

Grandfather's Heir

**and other Short
Stories**

By
Katy O'Reilly

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Published by Newsite Web Services, LLC
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Grandfather's Heir

Chapter One

Nine-ten a.m., blast that man! He said nine o'clock a.m. sharp! I told him I did not have time for this. All I want is to pick up my check and leave. I don't understand this meeting nonsense. He is such an old fuddy-duddy. Probably wants to make sure I am okay. I'm fine. Grandfather is gone and life goes on, what does he want from me?" Molly O'Connor was getting edgier with each passing minute. She was sitting in the waiting room of Shaughnessey and Duggin, her, or rather her deceased grandfather's lawyer's waiting room. She did miss her grandfather more than she would ever admit to anyone. He was the most important person in her life and she loved him without reservation. But, he was gone and she was not going to give in to her grief. Life was meant for living and that was exactly what she planned to do. Her feelings of devastation would not get in her way.

Molly was not a patient person. What little she had, she was losing. She flipped through a magazine without even reading it. Suddenly throwing it down, she stormed over to the receptionist. "Miss, how long is old man Shaughnessey going to be? I'm not waiting much longer. Tell him I'm here and would like my check, *now!* I don't care if you have to interrupt him."

"I am sorry, Mss O'Connor, but Mr. Shaughnessey is on the phone with a client and

cannot be disturbed. He knows you are here, please be patient. Could I get you some coffee or anything?"

"No, You *cannot* get me some coffee or *anything*, other than my *check*! Now I insist that you interrupt the old fart or I will do it myself!" Molly was leaning over the desk screaming at the poor receptionist. The mini skirt she was wearing was very short and revealing far more than she knew.

Dan Duggin heard the commotion from his office. He figured it was Molly O'Connor causing the uproar. Tom Shaughnessey had warned him she would be a handful. Her grandfather had raised her from the time she was five, after her parents had died in an automobile accident. He had loved her with all his heart, but had spoiled her badly. He had never been able to instill any discipline; he just could not punish her. Consequently she was now a twenty-year-old spoiled brat.

"I better go break this up and get her calmed down. I may as well break the news that there *will* be a meeting, and she will not be getting a check today. If you think you are upset now Miss Molly, just wait till you hear what your Grandfather had planned for you." Dan opened his office door and walked out into the reception area. The first thing he saw was the sight of a shapely brunette in a mini-skirt leaning over the desk. She was about five-foot-three, necessitating her standing on tiptoe to yell at poor Linda. Her hiked up skirt showed her pantied bottom peeking out. A pleasant sight indeed.

"*Excuse me!* Is there a problem here?"

Molly twirled around and faced him. "Yes, there is a problem, I want MY check NOW. It was to be

ready at nine a.m. sharp and it is now nine-fifteen. If I don't get it now, I am going into Lard Butt's office and get it myself!"

"You must be Molly O'Connor, I'm Dan Duggin Mr. Shaughnessey's partner." Dan held out his hand, but Molly just ignored it. "Okay! I'm meeting with you and Mr. Shaughnessey as soon as he's finished with his call. Why don't you come with me into my office to wait for Tom, it will be much more comfortable there." Dan took Molly's elbow and steered her into the office.

Molly started to pull away, but decided it couldn't hurt and maybe would speed things up. She needed this monthly check from the estate to pay her bills. She was supposed to be in class, but lately had skipped more than she'd attended. She had big plans for the rest of the day; most of which centered on shopping and partying with her friends. Since she was her grandfather's only heir, and he was a multi-millionaire, she had become quite popular. Molly took the seat at the table that Dan motioned her to. He sat down next to her. She realized for the first time, that he was quite nice looking. Well-built, over six feet tall, with auburn hair and hazel eyes, he could be very desirable. At least he was easier to look at than Old Man Shaughnessey.

Molly had a scowl on her face. "Do you mind telling me what this is all about? Who are you and why are you involved in this?"

Dan was just about to answer her when the door opened and Tom Shaughnessey came in. He smiled at Molly and took her hands in his. "My dear, you are looking lovely as always! How nice to see you! Please accept my apologies for the lateness, but I had to take care of a client."

Molly pulled her hands away and wiped them on her skirt. "I don't care what you were doing. I have plans and I'm late already. Just give me the damn check and I'll be out of here." Molly stood up preparing to leave.

Tom sat down at the table. "Molly, I told you on the phone, we need to talk about your Grandfather's last wishes. Now please sit down so we can go over this with you. It is important that you understand this."

"I know what his wishes were, he told me, I get everything after the bequests to the servants, so what is there to understand? Just give me— the check. *Now*. You asshole!" Molly was speaking through clenched teeth.

"Molly! I am shocked at your language, there is no call for that, now sit down!" Tom addressed her in his sternest voice.

"Look, I am not sitting here discussing anything with you. You, scumbag are *fired*! I'll find myself another attorney." Molly turned and was on her way out the door.

Dan jumped up and blocked her exit. "Miss O'Connor, I think you should calm down and resume your seat!" He grabbed her arm and returned her to her chair.

Molly pulled away from him. "How dare you! Who do you think you are?"

Dan just pushed her down in her chair. He leaned into her face and calmly said, "That's one."

Tom cleared his voice preparing to go on. "Now Molly, you have to hear what your Grandfather specified in his will. You are right, you are the sole heir, but there are some things you must agree to before you get his estate free and clear."

Molly jumped up once again and leaned over the table. She grabbed Tom by the tie. "Look, I know what my grandfather wanted and you had better not be trying to put any strings on it. I will sue your fat ass from here to Sunday, understand!" Tom's face was beet red and he was unable to speak. He had never seen Molly so out of control before.

The words were barely out of Molly's mouth, when Dan grabbed her arm and sat her down again. "That's two, young lady! I wouldn't advise going for three. Now you sit there and listen. I don't want to hear another word out of you till we are finished here. Do *you* understand that!"

Molly just glared at him, but said nothing out loud. *Who the hell does he think he is? I don't like him one bit.*

Tom was having a hard time regaining his composure. "Dan, why don't you take over from here."

"I'd be happy to. Molly, when your grandfather realized that his disease was fatal, he wanted to provide for you in the best possible way. It was his observation over the last few years that he had not been exactly fair in raising you. He loved you so, that he did not have the heart to give you the one thing he should have. Discipline. He realized that you were not going to be able to handle life without that missing ingredient. In other words, he knew he had produced a spoiled rich girl, incapable of making the right decisions for her life. He— "

Molly was livid! "You absolutely are wrong! You are the biggest F***n jerk I have ever met! You dare to sit there and say these things. Are you some sort of a pervert? How dare you." Having said that, Molly stood and tried to slap Dan's face.

Dan saw it coming and caught her arm. "That is number three! Now *sit down!* I told you, I did not want to hear another word from you till we were finished. *Sit!*"

Molly was taken back with his reaction. Sit, she did.

"As I was saying, your grandfather wanted to change things for you. He and Tom discussed this at length. They looked for someone to be executor of the estate and more. To be your 'guardian' shall we say? An executor with powers beyond those of the normal executor. They looked for and interviewed many candidates. Tom, as you know, is retiring soon. He was also looking for a successor for his business. I interviewed with both your grandfather and Tom on many occasions. It was our decision that I would become Tom's partner and successor and also the executor your grandfather was looking for."

Molly started to stand and say something. Dan quickly silenced her, "Uh -Uh, I told you not a word!

"The letter I am about to read was written by your grandfather. It is to let you know his wishes for you and the conditions attached to your inheritance. Please say nothing, until I am done reading this."

"Molly dear, I know when you hear this, you will be upset. Be assured that I loved you with all my heart and you were the most precious person in my life. I feel that I have failed you however, in not providing the discipline necessary to make wise choices for yourself. I am dying now and do not want you to have no one to guide you. I know that you will

not let anyone you know close enough to help you. I have decided that I will find a person for you to make those decisions, and help you with the discipline you so desperately need.

I have spent many months interviewing and deciding on who this should be. Dan Duggin is my choice. He is a strong man, with clear thinking and a kind heart. He is exactly the man I desire to help you. You will inherit my estate in total after bequests; you know this. However, you will not inherit it without restriction. If you agree to have Dan be the executor and administrator of your affairs, you will inherit at age 25. If you do not agree, then you will not inherit until you are 35. You will also not receive an allowance or any benefit of the estate until that time.

Now, I know you are reading this and starting to fume. Please believe me, I do love you and am doing this for your own good. Dan is to live in my house and have total control over the estate. You are to live there also. He will act not only as executor, but also as guardian. He will be free to make all decisions regarding your well being and life. I trust that you will cooperate with him in this. I have also given him permission to discipline you as he sees necessary. If you agree, you will continue to receive an allowance that he will monitor and will not have any monetary concerns. You must however live in the house and not on your own, as

I do not like your choice of friends or roommates. At some future point, Dan may agree to your living independently. It is then his decision.

Molly, he is a good man. Please think about this. The choice is yours. I am doing this only because I love you and realize that I failed you in your upbringing.

*Love always,
Grandfather"*

Molly was stunned. Tears that she had not shed since he died welled up in her eyes. She didn't know what to think. Her grandfather expected her to live under that same roof with this *man*! Actually let him make decisions that affected her? And what was this about discipline? NO, this was just not right. She fought back her tears and looked at Tom and Dan.

"Okay, you had your laugh, now let's just get down to business. There is no way I will allow this. I will challenge this in every court in the land. You are both insane!" Molly's temper now got the better of her, she was totally out of control. She picked up the pen that was handed to her to sign the agreement and threw it at Dan.

Tom Shaughnessey interceded. "Molly, you either agree to this, or you get nothing at all, not one penny until you are 35. You will have to quit school and get a job to support yourself. You sign or you are cut off as of today."

Molly was shocked. There was no way she was prepared to support herself. She was trapped and she knew it. Still it did not make her happy. Molly's thoughts were in turmoil. *Shit, I don't see a way out*

of this. Grandpa, how could you do this? She sat there without saying anything.

Dan had been observing her closely. He had noticed the tears start and her effort to stop them. He softened somewhat toward her. He knew from his talks with her grandfather that she really could be a sweet, gentle person. She was acting tough now to hide her grief. She was so spoiled she couldn't comprehend not getting her own way. He picked up the pen and handed it to her. "Well, what is your decision?"

Molly looked at him with contempt, took the pen and signed the agreement. "You win, but I am going to make my own decisions, hear? You will not be telling me what to do and what not to do— so, just get used to being the token executor, *dummy!*" She threw the pen back at him.

Dan just looked at her and said very calmly, "Well, that makes Four!"

Tom Shaughnessey looked at Molly. "Dearest, you are just making this harder on yourself. You know that your grandfather had only your best interest in mind."

"F*** you!" Molly spat at him.

Tom quickly left the office shaking his head. "Dan, I leave this to you."

Dan leaned back in his chair and looked at Molly. "Well, Young Lady, that just earned you number five! Quite a record for our first day."

"What are you talking about? Do I get my check now or what? I signed all your f***** papers!" Molly was standing and about to leave the office.

"Nope, no check for you today. Sit back down and I will explain what is going to happen now."

Molly just glared at him.

"Miss O'Connor, like it or not, I am now in control. You have agreed to your grandfather's wishes, so I will be in your life for the next five years. Starting *now*, you will show me the respect that comes with that position. I asked you to sit, and I suggest you do that, unless you want to hear a number Six!"

Molly sat and stared at him. "What are these numbers all about, I don't understand what you are talking about. I have plans. I should be meeting friends right now! Let's just get this over with."

Dan said nothing. Just stared at her. Molly was beginning to be uncomfortable.

Finally Dan spoke. "I realize that you have never had any discipline in your twenty years. I am a firm believer that spoiled young ladies need to have their bare bottoms thoroughly spanked, each and every time they misbehave. You have exhibited the worst behavior I have seen in a long time; you are about to receive your first well-deserved spanking."

"The numbers you asked about tell you the severity of your spanking. Number One is a warning that your behavior has passed acceptable boundaries. Number Two earns you a hard hand spanking. Number Three is a paddling. Every number over that just increases the punishment. Should you ever hit a Ten you will receive a strapping. Now I believe we got to number five today. You are going to get a hard bare bottom hand spanking followed by a paddling of twenty strokes for each number over three. That makes it a hard spanking and a paddling of forty strokes. Between the hand spanking and the paddling, you will stand in the corner with your panties lowered and your skirt held up. This will give you time to

reflect on the behavior that put you there and what is coming.

"After your spanking and paddling you will apologize Tom and Linda for your despicable behavior. If I do not think it is sincere, we will come back here and start over. When we are done, we will be leaving for home. Your belongings have been moved from your apartment, and your roommate given compensation for her loss of your share of rent. I will review the rest of the rules with you later. Do you understand what is about to happen?"

Molly was floored. *Who does he think he is? Spanking? I've had never been so much as grounded! There was no way.* Yet there he sat, looking totally serious.

Dan stood up and locked his office door. He pulled a straight back chair to the front of his desk, and pulled a paddle from his drawer. Dan sat in the chair. "Molly, come here."

Molly looked at him like he was out of his mind, and just sat there.

Dan stood and pulled her from her chair and swatted her hard three times "You heard me young lady, now *move!*" He sat back down in the chair.

Molly was in shock but did as she was told. This was way beyond her comprehension. She stood in front of him. Dan then lectured her about her behavior and language.

"You have shown the worst behavior of a young lady today, that I have ever seen. You were rude, disrespectful and foul-mouthed. You will never act that way again. If you ever use that language again, you will not only be well spanked you will find yourself chewing on soap. Now I want you to pull your panties down and get over my knee."

Molly did as she was told and laid over his lap. Dan pulled her skimpy skirt clear of her bottom and started spanking.

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SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK!

He said nothing until she was pleading with him to stop.

"Pleeasee, stop, ouch ow pleaeese ouch, ow, ouch ow, ouch, I will behave I promise, pleeeeeease stop! It hurts, pleeeeeeeeease! Ouch, ow, Ouch, ow, Ouch, ow, Ouch!"

Dan stopped pulled her to her feet and sent her to the corner with a series of hard swats. Molly hobbled over to the corner with her panties at her ankles. "I want your nose in that corner and your hands holding that skirt up. You are not to let that skirt drop. You will stay there and not say one word, until I call you back for your paddling."

Dan picked up the phone and called the caretakers of her grandfather's house. "Hi, Sam this is Dan, did Molly's things arrive? Good, tell Sarah we will be home for lunch, and not to worry about putting her things away. Molly can take care of that herself this afternoon. " Dan hung up and looked at his new ward standing in the corner sniffing. She was certainly a pretty thing, and had the most spankable bottom he had seen in a long time. A spoiled brat maybe, but it would be worth it to teach her to behave. Life was going to be very interesting for a while.

Dan just let her lay there and sob. Her bottom looked like it was on fire. In fact it was crimson with bruises beginning to appear. He knew she needed to cry this out of her system. After a few minutes he picked her up and held her. Molly leaned into his shoulder and continued sobbing. When she quieted some, he gave her a Kleenex to blow her nose and wipe her eyes. She felt strangely peaceful, but very humiliated also.

Dan helped her pull up her panties and stand. "Ready for some apologies now?"

Molly nodded and followed him out the door, her hands rubbing her bottom. When they entered Tom's office he looked up, he could not believe the change in Molly. She looked like a very sorry little girl. Her head was down and hands behind her back. He could tell she had been crying.

"Mr. Shaughnessey, I am very sorry for my actions earlier. I was terribly rude and disrespectful. Please forgive me. I won't ever act that way again."

"Thank you, Molly, you are of course forgiven. I am sorry if this has been such a shock to you, but it will be fine, you'll see." Tom rose and gave Molly a hug. She did not resist him this time.

As Dan and Molly were leaving the office, Dan turned and winked at Tom. Tom had been sure this would never work. Apparently he was wrong.

Molly approached the reception desk. "Linda, I am sorry I was so bitchy, please forgive me. I won't treat you that way ever again."

Linda just sat there with her mouth open. She couldn't believe her ears. She had never heard Molly apologize for anything in her life. Dan must be a miracle worker.

When they got back to Dan's office, he motioned for her to sit. Molly sat down very gingerly.

"Molly, we are going to leave here and go to the house. Sam and Sarah will be with us for the next week until you are settled in, then they will be leaving for Florida and their retirement. You and I will be living alone in the house. You will be responsible for the running of the household. There will be a cleaning service, but you are responsible for meals. I know from Sarah, that you have been taught to cook, so this should not be a problem. You will be attending school and I will monitor your courses. You will ask my permission to leave the house for any reason other than school. You will have an allowance just as you do now. I don't intend to be a tyrant. You may discuss any decision I make if you feel it is unreasonable. Remember though, I said discuss, in a respectful manner, no arguing about a decision. Do you understand?"

Molly nodded in agreement.

"Okay, then let's go home. Sarah is expecting us for lunch, and you can spend the afternoon getting settled." Dan smiled at her and gave her his hand to help her up.

Molly managed to smile and this time accepted his hand. Her new life was going to be far different from the old.

Chapter Two

Dan Duggin looked at Molly O' Connor standing in front of him. He had been ready to leave for home, but she looked a bit shaken. Her cheeks were streaked with tears and her mascara had long disappeared. She did not resemble the young bratty lady that he saw an hour ago for the first time. Molly had just learned that he would be the executor of her grandfather's estate and her guardian for the next five years. She had not taken the news well and had been soundly spanked by Dan for her behavior.

" Molly, why don't you freshen up before we leave. You can use my bathroom, there are fresh towels in the cabinet next to the sink."

Molly nodded and headed for the bathroom. She was beyond words at this point. She had just received her first spanking and paddling. Her bottom was certainly feeling the after affects. Once in the bathroom she lowered her panties and looked at her bottom in the mirror. She gasped at what she saw. "Son of a Bitch, that man is a monster! I can't believe it is this red, and bruised too. It is so sore! How am I going to be able to live like this? Surely he can't be serious about all of this. He couldn't mean it when he said that he will do this anytime I don't obey?" Molly was just not capable of

processing coherent thoughts at the time. She washed her face and combed her hair and tried to repair her makeup as best she could. She may have been 20 years old, but she felt like she was about five.

Dan in the meantime had packed his briefcase and emailed some files home to work on this afternoon. At least for a while he planned on working from home so he could be there when Molly was. He wanted to monitor her studies. She had not attended class for most of the quarter. In fact she put in a request to be dropped for the remainder of the quarter. He was not going to allow it. She would attend classes and earn acceptable marks; she was very bright, but had not applied herself at all since her Grandfather died.

Molly came out of the bathroom ready to leave. "I'm ready to leave now but I'm not going to eat at the house. I made plans with friends and they'll be upset if I don't show. Just drop me off at Hannigan's restaurant. I'll pick up my car and be there later."

Dan shook his head. "Molly, you are coming with me, and having lunch at home. We have a lot of talking to do this afternoon and you need to get settled before class tomorrow. I also know that Hannigan's is not a restaurant it's a bar. You are not going to hang around bars in the middle of the afternoon. Your "friends" can think and feel anything they want. They are not my concern, you are. Unless I approve of them, you won't be seeing them anyway. Your Grandfather was very specific with me on the subject of your friends. You know he did not approve of most of them; felt you made very poor choices in friends. No, you are coming home with me."

Dan opened the door and waited for her to go before him. "By the way, your car is already at the house. Sam picked it up this morning."

Molly's temper was beginning to come back. "You aren't being fair! You can't just spring this on me and expect me to change my life. I WILL be friends with whomever I please so get used to it." She stomped her foot and glared at Dan.

