She was holding herself and bouncing. The other guys started to laugh.

Cindy walked over to her. "Come on, honey. I'll take you."

They walked back in, and Cindy smiled. "Is it okay if she sits in the big chair?"

Jack looked at his leather seat. Candy ran up and jumped in it.

Jack continued his meeting. "We are now going to talk about public appearances. Ross and Dakota, you guys are going to the Hard Rock on Wednesday night. Any problems with that?" Ross shook his head.

Candy stood up. "But Ross, you said that was bullshit. You said you didn't think it was fair that you and your brothers had to make all those dates, while Frank sat on his big ass and didn't make the no-namers do a thing." Frank, one of the board members, looked at Ross and wondered what the hell was going on.

The room was filled with laughter. Ross just sat there stunned.

Jack looked at Candy. "He said that?"

She nodded. "He told Dakota that in the truck on the way over here. He also said that working on Mondays sucked." She smiled and sat down. "Right, Dakota? I'm not lying."

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Dakota smiled. "Yeah, you are right. But sometimes we don't repeat everything we hear."

She stood up and put her hands on her hips. "I don't. I did not tell Ross that my Aunt Diane said he was a scum-sucking faggot. Or that my mom thinks you're hot, but your attitude sucks."

She covered her mouth. The guys were cracking up. Cindy was laughing too.

When the meeting was over Cindy looked at Dakota. "If she is anything like her mama, you have your work cut out for you."

He kissed her on the cheek. "Oh, Mom, her mother is far worse." He let out a big smile. "But she is so beautiful and ornery at the same time."

A Week Later

I opened my eyes and looked at Diane. "Where am I?"

She smiled. "It is about damn time you woke up."

The lights were bright. "Shut the shades."

She got up and shut them. "I guess they stopped the convulsions."

She laughed. "Kelly, they got the tumor out. You are going to live. You don't have a disease anymore."

I tried to sit up. Diane lifted the bed so I could be in a sitting position. "But how did they do that?"

She smiled. "Well, I signed the papers to approve for you to get the surgery."

I reached for some water. "But who did it?"

She smiled. "Dr. Jacque. He came here and did it."

I was very tired and weak. "But why did he come here?" She got quiet. "What are you hiding from me?"

She shook her head. "Nothing, someone paid for him to come here. They paid for his trip and the surgery."

I closed my eyes. "Who the hell do we know that could afford that?"

She got super quiet. "Who paid for this surgery,

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Diane? Damn it, would you just tell me?"

Diane sat down. "Dakota did it."

I opened my eyes. "What do you mean he paid for it? Diane, you didn't allow him to do this, did you?"

She took a deep breath. "He came running in here and told me to forge the paper. He was very adamant about it. I signed it. Then the nurse told me that he flew the doctor here. Damn it, Kelly, he was offering you life; he was offering you the chance to see Candy grow up. What did you want me to do, say no?"

I looked at her. "Why would he do that?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "There's another thing I need to tell you."

I looked at her. "What?" I just knew it was going to get worse. Diane always played with her hair when she was nervous or upset. "What, Diane? What do you need to tell me now?"

She smiled. "I wanted to be here with you. Candy was staying at Maria's house. Well, all she did was cry. You know she hates it there. Dakota took her."

I raised my voice. "He what? You are telling me that my daughter is with a man that I find obnoxious? You let her go with him, Diane? What is the hell were you thinking of?"

She smiled. "Calm down, he is really taking care of her. I go and see her, and she's great. She spends a lot of time with his mom. His mother is a nice lady. She is so decent, and has a heart of gold. Kelly, she doesn't cry with him. He is really good with kids."

I took a deep breath. "I want to see my daughter."

She grabbed her cell phone out of her purse and walked into the hallway.

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Dakota tripped over the Barbie house as he ran for the phone. "Shit."

Candy smacked him. "That's not nice, Dakota."

"Hello, who is it?"

Diane laughed. "Are you okay, Dakota?"

He felt the pain in his toes. "I am fine; I just tripped over Barbie's crib."

Diane laughed. "It's not a crib, Dakota, it's a house. Actually, it's a Malibu beach house."

He smiled at Candy then walked into the kitchen. "Excuse me. Now, what do you want?"

Diane looked around to make sure no one was around. "Kelly is awake. She wants to see her daughter."

An hour later Candy ran in. She jumped on the bed. "Hi, Mama, I missed you."

She was dressed nicely, and her hair was combed. She was smiling from ear to ear. An older lady walked in with her.

Diane liked Cindy; she was just a nice lady. "Hi, Cindy."

Cindy put her purse down in the chair close to the wall. "Hi."

She then looked at me. "How are you feeling?" She was the sweetest woman. She got me some cold water and fluffed my pillows. I could not believe how sweet she was. I looked at her. "Are you sure you are Dakota's mom?"

She laughed. "Honey, I was there. I remember all twelve pounds of that boy."

I must have gasped, because she laughed. "Oh

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honey, those boys were all big. My youngest son Greg was the smallest, at ten pounds. Dakota was the biggest."

I took a drink of water. She sat down on the side of my bed. "You know girls, my sons are not that bad, I know they have made a lot of mistakes, but they are only human. They have a few hang-ups. They have been known to treat girls like crap. I know this and I am ashamed of it. See, Ross and Dakota have always been wanted by the girls. They were dating some girls and they really dogged my sons. Well, after that they became sluts. See, Ross was dating a girl we thought he would marry. She got pregnant. Ross was so happy about it. He was such a good man 'til she screwed him over. See she asked Ross to borrow some money for tuition. He gave it to her. She came back that night with a paper. Ross had paid for her abortion. He was crushed. After that, he became dark. He doesn't trust and will not open his heart to anyone."

Diane sat down. Cindy continued. "Dakota has had it bad, too. The girl he was dating was sleeping with Brian, too. See, girls, Brian was one of his best friends growing up. They were very close. Dakota was so mad. He figured what the hell, girls just want a piece of him, he might as well enjoy it.

"I hated it. I hated when they started it. I thought I had taught them better than that. I know they are decent boys. They will help anyone. They just don't love themselves enough to see what they do is wrong."

Candy started to sit on Cindy. "When can we see

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Dakota?"

Cindy smiled at me. "She has it bad for him." I bit my lip. "I know you don't like him. But he treats her like gold."

I cleared my throat. "I'm just really confused right now."

She smiled. "So is he."

Three weeks later, I went home. Candy was at the house with Darcy when I got back. She had five dozen yellow roses waiting for me, plus a sign.

I had not seen Dakota. He never went to the hospital. I was still not sure what was going on with him. Why would a man pay all that money for an operation? I expected him to come to the hospital, but not once did he call or come by. What bothered me the most was that it bothered me.

Diane opened the bar back up and it soon was busy as ever. I stayed home for the next two weeks recuperating. By the second week I was stir crazy. Candy was at her friend's house staying the night. I decided to go to the bar. I knew Diane would have a cow, but I was sick and tired of being at home.

Diane looked at Dakota. "Well, what are you up to?"

He sat down. "I just got off work. How's Kelly?"

She wiped out an ashtray. "She has gained ten pounds, thanks to your mom. She is looking so good. She is starting to bitch again, so you know she is better."

Dakota had no idea his mother had been going

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over to their house. "My mother has been going over there?"

Diane nodded. "Yeah. She brings the most fattening food."

Dakota laughed. "I see you've been eating, too."

Diane was a little pissed about the comment. "Just a little bit, asshole, but I have reason."

I got into the car. It seemed like forever since I had driven. I pulled into the parking lot and got out. I was still a little underweight. My shirt hung off my shoulders and my jeans were a little baggy, but the main thing was I was alive, and I had one man to thank for that. One man that really did not care.

I walked in and Diane about freaked out. "What the hell are you doing?"

Dakota had been playing pool with Nick. "Oh, shit, there's Kelly."

I looked at Diane. "I just wanted to come and see what is going on."

Diane shook her head. "Bitch, you just had major surgery. Go home."

I sat down. Dakota grabbed his keys and left. Diane saw him go. I stayed for a while, then Candy called and wanted to come home.

I picked her up. "Where does Dakota live?" She showed me the way. As we got closer, I wanted to turn around but I just had to speak to him. I had to know why he did it, and to be honest, I wanted to see him.

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We got out and knocked on the door. A girl I had never seen before answered. "Can I help you?" She stood in front of the door possessive-like, like we were interrupting her. I was a little shocked to see her. "No, I'm sorry. I must have the wrong house." I walked back to the car.

Kristen got Dakota. "It was some girl. She looked at me and said she was sorry, and walked back to her car. I thought you didn't let your women know where you live."

Dakota rolled his eyes. "Shut up." He went to the window. "Oh, shit. That's Kelly. I'll be back in a minute." He ran out the door. "Kelly, what are you doing here?"

I looked around for Candy. "I'm sorry, Dakota; I didn't mean to interrupt you."

He blocked my way so I could not get in the car. "Where did my daughter go?"

He smiled. "I'll take you to her."

We walked in the back. Candy was on the back patio with Kristen. "Mama, look! Lady had her puppies." The puppies were adorable. "Mama, can I have one?"

I grabbed her hand. "We have to go, honey. It's time to go home."

Dakota stood in my way. "This is Kristen."

Kristen smiled. "Hi, it's nice to meet you."

She was beautiful. She did not look his type, but I really didn't know him. "Hi."

Dakota finished his introduction. "Kristen is my sister-in-law. She is married to David. She's a vet, so she came over to check on the puppies. But she was

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just leaving."

Kristen caught his tone. "Yeah, I was just leaving."

I let out a sigh of relief. "We have to go."

Kristen walked out and a few minutes later we heard her truck leave. "How are you feeling?"

I sat down. "I think I overdid it."

He got me a glass of water. "Hey, brat, do you want an icy?"

Candy smiled. "I am not a brat, Dakota. You are."

She ran into the house after him. He quickly returned. "Why did you leave when I walked in?"

He sat down. "I didn't want to upset you. I figured if you saw me, you would get mad, and it's better not to get your blood pressure boiling so soon." One of the puppies almost fell down the stairs. He grabbed it and put them all back in the box.