Dan had to hide his smile. She was something else, a real handful that was for sure. He closed the door and turned to her. "*Young lady*, for someone who just had her bottom spanked and paddled hard that is not a wise attitude. Consider this your only warning! I do not tolerate insolence and childish behavior; if you ever stomp your foot at me again, you will be over my knee so fast you will not know what hit you. Now get your purse we're going home; I don't want to hear another word on this subject!"

Molly wanted to continue arguing, tell Dan what she thought of him and his rules. Taking one look at his face she wisely decided not to. She wasn't giving in easily though; she would have her say another day. She was also not going "home." It was only home, when Grandfather and she lived there. It would never be home with him. It would just be a house. When she got to the house, she would go to her room and call her friends. Tomorrow she would see her friends and play all day. He would be at work and would think she was in class. He would never know.

Molly grabbed her purse and frowned at Dan. She stormed out of his office and into the hallway outside, without saying a word to anyone.

Dan was not happy with her attitude at all. He needed to have a little talk with her about common

courtesy. "Linda, I'm leaving for the day. If you need me I'll be at home. I won't be in tomorrow; I'll be working at home. I'll check with you in the morning. Have a good evening." Dan followed Molly out the door.

When they reached the car Dan opened the door for Molly. She got in and plunked herself down on the seat. She let out a small yelp as her bottom came in contact with the warm leather. Dan had to chuckle watching her struggle to get comfortable. He got in the car, put on his seat belt and looked over at her. She was just sitting there staring ahead, saying nothing. She also did not have on her seat belt.

"Molly, please fasten your seat belt so we can go." Molly did not answer, nor did she fasten the seat belt. She was almost back into full brat mode. She was beginning to aggravate Dan. He had tried to be patient with her mini tantrum in the office, but she was really pushing him. "Molly, you are to fasten that seat belt right now! I have had enough of this childishness. If you do not, I will put you over my knee right here in the parking lot and spank you. Then I assure you, you will fasten that seat belt and have a most unpleasant ride home. Now, what is it going to be?" Molly would not look at him or answer him, but she quickly fastened the belt.

Dan started the car and pulled out of the lot. "All right Young Lady, I want to make one thing perfectly clear. I do not care how you feel about this arrangement; you signed the papers and you knew the consequences. I would think that the spanking and paddling I gave you in the office would be enough to remind you that I am serious and you are to behave. However, it does not seem to have made

a lasting impression. If you do not change your attitude and change it *now*, you will be in for another spanking today. I am not going to tolerate anymore nonsense. You will display common courtesy and respect

to me and everyone else. Do you understand? And you better answer the question."

Dan looked over at her. She was staring ahead and would not look at him. "I'm waiting, but not much longer."

Molly shifted in her seat. "I understand."

Dan tried making small talk with her but he only got short answers. She was not about to carry on a conversation with him. He finally gave up and put music on for the rest of the ride.

When they arrived at the house, Sam and Sarah came to greet them. Sam grabbed Molly and gave her a big hug. "Oh girl, it is so good to see you! We have missed you so much!" Sarah was right behind him and when he released Molly she hugged her also.

Molly felt so good to be hugged by these two. They had been with her for her entire life and were almost like family. She wished they could stay. It would make this arrangement a bit more palatable.

Molly held Sarah and Sam's hands and looked at them. "It is good to see you, I should have visited you sooner."

Sarah hugged Molly again. "Why don't you go freshen up. I unpacked your clothes for you. You can unpack the rest this afternoon. Lunch will be ready in 30 minutes."

Sam and Sarah left for the kitchen. Dan and Molly both went upstairs. Molly was opening her door when she noticed Dan going into her

Grandfather's room. "Where are you going? That's Grandfather's room!"

"It's my room now Molly. Your Grandfather is gone and doesn't need it."

Molly pushed past Dan into the room. "What did you do with his things? How could you take over his room; that was his, not yours!"

Dan knew she would be upset. In a calm quiet voice he told her. "Molly, Sarah and Sam cleaned out your Grandfather's room a month ago. His mementos and things are boxed for you in your room. You may do whatever you want with them. I am not trying to replace your Grandfather; I am just living here as his executor and your guardian for five years. Now let's be adult about this. I am going to change and I will see you for lunch in one half-hour."

Molly broke out in tears and ran to her room, slamming the door after her. Dan started after her to tell her what he thought about that behavior, but decided it could wait. He knew she was really upset with all that had happened so far.

Molly composed herself and sat down on her bed to call her friends at Hannigan's. She started to reach for the phone and realized there wasn't one. She looked around the room; there was no phone anywhere. Now she really lost her temper. She jumped off the bed, flung open her door and stormed into Dan's room. She didn't even bother knocking.

He was just buttoning his shirt and she startled him. She flew across the room toward him arms flaying. "You *son of a bitch!* What did you do with my phone? You have no right to touch anything of mine you F*****.

Dan didn't wait to hear any more he grabbed her and marched her into the bathroom. He pinned her against the sink and soaped up a washcloth. Before she knew it she had a mouth full of soapy cloth. She was blubbing and trying to spit it out but he had both her hands pinned in front of her. He washed her mouth thoroughly then took her back into the bedroom, grabbing a brush from the dresser. He sat down on the end of the bed and flipped her over his knee. He quickly started spanking her hard with his hand.

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Dan had not said one word. Molly was blubbing trying to spit the soapsuds out. Her mouth tasted terrible and her bottom was on fire. Dan stopped and pulled her to her feet. Molly stood in front of him crying and rubbing her bottom. He pulled her close to him and pulled down her panties to her knees.

"I warned you that I would not tolerate and more childish behavior or bad language. You were spanked hard not even two hours ago, and here you are getting another one. You had better learn to listen and behave or you will not sit comfortably for the entire five years." Dan then pulled her over his knee again.

Molly was crying and pleading with him not to spank her anymore. It fell on deaf ears. Dan rested his hand on her bottom. Molly was clenching her bottom anticipating his spanks.

"Molly, I know you are upset, but you cannot lose your temper like that. I am not going to put up with it. The sooner you understand and accept that the better off you will be."

Dan picked up the hairbrush he had laid on the bed at this side. He raised his arm and brought the brush down hard on her bottom. She screamed with the first smack. She had not been expecting the brush and her bottom was already very sore.

SMACK, "You will not" SMACK, "ever again" SMACK, "bargue through this door" SMACK, "without knocking" SMACK, "You will not" SMACK, "Lose your temper", SMACK, "You will not slam doors" SMACK "You will not use" SMACK, "foul language" SMACK, "Or question" SMACK, "My decisions" SMACK, "after I have" SMACK, "said they were" SMACK, "final" SMACK, "do you" SMACK, "Understand?" SMACK.

Molly could only reply with cries and sobs. "*Ouch*, ow, oh please stop, Please I will behave. Pleaaase, Stop. I am sorry, pleeeeeease, stop, It hurts too much, I can't stand anymore, Ouch, Ouch, pleeeeeease. Yes, Yes I will Ouch Ouch, Yes I understand.

Dan stopped spanking and held her in place. He leaned over and told her. "Molly, I do not like having to do this, but you must learn. Don't push me, you will end up here every time. Now, I want you to change your clothes and be ready for lunch in two minutes. If you are not I will come and get you and you will have lunch in whatever you happen to be wearing."

He stood her on her feet. She pulled up her panties and fled to her room. True to his word 2 minutes later he knocked and entered her room. She was ready. After a quiet lunch they went to the office. Her grandfathers desk was still there, but now held his computer and papers. She looked around the room and could not believe it. In the opposite corner was her old school desk. Grandpa had bought it for her when she was in junior high. She used to do her homework in her with him.

"What is that doing here?" Molly looked quizzically at Dan.

"You're going to study there. I asked Sam to bring it down from the attic. I want to be able to monitor your work." Dan motioned to the couch. "Have a seat, we have a lot to talk about."

"I don't feel like talking or sitting right now." Molly wanted out of this room.

"I'm sorry you don't feel like it, but we must, now please sit down." Dan sat on a chair he pulled up in front of the couch.

Molly sat down and waited. Dan began with all of the rules and regulations that they would live by. She was not dropping out of school, she would attend each and every class, she would maintain at least a 3.0 average, she would come right home from school after every class, and she would not go anywhere without his permission. In addition they would decide on household chores and tasks together. Outside of a cleaning and yard service they would maintain the house and meals. Sarah and Sam would be leaving in a week for retirement in Florida. If she did not behave or follow the rules, she would be spanked. The severity of the spanking would depend on the offence. That was at his discretion, but each violation would up the

punishment. The ultimate punishment would be a strapping. If she wanted to discuss anything,

he would listen and talk to her; in fact he encouraged it. But once a decision was made she was not to argue, whine or pout about it. That would also get her spanked.

She said very little through the whole conversation. Her only question concerned her allowance. "How much was it and when would she get it? Also, why didn't she have a phone in her room?"

Dan smiled at that question. "Your allowance is \$250.00 a month. You will have a credit card with a \$2000.00 limit. I do want an accounting of how it is spent. I want to personally meet anyone, male or female, that you are associating with. If I don't meet them, you will not be going out with them. You do not have a phone in your room, because I see no reason for you to have one. You may use the phone in here, or any other phone in the house."

"But, I need my privacy, I can not talk with you or anyone else listening in. That is not fair!" Molly told him sharply.

"Sorry, but that is my decision, you have privacy and no one is listening in on your calls, but you do not need a phone in your room. Do you have any other questions? No? Okay then, I'll let you get settled and see you for dinner." Dan stood up and moved the chair back.

Molly quickly rose and left the room. She went to the kitchen and called her old roommate. There was no one in the kitchen so she could talk freely. "Hi, Nancy, it's me Molly. I know, I know, it's the pits! I can't believe Grandfather did this to me. Listen I can't talk now, but meet me tomorrow in the Student Union for coffee. We'll plan our day

from there. Okay, see you then." Molly hung up and went to her room.

The rest of the afternoon and evening passed quietly enough. Molly helped prepare dinner and Dan praised her cooking. They even exchanged small talk and she enjoyed his conversation. She didn't want to admit it, but he was kind of fun to be with. The next morning Molly had breakfast with Dan and told him she was off to school. Dan put down the paper he was reading and looked at her. "What classes do you have today?"

Molly really didn't know what she was supposed to have that day; she hadn't gone in so long. "Oh, English Lit, American History and Art. I should be home by 4:30. Bye."

"Okay, see you then." Dan went back to reading his paper.

Molly met Nancy 20 minutes later at the Student Union. "Boy, am I glad to see you! It is so good to see a friendly face. You would not believe what my life has turned into."

"It's good to see you too Molly! Are you going to any classes today? I am thinking of skipping mine and hitting Hannigan's for awhile at lunch. What do you say? You missed a really good time yesterday."

"Sounds good to me. No, I am not going to class. I requested a drop, but Mr. Duggin has decided I am not dropping. So, I will just flunk out! That'll show him." Molly slapped the table with her hand for emphasis.

"Great, I think Doug, Gale and Tony are going to be there too. At least for awhile, we are all pretty short of cash, so I don't think we can stay long. You know we all have to watch our pennies." Nancy was looking very pitiful.

"Oh don't worry about it. I'll pay, I always do don't I? I need the company, so it's on me." That was exactly what Nancy wanted to hear.

Dan had checked in with the office and worked on some briefs. He had a suspicious feeling that Miss Molly was not attending class at all. He called the registrar's office and asked for her schedule for the day. True she had an English Lit class, but that was in progress when she left the house. Her only other class for the day was accounting. That was at 11:30. She did not even know what classes she was supposed to be in. "Molly O'Connor, you are in for a big surprise today. You are about to find out what happens to young ladies who disobey and lie."

He placed a phone call to Hannigan's. "Hi, could you tell me if there is a Molly O'Connor there. I don't need to talk to her, but I'm supposed to meet her. Just wondered if she is there yet? She is? Great! Bye." Dan put his coat on and left the house.

Twenty minutes later he was standing in Hannigan's looking around for Molly. He spotted her in a corner with a group of young people. He sat at the bar and watched them. There were about 10 of them and they were all fawning over her. Dan asked the bartender "Who is that girl in the corner, with all the kids around her?"

"Oh, that's Molly, she is always buying, so the kids are always there. Too bad, she seems like a nice kid. She quits buying and those kids will be gone. They're the biggest bunch of losers I have ever seen. They are leeching off of her. Some of them are even druggies."

"Oh, how much does she spend on those kids?"

"Oh, most days about a hundred and fifty bucks, sometimes more. Cash flows like water with her. I guess she had a rich Grandfather that left her all his

money. She is just asking for the wrong guy to take it all away from her. She used to be a real sweetheart but she has gotten hard now, I feel sorry for her."

Dan had heard enough. He was mad before, but now he was furious. "That idiot girl, what is she thinking. No matter, she won't be doing this ever again." He strode over to her group and casually said, "Hi, what's going on here? Can anyone join in?"

Nancy turned to him and looked him up and down. "Man what a great looking guy she thought." She batted her eyes at him and took his arm. "Sure sweetie anyone as good looking as you can join us anytime."

Dan removed her hand from his arm. Molly was just staring at him with her mouth open. "Molly, why don't you introduce me to your friends, before we leave." Dan smiled at her.

Molly was dumfounded. She stammered out introductions. The group became stone silent. They all knew who he was from Molly's story.

Dan grabbed Molly's arm. "Say good-bye Molly."

Molly could still not say anything. Dan turned to the group. "Molly is leaving and she will not be back. I would suggest that you start pooling your money, cause she is not paying for this little party today, or any other day from now on. Good-by."

He steered Molly out of the bar and to her car. "You get in that car and go straight home. I will be following you, so do not get any smart ideas. When you get home, I want you to go the office and wait for me. While you are waiting you may stand in the corner and think about what is about to happen to you." He slammed her car door shut and went to his car.

Molly was stunned. She never expected him to show up there. "What are my friends going to think. I told them I would treat and now he pulls this. How did he know where I was?" She drove home glancing back occasionally to see if he was following. He was.

She got to the house and did as she was told. She was standing in the corner when Dan came into the office. He went to the desk and took the paddle out of the drawer. He sat down on the couch and said not one word to her. Molly heard him come in and was nervously awaiting him to call her over. He didn't. He just let her stand there. She felt like she had been there for an hour. "What is he going to do? I know he is going to spank me, but how long? Oh Shit, I wish he hadn't caught me. I should have gone to class." She was really getting nervous now.

Finally Dan called her over to him. "I am terribly angry and disappointed in you. I trusted you at your word. You lied to me and blatantly disobeyed me. You do not even know what classes you have on what days, or what times. That is over as of today. I have your schedule and you are going to set it up on your computer. Molly, you are going to school, and you are going to get at least a 2.5 average this quarter. That means you are going to have to work awfully hard for the rest of this quarter. If you do not get a 2.5 average, you are going to get one stroke of the strap for every point you're under. Every class you skip for the rest of this quarter will earn you a paddling. If you skip more than three you will get a strapping for every class you skip after that. Now, are we clear on this?"

Molly just stood there. He lifted her chin so she was looking right in his eyes. "Are we clear on this?"

Molly finally nodded yes. "I want you to say it out loud Molly."

"Yes, I understand." Molly's voice was barely above a whisper and tears were starting to fall.

Dan reached under her skirt and pulled her panties down. "All right over my knee."

Molly lay over his knee and he raised her skirt. Without another word he spanked her until she was bucking and crying. Her bottom was crimson. It still had bruises from the day before so he knew this was very painful.

He paused for a minute. "Molly are you going to try and behave, or am I going to have to do this everyday? I don't want to. I would rather we be friends and work together. Are you going to try?"

Molly was in tears and sobbing. She had never been so humiliated and in such pain. But she also felt that he really did care. She had not felt that anyone cared in a long time. "Yes, I will try, but please don't spank me anymore. Please, I will be good."

Dan picked up the paddle. "Sorry, Molly, but you have a big lesson to learn and you aren't done here yet. I will help you, but you have to come half way. I am going to paddle you now, when I am done, I want your promise that you will behave and attend class. I don't want to have to take you everyday, but I will if that is necessary."

Dan raised the paddle and let it fall. The sound of the crack echoed through the room, followed by her screech. He gave her 20 hard smacks and put the paddle down. She was limp on his lap sobbing. He let her lay there a moment then picked her up and held her. She was like a little rag doll. He had not heard her sob as hard as she was now. He started rubbing her back and comforting her.

"Shh Molly, it is over, shh, calm down. I'll help you and this will work. Shh, Shh."

Finally, she calmed and just snuggled into his shoulder. She had never ever in her life felt so warm and secure. She just didn't want him to stop hugging her. She couldn't understand the feeling. She just did not hate him anymore. But she was worried about her friends.

"What are my friends going to do? They'll never talk to me again. I won't have any friends left." Molly started crying again.

Dan pulled her back and lifted her chin. "Molly, they are not friends. They are using you. They only hang around with you for your money. You can make other friends, the kind that actually are going to school and not drinking and drugging. You don't need them. Are you ready to try and change things?"

Molly snuggled back into his shoulder. "I-I'll try." sniff, sniff, "Will you help me?" sniff. "I miss Grandfather so much, I don't have any one else."

"Molly, I will do whatever I can to help you. That's what I'm here for. Come on now let's get you upstairs to rest. After a nap, you can come down and we'll figure out how you can make that 2.5." Dan gave her one last hug, and set her on her feet.

Molly leaned over and gave him a hug and went to her room. "Maybe, this won't be so bad after all."

Several months had passed since Dan had pulled Molly out of Hannigan's Bar. She had been trying very hard to go to school and get acceptable marks. Life with Dan had settled into a comfortable existence. She no longer resisted everything he said or did.

With his help, she had earned a 2.6 in that final quarter. This quarter she was carrying a 3.8 and

had not skipped one class. She actually found that she looked forward to his being home in the evening and helping her when she needed it. She had only been over his knee twice in the last two months and neither spanking had been for anything serious, just minor problems, such as being late and not calling.

Dan was also feeling very comfortable with the arrangement. Molly was fun and he was enjoying her a lot lately. Neither one of them had been doing much socially apart from each other. Dan had not dated or seen anyone other than Molly. Nor had Molly seen anyone other than some girlfriends from school.

This was beginning to bother Dan. He really enjoyed Molly and was not unhappy that she was not dating, but he didn't feel it was right. After all, he was supposed to be her guardian and he was 8 years older. He decided that he needed to break up the pattern. He would ask someone out and start casually dating. Then maybe Molly would do the same.

Several weeks after this decision he met Sally. She was the Executive Assistant to one of his clients. A stunning blonde with a figure to match, she had a great sense of humor. Also, she seemed rather attracted to Dan. The last time Dan had been at his clients, he has asked her to lunch. Several lunches later, they were having dinner. She was coming from a meeting out of town, and would pick him up at the house.

"Molly, I am going to be out for dinner tonight, so you are on your own kid. Do you have any plans?"

Molly was surprised to hear this. In all the months they had been together, he had never been

away for dinner. "What's the matter, you tired of my cooking?"

"No, not at all, just have a dinner engagement. What do you have planned?"

This really baffled Molly. "Nothing, I guess just hang around here. Is this business?"

"No, not business, a lady I met a few weeks ago. Her name is Sally. She is picking me up here around seven. Since you are going to be here , I want you to meet her.."

"Well, I may or may not be around to meet her. I'm sure that won't matter to you though!" Molly was feeling definitely put out about this.

"You just said you had no plans, so if you do you better tell me what they are now! You know the rules Molly, don't play games." Dan was not pleased with her attitude.

"No, I don't have plans, but I am not sure I need to meet every bimbo you decide to lay."

Molly turned and stormed out of the room.

Dan was shocked. Where had that come from? No matter it wasn't going to continue. He caught Molly as she was going upstairs.

"All right Young Lady, you and I are going to the office and have a discussion about this. NOW!" Dan grabbed her arm and steered her into the office and plopped her in a chair.

"If you don't want to find yourself over my lap with your bare bottom getting warmed, you will explain that outburst!"

"Geez, I am sorry, you just never went anywhere before. I guess I just thought you might be wanting some, err, err, action." Molly was blushing as red as she ever had.

Dan had to laugh looking at her.

He still didn't understand the outburst, but she did seem contrite. "Okay, I'll let that go this time, but I want you here at seven to meet Sally, and Molly, you better be on your best behavior."

Molly left the room making a face at him. However, she was not at all happy with this turn of events. She didn't understand why, but she did not want him going out with this woman.

By seven she looked her best. Her hair and makeup were perfect and she had on her sexiest jeans. She was in the office studying when she heard the car pull into the driveway. She jumped up and peeked out the window. The most beautiful blonde she had ever seen emerged from the sports car. Dan had gone to meet her and hugged and kissed her.

Molly saw red. "The nerve of that hussy! Look at those clothes, she is nothing but a bimbo! Dan can do better than that."

Several minutes later Dan called to Molly to come meet Sally.

"Sally, this is Molly."

"I am so happy to meet you Molly, Dan has told me so much about you." Sally was holding out her hand to Molly.

Molly barely touched her hand and pulled away. "Yeah right, well I have things to do."

Dan what time tomorrow do you think you will get home? Should I wait lunch for you?

I will be going to church at 9:00 so just leave me a message." She gave Sally a leer and looked her up and down. "I guess I don't need to tell you guys to have fun!" Molly turned and went back into the office.

Dan was dumbfounded. That was the rudest behavior he had ever seen. Molly had not only been

rude, she had been insulting to both of them. Sally was equally amazed and her face had turned red.

"I'm so sorry about Molly's behavior Sally. I don't know what to say." Dan had put his arm around Sally.

"Oh, I think I will live, but you didn't tell me she was a rude obnoxious bitch!" Sally pulled away from Dan.

"Have a seat and I'll get you a glass of wine. I have something to take care of before we leave. I hope you don't mind waiting a few minutes?" Dan gave Sally the wine and was turning to leave.

"If it involves telling the little brat off, be my guest!" Sally was still highly incensed.

Dan turned and headed to the office. He opened the door and found Molly sitting at her computer. "Young Lady, you get over here RIGHT NOW! And I mean this instant!" Dan's voice was shaking with anger.

Molly was now afraid. She knew she pushed the limits, but she just did not like that woman. Before she could get out of the chair and over to Dan, he arrived and yanked her up.

He quickly unbuttoned her jeans and pulled her panties down. Before Molly half realized it she was over his knee staring at the floor. Dan said not one word to her. He began to spank her hard and fast with the paddle.

Sally sitting in the living room could not help but hear the sounds coming from the office.

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,
CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,
CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,
CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK

CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK.

Those were interspersed with cries from Molly. She was sobbing and promising to behave and not be rude anymore. Her cries were finally totally incoherent. Sally smiled to herself. "Well that brat is sure being taught a lesson. But I can't believe he is actually spanking her. If it were me I would have him arrested."

Finally the spanking stopped. Dan felt bad that he had spanked her so hard when he was angry. He always tried to be cool before he punished her. Molly was sobbing as hard as he had ever heard her. He gently picked her up and stood her in front of him. She was a mess. His heart was beating hard. She was also quite beautiful. He wanted at that moment to be able to just take her in his arms and cuddle her. He knew he shouldn't be feeling this way.

"Molly, I am sorry I spanked you when I was angry but you earned every paddle stroke that you got. What possessed you to do that?"

Molly could only shake her head and sob.

"Molly, I want an answer from you. I want you to tell me why you did that?"

"I don... don't know. I, I, didn't like her, I guess." Molly was quieting but had her head hung down.

Dan lifted her chin up to look into her eyes. "Molly, you will go out and apologize to Sally right now. Then you may go to bed and stay there for the rest of the evening. I am not going to be here to check on you, but you had better obey. For your information, young lady, I am not sleeping with her and do not intend to spend the night with her. I will

be home, and you best be in your room when I get here. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, I understand, and I am sorry I said that about you. I didn't mean it." Molly sniffled.

"All right, you are forgiven. But you need to apologize. I have kept her waiting long enough."

It suddenly dawned on Molly, that Sally had probably heard the whole spanking. She was mortified and her face turned as red as her bottom. She pulled up her panties and fastened her jeans. She took Dan's offered hand and they went to the living room.

"Sally, Molly here has something to say to you." Dan let go of Molly's hand and pushed her toward Sally. Sally was sitting there on the couch with a smug look on her face. Dan did not much care for that look.

"Sally, I am very sorry I was rude and bratty. Please forgive me, I won't be that way again. I do hope you two have a good time at dinner tonight." Molly almost started crying again.

Sally didn't say anything for a few minutes, then finally accepted the apology. Molly quickly ran upstairs to her room.

The next morning Molly was very quiet. She did feel bad that she had upset Dan, but she hated Sally. Dan had come home about 11:00p.m. and had checked on her. She pretended she was asleep, but was glad he was home. She just could not face talking to him. Dan said nothing about the day before or his evening. Just went about things as usual.

Later that day Molly got a phone call from a student at college. Mark Oster was a grad student and liked Molly. He had asked her out a couple of times, but she was always busy. He was calling to

ask her to the big dance two weeks from then. Molly was going to turn him down again, but then decided maybe she should start dating, that would show Dan that other men liked her. Dan had not met him though, so he would have to come over to meet him and get approval. She explained to Mark that she would love to go, but that her guardian would have to meet him first. They decided Mark would come for lunch next Saturday.

Dan was pleased that Molly was going out. At least he thought he was, but the more he thought about it, the uneasier he was. He put the thought out of his mind.

The next Saturday the doorbell rang at exactly noon. Dan opened the door and saw a tall, well built, good-looking man with a bottle of wine. "Hi, you must be Mark, come on in. Molly is in the kitchen. Why don't we go sit on the deck? She'll join us in a minute." Dan took the wine and led Mark to the deck. Molly had heard him come in and quickly finished what she was doing and went to join them.

Mark stood and gave her a kiss on the cheek when she came out. Dan's stomach tightened when he saw that. The three of them had a nice lunch and Dan liked Mark.

He was a well-spoken intelligent man and easy to be around. He agreed that Molly could indeed go to the dance with him.

Molly was like a teenager going to her first dance. Dan had to laugh at her with all of the primping and preparations. She had bought a new dress and he even let her spend more than he thought necessary. She was just so happy. The day of the dance she spent the entire afternoon getting ready. She was finally ready and waiting for Mark to pick her up.

She took Dan's breath away when she came down the stairs. She was wearing a floor length strapless emerald green satin dress. The color of the dress showed off her ivory skin and green eyes to perfection.

Mark arrived and the couple left in a flurry of good-byes.

The house felt so empty with her gone. Dan actually felt lonely. He had debated going out but decided against it. His relationship with Sally had been short lived. After the first dinner date he just hadn't felt they had much in common. He had in truth not liked her attitude toward Molly at all. He finally decided to just go to bed. He woke up about 1:00 and heard muffled voices downstairs. He figured Molly had come home and she and Mark were saying goodnight. He started to slip back to sleep when he heard Molly's voice a bit louder. She sounded upset.

Dan put on his bathrobe and headed downstairs. When he got to the bottom of the steps he saw Molly on the couch with Mark over her trying to push up her dress. He had his pants half way off and Molly was struggling with him and saying NO, *don't, stop!* She was trying to push him off and get up, but he had her held down.

Dan flipped on the lights. "What is going on here?" He ran to the couch and pulled Mark off Molly. "What do you think you are doing. I heard her yelling *no* from upstairs. Get the Hell out of my house *now!*"

Mark looked like he was going to throw a punch, but one look at Dan and he thought better of it. He fastened his pants and turned to go. Before he left he looked at Molly. "You are going to be so sorry for this. You're a F***** tease."

He slammed the door on his way out.

Molly dissolved in tears. Dan sat down next to her and put his arm around her drawing her close to him. "Molly, shh, it's all right now. What happened? Did he hurt you?"

Molly was huddled in a ball crying. "No, I'm sorry, Dan, please don't spank me."

"I'm not going to spank you Molly. I am not mad at you. You didn't do anything wrong, he did. Now calm down and tell me what happened."

"He wanted me to have sex with him. Said I owed it to him. When I said no he said I didn't meant that, I was teasing him. I didn't want to. I—I, never, err—I " Molly was hugging Dan and crying.. She just couldn't tell him.

Dan held her and rubbed her back. It suddenly dawned on him what she was trying to say. "Molly, are trying to say that you're a virgin and didn't want to have sex with him?"

"Yes. I am just so weird. I— I wanted to be a virgin for my husband. But I'll never find someone who wants me."

Dan's heart about burst with happiness. "Molly, there is nothing weird about you. You are a beautiful smart lovely woman. There are plenty of men who would be honored that you saved yourself for them." He hugged her tight to him.

Molly finally quieted down and looked up at Dan's face. She knew then that she was really in love with him. What was she going to do. This was an impossible situation. She started to cry again. Dan was looking at her and he also knew now, what he had not wanted to admit to himself before. He was also in love with her. He didn't want her to be with anyone else, and he had no desire for anyone else. He held her tighter and pulled her close to

him. After a minute he lifted her chin and leaned down and kissed her. She returned his kiss and they were lost in each other for several minutes. Dan finally pulled her away.

"Molly, I shouldn't have done that. This is not a good situation, you know that, don't you?"

"I know, but I can't help it. I'm sorry, I will just stay out of your way." She started to get up.

Dan pulled her back down. "You are going to do no such thing. I'll talk to Shaughnessey when he comes back to town next week and see what he advises. But Molly, you aren't going anywhere." He pulled her into another kiss. "We just have to be patient until I figure out how to handle this."

Chapter Three

The next week found Dan and Molly falling into a nice routine. Molly would go to school and Dan to work. Neither one could hardly wait for the other to arrive home.

They would sit and cuddle for awhile before dinner and then work in the office till bedtime. There was a lot of kissing but Dan was determined not to go any further at this time.

Molly was happy enough with that decision for now. She loved him so much. She had never thought it was possible to love anyone as much as this. She laughed when she thought of her feelings toward him just a few months ago. She was worried though about what would happen when Dan talked to Tom Shaughnessey.

On the Sunday night before Tom Shaughnessey was scheduled to return Molly was fidgety. Dan was busy at his desk working on briefs. She could not concentrate on the paper she was writing and got up and sat on his lap.

"Hmmm, this feels better." She was snuggling into his chest. Dan had his arms around her tight. He was nibbling at her neck. Feelings she was not accustomed to were flooding her body. His body was reacting also.

"What's up Molly, you are so tense today?" Dan had stopped kissing and was rubbing her back.

"I'm worried about what Tom is going to say. Do you think he will make you leave?"

Her eyes reflected her worry.

"Molly, I told you not to worry. Nothing is going to change the way we feel. I can always quit being the executor of your Grandfather's estate and your guardian, but I am not going to quit you! I reviewed all the papers last week and I don't see anything that should change the current set up. So quit worrying!" He hugged her tight and kissed her once more and put her on her feet. "Now, go finish your paper and let me get some work done." He gave her rump a smack and sent her on her way.

Molly stuck her tongue out at him and rubbed her bottom as she went back to the computer. She did feel much better. He could make anything feel better.

The next morning she had English Lit at 8:00 a.m. Professor Warren was one of her favorite professors and she loved this class. She was currently carrying an 'A' and wanted to keep it that way. She was sitting at her desk reviewing her notes when Professor Warren walked in with Mark Oster. Both of them took places at the front of the classroom. Mark was staring at her. She had not seen him since that awful night a week ago.

"Class may I have your attention?" Professor Warren clapped his hands. "I would like to introduce you to Mark Oster. He is my new Graduate Teaching Assistant. He will be taking over this class the rest of the quarter. He is well qualified and I am sure that you will all learn a lot with him. I am still the Professor of record and will review all class material with Mark. Feel free to come and visit with me in

my office if you have any problems. Mark, the class is yours." Professor Warren left the room.

Molly was in a state of shock. This was awful! How could this be? She sat through class in a haze. She was about to leave the classroom when Mark asked her to wait.

When all the other students had left, Mark sat on the edge of the desk and looked at her.

"Well, Miss Molly O'Connor we meet again. Seems to me that I have the upper hand in this encounter. Your precious guardian, if that IS what he is, can't help you now."

"What do you want Mark. I thought it was perfectly clear that I want nothing to do with you. Now you may be the teacher but it ends there." Molly turned to go.

"I wouldn't be in such a hurry if I were you. If you don't come to my office today after your 1:00 class and be prepared to give me what I want, you will find that your paper you turned in today, will just probably be a D or F. Now what will that do to your precious grade average?" Mark was leering at her.

Molly just turned and ran from the classroom. She was panicky what could she do. She was not about to meet with him. But would he really give her a D or F. He couldn't do that. He scared her badly though.

That night Molly was very quiet. Dan noticed something was wrong and tried to get her to talk. She just said she was tired. She didn't even ask if he had talked to Tom Shaughnessey. She was sitting on the couch reading and listening to music. Dan sat down next to her and took the book out of her hands.

"Okay kid, what's going on? You are way too quiet. Tell me what's bothering you?" Dan put his arms around her and pulled her to him.

Molly just could not tell him. He would think she was flirting with Mark, and she couldn't risk him thinking that. He might leave her and she would be so alone again, she couldn't stand it. "I'm just tired, really. I think I will just go to bed early tonight." She snuggled against him. She felt so safe here; she just could not risk losing him.

"Don't you want to know about a certain conversation I had today?" Dan was playing with her hair. That got a reaction from Molly.

She turned to him eagerly. "Oh, I forgot. Yes, what did he say? Please tell me it's good news."

"There is absolutely no problem at all. In fact he thinks maybe this is what your Grandfather had in mind all along. I did wonder some at the time. He refused to consider anyone who was married, over 35 or who was involved in a relationship. Now we just have to decide what we want to do. So kid, what do you want to do?" Dan was holding both of her hands.

"Oh Dan, I am so happy, I don't know what to say." Molly couldn't talk she just started crying.

"I didn't think finding out that I love you and want to marry you, would make you cry." Dan started kissing her hard. Molly returned the kisses deeply.

After a few minutes Dan asked her. "So Molly O'Connor, will you marry me?"

"Oh Dan you know it." She grabbed him and began kissing him.

Dan finally broke away. We had better stop this, or you are not going to make it to your wedding night, young lady. And before you say a word, I do

want you to have your wish on that. Now I think it is a good idea for you to get to bed. You do look tired and we can make plans tomorrow. He pulled her up and kissed her good night sending her upstairs.

The next few days were spent in a blur talking about wedding plans and trying to set a date. Molly was never happier. Until Wednesday and time for Lit class again.

She sat at her desk waiting for class to start and was almost trembling. Mark came in and passed back the papers to the class.

"For the most part these were very good. I am impressed at the level of writing from some of you. However, I was terribly disappointed in one student, I was told was an 'A' student. That paper was a disappointing 'D'. I would like to see that person after class.

Molly again was in a stupor. She could only stare at the 'D' on the paper in front of her. He had actually done it. He had given her a 'D'. All her happiness just fled. Finally class was over.

"Mark, what do you want from me? This is not fair, you know this was not a 'D' paper."

Molly was angry.

"Molly my dear, my office 2:00; you know what I want. Now I suggest you be there. If I should be a bit late, just strip and wait on the couch. If you don't show, the quiz in Lit Lab tomorrow may just be an 'F'. See you at 2:00." Marc strode out of the classroom giving her a wink as he left.

Molly dissolved in tears. What could she do? She was trapped. She was not going to his office and she just knew he would give her an 'F'. She wanted to tell Dan. "I can't tell him. He is going to think I led Mark on, or I really am not working hard enough

because of the wedding plans. What if he calls the whole thing off?"

The next week was the mirror of the previous one. Molly received an "F" on her test and another 'F' and a 'D' on two more papers. She was now becoming physically ill at the thought of going to class. She just didn't know where to turn. She didn't feel she could tell anyone. Everyone else seemed to love Mark and no one would believe her. They would just think it was sour grapes. She had hid her papers and test from Dan.

Every time he asked she told him she was getting an 'A'.

Molly decided that she could just not face Mark anymore. She just would not go to class until she figured out what to do. On Monday of the next week she left home at the usual time and just went to the Student Union instead of class. She did the same on Wednesday and again on Thursday missing Lit Lab. She was feeling so guilty she could hardly look at Dan.

On Thursday night Dan was watching her studying at her desk. She had been so jumpy lately and quiet. He even thought that several times she looked like she had been crying. Each time he asked she denied anything was wrong. She just said she was busy, classes were tough and she was excited about making plans. He had a real surprise for her this weekend, that he thought for sure would relax her. He had shopped for her engagement ring. It was the best diamond he could find. He planned on taking her out to dinner on Friday and giving her the ring.

Dan was just leaving a luncheon with a client on Friday, when he bumped into Kevin Warren, Molly's

English Lit professor. "Professor how are you? I haven't seen you in ages. How's the academic life?"

"Oh, fine. I have a new Graduate Teaching Assistant now. I can spend more time on research and writing myself. I'm glad I ran into you though. I've wanted to talk to you. What is wrong with Molly? Is she ill?"

Dan looked at him confused. "No, she is fine. Why do you ask?"

"She had an 'A' in the class until recently. She has turned in three below grade papers. Two 'F's" and a 'D'. Plus she failed a test last week. She has not attended classes all this week. I thought maybe she was sick, but I saw her sitting in the Student Union two of the days she should have been in class. Just yesterday, I saw her sitting in her car and it looked like she was crying. Ever since you started as her guardian she has been a model student. I don't understand it. I thought that maybe something was wrong. I was going to call you this afternoon, but running into you saved me a call."

Dan stood there dumbfounded. "Kevin, I don't know what to say. As far as I knew Molly was still getting an 'A' and she was attending class. I will tell you that I will get an answer this afternoon, though."

"Dan, I did not mean to alarm you. I just thought it was strange. It's just such a

complete change of behavior for Molly. Don't worry. I'm sure there is an explanation. Let me know if I can help."

Dan left the restaurant and went home. He called the office and told them he would not be back. This was certainly changing his plans for this evening. What had gotten into her? Surely it could not be just the wedding plans. She was acting

different. Had she changed her mind? Did she not want to get married? Was he rushing her? All these thoughts were racing through his mind. He calmed himself and sat down at the desk awaiting her return from school.

Fifteen minutes later she arrived. She walked into the office and was shocked to see him there. "Hi! You're home early aren't you?"

"Yes, I guess a bit. How was school?" Dan motioned her over to sit on his lap.

Molly cuddled up to him. Lately it was the only time she felt safe. "Oh, I guess okay."

"How is English Lit coming? You haven't shown me any of your papers lately. Everything going all right?"

"Oh, Yes. Still right on target for that 'A'." Molly was really nervous now. She knew she had been lying and now she just made another big one.

"What is Professor Warren concentrating on this quarter? I haven't heard you mention him lately." Dan was leading her right into his trap.