"Dakota, why did you do it? Why did you fly the doctor here? I know that cost you a lot of money."

He looked at me. "I didn't want you to die. I mean, if you died, then I couldn't get my conquest."

I shook my head. "You're not funny."

Candy ran out and jumped on his lap. "I did it for her."

His phone rang and he grabbed it. "Excuse me." Candy got down and started playing with the puppies. He then put the phone down. "Sorry, that was my nephew. I have uncle duty tonight."

I stood up. "I'm sorry. I've been keeping you."

He shook his head. "Oh, it's no problem at all. I have plenty of time. They want to see *Finding Nemo*."

Candy jumped up. "I want to go. Oh, Mama, please, I want to see *Finding Nemo*. There is a shark

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named Bruce and sea turtles and they go
Duuuuuuuuuuude."

I grabbed her hand. "We're going home. I'll take you to see the movie another time."

She began to pout. "Mom, I have not seen Davie and Jackie in a long time."

I grabbed my keys off the table. "Candy, let's go."

Dakota took a deep breath. He just wanted her to go, to leave, to go home. Hell, who was he kidding? He wanted her to go with him. "You two can go if you like."

I turned to him. "No, it's a male thing."

He laughed. "Really, there is plenty of room in my truck. We are going to Chuck E Cheese, where I get to sign autographs for an hour, then to the movie, where I might get to watch it."

Candy grabbed my hand. "Please, Mama, please." She gave me her little sad eyes, eyes that pretty much always got their way. I was just too tired to fight her tonight, and I wanted to be with him. I looked at Dakota. "Are you sure you don't mind?"

He shook his head. "Not at all, I really could use the adult conversation."

We went to David and Kristen's house to get the boys. They looked at me. "Who is she?"

Candy put her hands on her hips. "That is my mama. Got a problem with it?"

They nodded. "No, we don't have a problem. Gosh, Uncle Dakota, girls are mouthy."

Kristen smiled. "Have loads of fun."

Dakota looked at David. "Yeah, thanks."

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We got to Chuck E Cheese, and Dakota was right. Kids asking for autographs bombarded him. The kids played and I watched them all while he was busy.

We finally sat down to eat and he shook his head. Dakota reached in his pockets for money. "Here guys, I'll get you tokens."

Jackie grabbed his uncle. "Kelly already bought them."

He walked over to Candy and me. "I'm paying for this."

I shook my head. "I already paid for them."

He stood there. "This is my treat." I ignored him and walked off.

The movie was just great. I had not laughed so hard in a long time. Even Dakota laughed when the sea turtles spoke like surfer dudes. Dory was a dinky fish, and she was just hilarious. I really enjoyed it and my heart melted watching Dakota laugh. Here was this big, tough macho man and he looked like a kid sitting with his nephews. Of course Candy had to sit next to him. The kids loved the movie. When it was over we loaded them up and headed back to David's house. David carried the boys in and said good night.

We went to Dakota's house and I got out. Dakota grabbed her. I unlocked the door to my car and he put her in the seat and put on her seat belt. "Thanks for the movie."

He made sure the seatbelt was secure. "Thanks for the pizza."

I opened my door and he turned to walk off.

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"Dakota..."

He turned around. "Look, you don't have to be nice to me for what I did. Remember, you don't like me."

I looked at him. "I don't know how to pay you back. Dakota, I don't have that kind of money. I'm not being nice to you because of the money. I have to be honest with you, I'm pretty confused and don't know what to think."

Dakota sighed. "Well, when you get back to one hundred percent you can sleep with me. Hell, that is the only reason I did it, anyway."

I walked towards him. "I don't know why you did it. I thank you, and I owe you my life. Because of you, I get to see my daughter grow up, get married and become a mom. I get to live, and I owe you that."

Dakota smiled. "You know, I owe you something too."

I stepped closer to him. "What could you possibly owe me?" He reached into my jean pocket and put forty dollars in it. "For the tokens." He then ran in the house. "Goodnight." I took the money out of my pocket and put it in his mailbox. Dakota saw what I did. He walked out and grabbed the money.

He walked back inside and smiled to himself. He had had a blast with the kids, and being with Kelly felt right. He felt his heart tighten up. Taking a deep breath, he went upstairs to get some sleep. Dreams came quickly, and Kelly was in them all.

Chapter Six

Ross had been out of town working. He liked going out of town. When you went out of town, you got the most ass. The girls lined up in groups to be the fuck of the night. It was almost a sure thing he could be laid in every town. He got back on a Sunday and drove home. Once he'd put all his stuff away and was alone, he began to think of Diane.

All he could think about was the scum-sucking faggot comment. How in the world a little girl as young as Candy could remember that amazed him. The child was so smart and so quick. He smiled to himself thinking of how cute she really was. Then he started thinking of Diane and her comment again. Did she really think he was a faggot? He would make her think faggot.

They met at the bar the next weekend. "Is Kelly working tonight?"

Diane nodded. "Yeah, she's working now. Why?"

Dakota pointed to the tip jar. "Is that hers?"

Diane nodded. "Yeah. Why are you asking about

Hollie Davidson

her tip jar, Dakota?" He walked over to the end of the bar and put the forty dollars in it.

Kelly went behind the bar. "Hi, guys."

Dakota smiled and walked off.

"What did he do?"

Diane pointed to the tip jar. I saw the two twenties. "That asshole." I rang up forty beers. It was happy hour, so the beer was only a dollar. "Take that to him."

Diane looked at the credit. It said he had forty beers coming. "What is this? Why are you two fighting over forty dollars? Girl, did you give him a blow job and he's trying to give you payment?"

I flipped her off, then loaded my tray with beers. "He wishes."

Diane sat it on the table. "I am supposed to give this to you."

Dakota looked at it. "She is impossible. The woman is just so damn stubborn."

Ross looked at his brother. "So what is this about?"

Dakota sat down. "The night I had the boys, I took Candy and Kelly. Candy begged and pleaded to go. Well, we went to get pizza first. While I was signing autographs, she paid for the tokens."

Ross laughed. "Oh, that's what the forty dollars is for."

Dakota gave Diane the credit back. "Give this back to her. Tell her I want to buy her forty beers."

Diane gave it back to him. "She's still on medication. She can't drink."

He looked around and smiled. He walked over to the girl selling flowers. "Ha. I'll get her yet." He

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handed the lady some money and pointed towards Kelly. Diane laughed and went back behind the bar.

I was sitting at the bar when Faith came up. "Hey Kelly, the big guy at the table told me to give these to you." She laid twenty long-stemmed yellow roses on the bar in front of me. "He has it bad for you. Damn, I'll get off early tonight."

I rolled my eyes at Dakota who lifted his beer and toasted me. "So are you still seeing that Mark guy?"

Faith put her money in her pocket. "Yeah, I guess you could say we're seeing each other. I only get to see him like, two days a week. He's working all the other days."

Faith sat down beside me. "Can I buy you a drink, Faith?"

She looked at her watch. "Yeah, thanks to the stud over there, I have extra time on my hands. I'll take a whiskey sour."

Diane made her drink and set it down in front of her. "So Kelly, what is the story of the stud over there? I mean I have heard rumors about him."

I laughed. "Oh yeah, he's a male slut."

She turned around to look at him. "Yeah, and I also heard he stopped because a certain woman and her little girl has blindsided him."

Diane and I both laughed. "Dakota blindsided? Oh please tell me who is saying this."

Faith pointed to Ross. "My friend Hope does the east side sales. She said he hangs out at the Outsiders. It's a sports bar. Hope told me that Ross was telling Ricky his little brother was pussy-whipped."

Diane poured us another drink. "Well, he hasn't

Hollie Davidson

whipped this pussy, so Ross is talking out his ass." I wanted to change the subject because the thought of him whipping me had turned me on. I did not like how my body had become a traitor to my mind. The truth was, I wanted this man. I wanted him inside me. I wanted him, and nothing I tried to do stopped the desire to be with him. "So when are you going to marry Mark?"

Faith got up laughing. "Girl, I don't want to marry him. I just like having him whenever I get horny."

Diane and Faith touched glasses. "I guess you haven't heard that Hope is marrying Ricky."

Gina put her hand to her mouth like she was gagging. "I know Hope is your best friend, Faith, but what in the hell does she see in Ricky? He's obese. He's nasty; he's what, from some island?"

"Ricky happens to be one of the nicest men I have ever met. Who cares what he weighs, who cares where he's from? You are so shallow, Gina. Hope loves him and that's what matters."

Faith was pissed. I could tell the minute she sat her basket back down on the counter they would have words. You just did not mess with Hope. The two were best friends and they would fight anyone for each other. Hell, Hope was the same way. While Faith was more level-headed and cool, Hope would just give you a face full of fist at the drop of a hat. I liked them both and had known them for a couple years. They were the only flower girls I allowed in my bar. I hated men thinking they had to buy a woman a rose. "What Hope does is none of your damn business."

Gina put her tray down. "I just don't see what she

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sees in that pig." I stood in the middle of the girls. "Ricky is a good man, at least he is faithful. Nick would drop you like a lead balloon if he met something better, and we all know he wanted Kelly first."

Gina grabbed at Faith. "Screw you, Faith. You are such a lying bitch."

I shoved Gina back. "Come on, girls. This is just too stupid to fight over."

Faith laughed. "I personally heard Nick talking about Kelly and what he would like to do to her. The only reason he stopped trying was because Dakota would and could kick his ass." Gina shoved me aside; I hit the side of the bar and fell to the floor. The two girls were at it. Faith had Gina on the floor, punching. The whole bar stopped what they were doing to watch the cat fight. Gina kicked Faith and she fell backwards. Gina picked up a bottle. I got back up to stop them, but got hit in the head. Gina had meant to hit Faith, but it hit me and I fell to the ground with blood pouring down my face.

That was it. Diane jumped the counter and held both girls by the throat up against the bar. "I don't care about you two fighting, but look what the fuck you did. When you hit my sister, you deal with me."

They both stopped screaming at the other. They knew not to mess with Diane. "Diane, I'm fine, it wasn't meant for me. Just let them go."