"Oh, Um, well the same old things I guess. Today he talked about Shakespeare's influence on American tragedies. Kind of boring." Molly was starting to squirm on his lap and avoiding his eyes.

"Hmm., that is interesting. When I saw him at lunch today, he told me he hadn't been in the classroom in three weeks. I guess that would make him missing two weeks more than you, since he told me you hadn't been there all week. Also seems that 'A' you have been talking about has turned into a 'D' or worse." Dan turned her around so she was facing him. "Care to explain yourself before I paddle your butt crimson?"

Molly was stunned. He knew. She couldn't say a thing.

"Molly, I want to know right now what is going on. Why are you disobeying and lying to me? Do you think you can just quit class and loaf because we are getting married? Do you?" Dan shook her. "I want an explanation and I want it NOW! I have never been so disappointed in you as I am at this moment."

Molly dissolved in tears. "I it isn't what you think I just I can't .I know you hate me!" She couldn't continue.

Dan was not in the mood for this nonsense. "Molly, you have 2 seconds to start talking sense." She still said nothing just stammered.

Dan stood her up and undid her jeans. Jeans and panties were at her ankles and in no time she was over his knee.

"Molly, I do not know what you think you are doing, but I am not putting up with it. You are going to class. We have had this discussion before. I can not believe you have turned an 'A' into a 'D' in a few short weeks. Well darling, that is not going to be tolerated. We may be getting married, but you are still going to school and you are going to obey me. You are not getting away with lying to me."

Without further hesitation Dan started spanking. He spanked for quite a while with his hand without saying a word. Molly was squirming and beginning to cry, when he stopped. She started to get up.

"You are not done Young Lady, you are going nowhere. You are now about to be paddled like I have not had to paddle you for quite sometime. I cannot believe you have slipped back into your old habits." Dan picked up the paddle and began smacking her. He cracked that paddle down at least 50 times. Molly was a mess pleading and sobbing

for him to stop. Nothing she said has any effect on him. Finally he stopped.

"Molly, why did you cut class?" Molly said nothing. CRACK, CRACK "Molly, I asked you a question?"

CRACK, CRACK

"Ouch, Ow, I can't tell you."

CRACK, CRACK.

"I think you better Young Lady!"

CRACK, CRACK.

"You'll hate me. Please I CAN'T! I just CAN'T"

CRACK, CRACK.

"Try a little harder."

CRACK, CRACK.

"Oh, Pleeeseee Dan, you won't love me. Pleeeeasesee." Molly was now almost hysterical.

Dan heard the desperation in her voice. He put the paddle down and pulled her up to sit on his lap. "Ouch, that hurts so bad!" Molly just sobbed into his shoulder. "You are going to hate me forever. I will have to leave. I didn't know what to do. I can't live without you. Please, please don't leave me. I love you. Please, it wasn't my fault. I can't stand this." Molly was now hysterical.

Dan held her tight. "Shh, Molly, what are you talking about? I do love you. I will always love you. What are you saying? What happened to you?" Finally Molly calmed down.

Dan held her and kissed her for a minute, then he lifted her chin and looked at her face. "Molly, there is something very wrong here. I think there has been for awhile. I want to know right now what it is. If you don't start talking, I will put you back over my knee and paddle you until you tell me." He rubbed away some tears with his thumb and looked at her.

"Oh Dan, I can't you will hate me." Molly sobbed.

Dan calmly turned her over his knee again. "Okay Molly, we can do it this way." He gently spanked her several times. It was all that was necessary to start her bawling. "Do you want to talk to me know?" Dan asked her.

"I don't know how." Molly bawled.

Dan flipped her over and sat her up. "Try using that mouth of yours. I don't care what you have to say. I want to hear it. I love you and will still love you. But I want to know what is going on."

Molly finally told him about Mark and the papers and quizzes. She explained she could just not face going to class anymore. Dan was furious that this had happened to her. Even more furious and hurt that she had not told him right away. "Molly, why didn't you tell me?"

"I was afraid to. I didn't know what to do. Oh, Dan, I'm so sorry." Molly was in tears again.

Dan held her and calmed her down. Finally she was quiet. "Molly, I will never ever not love you. You have to understand and believe that! Now we are going to take care of this problem. Let me see the papers you turned in."

Molly went and got the papers and test and gave them to Dan. "I am going to read these while you rest."

Dan picked her up and carried her up to bed. He tucked her under the covers and kissed her. "Sweetheart don't you worry, I will take care of this."

Molly hugged him and snuggled down into the covers. She felt so loved and at peace finally.

Chapter Four

Dan was furious. He had been reading the papers that Molly gave him. They were excellent, by far the best she had ever done. They were 'A' papers if he were any judge at all. The test was also an 'A'. He could only see one mistake she had made. Clearly Mark was guilty of sexual harassment. "If Mark Oster were in this room, I think I would beat the **** out of him! This is despicable, to do something like this to anyone!"

Dan picked the phone up and called Professor Warren. "Hi Kevin, Dan Duggin here. I have a problem and I need your help. Do you have some time?"

"Sure Dan, what's up. Does this have to do with Molly?"

"Yes Kevin, it does. It concerns Molly and Mark Oster your GTA. "

Dan proceeded to explain what was going on. The more he talked about it the madder he became.

"Dan, calm down. If what you say is true we have a big problem. No, I am not implying you aren't telling me the truth, but I need to investigate this. I need to see those papers and talk to Molly."

Dan talked a bit longer and convinced Kevin to see them yet that afternoon. He wanted this settled fast. Molly was not going to keep suffering over this.

Kevin agreed to see them as soon as they could get there.

"Molly, wake up!" Dan was gently shaking Molly. "We have to see Professor Warren."

Molly opened her eyes and smiled at Dan. "Who do we have to see?" She sat up and winced. She had forgotten about the sore bottom.

Dan laughed at the face she made. "Sorry kid, but we have to go see Professor Warren."

Freshen up and meet me downstairs in five minutes." Dan kissed her and left to let her get ready.

Molly started getting very nervous. She did not want to confront Professor Warren. She felt so bad. She just wanted this to go away. She changed clothes, washed her face and met Dan downstairs.

"I don't think I want to do this Dan. I am so scared. What if he doesn't believe me? Please can't we just forget it?" Molly looked like she was going to cry again.

"No Molly, we are not going to forget it. I am going to see to it that you get the grades you deserve and that idiot gets what he deserves. Now come on we have to go." He pulled Molly into a hug.

Thirty minutes later they were sitting in Professor Warren's office. Molly was shaking and Dan was holding her hand underneath the desk. Kevin Warren was reading over the papers that Dan had given him.

He put the papers down on his desk and shook his head. "Molly, you have certainly been done a terrible injustice. I can't begin to say how sorry I am about this. I need you to write down for me in as much detail as possible what happened. Can you do that?"

Molly looked at Dan. "I uh, do I have to do that? Can't you just let it go?"

Dan and Kevin exchanged astounded looks. Dan was the first to speak. "Molly, what are you thinking of? Let it go! There is no way we are letting this go. Why would you want to?"

Molly started crying. "Dan, he might still do something to me. I am so afraid of him. I just want things to be normal again."

Dan started to speak but Kevin stopped him. "Molly, he hasn't threatened you with violence has he?"

"N... no, he just wanted me to you know. Have sex with him." Molly was so embarrassed her face was beet red. How much information do I have to put down?"

"You will have to be very specific Molly. These are serious charges. They have to be in your own words with as much detail as you can remember. The papers are good proof of what you are saying, but I have to have more to take to the board. They will investigate and decide what to do. In the meantime, we will suspend Mark. He won't be in class to bother you. You don't have anything to worry about."

Molly felt like she might be ill. "Professor Warren, can I talk to Dan in private for a moment?"

"Sure I will be in the waiting area. Just call me when you are done." Kevin got up and left the room.

Dan turned to Molly with a stern look on his face. "Molly, you are going to do this. You are not going to let him get away with this. Now what is the problem?"

"I just don't want everyone knowing what happened. Other professors may hold that against

me. Dan, please don't be mad at me. I am so scared!" Molly started crying again.

Dan pulled her onto his lap and hugged her. "Darling, no one is going to know. This is strictly confidential. It is not public knowledge. But you have to cooperate or they will not be able to do anything and Mark will be free to do this to someone else. You don't want anyone else to go through what you did, do you?"

"No, I don't want anyone to be treated like this, it is terrible! All right, I'll do the statement, but I am so scared. You won't let him hurt me will you?" Molly's eyes were wide with terror.

"Molly, I will personally see to it that he does not hurt you ever!" Dan hugged her hard and kissed her."

Dan called Kevin back in. "Molly is ready to give you her statement."

"Fine. Molly, you can use the computer in the other office where you have some privacy. Dan and I will visit until you are finished." Kevin showed Molly to the other office and closed the door.

"Kevin, isn't there something we can do to speed this process up? Molly is sick over this, and I can't stand seeing her hurting like this? An investigation and Board hearing could take a month."

"Well, if he were confronted and confessed, that would be it. But that rarely ever happens in cases like this. It would have to be a confession that wasn't coerced. Or if there were a witness to it, something like that." Kevin sat back and studied Dan.

Dan stood and was pacing the room. "I need to fix this for her. It tears my heart out to see her

hurting so. I just can't sit here and do nothing. I feel like using Mark Oster for a punching bag."

Dan sat back down, then stood up again. "I hope she is all right in there. Seems to be taking her a long time. Should I check on her?"

"Dan, I am sure she is fine. She knows we are here if she needed anything. Just relax." Kevin was smiling at Dan.

Dan could not sit still. He sat and stood. Then sat and stood and paced. He even went and listened at the door.

Kevin was watching him and smiling. "You and I have known each other for a long time Dan, and I don't ever remember you being so protective and nervous about someone. It doesn't seem to me that is the typical behavior I have witnessed from parents or guardians before. Something you want to tell an old friend?"

Running his hands through his hair, Dan turned and looked at his old friend. "I wasn't going to say anything for awhile, but yes, Molly and I are getting married. I think that is what her Grandfather had in mind all along. We haven't set the date or told anyone yet. We wanted to make sure everything was all right with Tom Shaughnessey and the estate. If there was the slightest problem, I would resign."

Kevin stood up and offered his hand to Dan. "Well I would say that is the best news I have heard from you today, or in a long time. I can see why you want to get this over with fast. I am going to call our legal department and see if there is something we can do to hurry this along."

I need to make a few phone calls, why don't you wait in the other room for a minute. I'll call you when I am done. Dan left and went to the waiting

room. Kevin sat and made his calls. When he was finished he called Dan back in.

"There is one thing we can try, but Molly will have to do it. I don't know that she or you for that matter will want to do this."

"Let's hear it. If it is a fast solution I think anything is worth a try. As long as it's legal."

"If Molly is willing to wear a tape and get him propositioning her for a grade on tape, we can use that against him. He still would not have to confess, and you probably know better than I do that it may not be admissible in court if it came to that. Mark may not know that and the sheer weight of the evidence may just get to him. We could even do it today, as he has late classes and will be around. That decision is up to Molly."

Dan thought for a few minutes. "Could we be right outside the door in case Molly needed help? I don't like the thought of her alone with him."

"I don't see why not. Molly will be wearing a wire, but we can have the tape machine and actually listen in. When he says the magic word we can go in and bust him."

Kevin and Dan were still discussing the plans when Molly came back in. Dan could tell by looking at her that she had been crying again. He thought his heart was going to break looking at her so hurt and unhappy.

"I guess this is it. I hope it is enough, it's all I can remember." Molly handed the papers to Kevin.

"Sit down Molly. Dan and I want to tell you about a plan we have that could end this today. But you need to agree and participate."

Kevin explained the procedure to Molly. She listened and asked a few questions.

"Dan, do you think I should do this? Will you be right outside the door? I don't want to be there alone with him." Molly was starting to shake again.

"Molly, if you do this, it will all be over today. You won't have to worry about it for the weekend and maybe a month or more. I will be right outside that door and will come in the second he incriminates himself. He will not touch you, I promise."

"All right I'll do it. I just want to get this over with."

Kevin stood up and motioned them to follow him. "Let's get down to security to have them set us up. They are expecting us. Molly, bring your statement with you. They will take it from there."

The Captain of Campus Security asked her to call Mark from there on a taped line.

"Mark, this is Molly, could I come talk to you about these grades. I really need to do something. I can't have a failing grade."

"Well Molly O'Connor, I gave you a chance to raise that grade and you didn't do it. I don't know that talking about it will do any good if you aren't willing to cooperate shall we say. If you want to see about some extracurricular work to up the grade, you can come see me. But only if you are ready to do what I ask. By the way, you now have to do a bit more to get the grades you want."

"I'll be here for another hour. If you don't show this time, forget passing." Mark hung up the phone.

Molly almost backed out after the call, but Dan and the Security Captain, persuaded her to go through with it. Besides Dan and Kevin there would also be a security guard there. He would bring Mark to the Security office for questioning when it was over.

Ten minutes later, Molly was outside of Mark Oster's office. She knocked on the door and entered.

Mark was sitting behind his desk, but rose and came and sat on the front of the desk when she came in. "Well, well, well, if it isn't Miss High and Mighty. So Molly, what do you want?"

"Mark, please I just want the grade I deserve. You know I deserve an 'A'. Why can't you just give it to me?" Molly was pleading with him.

"Molly, I told you before, you have to do something to earn that 'A'. I am tired of explaining this to you."

"What do you want Mark?"

"You know what I want. But since you haven't listened or cooperated now I want more. " Mark stood up and turned around. Molly could only hear him unzipping his pants. When he had exposed himself he turned around. "I want you to give me a blow job for starters. Then we'll see where we go from there. If you do a good enough job you can have a 'C'. You are going to have to be really good for an 'A'. " He had just started to grab her when the door burst open.

Dan was the first one to reach Molly. He pulled her behind him and stood facing Mark. Mark started cursing and took a swing at Dan. That was all Dan needed. He blocked the swing but landed one right in Marks face. Before either one could swing again, the Security Guard broke it up. He had Mark 's arms pinned behind him and was handcuffing him.

Mark was sputtering with blood gushing from his nose. "What the F*** do you think you're doing. What's going on here?"

Kevin stepped into the room. "Mark you are going to the Security Office. We have you on tape

harassing Molly. I have also seen the papers and test you flunked her on. You are finished here. Your best option is to resign and not face a lengthy hearing process. But you can discuss that in Security."

Kevin turned to Dan and Molly. Molly had removed the wire and handed it to Kevin. "Molly, again I am so sorry this happened. Your grade will be returned to an 'A' and we'll go from there. Please if anything like this ever happens again, come to me right away. You never should have gone through this."

Molly looked like she was about to collapse. Dan had his arm around her supporting her. "Thanks Kevin, I appreciate you quick handling of this. Molly and I are very grateful. I think I better get her home now." Dan and Kevin shook hands and Dan led Molly out of the office.

Molly just sat in the car with her eyes closed all the way home. She was ghostly white and Dan was very worried about her. They no sooner got in the house than she ran for the bathroom.

Dan could hear her getting sick. He gave her a minute and then went in. She was slumped on the floor in front of the toilet. "Are you all right Molly?"

She shook her head but did not answer him. He wet a washcloth in cool water and placed it on the back of her neck. He rubbed her back until he could feel her relax. Then he picked her and carried her upstairs. The color had come back to her face and she looked much better.

Dan sat her on the bed and held her for a minute. "I am going to run a bath for you. I want you to take a bath and put on your nightgown and robe. I am going to start a fire and make us something simple for dinner. When you're ready

come back down and we can talk. Just remember I love you more than anything in the world." Dan kissed her on the forehead and headed for the bathroom to run her bath.

An hour later Molly came downstairs. She felt much better than she had before. She had thought things through though and decided that she just didn't want to go to Lit Class the rest of the quarter. She felt so foolish about everything; she just did not want to face Professor Warren.

He had offered to let her drop and keep her grade and that is what she was going to do.

Dan was sitting in front of the fire. Molly sat down beside him and cuddled up. He handed her a glass of wine. "How do you feel, any better?"

"MMM. Yes, much better now. I am so glad that is over with. I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner, but I was just afraid. " Molly leaned against him.

"I know, but you have to promise to tell me everything from now on, hear?" Dan turned her face to his. He just loved her so much. This evening wasn't what he had planned that is for sure. He had the ring in his pocket and was just waiting for the right moment to give it to her. That should make her feel a whole lot better.

They sat there together and ate soup and enjoyed the fire. Dan was just about to give her the ring.

"Dan, I have been thinking. Professor Warren offered me the chance to drop the course for this quarter. I'm going to do it. I don't want to go back to that class and face him. I am so embarrassed about it."

"Molly, you are not dropping that class, and that is final. There is no reason for you to be

embarrassed at all. Don't even think like that." Dan's tone was stern.

"NO Dan, I am NOT going back and you can't make me! I made up my mind."

Dan was just not in the mood to argue with her. There was only one way he could handle this.

Without saying a word, he took Molly's wineglass out of her hand and turned her over his knee.

He flipped up her nightgown and began spanking her.

"SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, "You are going" SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, "to class", SMACK, SMACK, "young lady" SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, "and don't you ever"

SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, "tell me you're not" SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK "doing what I tell you!" SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK. SMACK, SMACK, SMACK, SMACK.

Molly has started crying with the first smack. She did not even plead with him to stop, just cried.

Dan knew this was exactly what she needed to release the tension from the day. He had in fact not even spanked her very hard. He left her lying over his lap and rubbed her bottom and back until she was quiet. She started to get up but he held her down.

"Not so fast young lady, there is something I want to do before you get up." Molly was puzzled but lay there quietly. She knew he was done spanking.

Dan reached into his pocket and took out the ring and slipped it on her finger. Molly gasped when she felt the ring placed on her finger. She flipped over and sat up.

"Oh Dan, it is just gorgeous, I love you so much." She flung herself at Dan before he could say a word.

All their pent up emotions were being released with each other. His mouth was exploring every inch of her neck and face. He did not think he could stop there, but he had promised her he would wait.

Molly was moaning. She did not want him to stop; she had never felt like this before and just wanted him all the way. When she felt him pulling back she pulled him back to her.

"Dan, don't stop. I don't care anymore to wait. You will still be the first and only man I will ever love. I want you now. Please make love to me."

Dan did not need to hear anything else. He picked her up and carried her to his bed, and filled her with his love.

In Memoriam

Chapter One

Caroline Neally sat on the porch of her parents' home fanning herself. The weather in western Virginia was uncharacteristically hot and humid for late May. With a huge sigh, she once again picked up the letter from her husband Brian, currently stationed in Iraq with the Marine Corps. Caroline read the letter again and threw it down on the swing next to her. She definitely wasn't happy that he was there. In fact, she had wanted him to resign his commission when his tour was up, but he'd refused. A week later his unit was deployed to Iraq. Brian was supposed to have been home after 6 months, and now it was 9 months later, and he still didn't have a date he was returning.

Caroline Maureen Barnes Neally,

I don't want to hear any more about my coming home now! I do love and miss you so much, but I can't just pick up and leave, as you seem to want me to do ... that's called desertion. I'll be home soon, that's all I can say. When I do get there, though, you and I are going to have a long overdue 'discussion' on patience.

I'm glad our parents are well and that you have company while I'm gone, but I want you to stop this fretting and pouting. This has to be short, as I'm going on duty in ten minutes. I'll write more tomorrow.

Don't worry, I'll be home soon.

Love and miss you,
Brian

"What's the matter Caroline? Bad news from Brian?" her mother asked as she sat down on the porch with a pan of beans to snap.

"All the news is bad until he can tell me when he's coming home. This is just so unfair!" Caroline sighed.

Bridget Barnes frowned at her daughter. "You aren't the first wife that's had a husband go overseas in a war, you know. I do think that you are over reacting. To be concerned about his safety is understandable, but honey, you can't make yourself miserable and him too. Be proud of what he's doing."

"I'm proud of him. I'd just be prouder and happier if he were here," she said, pouting.

Bridget didn't reply but continued to snap her beans. When she was done she took them into the kitchen and put them to soak in cold water. While she was on the porch she remembered the old diaries she had from her family dating back to the civil war. They might be just the things to snap Caroline out of this funk she was in. Lord knew the family was tired of living with her pouting and moods.

It took a bit of rummaging, but she soon found the three old diaries she was seeking. Bridget took them downstairs, dusted them off and started for the porch to give them to Caroline. At the last moment she went to her bedroom bookshelf and found her diary for the late 60's. Maybe the diaries would be an eye opener for her.

Caroline was still sitting on the swing pouting when her mother plunked the diaries in her lap.

"I think you should read these, before you write any more letters to Brian," Bridget said and quickly left the porch.

Caroline was surprised but picked them up and looked at the dates, amazed that they dated all the way back to the 1800's. The oldest was her great-great-great grandmother Lucy Barnes. Caroline picked one up and read the title, then flipped through the pages.

DIARY OF LUCY FELLOWS BARNES 1864

April 2, 1862

I'm so happy! William Barnes has asked me to marry him. My father has given us his blessing. The wedding will take place in a month. My mother and I are starting on my dress right away. Normally, we'd wait longer, but with this blasted war, he wants to get us settled on his farm before summer sets in.

Caroline had to smile at the infectious happiness the young girl portrayed. Slowly scanning other entries she stopped and read another few.

May 3, 1862

This is the biggest day of my life! In just one hour I'll be Mrs. William Barnes. All the family is here, and the guests are arriving now. The weather is perfect; the rain that has been plaguing us has stopped. It's a beautiful warm spring day with the prettiest sky. All the flowers are blooming, and the garden looks wonderful. In just a few minutes, I'll start

dressing. All my trunks are packed and already on their way to William's farm.

William has said that he will give me a generous budget to redecorate the house as I wish. I've so many ideas! Marriage is going to be wonderful. I just hope tonight isn't too bad. I'm not quite sure what to expect. Mother has only said the basics of doing my duty, but some of my friends have hinted awful things.

May 4, 1863

Last night was wonderful! William was so patient and kind. I don't know what my friends were talking about ... blush ... this marital bed is just bliss! I hope we can spend lots more time here.

We, unfortunately, had to pack up and leave for his farm today. The trip wasn't overly long, but I was glad to get to my new home. It is very nice but does need a womanly touch. I'm so hoping that he won't listen to some of the other men and join the army to fight ... there are plenty of men to fight ... he doesn't need be one.

August 5, 1862

I'm overwrought! William is leaving to fight in the damn war. I begged him not to go, but he won't listen to me. He says it is the right thing to do, to defend our rights. I don't know what I shall do ... he could be killed and then I'll never be able to feel him hold me again. I love him so; this isn't fair. We have been so happy in our marriage, and I can't imagine not having him love me at night.

I shall do what I can to stop him from leaving. Perhaps I'll hide his weapons and saddle ...

August 6, 1862

William was most unhappy with me today. He didn't appreciate my attempts to deter him from what he calls his "duty". He spanked me so hard when he discovered I'd hidden his rifle and saddle. I'll be sore for days and tomorrow morning he is leaving. What am I going to do?

Caroline gasped when she read the last entry. The long ago Lucy had her instant sympathy. She wondered out loud, "How could he spank her! What a brute! He should never have left home for war. He's as bad as Brian."

Now, she was curious and continued leafing through scanning the entries. They were pretty much just the daily musings and pinings of Lucy for her husband. Finally, an entry in 1863 caught her attention.

March 27, 1863

I've heard from William, finally, after several months of nothing. I've been so worried, but the day to day business of running the farm has kept me busy. He is at some place called Chancellorsville. They apparently expect a big battle ... Oh dear God ... please protect him.

May 27, 1863

Our anniversary came and went, and I've still heard nothing from William since the end of March. I'm beginning to think

that perhaps he was killed. I heard there were many deaths in the battle. Things here are not good. I'm trying to hold onto the farm, but there is just only so much I can do alone. The hired help have all left to join the fight, and I have only the local young boys for help.

May 31, 1863

My heart overflows with happiness! My William is home. He was injured and arrived today with another man escorting him. I believe he'll recover in time ... his arm is in bad shape ... but with time it should heal. I'm just grateful he is home. He was so happy to be here, and I to have him. The young soldier that helped him home has stayed and will help with the chores till William is well. James Moore is a handsome man and single ... I'm sure some of the local ladies will attract his attention.

Carolyn smiled at the last entry ... at least her husband returned. Then, she frowned when she realized that he was injured...what had become of them?

Quickly thumbing through the diary she once again relaxed.

January 4, 1893

Oh, the years have been good to William and me, and today is a special day. After bearing him 5 daughters, we are finally blessed with a son, Thomas William, born this day. Surely we are blessed. William will finally have the son

to help him with the farm. His arm never did heal the way we hoped, but fortunately, James Moore fell in love with my sister Sarah and has been here to help. Now, we have our own son to carry on the tradition.

Caroline set the book down and rubbed her temples ... the diary had given her a lot to think about. Lucy was so brave ... and supportive.

Bridget saw her daughter put the book down and stretch. She was pleased to notice the perplexed look in her face.

Smiling, she called, "Caroline, I could use some help for dinner."

"Okay, mom, just let me wash up," Caroline replied as she rose from the swing and gathered up the diaries.

Caroline was quiet all through dinner and didn't voice any of her usual complaints the family had become used to. While helping her mother with the dishes Caroline asked her, "Did you read those diaries?"

Bridget smiled before replying, "Yes, a long time ago, they're interesting aren't they? You haven't finished them yet have you?"

"No...I just read part of Lucy's, I'll finish that tonight and then read the others. But, for now, I think I'm going to go visit my friend Sarah." Caroline grabbed her purse and left.

John Barnes heard the car start and came into the kitchen. "What's up with Caroline? She was so quiet at dinner."

Bridget put her arms around his neck. "I gave her the diaries to read, along with mine. I expect

she is beginning to understand she isn't alone in her feelings," she replied laughing.

John looked at his wife in amazement. "What diaries exactly did you give her?" he asked.

"All of them, even mine," Bridget giggled.

"That should be a real eye-opener for her. I only hope that Brian is half the man I think he is, and straightens her out good when he gets home." John stated, then looking at his watch pulled Bridget out of the kitchen. "I think we have plenty of time to "amuse" ourselves before Caroline returns.

Early the next morning, once again on the porch, Caroline finished Lucy's journal and sighed at the love she was able to convey in her writings. She wrote about William's death and her son Thomas who was there with her when he died. The girls had married and scattered and weren't able to come back in time. The world had changed so much since she and William married, that she was amazed at the new horseless carriage that was appearing all the more frequently on the roads.

Caroline tried several times to start a letter to Brian, but still didn't quite know what to say. She was disturbed somewhat at the implied things in his last letter. Finally, she gave up and picked up the next diary.

DIARY OF MARY BARNES 1917

June 15, 1917

I've decided that now that I'm a married woman, I'll start a new diary as Mary Barnes. My other diaries as Mary O'Toole have been retired. They were my

childhood... this is my new life. I love being married. I've known Thomas for years, since we were both children. I guess I've loved him since we were both young and met at farm functions. Oh, did I tell you, diary, that I've been married a whole week now? We had the most wonderful honeymoon in Savannah. I loved the city, and enjoyed every minute. Our life together will be wonderful.

Caroline smiled as she read the entry. She knew from stories she heard that Mary's predictions weren't all going to come true, yet she wanted to hear for herself what Mary had to say. She started reading again, only to see the mailman, pull up to the box and deposit letter.

Quickly, she dropped the book on the swing, and ran to the mailbox. She held her breath until she saw the envelope with the familiar writing on it. Hugging it to her, she sat back on the porch swing and opened it.

*Hi Honey,
It's been really hectic here for the last few days; I haven't had a chance to really write at all. You should be relieved to know that I've been posted back to Qatar, so I'll get a bit of rest.*

I don't know how long I'll be here, but at least conditions are better than they are in the other places I've been.

Caroline sighed ... why did he have to go in the first place. He could have just gotten out like she asked, then he'd be here now. Scowling, she

scanned more of his letter talking about some of the things he'd seen and done.

I do hope you're not still in a snit. I meant what I said about our discussion when I return. I love you babe, but we do need to talk about a few things.

*Huggggs and all my love,
Brian.*

Once again, Caroline sighed and wiped the tears from her eyes, unaware that her father was watching her from the window.

John Barnes chuckled and called for his wife. "Bridget, I need to talk to you about the phone call I just received."

"I'll be there in a second," she replied. Bridget finished loading the dryer then joined her husband in the living room. "What's up?" she asked.

"Our daughter is going to get a huge surprise this weekend," he chuckled.

"Oh, what?" Bridget asked.

John smiled and then and there decided that both his wife and daughter would be surprised. "I think I'll keep it as a surprise for you too."

"John Barnes, don't call me away from what I'm doing to tease me. You're impossible." Bridget sighed and went back to her laundry. After years of living with him, she knew he wouldn't change his mind, once he'd decided on something. It was best just to let it go... a lesson that Caroline needed to learn.

Caroline put the letter down and picked up the diary again. She just couldn't handle thinking about Brian right now. She thumbed through the entries

of one very upbeat and happy Mary Barnes until an entry caught her attention.

April 25, 1918

I'm so happy, yet tinged with sadness. Our first son, Henry is two weeks old. He is perfect and looks just like his father. His father and grandmother are doting on him, like he was the only baby ever born. Life would be perfect, if it weren't for this war. I overheard Thomas discussing it with some friends. He feels a duty to enlist and fight for our country. I'm proud he feels that way, but really don't want to be without him. I tried talking to him about it, but he is set in his beliefs. I know better than to argue with him or sulk. It will only result in a stern lecture and spanking.

Caroline gasped as she read the entry. She couldn't believe that another male ancestor was stubborn about going to war; it was unbelievable. She kept reading until this entry hit her.

August 30, 1918

My mother in law has been a rock for me. Thomas has enlisted and is now on his way across the sea to fight. I so wish he hadn't made that decision, but I support him. Mother Barnes told me about her feelings when her husband fought in the Civil War, and I learned a lot. Thomas assured me he would be back, and I have to believe he will. It was hard for him to leave Henry and me, and

I know that I will cry myself to sleep for nights on end missing him. Having a chubby happy baby does make my days easier.

Caroline shook her head in wonder. Her great-great grandmother was certainly a brave woman. She never realized how many wars affected her whole ancestry and history. Once again, she picked up the diary and read further.

October 20, 1918

I finally received a packet of mail from Thomas. I was so worried when I hadn't heard. I've been writing him daily letters and posting them, but of course, don't know when he will get them.

Today, I received 10 letters from him. He has received a few of my letters and is glad that Henry is well. He misses and loves me, as I do him. The last few letters are troubling me. He is in a heavy battle zone in a place called Argonne Forest. I've heard some news of this in the paper, and I'm worried. I'm going to go to church and light a candle and pray for him and his comrades.

December 10, 1918

My heart is so heavy. If it weren't for Henry, I don't think I'd want to live. Mother Lucy has been a rock, but I can tell she is even suffering so. It's been a little over two weeks since I received the word that Thomas had been killed in battle. I still am numb and can't believe it. He promised he'd return, but instead,

he is buried in a plot across a vast ocean.

I heard that the fighting in Argonne Forest was fierce, and our troops distinguished themselves, but I shall miss him so much. Poor Henry will never really know his father. I'll see that he knows what a brave man Thomas was, and how proud I am of him.

Caroline wiped away the tears that were running down her cheeks freely. Oh, how she wished she could have rewritten history to make Thomas Barnes return from war. Her stomach tightened thinking of Brian over there in danger. It didn't matter that he said he was safer now... she still worried, and was still upset that he went at all.

It was time to take a break from reading and get her mind on other things. Memorial Day was only three days away, and the Barnes family always hosted a huge BBQ on that day for family and friends. Even though she wasn't looking forward to it this year, she did have things to do in preparation. It was her job to do the decorating for the tables and yards, as well as prepare a selection of salads. Keeping busy concentrating on that would get her mind off all these blasted wars.

It was afternoon before Caroline again had time to read. She picked Mary's diary up off the swing and started reading again.

June 4, 1940

This is such a special day. Oh, that Thomas was here to celebrate. Henry is marrying the lovely Betty Carson today. She is a wonderful girl; I really love her.

They will be so happy and provide me with lots of little grandchildren to spoil. I must run as the ceremony is in an hour and I have to be ready to leave, when my ride gets here.

There were only a few more entries in the diary, and it abruptly ended at the end of October 1940. Caroline recalled that Mary had died shortly before Halloween of that year. It was now time to clean up for dinner, so she gathered the diaries together and took them inside.

Bridget had pondered what John said all day. They were now cuddled in bed, and John was almost asleep. Bridget rose up on one arm and shook him. "John, what were you talking about today?" she whispered.

John was almost asleep and grunted, "Nothing."

"John Barnes, it wasn't nothing. Now what are you hiding from me?" Bridget demanded.

Wide awake now, John frowned. He wasn't about to reveal what he learned over the phone. It was going to be a great learning experience for his daughter, and possibly his wife as well, if her attitude didn't change. "I told you it was a surprise. It is time for sleep, so end of conversation." John turned over and pulled the covers over his head. Bridget was incensed. She plopped back down on the bed, but sleep wasn't coming. Finally, she lost her patience, and nudged John hard in the back.

"John, I want to know what is going on. It's not fair to keep something that affects Caroline from me," she said poking him again and again for emphasis.

John was awake but didn't speak... instead he sat up suddenly and pulled Bridget over his lap. It

took only a second to flip up her nightgown and start peppering her bottom with hard swats.

"I would have thought after all these years, you'd have learned that when I say something I mean it," John said in a stern voice. "I told you this was a surprise, and it will be. I will not put up with being badgered or nagged about it."

There was no more conversation until he was sure Bridget was truly contrite.

By the time he stopped spanking, Bridget was limp and felt like her bottom was on fire. It'd been a long time since he'd spanked her so hard.

"I'm sorry, John," she sobbed into his shirt. John comforted her until she was calm.

"I know you are, but this is something I want to be a surprise. You'll have to be patient." John smiled down at his wife and decided it was time to make up. It was a long time later that he held her as she slept and grinned thinking of the weekend ahead. This years BBQ was going to be memorable... that was for sure.

The next morning was much cooler and rainy. It was not a good day for doing anything outside, so Caroline curled up on the couch with another diary. This was her grandmother's, and she knew her grandfather hadn't died in the war. She was anxious to see how her grandmother had reacted.

DIARY OF BETTY BARNES 1940

December 25, 1940

Christmas this year seems a bit sad, since Henry's mother is no longer with us. She was such a wonderful part of our life, and I know Henry misses her so

much. We finally finished cleaning out her room, and I found her diaries. I've never kept a diary but after reading hers decided I would. It is a great way to record things. Henry gave me one for Christmas so I'll start and try and be diligent about recording things.

April 7, 1941

I haven't been very good about recording things, but I will try and be better. Henry isn't very happy with me at all. I overspent our budget for the week, and he is furious with me. He also discovered the romance books I've bought and that didn't please him at all. I'm not sure what he will do, but promised me when he came home from work, he'd straighten me out. I'm going to try and get the house all clean and make his favorite dinner. Maybe that will soften his mood.

April 8, 1941

I'm sitting on a few pillows as I write this. Henry was so stern when he came home. I was totally surprised when he pulled me into the bedroom and sat on the bed with me standing in front of him. He lectured until I really felt bad, but then he pulled me over his knee and spanked me on my bare bottom so hard! I haven't been spanked since I was a child, and it hurt so much. I'm going to try really hard not to be so 'spoiled' like he says I am.

Caroline sighed and wondered again why these women allowed their husbands to spank them. It certainly would never happen in this day and age. There were few entries for the rest of the year. Caroline yawned and put the diary down. It was almost lunchtime so she went in search of her mother.

Bridget was in the kitchen and smiled when Caroline came in. "How are the diaries going? Almost finished?" she asked.

"I'm on grandma's but there really isn't a lot there. I'll probably finish it today, and then only have yours left," Caroline replied and started setting the table for lunch.

Bridget really wanted to ask her what she thought, but decided to wait and see if Caroline commented. She wondered how surprised she'd be when she read her diary. She stifled a giggle thinking about it.

Bridge and John were going shopping for supplies for the BBQ after lunch. They invited Caroline along, but she declined.

"I want to finish up the diary, and then I'll work on the decorations some more," she told them with a huge sigh.

The weather had cleared some, so Caroline moved back outside. She leafed through other random entries. She smiled when she read the entry from January of 1944.

Chapter Two

January 15, 1944

He is perfect! I can't believe we finally have a son. I was beginning to wonder after two daughters if we ever would. I wanted to name him after his father, but Henry doesn't want a junior. We've called him John Henry instead. The girls are so excited to have a little brother, too.

Life would be perfect if it weren't for this awful war. Henry doesn't say much, but I know he has been talking to some of the other men about the fighting. If they draft him, I don't know what I'll do. That shouldn't happen with the children, but men are so unpredictable you never know what they might do. His best friend Tom just enlisted. I'll not allow that at all!

Caroline rested the diary on her stomach and thought about her grandmother and grandfather. They were now in their late 80's but both seemed serene and happy. When she was a child some of her favorite memories were of visits with them. At the time they lived in

this very house, and she and her parents lived about an hour away. He always would scoop her up and hug her and suggest they go for an ice cream. Caroline smiled at the happy memories.

Now they were in a retirement center, and he used a wheelchair most of the time, but was still the same happy person she remembered. With a sigh, she picked up the diary and read further.

February 15, 1944

I'm furious! Henry has listened to that damn officer from the Army and accepted a commission. I don't care that they can use his engineering expertise to end this war sooner. His place is here with his family and me. I don't want to raise my children alone like his mother did. I'll stop him somehow. I will.

Smiling, Caroline quickly turned pages to see what happened. This sounded so much like her grandmother when she was determined to get her way.

February 21, 1944

Henry left for training camp in North Carolina this morning. The train was full of eager young men, just dying to get into this war. I can't understand it. My best efforts to stop him just weren't enough.

I packed the children up and went to my cousin's house in Maryland. I left him a note saying I'd return when he came to his senses, but didn't tell him where I was. It seems he checked with the bus

terminal and was told my destination. When he arrived to escort us home, he was so angry. I'd never seen him that angry before. Little was said on the trip home, other than he hadn't changed his mind, but I'd be changing my attitude.

Once the children were in bed asleep, he wasted no time in putting me over his knee and paddling me with my hairbrush until I was barely able to breathe. I was so sore for three days that it hurt every time I sat down. However, the love afterward was almost worth it. I've promised him I'll be brave and write him everyday.

I've cried for an hour now, but I'll pray this war is over before he can finish training and be shipped overseas.

May 1, 1944

I've been so busy with the children and volunteering at the Canteen to do much writing. It has helped so much to be around other women whose husbands are overseas. Henry shipped out to England a week ago, and I haven't heard from him since then. I imagine mail will take a bit longer to arrive now. I only pray that he is safe and isn't in too much danger there.