Diane looked down at me and let them go. "Fighting over men is some stupid shit. Made you both look really ignorant. Don't you know that they thrive on our immaturity? Grow up, and Gina, if you

Hollie Davidson

are going to fight, you need to learn to fight fair. Using a damn beer bottle is really not cool."

Faith moved away from Diane and knelt down besides me. "God, Kelly, I am so sorry."

Gina knelt down too. "Kelly, are you okay?"

"I'm fine, Faith. It's okay."

She got up and grabbed her basket. "I really am sorry."

Faith looked at Gina. "You better be damn glad you didn't hit me with that bottle. I would have permanently stuck it up your ass." Nick pulled Gina to the other side of the bar as Faith walked out.

Dakota shoved everyone out of the way. He grabbed a bar towel and put it on my head. He then helped me to the barstool. He put the towel on my head, and with the clean end, wiped the blood off of my face. "Damn, princess, you just had major surgery. You shouldn't be in a barroom brawl so soon."

I shoved him away. "I'm fine, Dakota. Now go back and drink with your brother."

Ross kept watching Diane. When she had jumped the bar and threw the two bitches up against it he thought he would spew all over himself. He had never been as turned on as then. She would be a good dominatrix. Ross finished off his beer and went to the bar. Ross looked at Diane's drink and gave it some herbs. She turned around and picked up her drink. Dakota shook his head. "Ross, leave that girl alone. Don't you mess this up for me by pissing her off."

Ross smiled. "Don't worry about me, Dakota. That woman wants me. Hell, she *needs* me." Diane sat

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down, and thirty minutes later she was back in his arms, dancing.

I had sat down to talk to Diane about some bills when Ross smiled. "Oh, I never told you two what your daughter did."

I looked at him. "What?"

He sat his drink down. "Well we were in a meeting with my dad and a bunch of other guys. She told my dad something I had said in the truck about not wanting to do so many public appearances. Well, I got my butt chewed for that one. So then Dakota tells her that we don't repeat everything we hear. So she puts her hands on her hips and says. "I did not tell you that my Aunt Diane thinks you are a scum-sucking faggot or my mama thinks Dakota is hot, but his attitude sucks."

I covered my mouth. "Oh, my God, you are kidding me, right? That is a lot for her to say. I mean she is only four."

Ross smiled. "Oh, yeah, she said that."

Diane got quiet. She wanted to die. She knew her niece would and could say those exact words. Candy was only four, but the child was smart. She was like a miniature parakeet.

Dakota ordered another round of beer. "Your little girl is not like a regular four year-old. She's smart, and that girl has a huge vocabulary. I think she acts just like her mama."

I looked at Dakota. "Well, that's good. She will never be in the situation I was in, and I don't know where she got that last comment. She must have just made it up."

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He smiled. "If you say so, Kelly. Yeah, I really believe you. I am so sure that a four year-old knows to call a man hot."

I rolled my eyes. "I think I am going to check on the bartender."

Ross grabbed Diane. "Let's dance." They got on the dance floor and he kissed her neck. "Let's see, what was that, a scum-sucking faggot?"

She got quiet. "I was just mad."

He shook his head. "Well now you have to pay for your sins. Diane, you know that such talk is not allowed. I am going to have to roughen you up."

I walked back over and sat at the table. "Where's Candy?"

I looked at him. "It's none of your business, Dakota. You're not her father."

He took a drink of his beer. "Kelly, you're right. I am not her... What do you call him? Oh yeah, her sperm donor. So stop treating me like I am. And furthermore, it *is* my business, she likes me."

I laughed. "Well, hell. That doesn't say much, all women like you."

He laughed. "Not all women like me. Some try to give me attitude."

I took a drink of my cranberry juice. "Hey, you can't be talking about me. You're my knight in

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shinning armor."

He finished his beer. "I see you are a hundred percent again."

I smiled at him. "Thanks to the almighty one."

I handed him a paper, and he looked at it. "What is this for?"

I put my straw down. "Well, it's the deed to the bar. I know it's not even the amount you paid for the doctor, but it's something. I will pay you back."

Dakota threw it at me. "I don't want that damn deed. I don't want anything in return."

Ross took Diane to her house. He laid her on the bed and began to take off her clothes. "You know Diane, you have been very bad. He put his hand on her stomach. "Damn, you must have eaten my mom's food, too."

She sat up. "Well, yeah, Ross, I have been eating your mom's cooking, but that poof you feel there is all baby."

Ross jumped up. "You're pregnant?" She nodded. "Why didn't you tell me?"

Diane put on her shirt. "Your mom told me about your ex. I did not want you around because of the baby."

He buttoned up his shirt. "How far are you?"

She stood up. "Three months."

He grabbed his stuff. "I have to get out of here."

He left, and she didn't expect to see him ever again. Diane curled up and cried. Ross was a jerk, he was

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always drunk, but something inside her wanted him, wanted to be with him. He was an excellent lover; he could perform magic with his tongue. He was considerate in bed, and his little games he played drove her mad.

She dried her eyes and got up. Kelly had done it alone, and so could she. She loved children and knew in her heart that she would be a good mom. But there was still an aching in her heart.

I closed up the bar and walked outside. Dakota was sitting on his bike. "So do you want to go with me?"

I stared into his eyes. "Dakota, I can't do this."

He started the bike. "I understand that you're scared."

"Dakota, I'm *not* scared. I just have a lot to deal with."

He shut off his Harley. "Kelly I never thought you were the unsure type."

I took a deep breath. 'Dakota, I am sure of what I want; I know where I want to go. I know what I want to do, but I just cannot play games with my heart. I love my daughter and myself too much to play with my life."

He grabbed my hand and kissed it. "I really understand what you're saying, but sometimes actions speak louder than words." He started his bike and took off. I was halfway home when I turned around and headed to his house.

He was on the porch petting his dog when I pulled

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up. I got out and walked over to him. "I cannot and will not play games. I have a daughter to think about and I just almost died. My daughter adores you Dakota, and I will not let her heart get broken."

He stood up and walked over to me. "Why does everyone always have to worry about tomorrow?"

I stared up in his eyes. "Dakota, I have to worry about everything. No one is going to take care of me. I have to worry about my daughter before anything else. I have to worry about my future, and my daughter's. I cannot be a conquest or another fuck."

Dakota turned around. "I have not been with a woman in over a month." He turned and looked at me.

"Why?" I was in shock.

He laughed. "Because I have had one—no—two women on my mind, and I hate it. I don't want to think about them, I don't want to care. I don't want to do anything but run. Every time I try to run away from them I find myself right back with them. I cannot get them out of my freaking head and it just kills me. Damn it, a year ago I wouldn't do half the shit I do now, but the woman is a witch and she cast a spell on me. Then I think about the bitch who..." He stopped talking.

"The one who slept with your best friend Brian?"

I sighed. "Dakota, you have to let go of what happened to you. I try every day to forget Candy's sperm donor. I hate him. You can not risk your life over what you think all women are like."

He sat back down on the porch. "You have no idea what it's like."

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I sat down by him. "Yeah, I do. When I met Johnny, I was a young immature teen who needed someone to love. He said 'I love you' and my world stopped. I wore the biggest and the brightest rose-colored glasses. He was sleeping with a friend of mine, and neither one dared tell me the truth. I would be working my ass off to pay bills. He would borrow money from me to take other women out. I was so stupid. Then I get pregnant, and he wants nothing to do with me. *'I tried to trap him. I was a bitch.'*

Dakota, I don't think all men are like him. I know there are decent men out there. I also know they carry a lot of baggage, and I just don't have room in my life to accommodate them. Johnny slept with so many women I didn't know about. He could have easily brought home a disease to me. I have been with one man in my life, and I cannot even call him a man. He was a punk; he was a little boy using women. By using these women he thought he it made him look like a big man."

Dakota picked up the brush and brushed his dog. "It doesn't matter anymore. I am not doing it. I told you, I have not been with a woman in over a month."

I laughed. "A whole month, Dakota? Wow, I have not been with anyone in over four years."

He turned to me. "You have got to be kidding me."

I nodded. "Well, three out of the four I have been sick. Have you ever just made love to a woman? I mean with your heart? Have you ever really been there when you did it? Looked in her eyes? Have you ever touched her soul?"

He turned the other way. "I didn't think so."

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He got up. "Do you want a drink?"

I followed him into the house. I jumped up on his counter. "What would you have done if one of them girls had gotten pregnant? How would you know?"

He took a drink and poured another. "I always wore protection."

I laughed. "So did Candy's sperm donor."

He put his cup down. "Could you use some other words?"

I shook my head. "No, that is all he was. He was a sperm donor."

He looked at the clock. "Don't you have to pick her up?"

I looked him in the eyes. "No, she is staying with a friend tonight, remember? I'm making you uncomfortable, aren't I?" I shoved my finger in the middle of his chest.

Dakota stood in front of me. "Why are you doing this?"

I looked innocent. "I'm talking to you. Don't you ever talk to anyone?"

He nodded. "Yeah, I talk to my brother Ross, and I talk to my friends."

I laughed. "Oh, the chief slut. Well, Ross is in for a surprise, too."

Dakota walked up closer to me. "What?"

I put down my drink. "Seems like your sweet older brother Ross is going to be a daddy. He didn't wear protection."

Dakota ran his hand threw his hair. "Oh shit."

I looked at him. "Don't worry. He won't have to deal with it. Diane can take care of that baby, and I

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will help her like she helped me." Dakota just stood there. "Have you ever had a woman make love to you? I mean, in total control. Not some bondage shit. I am not talking about that. I am talking with her heart."

He shook his head. "Nope. It's always sex. I don't want to get mentally involved."

"But what about these two women you care about?" I waited for an answer. He seemed to be trying to avoid me.

He put his cup in the sink. "There is actually only one I care about in that way." Dakota excused himself and went upstairs. I bit my lip and took a deep breath. I walked into his room just as he was coming out of his bathroom. "What are you doing?"

I walked over to him. "I want to show you how to make love to a woman. Not just screw her, but make love to her. Maybe then this girl you care about will care about you."

I started unbuttoning my shirt. He just stood there. "Kelly, you don't have to."

I put my fingers over his lips. "Don't talk."

He ran his hand threw his hair. "Kelly." I stood there naked in front of him and then shoved him towards the bed. I crawled on top of him and began to kiss him. He tried to touch me, but I pushed his hand away. I kissed his neck and his ears, then took off his shirt. The smell of Hero and sweat made me ache. He was all lean hard muscle. He had the biggest chest I had ever seen on a man. I took off the rest of his clothes, exposing his hard, thick shaft. Rubbing myself against his cock not only made him harder, I

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made myself wetter. I then got off of him and he rolled me over. "Look me in the eye."

He kissed me over and over then he went to my neck. His hands began to explore my body, as did mine his. I pulled on his shaft and stroked him. He was huge. I could barely wrap my hand around his cock. His breath became ragged. I shoved him back on the bed and slowly, oh so slowly slid down his cock till he filled me to the brim. "Dakota, look me in the eye." His eyes were filled with passion. "Women love for their nipples to be sucked, to be tongued, to be played with." My hands went to my breasts squeezing my nipples. I slowly pulled my breast up and licked my own nipple. His cock stirred inside me.

His hands went to my breasts. His huge hands covered them both; his thumb rubbed my hard erect nipple and it felt so good to have him touch me. Dakota softly laid me down on the bed and began to suck on my breast. His free hand went straight between my legs. I closed my legs against his hand. "Dakota, do it softly. If you do it hard, a woman loses the desire. The only thing hard and rough she wants is you inside her." He stuck two fingers inside me while his thumb rubbed my aching clit. I closed my eyes and moved my hips up to get more of his touch.

Dakota climbed on top of me. He parted my legs with his knee. His mouth came down on mine and for once I knew why all the women wanted him. He was just sexy. His tongue danced with mine. Teasingly I sucked on it, knowing he would rather me be sucking him elsewhere. I felt him at the tip of my opening. Once he entered, I cried out. I could not tell what I felt

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pain from his dick or pure heaven. It was a mixture of both. Damn he felt so good inside me. After not having sex for years, I was a little tighter, and it hurt. But the pain soon was nothing compared to the pure ecstasy the man brought as he brought me to climax.

He collapsed on me.

"Well, was it worth the wait?" Dakota pulled me close to him. "Damn, woman, you are going to kill me."

I slept all night in his arms. I woke up, and he was looking at me. "What's wrong?"

He shook his head. "Nothing's wrong."

I pulled the covers around me. "Oh, yeah. You're not used to them still being there in the morning, right?"

He smacked me on the butt. "Want to know something?"

I pulled the covers off my head. "What?"

He pulled me closer. "The two girls I was talking about. One is your daughter, and the other is you."

I smiled and him. "I knew that, Dakota. I've seen it in your eyes for a long time."

He sat up. "So why have you played hard to get for so damn long?"

I ran my hand through my hair to get it out of my face. "Well, I wanted to know how bad you wanted me." I sat up and kissed him. He pulled me on top of him and we made love again.

Just as he was going to go to the shower the doorbell rang. I had already taken one. I was in his shirt and my jeans. "I'll get it. Take your shower. Maybe it is one of your girls."

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He laughed. "No, they don't know where I live."

I opened the door and Ross was there. I could tell on his face that he knew. "Kelly, um, is Dakota here?"

I nodded. "He is in the shower."

I went upstairs and into the bathroom. "Ross is here, and he knows. He looks like he has seen a ghost. I'm leaving. I have to go and get my daughter."

He got out and got dressed. "Oh you are just going to leave me?" He kissed me. We walked downstairs.

I grabbed my purse. "I'll see you guys around. I have to go and get my baby. My baby misses me. So call me later, Dakota. I have to go take my baby shopping."

Dakota looked at me and shook his head. He knew why I kept saying baby. Ross looked like he was about to pass out. Every time I said baby he turned whiter. I thought it was pretty damned funny. I walked towards the door. "Well, I'm out of here."

He stood in my way. "You have my shirt."

I smiled. "I have to have something to remember you by. Oh, and my friends will want proof."

He shook his head. "You are so funny."

He leaned down and kissed me. "What are you doing tonight?"

I laughed. "Oh I don't know. Maybe Nick..."

Dakota grabbed my arm. "I don't think so. Now what are you doing?"

I got my keys out of my purse. "I have a hot date with Ronald McDonald."

He laughed. "Well, what time are you going?"

He would not let my arm go. "I'm taking my daughter at six. Why all the questions, Dakota? Are

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you afraid that I might meet some single dads there? Hey, McDonald's is a great singles hangout."

He let me go. "I'll be there." I walked out laughing. "Bye, baby."

Dakota pointed to my car. "Get out of here."

Diane smiled as I walked in and told her about Ross showing up. She slammed her hand on the bar. "He gave me herbs."

I looked at her. "What are you talking about?"

She stood up. "Well, this girl comes in here last night. She was talking about Ross. It seems that her sister had a one-night stand with him. He likes to give the girls these herbs that make them act out their desires. It is not a drug, it's pure herbs, but I am so pissed at him. I went to the doctor, and he told me that if I had consumed too much of it, then it could have affected the baby. He ran a blood test, and the baby is fine. I tell you I could care less if I ever see him again."

She quickly turned to me. "You slept with Dakota."

I shook my head. "I did not."

She laughed. "You lying bitch, you didn't come home last night. Oh, and I guess the fact you are wearing the shirt he had on last night says something, too."

I started to laugh. "Well, maybe once."

She rolled her eyes. "If he is anything like his brother, then once is never enough."

I laid my head on the bar. "Five times, girl. I could

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never be with that man. He would kill me. I swear he would literally fuck me to death."

Diane laughed. "Oh, but what a way to die. Ross would be a perfect cannibal. He could eat me to death anytime."

I worked the afternoon shift, then at five, Darcy came in. I quickly went home, showered and changed. I was curious if he would show up. I had feelings for him, but there was still an ounce of me that wondered what he was up to, and what he would do once he had slept with me. We got to McDonald's, and he never showed up. I just blew it off and went home. Candy lay with me on the couch and we fell asleep. About twelve, Darcy called and said the cooler had gone out. I woke Diane and told her where I was going.

When I walked in, Dakota was sitting with Ross. I ignored him and walked over behind the bar to the walk-in cooler. I finally got it working right. It was old, and I knew I needed to invest in another one. I got the deposit for the morning and told Darcy I was leaving. Dakota grabbed my arm. "You're not going to say hi to me?"

I shook my head. "Nope, I'm going home. Just because I own this place does not mean I live here."

He stood up. "You're mad at me, aren't you?"

I shook my head. "Not at all, I actually was not even thinking of you. I don't expect anything from you."

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Dakota put his beer down. "I had to work tonight. I just got off an hour ago. Ross didn't want to, so my dad asked me to and I did."

I stopped. "Dakota, you don't owe me an explanation. It is none of my business what you do."

Ross was drunk off his ass. "Take a pill or something. He was working and I forgot to call you."

His tone pissed me off. "I don't take pills, Ross, I like to take herbs."

Ross and Dakota both froze and looked at me. "Oh yeah, Ross, we know about the herbs. Your past always catches up to you. One of your girlies' sisters was in here last night and told Diane about it. Did you know that if you take too much of that it can affect an unborn baby? Thank God the blood tests came back normal."

I turned to go, then stopped. "I am really not pissed at you, Dakota. I'm tired and I am going home. There is one thing I do have to say, though. If you ever make plans to do something with me, don't tell my daughter. She gets all excited and hurt when people don't keep their word. I screwed up and told her you were going. She was upset. That was my fault. But just in case there is ever a next time. Goodnight."

Dakota sat there for a while. Ross looked at him. "Take me home."

Dakota drove him home. "Are you okay?"

Ross got out. "Go be with her. Dakota, I know you want to."

Dakota turned down the radio. "No, I'm okay."

Ross shook his head. "Man, I can tell you care

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about her; I see it, I know it and so do you. So just go with her." Ross stumbled in the house.

I did the dishes and cleaned up the living room. I heard his truck pull up. I went out on the patio. "Here is your shirt."

He pulled me into his arms and kissed me. "I would never hurt her."

I pulled away. "I have neighbors."

He looked around. "I don't care about them."

I rolled my eyes. "What do you want?"

He pulled at my shirt. "You know what I want."

I laughed. "Dakota, this is not going to be a sexual thing. I'm not into bed-buddy relationships, okay?"

He kissed me again. "Okay."

He walked into my house and returned with Candy, wrapped in a blanket. "What the hell are you doing?"

He put her in his truck. "Dakota, she's sleeping."

He picked me up. "I said, you are coming home with me. I want you to be with me. I want you to come home with me. He put me in his truck. "Dakota, you just can't do this."

He shut the door. "I'll be right back."

Diane was in the kitchen. "Get me some of Candy's clothes."

Diane shook her head. "She's going to kick your

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ass." She walked in Candy's room and took some clothes. "There. Do you want Kelly's clothes?"

He nodded. "Yeah, well I would rather she be naked, but I guess she does need them."

She gave him some. "Here is her purse and makeup. When are they coming back?"

He smiled. "Well, I don't know. I'll get back with you on that."

Dakota got in. "What are you doing?"

He smiled and started the truck. "You girls get to stay with me for the weekend."

I looked at him. "Dakota, you are the most annoying man."

I heard a small voice from the back. "All right! We get to stay with Dakota."

Chapter Seven

We got to his house and he carried her in. He tucked her in bed and came downstairs. I was going through his fridge. "What are you doing?"

I turned to him. "I'm hungry."

He cornered me against the cabinets. "So am I, and tonight is my turn. There will be no making love tonight."

I yawned. "I'm tired."

He laughed. "Better wake your ass up." The phone rang and he turned to answer it.

I walked out the back patio. He hung up and came out after me. He walked up behind me. "So, was it one of your girls? If so, then go ahead and go, and I can go to sleep."

He put his arms around my waist, and then put his hands on my breasts roughly squeezing them. I leaned back into his chest. He kissed my neck and then he shoved me forward. I fell into the pool. He came in right behind me, clothes and all. "Are you crazy?" He swam up to me and pushed me up against the wall. He took off his shirt and threw it on the deck, then took off mine. He kissed my breasts while taking off my shorts. He put his finger inside me. He

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was horny and just wanted to fuck. It was very evident, and I felt the same. He did not take long till he lifted me on to him and he gave it to me hard. He smothered my cries with his kisses. I bit down on his shoulder as he fucked me hard.