Damn this war, I wish it would end! I pray every night that God will end the war and bring all the men home safely.

June 7, 1944

We've heard news that the Allies invaded France in a huge campaign. They launched from England and it appears

were largely successful, but there are many casualties.

I'm so scared. I haven't heard from Henry again in a week. He mentioned about some big project he was working on but couldn't tell me. I hope he wasn't involved in that invasion.

The ringing of the phone interrupted Caroline's reading. It wasn't until she went to answer that she realized she'd been holding her breath as she read.

"Hello?"

"I'd like to speak to John Barnes," the caller stated.

"He's not here right now, may I take a message for him?" Caroline thought she recognized the voice, but couldn't place it.

"Is this Mrs. Barnes?" asked the caller.

"No, this is his daughter Caroline, can I help you?" Caroline asked becoming a bit annoyed.

There was a moment of silence then the caller responded, "Ask him to call George at this number," he read out the number and promptly hung up. Caroline stared at the phone for a moment and looked at the number. It wasn't familiar but something about the caller bothered her. She shrugged and left the message on the counter for her father and returned to the diary.

June 15, 1944

This has been one of the worst days in my life. I was in the backyard working in the garden when Nelly came to tell me there was an 'important' soldier man wanting to see me. My heart immediately

leapt to my throat and my stomach knotted.

I wiped my hands on my apron and took Nelly by the hand and almost ran to the house. Sure enough there was a Colonel from the army sitting on the front porch being entertained by the girls.

I sent the girls away and sat down across from him. He was very kind, but informed me that Henry had been seriously injured in the Normandy invasion. I wasn't very brave and immediately burst into tears. After I calmed down, he told me the details. He was in a hospital in England and would be returned to the states within two weeks. His left leg was amputated below the knee, but he would walk again with an artificial leg. I was in shock, and he was kind enough to summon one of my friends to be with me.

As soon as they know when Henry will be back, I'll be able to go and stay with him. He'll be discharged from the Army as soon as he can leave the hospital.

Once again, tears were flowing down Caroline's cheeks. The pages of the diary contained old tearstains, and she was careful not to add to them. She hadn't really realized that her grandpa's injury was from the war. Always, she had assumed it was farm related.

October 2, 1944

We're home! Henry looks wonderful and has adjusted well to his new leg. We were able to spend a few days alone

together before returning home. It was so nice. He is going to rest for a month or so, then back to work. He thinks the war will be over soon, and I hope so.

There were few other entries in the diary but nothing that caught Caroline's eye. Her parents arrived just as she finished the diary. She gathered them up and went in to help put away things.

It was a little while before she remembered the message on the counter. "Dad, I almost forgot, you had a call while you were out. A bit strange if you ask me," she said as she handed him the message.

John looked at it and frowned. "This is all? He didn't say anything more?" he questioned Caroline.

"Nope, that's it. I thought he was really strange, though. Do you know who he is? Something about his voice sounded familiar, but I couldn't place it." Caroline studied her father's face.

"He's a business acquaintance. You might have heard him on the phone before. I'll have to return this call," John replied as he headed for his office.

Bridget frowned when she heard his office door close. It was not like John to be so secretive. Her curiosity was ready to kill her, but she wasn't about to listen in with Caroline standing there. Instead, she busied herself putting away the groceries with Caroline's help.

John dialed the number excitedly and wondered if something had changed the plans. He so hoped there would be a surprise for them the next day.

Finally the phone was answered, "General George Anderson."

"Hi George, this is John Bames. I hope there isn't bad news," he questioned.

"No, John, probably better news than you had been expecting. The schedule has been moved up a bit. You should have a visitor sometime tomorrow afternoon. Have you told everyone yet?"

"No, I'm the only one who knows, and I think I'll keep it that way. Thanks again George, I'll let you know how it goes." John smiled smugly to himself after he hung up the phone.

Bridget looked at him quizzically when he came back into the kitchen, but wisely didn't ask any questions. Caroline finished what she was doing and once again retired to the porch, with the only diary left, her mothers. Before she opened it, she thought back to her younger days. She was born in 1973, so she really didn't remember the Vietnam War at all, though she knew her father had been in the Navy. He wasn't one to talk about it much, and it never was a subject that she brought up. Last year at the BBQ Brian and her dad had been together talking for a long time, and she recalled him mentioning to her that night that her father was a hero. Even then, she hadn't pursued it, because she was more interested in getting Brian out of the service.

Casually, she picked up the book and started looking through it. There really weren't too many pages of writing. This one she'd be able to finish easily tonight.

DIARY OF BRIDGET BARNES 1969

September 10, 1969

I met the coolest guy today at the protest. He is so handsome; I can't believe it. Of course, with my luck, he had to be in the military. He was part of the group recruiting on campus, and wasn't pleased with our sit in. His name

is John Barnes, and he comes from Chancellorsville. I had coffee with him after he caught me trying to sneak out when the police came. At least, he didn't turn me over to them, but oh my can he lecture and really get stern. It was all I could do not to giggle. He reminded me of my father when he tries to be strict. I'm seeing him tomorrow night.

Reading that statement made Caroline smile; yep her dad could really lecture when he was upset. She learned early, though, that if she looked sad and contrite, he'd most times give in, and she'd get her own way. Very rarely did he ever really ground her or punish her.

March 5, 1970

Ok, so I'm a lousy diary keeper, but I've been far too busy with school and John, to have much time. We're getting married! I can hardly believe it. I graduate May 2, and we're being married on Memorial Day weekend. My mother is a wreck trying to plan the wedding on such, as she says, short notice. I've met his parents and visited their home. They are great, and his sisters are all really nice too. I'm so happy!

June 25, 1970

The wedding was fantastic! I've never been happier in my life. John looked so handsome in his uniform and all of his friends in theirs. It was thrilling having a military wedding. My father was really impressed.

The honeymoon in Jamaica was so neat. I really want to go back there some day. Alas, now it is down to everyday living. We are at a naval air base in Pensacola, Florida. I really am not fond of the weather here at all, but maybe we can get transferred back to Virginia soon. John said he probably would have new orders coming in soon. I do like the other officer's wives though and the Officer's Club is great!

Life is perfect!

Caroline smiled when she read her mother's words. They sounded so much like her mother, even today. However, she knew that life wasn't going to stay perfect. There was not much in the diary, but Caroline read further.

January 31, 1971

We've been transferred back to Virginia. I love this base a lot more than the one in Florida. We get to see our families a lot more, too. The holidays were spent pretty much packing and moving, but we did get to spend Christmas with his family at the family home. I love that house. It's been in the family for years and is cool.

John has been promoted again too; he is now a full Lieutenant. I just hope he doesn't really consider making this a career. I'm not sure I'd like that. Have to run, he's calling me.

The next few entries were more of just ordinary everyday things, her mother's ramblings about bridge parties,

and dinners at the Officer's Club. It seemed that life was pretty tame for her. There was very little mention of her dad and his duties in the Navy.

Caroline flipped a few more pages and then started reading avidly.

June 30, 1971

This can't be happening to me! It just can't. John knows I hate that stupid war, and now he is allowing himself to be transferred to Vietnam. I can't believe this... I just can't. It's not fair, it just isn't fair. I want to start a family, and now we won't be able to for a year... a whole year! And what if he is hurt or killed while flying missions... so many are being killed every day. This doesn't bear thinking about.

Somehow, this can't be. We are going to his parents for the weekend. He wants me to stay there while he is gone. He isn't going... I'm not going to let him.

Her heart beating wildly, Caroline kept reading. The only good part of this is she knew her father wasn't injured or killed. He did come home, and she was proof that they did have a family.

July 10, 1971

I guess I should have listened to my mother in law. She told me to read these diaries before I pulled some stupid stunt. Patiently, she tried to explain about wars and men serving in them. John and his father frowned identical frowns every time I protested his leaving. I took the diaries, but didn't read them... I thought I

had a better plan. If I were deathly ill, he wouldn't be able to leave.

Stupid Navy doctors, I hate them. Captain Nelson actually laughed when John rushed me to the hospital with my 106 fever and delirium. Oh, I forgot about the severe diarrhea, too. They should have taken a long time to diagnose me, and he'd have missed his plane.

But nooooooooo, smarty-pants Doctor had to tell him that I was faking. How did he know?

John was furious. They did treat me for the overdose of laxatives, and explained oh so nicely to John, about the effects of heating pads on thermometers and faked delirium.

I thought he could be so stern and scold so well before, well, this time the scolding took place over his lap, on my bare bottom with a paddle. I never thought he'd do that in a million years. One thing for sure is, I'll never pull another stunt like that again. He leaves tomorrow. I'm so sad, but will try and not cry when he boards that transport.

Caroline gasped in shock. She couldn't believe her father, the gentle man, actually spanked her mother. That was awful. Well, that would certainly never happen to her. Brian wouldn't dare, he was way too gentle, caring and modern.

There was one last entry and Caroline read it quickly.

May 11, 1973

Sigh, I'm giving up this diary. I didn't keep it up at all. John came home safe and sound. We were so much luckier than many of my friends on base. I read the diaries finally while he was gone and realized what a brat I'd been. He was right, and it has been wonderful since he came home. He definitely is the head of this house and my bottom reminds me every time I think differently.

The best news is my precious daughter. Caroline Maureen Barnes born on May 2, 1973. She is a precious little doll. I pray that she'll never have to have a husband go to war, but if she does... I'll have the diaries all ready for her.

Caroline set the diary down and stared into space, thinking about what she read. Her mom called her to help with dinner, and she didn't think about it again until late that evening as she lay in bed trying to sleep. Finally, she fell into a fitful sleep. It was barely dawn when she woke the next morning. Her parents were still sleeping when she left the house for a walk. The morning was perfect; the weather had really improved and was supposed to be like this for the BBQ tomorrow, too. Oh, how she wished Brian could be here.

By the time she returned from the walk she vowed that she would write Brian a letter apologizing for everything and supporting him from now on.

The late morning wind whipped around the helicopter as it landed on the small airstrip outside Chancellorsville. A young smiling soldier in his dress uniform stepped off the plane and saluted the man standing next to the car waiting for him.

"Welcome home Lt. Neally, glad to have you back," General George Anderson told his young prodigy. "Seems that your father in law has kept the news of your arrival a secret from your wife and mother in law."

"Thank you, General, for all you've done for me," Brian Neally said as he got into the car. "I think Caroline is going to be surprised in more ways than one." Brian chuckled to himself thinking of his young spoiled wife. No longer was he spoiling her. That would stop now.

The General and Brian chatted until the Barnes home was in view. Brian grew quiet looking at the house and the person sitting on the porch swing. It was Caroline, and she appeared to be writing. His heart beat wildly anticipating holding her against him once again.

The sound of tires crunching on the gravel broke Caroline's concentration. Her heart almost stopped when she realized it was a military car. There was a driver and two men in the back, one a high-ranking officer, got out first.

"Mom, Dad, come quick!" Caroline screamed and ran into the house.

Bridget and John had been in the kitchen and at the sound of Caroline's screams came running.

John grabbed the hysterical girl and shook her. "What's wrong, Caroline? Calm down."

"There's a military car and an officer here... something has happened to Brian... I know he's

dead... he's dead," she sobbed on her father's shoulder.

John smiled and pulled his daughter away. "Go out and see what he wants."

Bridget couldn't believe John was being so cold. She glared at him and went after Caroline. She reached the porch in time to see Caroline scream and fly into the arms of her husband.

John came up to her and put his arm around her shoulders. "That is the surprise."

He pulled Bridget into the house. "Let's give them some privacy."

Brian held Caroline tight against him until she quieted down. General Anderson and the car had left after putting Brian's bag on the porch. Neither Brian nor Caroline was aware of their leaving.

"Oh Brian, I've been so worried. I was frantic when I saw that car... I thought ...I..."

Brian didn't give her a chance to respond; he kissed her soundly until she quieted. "I know. We have a lot to talk about. But, now, we better get inside and greet your parents." Brian put his arm around her and led her into the house.

It was a festive group that sat down for lunch. Conversation centered on Brian's stories and early release. He'd been offered a position as special adjutant to General Anderson, and he'd accepted. That meant no more war duty for him, so they sent him home. He'd wanted it to be a surprise for Caroline, so hadn't told her. Caroline started to get angry and say something, but one look and warning from Brian had her swallow her words.

Immediately after lunch, John announced that he and Bridget had some errands to run. They'd be back in a few hours. Bridget looked confused but didn't say anything and followed John to the car.

Once they were alone, Brian pulled Caroline into the living room and sat down on the couch with her.

"I think it's time we address your attitude before I left and while I was gone," he told her.

"I'm sorry Brian, I realize now it was wrong of me. But, I'm so relieved you're home and won't ever have to go back," she told him softly and hugged him.

"That still doesn't mean we aren't having a discussion about it. From now on, you aren't to behave like a spoiled brat. I'm hoping that this will remind you for a long time to come."

Without another word, Brian stood her up and pulled her shorts and panties to her knees and flipped her over his lap.

"No... no... Brian, you can't do this," Caroline screamed at him. This isn't allowed in this day and age.

"Wrong, Caroline, it is very much allowed, and it's going to be the way you are treated if you behave like this ever again," Brian answered her as he brought his hand down hard and fast on her bottom. Over and over again his hand landed as she struggled and cried, until finally she lay limp and sobbing over his knee.

Immediately, he stopped and rubbed her sore red bottom. "Shhh, baby, it's over," Brian whispered soothingly in her ear as he drew her up into his arms.

"I'm so sorry, Brian, I really am," she cried.

"I know, but it's over and we have a lot of time to make up for." Brian carried her upstairs to their bedroom and made short work of their clothes. Hours later they woke and cuddled close.

"I think we best get up and get downstairs. I'm sure your parents have returned long ago."

Caroline smiled and rubbed her still sore bottom as she dressed. Life was certainly going to be different from now on. Perhaps she should start her own diary.

This is dedicated to all those men and women
who have unselfishly served our country in all the
wars;
also, to the families who have borne terrible
losses and supported them in their duty.
God Bless all of You!

Maddie

Chapter One

Outside the sun was shining brightly on the soft rolling hills of central California, but inside the ranch house it was stormy. Maddie Charles wasn't happy. When Maddie wasn't happy, the whole house knew it; actually the whole ranch knew it. Everyone from the smallest calf to the foreman avoided her.

Jake Matthews, the foreman, was now sitting in his office grimacing, as he knew without a doubt that the stomping he heard was Maddie heading his way. He sat back in his chair and looked around the room. There wasn't much here she could throw... he'd learned a long time ago to not have anything around that could become an airborne missile.

Jake sat back and thought about her, while he was waiting for her to arrive. Her mother had died in childbirth and Frank had tried to do his best raising her, but the best had been to leave her to a bunch of different nannies and give her whatever she asked for. When she turned 18 he remarried and Maddie couldn't or wouldn't get along with Margaret. As soon as Maddie was in college, Frank left and went to New York to live with his new wife and her family. Maddie seemed happy with that decision, as she hated Margaret with a passion. What she needed in Jake's opinion was to learn the meaning of the word 'No' and her bottomed warmed but good. It appeared her father was beginning to see the problem and take steps to correct it.

Maddie loved the ranch there was no doubt about it, but she knew nothing about running it nor wanted to take part in the business side. Apparently her father was growing tired of doing it long distance. The phone call had come early this morning, and life at the Paradise Ranch had been hell since then.

Frank Charles had taken on a business partner, and said partner was arriving tomorrow to take over the management of the ranch and oversight of Maddie's trust fund. Jake felt a bit guilty because he knew his decision to retire had prompted Frank's decision. Hell, he'd been running this place single-handedly for the last 7 years, and he was approaching 70. He wanted to relax and enjoy the rest of his years. The door of his office slamming open brought him out of his reverie.

"Damn, damn, and double damn, what the hell does my father think he's doing?" Maddie yelled as she stormed into the room. "I'm not putting up with a hoity-toity city boy coming here to run this ranch...living here even. This is just too much. Nope, I'm not letting him in. I want you to instruct the men to shoot him if necessary to keep him off this land," she continued at the top of her lungs.

"Maddie, calm down, and be realistic," Jake told her in as calm a voice as he could muster.

"I AM being realistic. I realistically will not allow," she paused and looked at the paper in her hand, "Jordan Forsythe in this house, or on the property." Maddie plunked down on the couch and glared.

Jake stared back at her for a long time then spoke through gritted teeth, "You young lady will do exactly as your father wishes. I'm leaving at the end of the week, and someone has to run this

place. I've heard of Mr. Forsythe, he is a successful breeder of horses and cattle in Kentucky."

"This is really all your fault! California is not Kentucky, I'm not having a stranger around here trying to control things," she was back to shouting again. "And... and... my father tells me I have to listen to what he says. I can't believe he is actually putting money in a trust fund that I have to live off, and this doofus Forsythe is going to monitor it. Who the hell does he think he is? I do what I want, when I want, how I want, and spend what I want."

Jake had to laugh at that. "Perhaps you should stand up and stamp your foot, then you'd be the perfect example of a spoiled brat having a temper tantrum. I'd say your father finally wised up and realized that you would put him in the poor house if he didn't put some control on you. He obviously can't say no, so he found someone impartial who can. I think you are in for a shock, Maddie."

"I hate you!" Maddie shouted at him, and picked up a magazine and threw it at him. Years of experience had Jake reflectively catching it. As she stormed from the room she shouted over her shoulder. "I'm going to order the men to shoot him on sight!"

"You know they won't do that, so you're just wasting your breath. You don't give the orders around here," Jake yelled back at her, then laughed as she slammed the door as hard as she could.

One minute later he heard her sport car peel out of the driveway going as fast as she could. He shook his head and hoped that one of the sheriff's guys would catch her and throw the book at her. He could only hope.

Jordan Forsythe and Frank Charles had been at the lawyer's office for the past three hours signing papers and reviewing contracts on their partnership. Jordan was really pleased. He had great admiration for Frank as a breeder and was greatly surprised when he left his ranch 7 years ago. Rumor had it that his wife didn't want to live there with his daughter. Apparently Maddie was a handful, and Frank decided it was best to separate the two. Jordan would find out for himself as he was flying to California in the next few days to take over the ranch. He wasn't sure about the role as trustee of the daughter's trust fund, but Frank was adamant.

"She's a smart girl, Maddie is, but she has no fiscal responsibility. I want her to have the trust fund to rely on. At the rate she is spending, it'll be gone long before I am," Frank had said sadly. "Margaret will be furious if I give her any more money."

"What does she do?" Jordan asked.

"Do? What do you mean?" Frank asked back.

"I mean what work does she do? How does she support herself?" Jordan replied but had a sinking feeling he knew what the answer was going to be.

"She plays. Does whatever she wants, spends my money mostly. That's why I'm setting up this trust for her and asking you to administer it. She dropped out of college and didn't finish, but she is bright and has a real flare for art and is great at math," Frank told him. "I used to have her help me with the office stuff, but since I left she hasn't done a thing."

"You mean to tell me she is 25 years old and has never had a job, of any kind?" Jordan asked shocked.

"You got it!"

Jordan shook his head but said nothing. He didn't want to upset the older man, but things were going to change fast.

Jordan's father had bred horses and cattle for years in Kentucky. When his parents were killed in a plane crash a few years ago, Jordan sold his successful Mortgage Banking business and went back to run the ranch. He loved finance, but he loved the ranch more. Within a year the ranch was showing twice the profit it had with his father at the helm. Jordan Forsythe was a wealthy young man at 33.