I held on to his neck, and he continued to kiss me. "I'm not complaining about your way, but mine meant more."

He let me go. "I'm not done."

He lifted me out of the pool and carried me upstairs. Once inside the room he did more things to my body than I ever imagined possible, and what magic his tongue held.

Ross went to see Diane the next morning. He stood at the doorway. She opened it. "I have nothing to say to you, Ross. I know about the ex-girlfriend and the abortion. This is the way it is going to be. I am having this baby. Ross, if you choose to be in his or her life that is your choice. But you will not, and I repeat, will *not* have anything to do with him or her if you keep acting like this. I can take care of this baby by myself. I have proof of the herbs you gave me. What's the matter, Ross, you have to give women herbs to get them to sleep with you?"

He just stood there. "They are not drugs; I never forced you to do anything."

She nodded. "Oh, I know. I slept with you. They may have helped a little in my decision-making, but I take full responsibility for my actions. Like I said, I

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don't need you, but I won't deny you your rights. But once I see you fucking up with this kid like you did to me, I will snatch it so fast and leave town you won't know what hit you."

He stepped back. "Are you threatening me?"

She started to shut the door. "You are damn right I am. I will not put up with you hurting this child. You can be a father or you can walk away now. I don't care what you do, *master*." She walked in and slammed the door.

I rolled over. Dakota was sleeping. I got up. "What an asshole." I was tired and sore. I took a shower, then went downstairs.

Candy was watching TV. She had all the puppies on the couch with her. "Mama, where were you?"

I smiled. "I was in the shower. Are you supposed to have all these puppies in the house?"

She looked at me. "I'm hungry."

I went to the kitchen. "Mom, he doesn't have anything."

I grabbed my purse. "I am going to get some breakfast tacos. If he wakes up tell him I took his truck."

When I got back, he was on the couch with her. They took the puppies outside and began to eat on the coffee table. Candy grabbed my hand. "Mama, are you okay?"

I turned to her. "I'm fine, why?"

She looked upset. "You have a big burn on your

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neck."

Dakota cleared his throat and laughed. I walked to the mirror. I could have killed him. I smiled at her. "I'm fine, honey. It's a curling burn."

She kept eating. I walked past Dakota and hit him across the head. Candy looked up at me. "Mama, that's not nice. Don't hit Dakota."

Dakota smiled and pulled her on his lap. "Yeah, don't pick on Dakota."

I hit him again. Candy turned her nose up at me. "Mama, *that's not nice.*"

I went upstairs and put on my bathing suit. "Can I go swimming too, mama?"

I turned to her and Dakota. "Ask Mr. Dakota. If you stick up for him so much, then you should go swimming with him."

Diane was at work when Sam and Jim walked in. They sat at the bar. "I heard you're pregnant."

Diane looked at Sam. "Yeah, I am."

Jim smiled. "So what do you want?"

She shook her head. "Just as long as the baby is healthy, I'll take what I get."

He bought her a drink. "Make sure it's a virgin."

She smiled. "Thank you."

Sam left an hour later and went home. Jim stayed around, talking to Diane. He had once been a good friend with Ross, but he noticed his friend changed and he didn't want anything to do with him. They had a professional relationship, but that was it. When

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Diane got off work, Jim invited her out for dinner. She was going to tell him no, but she enjoyed his company. He loved children, and was very interested in the baby. After they had dinner, he took her home and dropped her off. She had a good time with him.

I heard the doorbell and went to the door Ross standing there. "I didn't know you were still here."

I smiled. "Yeah, I'm getting all I can from him 'til I dump him."

Dakota smacked me on the butt. "Go cook me something to eat now."

I bowed my head to him. "Yes sir, I will do that right now."

I went to the kitchen and started making a salad. I wanted to hear what Ross had to say so I strained to listen to them talking. "What you going to do, marry her?"

Dakota looked at Ross, "I like being with her and Candy. It's different."

Ross laughed. "Well, I guess you heard. She is knocked up with my kid, and now she is out with Jim tonight. She is pregnant with my child, but seeing him. You better make sure her sister is not trying to get pregnant by you, too, man."

Dakota sat down. "Ross, you two are not a couple. It was sex, right? Well, she has the right to go out with whomever she wants, and what happens between us is our business."

Ross took a deep breath. "What am I going to do?"

Dakota looked at Ross. "I think you need to find out what you want, Ross. Find out what is missing in

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your life and get it back."

Candy ran into the living room. "Dakota, can I bring a puppy inside? The puppies are cold."

Ross looked at his brother. Dakota had changed. He seemed happier. "Well, I guess you can bring in one."

She smiled. "You are the bestest, Dakota." She ran out of the house. "So are you getting attached to mama or the little girl?"

Dakota looked around to make sure I was nowhere around. "I am crazy about that child. She is the sweetest little girl. She can melt my heart and my soul. Now, her mama is a pain in my ass. I am not sure if she trusts me or not. I know I have given her good reason not to trust me, but I try everyday to make her see that I can and will be different for her. Hell, Ross, I will be anything she wants. I don't know where it is going. I go day-to-day. I'm just enjoying the moment. I actually enjoy waking up with her."

Ross got up. "Well, I have a date."

Dakota shook his head. "Ross, you have been given a second chance with this baby. Don't ruin it."

Ross laughed. "She told me she wants nothing to do with me."

Dakota got out of the recliner. "What do you want her to say? I mean, you haven't actually been around man. You wanted sex from her, you got it and you didn't use protection."

Ross looked aggravated. "Well the damn thing broke Dakota. It was not my fault. Look, all you wanted was to get the redhead in bed and you did, so why are you still around?"

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Dakota pointed to his heart. "That's why, big brother." Ross sighed and walked out.

I overheard the whole thing. I didn't feel sorry for him. Dakota walked into the kitchen. "So did you hear everything?"

I nodded. "I'm sorry, but I wouldn't wait around for him to decide what he is going to do. Diane can take care of it by herself and she doesn't need him."

Dakota sat on the counter. "You don't understand."

I put down the fork. "I do, I went through the same thing with Candy. You guys think you can screw anything you want and not care about their feelings. It's bullshit. I was able to care for my daughter. It was hard, but his payoff helped me."

Dakota shook his head. "Ross is going through a lot of shit."

I laughed. "Oh, and Diane isn't? She is the one who got knocked up by one of your brother's little sex games. Then he used the herbs to get her to do what her body wanted to do. I don't feel sorry for him. I mean, honestly, how many kids do you have, Dakota? How many do you not know about? You had sex with everything. Hell, I knew a couple of the girls. You screwed them, then you left. You didn't even stay the night."

Dakota jumped down. "I am not going to discuss this with you."

I grabbed his arm. "How could we possible ever

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have a relationship with all those girls hanging over your head? How could I ever trust you enough to know you would not get bored and decide to go back to your old ways? I will not subject my daughter to that."

He shrugged his shoulders. "I guess you'll never know now, will you?"

He walked out, slamming the door behind him. I heard his Harley start, and I knew he was gone. I held in the tears. I called a cab, and Candy and I left his house. I took her out of the house crying. She wanted Dakota. I knew it was time to stop seeing him before she became even more attached.

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A Week Later

Diane and Jim had gone out a few times that week. They just had dinner and the dates were innocent. He would listen to her and give her advice. On Friday night, she went to the matches with him. Ross was livid. Dakota had to calm him down so he did not go and fight with Jim. Diane did not even acknowledge his existence. Ross was mad. How dare a broad ignore him? How dare she act like they had never slept together? He was livid. They left the arena to go get shit-faced.

A week later, Ross walked into the bar. Diane was cleaning. "We're closed, Ross."

He looked right past her. "Where's Kelly?"

She pointed up stairs. "She's up there, but I'm sure she doesn't want to talk to you, or your asshole brother."

Ross stopped. "Stay out of their business."

Diane laughed. "Oh, yes, sir, master, sir." She went back to her paperwork and he stomped up the steps to find Kelly.

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I heard the knock on the door. "It's open."

Ross walked in and sat down. "I need to talk to you."

I turned towards him. "What do you have to talk to me about?"

He started. "I have tried all week to get Dakota to go out and get a piece of ass. He won't do it. You came into his life, and he changed. He loves that little girl with all his heart and would never hurt her."

I put the papers down. "Ross, look, I know you're trying to help your little brother, but it's over before it started. I'm trying to get the money to pay him back so he has nothing over me."

Ross laughed. "Why are you being such a bitch?"

I shook my head. "Oh, that's so original, Ross. Did you think of that big word all by yourself?"

He sat down in front of me. "Do you care about him, Kelly? Just answer that."

I picked up some money and started counting it. "Ross, you want the truth? Yes, I care about him. I care about him very much. Hell, the sex is great. But I have a daughter whom I think loves him very much and I don't want her hurt. I cannot risk her heart. I cannot play with chances."

Ross leaned close to me. "He loves you."

I laughed. "Why would you try to feed me that bullshit? Dakota doesn't love anyone but himself."

Ross shook his head. "It's not bullshit. Go talk to him. Ask him. Ask him plain as day if he does. He

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will not tell you, because he doesn't want to be hurt either. Woman, you and that little girl can break him in two, and you did when you left."

I felt my temper about to flare. "Ross, he walked out that night. He left on his Harley, and probably went and got a woman and took her to bed. I did not walk out. It would not have happened if we were not fighting about your drunken ass, anyway."

Dakota had not told him what they had been fighting over. He just simply said it was never going to work out. "He loves you and that little girl. No, he did not sleep with anyone that night. When I got home, he was sleeping on my couch with a bottle of Jack Daniels. He has been sleeping with Jack Daniels ever since that night. Damn it, Kelly, I don't want Dakota to be like me."

I stopped what I was doing and sat, shocked. I had actually heard sincerity in his voice. He blew me away. Could it be true that he actually had a heart under all the blackness?

I put the money down. "Ross..."

He stood up. "Talk to him. It's not that hard. He is home sick right now. We worked in Alabama the other night, and it was raining. We all decided not to cancel the show and worked in the rain. So he has a cold and will not go to the doctor's."

Ross began to walk. "Look, he really does care. He's not a dickhead like me. Oh, and he doesn't know I'm here. He would beat me down if he knew. Kelly, please don't judge him by the past or by my indiscretions. He loves you and that little girl." Ross walked out and shut the door behind him.

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I had just witnessed a real side of Ross, a nice side, a caring side. Maybe I had been wrong about him. Then I thought of Diane, hearing her cry at night or seeing her struggle to pay medical bills, and laughed it off. No, the man was an asshole.

Diane looked at me and asked me what he said. I told her and she laughed. "Well, Ross is a dickhead. Don't let his smooth ways woo you over, sister girl. The man does not have a heart. The only thing he cares about his sex. Now, he is good, I have to say that, but when it comes to emotions he is one hundred percent self, and egotistical. Yep, girl, he is a prick." I laughed.

"Kelly, just go and see him."

I left, stopping at the store and buying some medicine. When I got to his house, the door was unlocked. I walked in and went upstairs. He was in bed. I walked into the room and saw him sleeping. The place was a pigsty. I put my hand on his forehead. He was burning up, so I went into his bathroom to get a wet cloth. After I put it on his head I went downstairs to get some water and an aspirin.

When I sat on the bed, he woke up. "Dakota, you are burning up with fever. Take this."

He swallowed the aspirin, and shut his eyes. "What are you doing here?"

I washed off his face and neck with the rag. "Ross told me you were sick."

He coughed. "What do you care?" He looked so vulnerable and sad lying there. My heart ached for him. "I do care, Dakota, you know that."

He started to shiver. "It is just so damn cold in this

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house." I grabbed some more blankets out of his closet and put them on him.

Dakota tried to sit up. "You really need to see a doctor, Dakota. I'm calling one."

I left the room and went downstairs and called a customer of mine who came in the bar that was a doctor. Within the hour, he came over to Dakota's house.

Andy smiled as he walked in. "I don't usually do house calls, Miss Thing."

I hugged him. "I really appreciate it, Andy. I'm worried about him."

Andy followed me upstairs to the room. "How long has he been like this?"

I shrugged. "All I know is he was working Saturday night in the rain."

Andy checked his heart, his lungs, then his blood pressure. "He has a fever, Kelly. It looks like the big guy has the flu. I will write you out some prescriptions for him. Keep fluids in him. A guy this size needs lots of fluids. You really need to break that fever. Do like you do for Candy; give him Motrin every six hours and Tylenol every four."

He handed me the prescriptions. I grabbed my purse. "How much do I owe you?"

He smiled. "Oh don't worry about it, hon. you can buy me a beer or two when you get back to work."

I hugged him. "Thank you, Andy."

He winked. "I'll see myself out."

I didn't want to leave him alone, so I called David's house and asked him to go and get Dakota's medication. He stopped by, then left to get it.

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About an hour later he was back. "I can call my mom over to watch him if you like."

I shook my head. "I can stay, but thanks anyway."

I had spent two days at Dakota's house. He was really sick. Dakota had a high fever. I spent the first night awake, taking care of him. He would have the chills, then he would burn up. The second night I did the same thing. I finally fell asleep about seven in the morning. I heard the doorbell somewhere around ten. I looked at the clock and moaned. I was so tired.

I walked downstairs and opened the door. Cindy was standing there with Jack. "We were worried when he didn't come into work. Finally David called and told us what was wrong. Is he okay?"

I nodded. Cindy smiled. "You look like shit."

I smiled. "I have had about three hours sleep. I'm just tired."

They went upstairs to check on him. I lay on the couch and fell asleep.

Cindy put her hand on his. Dakota opened his eyes. She smiled. "Feeling better, I take it."

He shook his head. "I'm very thirsty."

She handed him a glass of water. "Damn, I have a match tonight. I feel real weak."

Jack smiled. "Son, this is Monday. You missed the match."

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Dakota sat up. "You've been here the whole time?"

Cindy shook her head. "Nobody called us till this morning. Kelly has been here taking care of you. She had a doctor come and check you out. He prescribed some meds and she stayed and took care of you. She has had three hours sleep since Saturday, so she is passed out on the couch." He drank the water.

"Are you hungry?"

He nodded. "I could eat a horse."

She smiled. "I brought over some plates."

Jack went out to the truck to bring in the food. As he walked back up the stairs, he looked over at me. "He's awake." They stayed a little while longer and left.

I faintly heard the door shut.

When I woke up, I was in Dakota's bed. "How did I get up here?"

He had just gotten out of the shower. "I carried you up here. I have another surprise for you."

There was a knock on the door and Dakota walked into the bathroom to change. "Come on in."

Candy ran in. "Hi, Mama."

She jumped on the bed and hugged me. "I missed you."

Dakota walked out of the bathroom in jeans and no shirt. Candy looked at him. "Why do you have all those bumps?"

I laughed. He looked at his skin. "I don't have any bumps on me."

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I rolled my eyes. "She is talking about your muscles."

He smiled and flexed for her. "Because I am the king of muscle."

I pulled the covers back over me. "I don't want to get up."

He sat on the bed and laced his shoes. "So stay there. You have been sleeping for almost two days." I jumped up. "What is today?"

He pulled his shirt on. "It's Wednesday."

Candy ran out when she heard the dogs bark.

Dakota pulled on a muscle shirt. "Will you ever be able to get over the things I did in the past?"

I sat up on the bed. "Do we agree to disagree about Ross and Diane?"

He nodded. "I agree he is being a jerk, but..."

I stood up on the bed and put my arms around his neck and kissed him. He laid me back down on the bed. His hands had started to roam my body when there was a knock on the door. He moaned and got up. "Shit, shit, shit."

I laughed. "Come in."

Candy came in crying. "Mama, he's dead."

We all ran down stairs and out on to the back patio. Ross was passed out cold on the steps. I looked at Dakota. "He has a problem."

Candy went back in the house. "Dakota, he needs help."

Dakota picked him up. "I can help him."

I grabbed Dakota's arm. "You cannot help him. What would you do if he had run into some car filled with children or a school bus? Ross has a problem."

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He turned to me with tears in his eyes. "Kelly, he's my brother."

I put my arms around his neck. "I know that, Dakota. That is why you need to get him help. Take him to the ranch. You and your family need to have him admitted, Dakota. He is a danger, not only to himself, but also to others. The drinking has to stop."

He kissed my cheek. "Ok, I'll take him."

Dakota laid Ross in his truck and left. A few hours later, they all drove out to Green Hill. Ross was admitted. He was severely pissed at his family and threw a fit until he saw the tears in his mother's eyes. He knew he had a problem with drinking. He had not remembered getting to Dakota's house. As they were about to leave, Ross looked at Dakota. "Why do you want me here?"

Dakota shook his head. "I want my brother back. Plus you scared the hell out of my kid."

Ross laughed. "That is not your kid."

Dakota turned to him. "Yeah, she is here, and if you weren't drunk all the time, you would see that."

He pointed to his heart. "I'm going to ask Kelly to marry me. So you got ninety days to sober up."

Dakota came back and we took Candy to see Kristen and David. She loved to ride the horses. David was her favorite. We drove to the bar and I told Diane about Ross. "I hope he gets better, Dakota. I know his drinking has gotten bad."

Dakota just smiled and went to talk to Steve. I went upstairs and did some paperwork. After about an hour, Dakota came upstairs. "David called. He wanted to know if it was okay if Candy went with

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them on their camping trip."

I looked at him. "Does she want to go?"

Dakota laughed. "Yeah, I told David I would have you call him back."

I picked up the phone and called him. After I spoke to David she got on the phone begging. I finally agreed to it. Dakota sat down on my desk. "I really don't feel like being here. I just want to go home."

I put down my papers. "I can get Diane to take me home. Go ahead and leave."

He stood up to go then stopped. "I was really hoping you would go with me."

I knew he was worried about Ross. "Okay, let me just finish the bank for tomorrow."

We went downstairs and I talked to Diane, then we left. We drove out to his house and went inside. He went out the back door and on to the patio. "Why did you want me here when you just want to be alone?"

He turned to me. "I just want to know you are here for me."

I walked up behind him. "I am here for you, Dakota."

He turned around and hugged me. "I hope this time it works for Ross."

I looked up at him. "How many times has he been in there?"

Dakota closed his eyes. "One other time, but that was when he was a teenager."

We sat on the porch and watched the sunset. "I have made a lot of mistakes, Kelly. I was a slut. I used women, I hurt them, and I didn't care. I have done many things I am not proud of, but that does not

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mean I'm not capable of loving someone. I am. I don't think I have ever loved someone as much as I love Candy."

That made me smile.

"Candy is not mine, but I feel as if she is. I cannot have children, Kelly. I did too many drugs, and when I was younger I did steroids. It pretty much screwed me up. That was the price I had to pay. I did it for the fans. The fans were women. Hell, all they wanted was my body, or my money or my fame. So who cared if I gave them what they wanted? You asked me once how many kids I had. Well, by blood I have none. By heart, I have a little girl."

I kissed him on the lips. "Why didn't you tell me this before?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "What, that I couldn't give you another baby?" I didn't say anything.

"I want you to think about that, then answer me. I love you. I really truly do. I don't see anyone but you. Well, except Candy and she has more pull than you." I laughed. "She just gives me those puppy dog eyes and I will do anything she asks."

I shook my head. "You are such a sucker."

He laughed. "Maybe I am, but I adore her and I adore you. I would like you to marry me. I understand completely if you don't want to. I know you love children and I cannot give them to you."

I stopped him before he went any further. "Dakota, have you had tests to see if you are sterile?"

He laughed. "I don't want to bring up the past, but Kelly. I have had my share of women. I never once got any of them pregnant."

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I sat back for a minute. "Dakota, you wore protection."

He nodded. "Not with Christine, the one who slept with Brian. We were together for two years and nothing ever happened. The trainer told me that because of my problems I would never have kids."