Over the next few days Jordan settled things on his ranch and made sure the manager had everything under control. He was looking forward to the new challenge but not necessarily Maddie Charles. After several phone conversations with the Jake Matthews, he knew he was in for a real hard time.

Jordan planned to split his time between Wingate Farm in Kentucky and California, giving each place his full attention for six months of the year. Paradise Ranch would be his home in the winter months and Wingate Farm in the summer. He decided to fly into Los Angeles and spend a day there before driving up to the ranch. Frank was calling Maddie and breaking the news to her today and he wanted to let her cool off for a day before arriving.

He checked into the Beverly Hills Hotel and decided on a swim. At six foot three and solid muscle every female eye was on him as he approached the pool. Dark hair and piercing blue eyes in a face that was finely chiseled completed the effect. He wasn't unaware of their looks, but wasn't interested either. One day he'd meet

someone and settle down; but for now he was more interested in his work. So far he hadn't met anyone that interested him for more than a few dates.

He enjoyed his swim and relaxed. Tomorrow he'd head up to the ranch in the morning and would be there for lunch. Today and tonight was his.

Jordan had just returned from some sightseeing and was considering where to have dinner when his phone rang.

"Forsythe here," he answered.

"Hi Jordan, hate to bother you, but wanted to give you a heads up on things here," Jake told him.

"Problems?"

"Frank called Maddie this morning and she has got everyone a wreck here. This is probably the worst I've ever seen her. She actually wants the hands to shoot you on sight. You're not very popular with her right now," Jake said.

"I didn't think I would be. Where is she now?" Jordan asked.

"Probably in town with her friends, she tore out of her spitting gravel about two hours ago, not back yet."

"Let me think about this for a bit and I'll call you back," Jordan replied and hung up.

Thirty minutes later he called Jake back. "I think I'm going to come down late tonight, so I'll be there first thing in the morning. Might as well take charge of this right away. If you'll leave a key somewhere, I'll be there about midnight."

"That's a good idea. I'll be up so just come around back to the kitchen entrance. I'll let you in. Maddie's room is in a different wing and she sleeps soundly so she won't know when you arrive. See you then," Jake explained and hung up smiling. Maddie would be one shocked lady when she woke

up tomorrow. Jake hummed to himself as he went to find Olivia and tell her the change of plans.

Maddie sat in the little restaurant in town across from her best friend Sarah. "I just can't believe he is doing this. How could he? First he marries that tramp Margaret, now she's convinced him to cut me off. I swear I'll make that Jordan Forsythe so sorry he ever heard of Paradise Ranch," Maddie all but shouted.

"Calm down Maddie, somehow you'll get through it. Your dad has always been generous, I'm sure it will be fine. What we need to do is find you a man to fall in love with and marry, then you can manage it all yourself," Sarah said soothingly.

At that Maddie snorted, "Just what I need, some jerky man hanging on me and trying to boss me around. Remember I did fall in love once... never again. I'm not ever going to be in love like you are with Bill."

"Speaking of jerky men, look who just strolled in," Sarah commented.

"Hi beautiful," Ed Baker said sliding into the booth next to Maddie. "How's my favorite girl?"

"I'm not your 'girl' Ed," Maddie told him frowning.

"Ah come on now, you know you're sweet on me. How about buying me some lunch? I'm a bit short," Ed squeezed her shoulder.

Maddie sighed and threw a ten-dollar bill at him. "Sarah and I have some private things to discuss, just go and eat somewhere else."

Ed grabbed it up and left. "Thanks darlin, catch you later," he said and left.

"Maddie, why do you put up with that? You know he only is leeching off you. He sleeps with every girl who'll have him," Sarah said frowning at the retreating Ed.

"It doesn't matter. I'm not sleeping with him or anyone, and I've learned from experience money gets him and the rest to leave me alone." Maddie snapped at her friend.

"Maddie, I do wish you'd forget what happened five years ago. All men aren't like that."

Maddie didn't reply, just shook her head and sat there. For a few moments there was silence, then Maddie smiled evilly. "I know just the thing. Forsythe's probably some old fuddy-duddy who can't stand noise. Saturday night, we are having a party! A huge party!" she said and giggled for the first time that day.

The rest of the afternoon they spent spreading the word to all their friends. Maddie went home far happier than when she left. Her first mission was to find Olivia, the housekeeper. She found her in the kitchen making preparations for dinner.

"Olivia, Saturday night, I'm having a huge party. There will be at least 100 people here, so get the staff going on stocking up on stuff," Maddie smiled and hugged her.

"But Miss Maddie, Mr. Forsythe will be here. What if he doesn't want a party?" Olivia asked warily.

"It doesn't matter what he wants. This is my home, and I'm having a party. He can go play somewhere else, or to hell for all I care," Maddie said as she left the kitchen.

Maddie went to bed that night smiling. Jordan Forsythe wouldn't last a week.

A few minutes after midnight, Jake heard the sound of gravel crunching and saw the beams of a headlight pass over the wall. As the car got closer the dogs started barking. He got up and walked to the kitchen and opened the door.

"You must be Jake," Jordan said extending his hand to the older man.

"Nice to meet you," Jake told him. "Let me help with those bags."

Jordan hadn't been able to form much of an opinion on the ranch in the dark, but the inside of the house was marvelous. The center of the house contained the kitchen, living room, dining room and two offices. There were three wings; one for the staff that resided there, one for the children or other family members and one was the master suite. The layout ensured that everyone would have his or her privacy. He was occupying the master suite, since he now was half owner of the ranch. His bedroom had a large king size bed and was decorated well. Jordan was tired and decided that he'd save any further inspection until morning.

Jake put the bags down on the floor of Jordan's room. "I'll let you get some rest. Tomorrow may be a long day. Olivia is always in the kitchen by 6:00 a.m., but sleep as long as you want," Jake told him before leaving.

"What time does Maddie get up?" Jordan inquired. "I want to be sure I'm there when she comes for breakfast."

"She usually is up by 8:30 or 9:00 depending on if she was out late the night before. Tonight she went to be early, so I'd say it could be 8:00 or 8:30."

"Great, I'll see you tomorrow," Jake said and shook hands again.

Maddie woke up and stretched in bed. After relaxing for a minute she bounded out of bed and looked out the window. It was a perfect day! The sun was shining and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. She could see the cattle grazing in one of the nearer pastures, and the colts were frisking around the mares in the paddock.

"I think I'll go for a nice ride after breakfast, after I fix a few things in Mr. Forsythe's office. When I get back maybe the jerk will be here and discover that I locked all his desk drawers so he can't get into anything. This will be fun!" Maddie told her pet cat that was uncurling himself from sleep and stretching on the bed.

As she walked into the kitchen for breakfast 45 minutes later, Maddie was humming. "Morning, Olivia," she called and poured herself a cup of coffee. "I think I'll have some scrambled eggs and sausage this morning."

Maddie turned to sit at the table and gasped.

"You must be Maddie Charles, I'm Jordon Forsythe," Jordan stood and offered his hand.

Maddie ignored the extended hand. "When did you get here? You weren't expected until lunch."

"I wanted to get a good start on the day, so I came in last night," he told her.

Olivia came in and set Maddie's plate in front of her, then poured Jordan more coffee. "Sit, Miss Maddie, eat before it gets cold," she instructed.

Maddie sat down but continued glaring at Jordan. "I don't want you here! I don't like you!" she said all the while thinking how handsome he

was. She didn't think she'd ever seen anyone that handsome in her life, and hated the coil of desire that came unbidden.

"I'm aware of that, but it hardly matters does it?" he said and smiled at her.

Jordan sat back drinking his coffee watching her as she ate her breakfast. She reminded him of an irate imp. Her long auburn hair curled nicely around her small face. She couldn't be more than 5 feet 3 inches, but she sure had spunk and fire in her. It was the eyes that fascinated him... deep emerald and they seemed to shoot sparks. She was nicely rounded in all the right places, especially her bottom. He couldn't help but feel a desire to know her better. Yes, this was going to be an interesting battle.

"When you're finished your breakfast, we can sit down and discuss your finances and plans," Jordan coolly informed her.

"I'm not discussing anything with you, I'm going for a ride. You'll just have to get used to the way things work around here. I do what I want, when I want, where I want and with whom I want. No one tells me different," Maddie almost yelled at him and tossed her head.

Jordan leaned over the table and locked eyes with her. "That's the way things were until now. From now on, I run things here, so you will do things my way; starting with a discussion of your finances."

Maddie's temper flared full force then as she turned bright red and stood up, knocking her chair over and sending Olivia scurrying into the other room.

"You are an asshole and I'm not doing anything you say!" Maddie threw her unfinished coffee, cup

and all, at him, missing him, but splashing all over the table and floor and breaking the cup. Laughing at the expression on his face she turned and started to leave. "Next time I won't miss."

Jordan was fast on his feet and Maddie hadn't gotten more than a foot before his hand wrapped around her arm stopping her. Maddie gasped in surprise as he pulled her against his chest facing him. She didn't think she'd ever seen anyone look that dark and angry in her life.

"I'm a patient man Maddie Charles, but you have pushed me way past patient. I'm the owner of this place and you are a 'guest'. I'm not your father and I'm not your guardian, other than over your finances, but if you ever pull a stunt like that again, young lady, you'll find yourself over my knee getting that pretty little bottom of yours spanked but good. Now, clean up the mess you made, and then we ARE talking," Jordan growled in a low voice.

Maddie stood there fuming but didn't reply for a second. She didn't know why, but being held against the hard chest and hearing his words, had her tummy doing somersaults. She wasn't giving in though. "I shall do no such thing, and if you ever dare lay a hand on me, I'll have you arrested for assault," she screamed and tried to pull away from him.

"No you won't. There won't be one person here who'll testify for you, and I'm sure you won't want to 'display' the evidence. Now get busy!" Jordan told her and turned her toward the mess and swatted her hard.

Maddie gasped and grabbed her bottom, but moved to the paper towels. Once she mopped up

the coffee and swept up the broken cup she started once again for the door.

"Seems you forgot the next part. Our talk." Jordan once again grabbed her arm and led her to his office. "Now sit!" he said plunking her down in a chair.

Maddie sat, though not at all happy about it. "Okay, I have things to do, what is it that's so important?" she spat out.

"I know your father told you about the trust fund and I would think you'd like to hear the details of how I intend to administer it," Jordan stated calmly and waited for some response from her.

"As long as I get what I need, I could care less. You stay in your wing and I'll stay in mine and we'll be just fine," Maddie spat out still fuming.

"I intend to go wherever I wish Maddie, but won't invade your privacy. As far as you getting what you need, as long as it's \$1,000 a month, you'll be fine. You have no rent to pay and your meals are provided. All other expenses, clothing, car, insurance, etc., have to come out of your allowance.

Maddie's mind went numb. She couldn't believe what she was hearing; it had to be a huge mistake.

"Wha... what?" she managed to stammer.

"\$1,000 a month Maddie, that's the allowance," Jordan repeated.

"But, I can't live on that! My car costs almost that much alone. I can't do it!" Maddie said frantically.

"Then perhaps you should get a job. You know work? Earn some money? Surely, you've heard of the concept," Jordan said and sat watching her.

Maddie was too shocked to reply, she merely got up and ran from the room, before the tears that

were threatening broke. She was not going to let him see her cry. No one saw her cry. That was a promise she made to herself 5 years ago, and she wasn't going to break it now.

As fast as she could, she saddled her horse Peanuts and rode out. Only when she was out of sight of the house did she give in to the tears. When she found her favorite spot by the lake, she slid off Peanuts and sat on the ground and sobbed.

Chapter Two

Jordan sat at the desk deep in thought after Maddie left. He'd expected a different reaction. She genuinely seemed in shock and he could swear she was about to cry when she ran from the room.

"I hear things didn't go smoothly," Jake said entering the room.

"No, not really. I feel bad now; I was kind of hard on her and maybe too mean. She didn't say much at all, just ran."

"Didn't throw anything at you or scream?" Jake asked puzzled.

"Not after the coffee earlier. I think I convinced her it wouldn't be a good idea to do that again," Jordan told him and smiled at the recollection. She sure had felt good plastered against him.

"How about showing me around the place, introduce me to the men?" Jordan asked Jake.

"Sure thing, let's take a ride and tour the grounds, then I'll introduce the men."

The two men had been riding about an hour when Jordan spotted the lake ahead. "Nice looking spot. I didn't realize there was a lake," he shouted over at Jake.

"It's a great spot, fed by a underground spring," he explained.

They hadn't gotten much further when Jordan spotted the horse tied to the tree, and Maddie slumped on the ground.

Both men reined in their horses and stopped. They were far enough away that Maddie wouldn't have heard them, but the wind was carrying her sobs clearly to them.

"Jeeze, I don't think I've ever heard that girl cry!" Jake exclaimed.

"I don't know if it would be a good idea to go to her or not," Jordan said.

"No, I think it best to leave her be," Jake said and turned his horse around.

They rode the rest of the way back in silence. Jordan really felt bad, and wondered even more about what made Maddie tick.

By the time Jordan had met the men and toured the rest of the buildings it was lunchtime. Olivia had set three places at the table, but Maddie never showed up. The two men finally went ahead without her. They were finished and still she hadn't come back.

"Does she usually miss meals?" Jordan inquired.

"Sometimes. Maybe she rode on into town to see her friend Sarah. If she is upset, I think that's where she'd head." Jake answered.

They were finishing their coffee and Jake was looking at the schedule and requisition for supplies Olivia had given him. He was just about to hand them over to Jordan when he noticed the large request for wine, beer and liquor, along with a request for 100 steaks.

"Olivia, could you come here please?" he called and handed Jordan the list, pointing to the requests.

"Yes Mister Jake?" Olivia asked.

Jordan asked her, "What is this large order for?"

"Oh, that's for Miss Maddie's party on Saturday. She said there would be 100 people and to have lots of food. She asked me to order a band, too!"

Jordan looked at Jake mystified. "Does she do this often?"

"No, this is a first I think. I doubt it's a welcome party for you though, must have something else in mind."

"Cancel the plans, Olivia, there won't be any party here this weekend. I'll speak to Maddie about it. From now on, any requests for parties or anything above normal meals will need to have my approval," Jordan told her.

"I really didn't want to confront her again so soon, but seems I have no choice," Jordan sighed.

The two men left the kitchen and went back to reviewing books and reports.

Maddie felt too bad and low to even talk to Sarah. She waited until she knew that lunch was over and then rode back home and snuck in the back door. Olivia fortunately wasn't around so she made a quick sandwich and went to her room.

After spending a long boring afternoon in her room, Maddie wanted to go into town, but she just wasn't in the mood. She supposed at some point in time she'd have to face Jordan again, but she wasn't in the mood for him either. However, she was hungry and didn't feel like sitting in her room any more.

Jordan was already sitting at the table in the dining room when Maddie came in. He noticed her eyes were still a bit puffy, but if hadn't known she was crying it wouldn't be obvious.

"Good evening, Maddie, missed you at lunch," Jordan stood and greeted her.

"I wasn't hungry," Maddie lied and sat down.

Olivia served them and left, so it was just the two of them in the room. Jordan tried small talk but didn't get much more than yes or no from Maddie. Finally he decided he might as well give her the bad news.

"Maddie, I saw Olivia's requisitions today, and cancelled all her extra's for the weekend. There won't be any party here this weekend. In the future, all such requests need to come through me, Okay?" Jordan kept his voice purposely low and calm.

Somehow Maddie just knew that the party wasn't going to happen. Nothing would surprise her anymore.

"That's fine, there won't be any requests from me," Maddie replied glaring at him. She finished her last bit of dinner, and then stood. "Excuse me, I think I'll go into town for a bit."

"Have fun!" Jordan told her and watched her walk slowly from the room.

Maddie didn't even feel like driving fast, her whole world seemed to have crashed around her. She didn't know what she would do, but it was clear she couldn't stay at the ranch with that odious man. Her father had succeeded in taking her entire life away from her. She only hoped that Sarah would be at Hightop, the local watering hole, she really needed her company.

It was noisy in the bar when Maddie opened the door. A few people waved at her as she searched the room with her eyes. Finally she located Sarah at a table on the other side. She made her way over and slunk down in a chair.

"Hi Maddie, wondered if I'd see you tonight. Everyone's so excited about the party," Sarah said in her bubbly voice.

With a huge sigh, Maddie told her, "Look do me a favor would you? Please tell everyone the party is off. Mr. High and Mighty cancelled it."

Sarah frowned at looked at her friend. She hadn't seen her this dejected since that time at college five years ago. "What's wrong Maddie? What happened?" she asked grabbing Maddie's hand.

"Mr. Jordan Forsythe and my father, that's what happened," Maddie grumbled. She proceeded to tell Sarah what had happened, leaving out the swat and threat.

"I'll help you find a job Maddie. It's not the end of the world, everyone works you know. I'll see if there is anything open in my office," Sarah told her and squeezed her hand.

"You know there isn't. This town is just too small. I'll look, but I guess I'm going to have to just move into Santa Barbara and start my life over." Maddie squeezed her eyes shut to stop the tears lurking there.

"Come on, let's get out of here and talk," Sarah said grabbing her purse and Maddie's arm. She knew the signs well and also knew Maddie would never forgive herself if she broke down there.

The two girls sat in Sarah's car and talked. Maddie was calming down but still had no real idea what she would do.

"I guess I'll head home, and start looking tomorrow. See what I can find. I'll call you, okay?" Maddie told her and got out of the car.

Bill Powers, Sarah's fiancé, saw Maddie leave the lot and wondered what was going on. She wasn't even speeding, and for Maddie that was a rarity. Sarah saw him pull in and went over and hugged him hard.

"What's up with Maddie?" he asked.

"Oh Bill, it's just awful," Sarah told him and started explaining all that had gone on, neglecting to tell him the name of the new partner.

"You know Sarah, that man is right. She needs to get a job. Maddie can't just hide out here and at the ranch for the rest of her life."

"She's not hiding, she's scared is all. Someday she'll get over it," Sarah said with a tinge of ire in her voice.

"Watch the tone, kiddo," Bill told her and hugged her to him. "She won't get over it until she trusts herself to be around strangers again. Now come on, let's go in and dance."

Over the next week, Maddie was quiet. Jake had left and only she and Jordan were at the table. To his credit he didn't question her and gradually she began talking to him a bit. She had been looking at the want ads, but so far there wasn't anything she could do.

Her lack of a degree left her few choices in a town this size. She decided she would just have to apply where she could and left for town.

She arranged to meet Sarah for lunch and filled her in. "I'm going to apply at Kitty's Club for a server position. The money is pretty good, and I hear the tips are great. For now it's the only option I have," Maddie told her.

"Oh Maddie, that's a horrid place. You know how we've heard they dress, and rumor is they run a prostitution and drug thing there. You can't work there," Sarah pleaded with her.

"I don't have a choice, and trust me, I'm not going to get close to any of the customers. It will have to do for now. When I can save some money,

I'll move," Maddie told her friend and smiled. "Now, let's eat and talk about fun stuff."

As soon as Sarah got back to work she called Bill. "You won't believe where Maddie is going to work."

Bill listened and shook his head. "No, she isn't going to work there Sarah, so don't worry. I'll personally see to it. Trust me," he told her and hung up.

Bill was the Sheriff of the town, and decided that it was time he paid this new resident at Paradise a visit. If he understood what was going on and some of Maddie's background, surely he wouldn't be so hard nosed. If necessary he would call Frank Charles himself and ream him out. Too bad if Maddie didn't want him to know about her, it might just be time he did.