I touched his arm. "Dakota, you don't know if that is a true fact or not. You need to be tested before you jump to conclusions, then we will cross that bridge when we get to it. Oh, and one more thing, I know that I am not your regular type that you go out with. But damn it, when you ask me to marry you, I do expect a ring."

He stood up and walked inside. He then came back out and sat down. He handed me a box and smiled. "I knew you would say that." He took the ring out of the box and put it on my finger. "I promise that I will be faithful, I will love you and take care of you. I will give you everything I can - mentally and physically. I will treat Candy like she is mine, I mean we both know she is already in her heart, but I will be to her what no one ever has been. I will be her daddy."

I looked at him, then at the ring. "Can I have some time to myself to think?"

He stood up. "Yeah, I am going to call the rehab and check on Ross."

I kissed his cheek and took off towards the lake. I did not know what to do. I was not really worried about the trust issue. I was not worried about the way him and Candy were together. We were good together; the sex was the best. I did not care about the baby thing, but we were not sure it was legit or not.

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Hell, what was my problem? I decide to walk back to the house.

Dakota was sitting on the kitchen counter. "I've made up my mind."

He jumped down. "Well, what did you decide?"

I smiled. "I'll marry you."

He picked me up and kissed me. "Let's celebrate." He put me down then turned around. "Where are my keys?"

I took off my shirt. "What are you doing?"

I smiled. "I have my own idea of celebrating." He took me upstairs.

Chapter Eight

Over the next thirty days, we started to plan the wedding. Dakota wanted me to move in with him, so Candy and I packed up and moved in. Ross was still in rehab. He was doing well. The first two weeks he spent in living hell. He started classes and was getting his head straight. He made all his amends to his family, but he had one more person he had to talk to.

Diane was not seeing Jim anymore. They were still friends, but they both decided to stop things before they went further. She heard about Ross and was happy for him. From what she had been told, he had gained some weight and was looking good.

Ross got out and started back to work. He focused all his energy on his work. He knew he had to talk to Diane, but he was not up to it yet.

He became a huge part in helping with the wedding. I could see the change in him big time. I knew he was healed. It was still hard on him. There was so much out there that he had to ignore and to withhold.

The guys still asked him to go out and party. He went home. There were many nights he came

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knocking on our door for company. He needed people around so he would not drink. I didn't mind it at all. Candy really became close to him, and he spoiled the hell out of her. She even started to call him Uncle Ross.

I started going less and less to the bar. I had so much to do, so I just ignored it. I knew Diane would take care of it, and I also knew she would approach me if she had a problem with my absence. She never talked to me about Ross.

I knew she was a strong woman, and did not need him. I also knew she was not in love with him. Hell, they were not a couple, they had been sex partners. So the whole ordeal did not leave her hurt and broken. She looked more beautiful then ever. She focused all her attention on the baby. She was so excited about it.

We went shopping a lot. We loved buying things for the baby. I have to be honest, I had baby pains. I knew I would never have one with Dakota, but I loved him too much to let it really bother me. But there was the pain inside. Diane just smiled and told me I was lucky to have what I did and to appreciate it. Oh I did. I loved him so much. My daughter was my life. He asked me if he could adopt her after we were married, and I told him he had to ask her. Well of course she loved the idea of calling him Daddy. Ever since that day, that is exactly what she calls him, too.

As the wedding came closer, I took Diane out to get her fitted for a dress. It was funny because she was huge. She had started getting really emotional. I had to laugh at her because she had laughed at me

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when I was that way. We were still very close, and she started opening up to Dakota too. She had not seen Ross since the day she told him to get the hell out of her life.

We decided to have our wedding shower at the ranch, and Diane was a little nervous, but she got dressed nice and put her head up high. She would never let anyone put her down.

I was helping Cindy bring out some food when she walked in. I smiled at her. She put her gift down and went out back. Ross stopped playing with the kids and looked at her. She was huge. She was in her eighth month. He never realized how pretty she was. She was glowing. He picked the ball up and threw it back to the boys. He had no right to even look at her.

Dakota got her a glass of tea, and she sat down by Darcy. Jim walked over to the table and sat down and started talking to her. I put the rest of the food down and sat down on Dakota's lap. "Well, how are you feeling?"

Diane put her hands on her big belly. "I'm hot, I'm tired, my ankles are swollen and my tits itch all the time."

I laughed. "Remember how you use to make fun of me all the time? Well, payback is hell, isn't it?" She flipped me off.

We chose to have a BBQ at the wedding shower. We had it very casual. The kids were swimming and playing with Ross. When they got tired of playing ball, he would throw them in the water. Diane found herself watching him. He looked so much better; it just did not seem possible that the man she saw

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playing with the kids was Ross the asshole.

Ross stayed as far away from Diane as he could. I knew he was hurt. I could see it in his eyes. He really cared about the baby and he wanted to help her. But he did not have the guts to approach her. I had spent many hours talking to him. He asked me not to get involved. He said that eventually it would either work itself out or not.

Dakota put Candy in bed and came back out. He was not drinking anything. He sat down with Ross and David. David looked at him. "You really need to talk to her."

Ross put his Coke down. "I know I need to, but what do you say? I mean I was the worse kind of asshole to her. I left her pregnant and then I..."

Dakota looked at Ross. "Hey, you were wrong, but you cannot live the rest of your life feeling sorry about it. I was the same way, Ross."

Ross shook his head. "Yeah, well, look what I did to her."

Dakota shrugged his shoulders. "Well we all make mistakes, Ross."

David put down his beer. "All you can do guys is make your future better. Your past sucks, and there is nothing you can do about it. But tomorrow is a new day."

Dakota laughed. "When did you get so smart?"

He smiled. "When I married Kristen. Well, that's what she says."

I walked over and sat on Dakota's lap. "Hey this is supposed to be a wedding shower. I've barely seen you all day."

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He smiled. "Well, I will make it up to you; you can have me all night."

I laughed. "I have a headache." I then walked off.

David laughed. "Oh get use to that one."

Dakota threw a Coke cap at me. "We'll see who wins."

I laughed. "Yeah, we'll see, oh and by the way, Candy asked to sleep with us tonight. I told her yes."

He glared at me. "But she'll fall asleep."

David got up. "Yeah, and so will Kelly."

I kissed him on the cheek. "I am going to talk to my sister."

I sat down by Diane. "How are you feeling?"

She looked pale. "I have been having a lot of contractions."

I smiled. "That's cool, the baby will be here any time now."

She rolled her eyes. "Yeah, I just cannot wait for labor."

I took a drink of my wine cooler. "Well, that is one thing I won't miss."

She smiled. "Are you really okay with the fact you will not be able to have kids?"

"Diane, he was never tested, he just thinks he can't. I mean if we cannot have kids, then I will live with it. There are tons of children who want homes."

Diane grabbed her stomach. "Oh, gosh, I tell you I hate these damn things."

I handed her a glass of water. "Do you want to go and lay down?"

She shook her head. "I am not sure."

I stood up. "Want to go to the hospital?"

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She grabbed her stomach. "No, they are not severe. I think I am just going to lie down." I took her to a guestroom and she lay down.

"What's wrong with Diane?"

I looked at Ross. "She is just having some contractions."

He looked nervous. "Is it time?"

I laughed. "No, she just needs to lie down, she will be fine. She said that they are not severe right now."

Ross looked worried. I really did feel sorry for him. He was going through a lot inside and I could see his frustration. Dakota pulled me on his lap. "So, are you ready to marry me?"

I smiled. "Oh, yeah, you're worth a lot of money."

He smacked my leg. "You are so funny tonight."

Candy walked out wiping her eyes. "Daddy, I can't sleep. Someone is yelling." I jumped up and ran to the house. I heard Diane as soon as I got inside.

Ross followed me. "Kelly, it is really, really bad."

I looked at the covers and they were wet. "Diane, did your water break?"

She cried out. "There is so much pressure."

I looked at Ross. "Pick her up." He grabbed her and we rushed her to the hospital.

Jayden was born two hours later. She was the sweetest little girl. Dakota, Ross and I were in the labor room with her. Diane saw her daughter then she passed out. They handed her to me and I looked at Ross. "Do you want to hold your daughter?"

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He stepped back. "Oh, God, I don't want to drop her."

I gave her to him. "You won't drop her."

He looked at the little girl and his heart broke. He sat in the rocking chair just staring at her. Cindy ran into the room. "Well, what is it?"

Ross smiled. "It's a girl."

She smiled. "Now I have two granddaughters."

I smiled at her. "Thank you for saying that."

She hugged me. "Candy is my granddaughter, too."

She snatched the baby up. "She is so little."

The nurse threw us all out. I told the nurse that Ross was the father, so they let him stay. We all went home. Kristen jumped up. "Well what was it?"

I smiled. "A girl, she named her Jayden."

Kristen hit David. "I want a girl."

David shook his head. "Great, now I'm in real trouble."

Dakota laughed and sat down. "I wish I had been there when Candy was born. I wish that I could go through that ordeal."

I straddled him. "Dakota, I love you and if there was a way you get could get pregnant, I would love for you to go through that ordeal too."

He put his arms around me. "You just think that is so funny, don't you?"

He kissed me. "Dakota, you would wuss out. There is no way you could handle being pregnant."

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He got up. "Let's go home."

Diane woke up as the nurse started the blood pressure cup. "Where is my baby?"

The nurse smiled. "Over there."

She pointed to the rocking chair. Ross was holding her and they were both sleeping. "We could hardly get that child away from him to change the diaper. He is one protective daddy."

Ross woke up and looked at her. The nurse walked out. "Do you need anything?"

Diane shook her head. "No, I'm fine. Can I see her?"

He handed her to Diane. "She's the prettiest thing I have ever seen."

He had tears in his eyes. "I was thinking that I would kill anyone who hurt her. I would kill anyone who hurt her like I hurt so many people."

Diane touched his hand. "Ross, that's in the past. We have to leave it there. We have to go forward, not backwards."

He smiled. "I can never undo what I did to you. I am so sorry Diane."

She smiled. "Well I have forgiven you, you were sick. But you know what? You have given me something that I will always cherish. I will always love and will spend the rest of my life protecting her. I thank you for that."

She started to cry. "She wants her daddy."

Diane laughed. "Let's not get carried away now,

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Ross."

He shook his head. "I am serious; she already said dada while ago."

Diane rolled her eyes. "Okay, if you say so."

He got serious. "She did, she looked into my eyes and said dada."

Diane smiled. "Okay, Ross, if you say so."

The next morning I rolled over to hug Dakota, but he was gone. I went downstairs and found him in the kitchen. "What are you two doing?"

Candy turned around. "We're making breakfast."

The place was a mess. "What are you two making?"

Dakota smiled. "Well, we have eggs, bacon, homemade biscuits, gravy and hash browns."

I sat at the table. "Where is my freshly-squeezed orange juice?"

Dakota handed me some juice. "Drink away, dear." We ate breakfast, and then got ready for church. After church we all went to the hospital. Candy looked at the baby. "I want a sister."

I smiled at her. "Cousins are better, they go home and you don't have to worry about them bugging you all the time." She hugged Dakota's neck.

Ross came in carrying some balloons and a huge teddy bear. "How are you two doing?"

Diane smiled. "We're fine."

I started packing her stuff up. "So you agree that you will stay with us till you feel better?"

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She smiled. "Well, what about the wedding?"

I smiled. "It's in two weeks. We'll be fine. Plus I am sure Grandma will be over all the time."

Diane came home with us. Everyday, Ross brought something different for the baby. Diane knew she was going to be spoiled. They talked, but not much. Diane was not in love with him. She liked him now. They were good friends.

It seemed the two weeks went by quickly. We were at the church getting ready when Cindy walked in. "Oh, you look so pretty." She was holding Jayden. Diane wiped some drool off of her chin.

"I'm trying to get her damn veil on." Cindy handed the baby to Diane and helped me get it on. I looked into the mirror. "I'm so nervous."

Cindy grabbed my hands. "You'll be fine."

I smiled. "I hope Dakota is just as nervous."

She laughed. "They were in the back room laughing when I left."

I rolled my eyes. "That jerk, he is probably cool and calm."

As the ceremony started I grabbed on to David's arm. He smiled at me. "Are you sure you want to marry him? He can be a real asshole."

I punched him in the arm. "Yeah, I have to straighten him out."

When the wedding march started, I took a deep breath and walked with David down the aisle. Candy was standing by Dakota near the altar. He looked so handsome in his tux. I was very happy. He grabbed my hand and the ceremony started.

The reception was fun. Cindy and Jack got drunk

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and livened up the party. We had Jack out on the dance floor jamming to *Who Let the Dogs Out*. Dakota was a little embarrassed, but I loved it. I knew I was going to love my new family. They were all such good people.

A slow song started, and I was dancing with Dakota. He smiled at me. "I have a secret to tell you." He kissed me softly on the lips.

"Well, Dakota, what is it you want to tell me?"

He looked around the room at the guests. "Can you believe you are married to me?"

I stopped dancing. "You promised me no secrets."

He let me go. "I went to the doctor and was tested."

My heart quickened. I could not read his expression. "Damn it, Dakota, if you don't tell me what happened, I am going to scream."

Dakota laughed. "Save your screams for later dear." I punched him in the gut. "Okay, okay. I can have children."

I jumped in his arms. I was so excited. In my heart I had known my love for him would endure the whole not-being-able-to-have-babies ordeal, but I did want more. I wanted to have his child inside me.

Faith sat next to Diane. "Damn, can't she wait till they get to the hotel room?"

Diane laughed. "I want to know what he said to her."

Hope sighed. "My back aches."

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Faith went behind her friend and rubbed her lower back. "I pray your child is not as big as his father."

Hope began to sob. Faith quickly sat down by her. "Oh, Hope, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your feelings." The music ended and Hope stopped crying. She was fine. Diane winked, and Faith whispered, "Hormones."

Cindy approached Ross; he had been holding Jayden all night. "She is so cute. Now give her up."

Ross looked at his mom. "Mom, would you behave?"

She shook her head. "No, I better not hold her, I'm a little drunk."

He laughed. "Yeah, you are."

We left the reception and headed to the airport. I had no idea where he was going, but I was ready to go to bed. I was so tired. Kristen and David were taking care of Candy for us while we were gone.

We arrived in Cancun very early in the morning. We got to the beach house and he carried me across the threshold. "So what do you want to do? Do you want to go eat, or do you want me to go eat?"

I smiled at his devilish grin. "Well, I *am* hungry."

He pouted, but grabbed his wallet. "Come on. Let's go eat."

After we ate breakfast, we went back to the room and slept. We were both exhausted from the wedding and from our trip. When I woke up, I heard the water running.

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I got up and lit candles, then turned off the lights. He walked out of the bathroom in a towel. His wet hair was still dripping, the water dripped from his hair down his chest looking like a manmade waterfall – one I wanted to go and dip into.

I grabbed his hand and pulled him to the bed. Somewhere along the way, the towel was lost. “Dakota, I have never in my life felt as much love for another person as I do you.” He started to remove my clothes. “Dakota, there is something I have to tell you.”

He laid me down on the bed. “We can talk later.”

His hands roamed my body. I sat up. “It can’t wait.” I ran to the bathroom.

Dakota came in behind me. “What’s the matter?”

I prayed to the porcelain God. “I feel awful.” He pulled my hair out of the way and put a washcloth on my neck. Everything went dark.

When I woke up Dakota was sitting next to me. A nurse was checking my blood pressure. “What happened?”

He looked worried. “The doctor is on his way in. One of the nurses, the only one that I could find who speaks English said probably food poisoning. We have to wait for him.”

I looked at the IVs. “What is all this for?”

He shrugged. “Well, it’s fluids and antibiotics. They really are not telling me much”

The door opened and an older man walked in. “Doctor what is wrong with my wife? Is it food poisoning?”

He began to run on and on in Spanish. Neither one

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of us knew a word he was saying. Dakota stopped him. "*Uno momento, por favor.*" I started to crack up at his Spanish. Dakota gave me a 'go to hell' look. The doctor started talking again. Dakota looked at him, hopeless.

The curtain next to me opened, and a young kid looked at me. "The doctor said you are not sick, you are pregnant." Everything went dark again.

When I woke I was in the cottage. Nothing could have been more perfect but it was, totally unexpected. Dakota was like a kid. I had never seen him shine like he did.

The whole week we were there he doted on me; I could not lift a finger.

Once we got back it seemed as everything just turned into a rat race. Candy started school and Dakota got busy with work. I spent my days working the bar and getting fat. Diane spent less and less time at the bar and more time with Jayden and Ross. It took a while but I finally saw the love in her eyes for him. They were great together and I knew before she did he was proposing.

I sat next to Dakota holding Jayden while they danced their first dance as man and wife. Ross looked down at Diane and smiled. "So when do we make number two?" She smiled and put her head up against his chest. "Number two is already on his or her way."

He kissed her. "This time I will be there for you."

She looked up at him. "I will always love you,

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Ross." He kissed her nose.

Dakota handed Jayden to his mom. "Are you sure you want them all tonight, mom?"

Jack stood behind his wife shaking his head no. Cindy elbowed him in the stomach. "Yes, we want them all."

Candy climbed in with David's boys while Cindy put Jayden in her car seat.

Diane and Ross ran out to the car and kissed their daughter. "You have the number to where we'll be, right?"

Cindy rolled her eyes. "Dakota, could you please tell your brother that I know how to take care of kids. I have raised some of my own."

Ross kissed his mom. "Bye, mom."

Cindy hugged Diane. "I will see you when get back, and don't worry about her."

Diane turned to me. "I'll call you."

Ross pulled her into the car. "She'll be too busy, Kelly. Bye."

I laughed and they drove off.

I plopped down on the bed. "My feet hurt, Dakota."

He removed my shoes and pulled up my dress to take off my hose. "Well, maybe I can make you think of other things."

I smiled as he planted kisses up my legs. "Dakota, stop. That tickles."

He moved up beside me. "I want you to be honest with me when it starts hurting."

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I laughed. "Dakota, I *am* only five months."

I unbuttoned my dress and climbed on the bed. Dakota pulled me on top of him. "I still cannot believe you have my child in you."

He placed his hand on my stomach. "I'm telling you it's a boy."

I just smiled at his enthusiasm, then leaned down and began to kiss his neck, and chest, then stopped at where he wanted my kisses the most. His mighty dick sprang to life at just the tip of my tongue on it. I took as much of him in my mouth as I could possibly fit. His hands stroked my back. My belly was so big it hit the bed underneath me. He moaned and I licked the tip of his penis, moving down taking his balls in my mouth. I stroked him up and down. I worked him up just about to explode then stopped then started again driving him mad. He finally held my head down in place, not allowing me to torture him any longer.

He exploded in my mouth and his body went limp. I loved to have total control.

Dakota laid me down and started kissing me. He nibbled at the back of my ear, knowing it drove me mad. I wrapped my arms around his neck and kissed his massive chest.

He was very careful not put his weight on me. He moved lower to my breasts and carefully licked the tip of them. My breasts were so sensitive due to the pregnancy, but his touch was heaven, and just the skills he possessed with his tongue had me wiggling underneath him.

Dakota rose up and buried his face between my legs. He sucked on my clit, then licked my juices till I

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screamed out his name in pure pleasure. Rising up, he entered me softly. He was so careful. I wanted him to fuck me, but the pregnancy made it a little more difficult to do the things we liked to do, but I could not imagine a day without him in me. He fulfilled me; he made me. He loved and more than anything, he was mine and I trusted him with my whole heart.

It seemed like it had been years ago since the first day I saw him with Nick and Ross. Now Ross and Diane were married, had a baby and one on the way. Dakota, the man I once despised, was my husband and I adored him.

He was sleeping as I got up and went to the balcony. The trees blew from the breeze off the lake. I smiled, thinking that sometimes bad decisions turn into happily ever after.

About the Author

Holly Davidson lives in Texas with her husband and three sons, where she works full time as an office manager. She knew from a very young age she was good with words, and started to write short stories and poetry. Words have always come easy and she enjoys writing and reading. When she is not writing , she reviews for Fallen Angel Reviews or talks to the many email friends she has acquired over the years.