Jordan was on the phone, when Olivia knocked on the door. "I'm so sorry to bother you Mr. Forsythe, but the sheriff is here to see you," she whispered.

"I have to go Tim, I'll check with you next week," Jordan told his foreman at Wingate and hung up.

"I'll see him in the living room," he told Olivia and wondered if something was wrong with Maddie.

Bill had his back to the door when Jordan walked in.

"Good afternoon, sheriff, I understand you want to see me?" Jordan asked him.

Bill turned around at the sound of the voice and smiled. "Jordan Forsythe! I never expected you to be here."

"Bill Powers, as I live and breathe! It's been years," Jordan exclaimed while shaking his hand.

"So what brings you here this afternoon. I don't think you knew I was here." Jordan motioned for him to sit.

"I didn't, but I want to talk to you about Maddie Charles. She's about to do the most harebrained thing she's ever done in her life. She's a good girl, and I can't let her do it," Bill explained.

"What is she doing? I really have no say over what she does; only what she spends. Maybe you should explain more," Jordan replied.

Bill took a few minutes to explain about Kitty's Club.

Jordan's face grew hard and his jaw was twitching when Bill finished. "That girl is out of her mind! Why didn't she tell me? Damn!" Jordan growled.

"She is pretty stubborn and doesn't trust people," Bill told him. "She'll be very upset when she finds out I've been here. My fiancée Sarah has known her since they were in grade school. When they were in college something happened that caused Maddie to drop out and she's been hiding here ever since. Sarah tries to protect her, but Maddie is ruining her life over it. I can't imagine what will happen to her at that place."

Jordan stood up and paced the room, running his hands through his thick dark hair. "Are you saying she doesn't trust anyone, or just men?"

"Men," Bill told him then sighed. "Better sit back down and I'll tell you the rest of it. I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't let her know I told you. This has to be confidential for now."

"When she was a freshman she met a man. He was a substitute professor quite a bit older than her. Maddie was always pretty innocent and sheltered. Frank spoiled her rotten and she is a

brat, but has no clue about people and the world. This man played her like a harp. She fell for him hard. When the year ended she stayed there with him, didn't even come home. It turns out he really was only after her money. When Maddie told him she only had the allowance her father gave her, he turned mean. Basically he got her to have sex with him, figuring if she got pregnant her father would insist they marry and he'd be on easy street.

Fortunately Maddie told Sarah and she told me. I went up there and took care of him for her. He left town, but Maddie was heartbroken. She tried to keep up with school, but couldn't. When she left school, she holed up here and became hell on wheels. It's mainly an act to keep men away from her. She's vowed there will be no one in her life. So that's Maddie Charles," Bill ended and stood up.

"Poor kid, I'd have killed the bastard if I were Frank. Too bad she didn't tell him," Jordan said. "Why didn't she press charges?"

"Maddie wouldn't. I tried to talk her into it, but she refused. She didn't tell Frank, because she felt he abandoned her too. It hasn't been an easy time for her. I hoped maybe you could give her a break" Bill asked and looked at Jordan.

"I'll do something, don't worry, I have to figure out what though. I'm not about to throw money at her though, that's for sure. She's got to learn responsibility somehow."

The men talked for a little while longer about old times, then Bill stood up. "I've got to get back, but let's get together. I'd like you to meet Sarah," he said.

"Sounds good," Jordan told him and shook hands.

Maddie drove around for a while getting her nerve up and now sat outside Kitty's Club hoping her stomach would stop turning. She hated the thought of working there, but the money was good and she had to save to get away from Jordan Forsythe and Paradise Ranch.

Finally she screwed up her courage and got out of the car and walked to the door. She opened it the smell of stale booze and smoke turned her stomach. It was dark and dingy inside and her eyes took a moment to adjust. The place was far seedier than her imagination even conjured up. A man came from someplace in the back and leered at her.

"What can I do for you, doll?" he asked in a drawl.

"I... I'd like to apply for work," she choked out.

"Yeah? So happens I could use a good looking broad like you. Any experience?" he drawled.

"Uh, no, but I'm a fast learner," Maddie answered.

"Okay, kid I'll give you a chance. Place opens in an hour, let's get you dressed and we'll see how it goes." He motioned for her to follow him.

Maddie felt like she was in some hell when she saw the 'costume' that he handed her. It was literally a bra and thong, with some tassels in front. Obediently she went into the changing room and put it on. She'd barely gotten decent when he came in and whistled.

"Yep, you're a looker." He spun her around and patted her bottom.

"Don't you dare touch me!" she shrieked.

"Lady, you'll be touched in a lot of ways shortly, so get over it," he said patting her again, and flipping the tassels on her bra.

Maddie flared and slapped his hand away. "I've changed my mind. I'm leaving," she screamed and pushed him out of the room and changed back.

On her way out she tossed the costume at him and ran from the place.

Bill had been on his way back to the station when he saw Maddie's car outside Kitty's Club. He pulled in behind her and was on his way in, when she flew out the door right into him.

"Whoa, Maddie, slow down," he said and grabbed her.

Maddie's face flared red and she looked up at him. "Oh. Hi Bill, I've got to get going."

Before he could stop her she was in her car and peeling away. Bill opened the door and greeted the owner. "I hope you haven't hired her, because if you did, she just quit!" he informed him.

"I woulda, but don't need no prudes working here. She's history," he told him.

Bill chuckled as he left. At least Maddie came to her senses in time.

Jordan breathed a sigh of relief when he saw Maddie speed into the drive. With a squeal of brakes and gravel flying, she came to a stop and jumped out of the car. Her face was still flushed from the humiliating experience.

As she ran into the kitchen she again came flat up against a hard male chest. This time it was Jordan. Her face flamed even hotter and her stomach was doing flip-flops when he held her arms and steadied her.

"Whoa, where are you going in such a hurry?" he asked smiling at her.

Maddie looked up at him and almost melted at that smile and twinkle in his eyes. "I...I...I nowhere I guess," she stammered.

Jordan held on to her, feeling her pulse hammering in her wrist.

"Sit down, and calm down, I'll get us some tea," he told her plunking her in a chair.

Maddie was too flustered to fight him so did as she was told. When Jordan came back with the ice tea he flipped a chair around and straddled it.

"Talk to me Maddie, what's going on? I'll help you, I promise," he said softly.

She sipped the tea and looked into his eyes. Somehow she knew he meant it, and that's all it took for tears to start streaming down her face. Quickly brushing them off she started to get up, but Jordan was faster. He picked her up and took her into the living room and sat down in the rocker with her on his lap and held her. No longer able to resist, Maddie sobbed. Jordan said nothing; he just let her cry.

When she quieted, he whispered in her ear, "Come on Maddie, let me help."

"I hate to cry," she bumbled out. Taking a few deep breaths, Maddie finally started talking. "I've been trying to get a job to save money to leave. I couldn't find anything but an opening at Kitty's Club in town. I...I applied today and was hired, but this awful man gave me my uniform and it was terrible! It was no more than a bra and thong and then... he...he fondled me. I hit him and ran out," Maddie hid her face in his chest.

Jordan hugged her a second then lifted her chin up to look at him. "Maddie, if you had taken a job there, I'd have paddled that backside of yours until you couldn't sit for a week. I'm here to help you. You should have told me. We need to have a long talk about what you are going to do, but you are

not running away from here. Understand?" he told her sternly.

Maddie stiffened in his arms. "You can't tell me what to do, Jordan Forsythe, no one tells Maddie Charles what to do," she hissed.

"Guess what? That just changed and nothing you can do about it. I decided you need guidance and help... and you're getting it... from me," he said and pulled her back against him. "Don't fight me Maddie, I'll win."

Maddie slowly relaxed again, but he felt her trembling a bit. He didn't want to scare her, but she felt so good in his arms. "Why don't you go rest for a while. We can talk more after dinner, okay?"

"Okay," Maddie said shyly and got up.

Once she was in her room, she lay on the bed thinking. 'Oh Maddie girl what are you doing? You promised you wouldn't ever do this again, and here you are... crying in front of him and actually falling for him. He's supposed to be the enemy... yet he seems so nice and sincere.'

Maddie slept for an hour, then showered and changed for dinner. As she was showering she kept thinking about Jordan. Why did she find herself drawn to him, when she wanted to hate him? What was happening to her?

Jordan was sitting on the couch in the living room drinking a glass of wine when Maddie came in and sat down in a chair on the other side of the room. He studied her and noticed she was nervous.

"Hi there, want a glass of wine?" he asked her.

"Uh sure," Maddie replied, but stayed where she was.

Jordan smiled and patted the cushion next to him. "Come sit with me," he said in a low voice.

Maddie walked over and sat down next to him suddenly feeling shy. When he handed her a glass and their fingers touched she felt a shock go through her body.

Jordan felt it also, but wasn't quite as surprised as Maddie. He had known for a few days that he was attracted to her, and the information Bill gave him had cemented it. Because of that he'd have to take it really slow so he didn't scare her.

"I'm really sorry about earlier," Maddie apologized. "I don't normally get emotional and cry on people, it was silly."

"No, it wasn't silly, and you aren't quite being truthful here Maddie Charles, you are an emotional person. You just normally show it differently. What happened to you was scary, and unnecessary. Don't be so hard on yourself," Jordan told her as he grabbed her free hand and held it.

Maddie didn't say anything but blushed. She couldn't believe she had ever blushed so much in her life as she was today.

Olivia broke the moment, by announcing dinner. Jordan sat opposite Maddie and carried on small talk during dinner. Normally she was hungry for dinner, but tonight Maddie picked at her food and just pushed it around on her plate. Now that she had calmed down from the afternoon, she wondered what she was going to do, what plan Jordan had and would she like it.

"I think it's time we talked about your future Maddie. I'd say it was bothering you since you don't seem to be able to eat. Ready?" Jordan rose and pulled her chair out.

He had Olivia serve coffee in the living room and sat back down on the couch pulling Maddie down next to him.

"Your father told me when he was drawing up the trust papers, that you were good with figures and used to help him with the paperwork. I can use an assistant and the job is yours. You'll be paid through the payroll just like all the other employees, except you'll be working from home so to speak. The hours will be normal office hours and I expect you to observe office protocol during them. You can start tomorrow. Jake's office has been cleared out and it will be yours," Jordan explained carefully watching her expression.

Maddie listened and felt her heart quicken. She did like office work and this way she'd be able to work with him and get to know him better.

"That sounds good!" Maddie replied and smiled at him. "Uh, do I still get my allowance?"

Jordan laughed at the question. "If you want it, sure it's yours." He grabbed her and hugged her to him. "I think this will be wonderful," he whispered in her ear.

Bright and early the next day Maddie was busy organizing her office and looking over the files and books. Her head was bent over reading when Jordan entered the office. She was so preoccupied she didn't even realize he was there. He stopped in the doorway and studied her, his heart beating hard. When she was smiling and happy, she was beautiful and his attraction grew more and more every day. He'd see to it that the old stormy days didn't reoccur.

Chapter Three

Over the next few weeks Maddie and Jordan fell into a pleasant working routine. She caught on fast to the books and the office work and everything was running smoothly.

Jordan had been patient and Maddie had relaxed and become close to him, their mutual attraction more and more obvious.

It was a Friday night and Maddie wanted to see Sarah and some of her other friends. At lunch she casually dropped it in the conversation.

"I think I'm going into town tonight, visit with Sarah and Bill at the Hightop. I haven't danced in ages either," she told him and waited to see his reaction. Secretly she hoped maybe he'd come with her. He'd told her about going to school with Bill, so it shouldn't be too awkward.

Jordan wasn't really surprised she'd not been to town once since she'd started working. He knew she talked to Sarah, but hadn't seen her. Maddie was acting a bit coy, and he really wasn't sure, but he thought maybe she wanted him to go with her.

"Feel like some company? I've not been anywhere in town much, I'd like to meet Sarah and see this Hightop place," he asked and watched her.

Maddie felt her heart leap and smiled at him. "Sure, I'd love it!" she responded cheerily.

The rest of the day went fast and as soon as dinner was over, they were ready to leave. Maddie skipped ahead of him and started for her car, "I'll drive!" she chirped.

Jordan caught her arm halting her. "No you aren't. One of my rules, young lady, when we are out together, I drive!" he said.

Maddie bristled and turned to him. "Your rules? I don't do rules, remember?" she snarled.

Jordan didn't hesitate one second, he spun her around and gave her five hard swats on the seat of her jeans.

"I don't put up with sass from brats, either. Care to continue, Maddie?" he asked her and held her tight.

Maddie was shocked and the swats hurt. Her first instinct was to scream at him, but one look at his eyes and clenched jaw changed her mind.

"That hurt Jordan!" she huffed. "Are you in the habit of swatting people who don't agree with you?"

"Not everyone, just you," he said and pulled her tight against him and kissed her. The reaction was instantaneous. His body felt like it was on fire, and he deepened the kiss. She tasted exactly like he thought she would.

Maddie was shocked at first and stiffened only to melt as the kiss went on. Passion and feelings she felt were banked for life, sprung to life. It felt like they'd been kissing forever when they finally broke apart.

"Let's get going, before this goes further than it should right now," Jordan said hugging her tight. "I care a lot for you Maddie, and I am going to take care of you. If you get out of line, those swats will be the least of your worries."

"I didn't like the swats, but I could take the kisses," she giggled at him and climbed in his car.

She was floating when they got to the Hightop. Bill and Sarah were already there and both a bit shocked to see Maddie with Jordan. They were holding hands and Sarah could barely keep her mouth closed when she looked at him. They sat and Sarah was introduced to Jordan, then the men left to get drinks.

"You didn't tell me he was drop dead gorgeous!" Sarah chided her friend. "What's with the holding hands, you've been holding out on me," she added.

Maddie sighed and giggled. "I don't know, but I really like him Sarah, he takes charge and doesn't let me get away with anything. He's different than anyone I've ever known, but I'm afraid he'll break my heart," she sighed and her smile disappeared.

"Maddie Charles! Don't you dare start that. Bill has known him for ages and says he's as honest and solid as they come. Just take it easy and learn to trust," Sarah told her.

The conversation ended there because the men returned. The evening flew by, and Maddie was pleased to find out that Jordan was a wonderful dancer. When he held her close to him, she felt like she was in heaven. He smiled at her and snuck a few kisses while they were dancing. All too soon, the night was over.

Jordan and Bill made some plans to meet and the girls said their goodbyes. Maddie was happy but sleepy. She was asleep before they got half way home. Jordan smiled over at her and put his arm around her.

The sound of the gravel under the tires woke Maddie and she yawned. "Sorry I fell asleep, I must have worn myself out dancing."

"You can sleep in tomorrow, but now it's time for bed," Jordan declared and picked her up and carried her into the house and straight to her room. He put her down and drew her close for a goodnight kiss. By the time he pulled away, Maddie wanted him to stay, but thought better of saying anything.

"Night Maddie, sleep well," Jordan said planting another light kiss on her lips before leaving the room. It took all his fortitude to walk out of that room and not go any further.

Slowly over the next few weeks the relationship between them deepened. During the day it was all business, but at night they ate out a few times and then would go dancing. Everyone was so pleased that Maddie seemed happy and relaxed. It made life at Paradise Ranch much more pleasant.

One Saturday they were enjoying a picnic at the lake and Maddie started teasing Jordan.

He was lying back on the blanket and Maddie was sitting up surveying the surroundings.

"I think I'm going to go see how far up that tree I can get. I haven't climbed it in ages," Maddie said standing up.

Jordan looked at the tree carefully. It was old and the branches didn't look like they'd hold any weight at all.

"No, you aren't climbing that tree," he informed her sternly. "Come, sit back down."

Maddie laughed and made a dash for the tree. "Don't understand that word," she said and started climbing the tree.

Jordan jumped up and grabbed her down as she hit the first branch and it cracked. Maddie squealed and was glad he was there so she didn't fall.

"Maddie Charles, you have just earned yourself a spanking," Jordan informed her as he dragged her back to the blanket and down on it with him.

"Nooooooo," she squealed.

"I don't think I understand that word either," Jordan informed her laughing.

He flipped her over his legs and swatted her hard a few times. Maddie yelped and tried to wiggle free.

"I'd stay still if I were you, or you may just lose those jeans young lady." Jordan continued spanking her hard until she was ouching and on the verge of tears. He stopped but held her down.

"This is just a sample Maddie. Don't disobey me again, hear?" he asked her.

"I'm sorry! I was just playing, I didn't know it would crack," she cried.

Jordan started rubbing her bottom and she relaxed and started purring. He was aroused and could tell she was becoming that way too.

"I think you need a better sample," he said and reached under her belly and unsnapped his jeans and lowered them down her legs. Her bottom was encased in delicate blue lace panties but he could see pink skin peeking out where she'd been spanked. He rubbed and swatted a bit more until she was arching into his hand.

"I think I'm not quite getting my point across," he informed her as he lowered the panties down her legs.

Maddie felt like she was in heaven. The brief hard spanking hurt, but this was a wonderful sensation. When he had her bare bottom under his palm, she moaned and separated her legs without thinking.

Jordan shifted uncomfortably, his erection straining against his jeans, but swatted her hard a few times, then rubbed and slowly rubbed against her swollen folds. Finally he found her nub and spanked and rubbed at the same time.

Maddie gasped and moaned. She hadn't ever been touched like this. Every nerve in her body was throbbing. She could feel her moisture leaking out and her nipples were straining against her bra.

Jordan could see her arousal, and bent to whisper in her ear. "Do you want to continue, or should I stop?"

"Don't stop, oh please Jordan don't stop," she begged.

Jordan pulled her up and undressed her slowly. When her breasts were free, he feasted first on one nipple then the other. Maddie was going mad with desire. Her only other sexual experience had been rough and brutal... nothing like this.

His fingers rubbed and probed every surface of her body followed by his mouth. When she felt his fingers enter her, she tightened around him and moments later exploded. Jordan held her against him kissing her as he brought her right back to the peak. This time he quickly shed his clothes and laying her down entered her.

Maddie gasped and moaned but soon found his rhythm. After they were both spent, Jordan pulled her against him and nuzzled her neck.

"Maddie, I love you. I didn't plan on this happening this way, but I want you to be my wife," he whispered in her ear.

Maddie smiled at him and put her arms around him. "I love you too Jordan. Are you sure you want me?" she asked him shyly.

Jordan leaned up on his elbows and brushed the hair off her face. "Yes, I'm sure."

After they had loved again, they dressed and slowly made their way home.

That night when it was time for bed, Jordan scooped her up and carried her to his room.

"Let's try and do this a bit more conventionally now," he said plunking her on the bed. They spent most of the night making love and finally fell asleep in the early hours of the morning.

Maddie slept for a while, but woke up with a nightmare about her college days. Jordan was still sound asleep, softly snoring and she didn't want to wake him. As she lay there all her old insecurities and doubts came rushing back. By 5 am she was a wreck. She was sure he was using her to get total control of her father's holdings. Climbing out of bed she tiptoed out of the room and back to hers. After a quick shower, she shoved some things into a suitcase and called Sarah.

"Sorry, I know I woke you, but I can't stay here. He's just as bad as the rest. I'm coming there," she spoke quietly into the phone and hung up before Sarah could answer.

Maddie left a quick note on the kitchen table.

I came to my senses. You aren't going to get to my father's holdings through me. I'm not getting used. I'll send for my things later.

Maddie

She threw her suitcase into the car and jumped in and raced out of the drive as if the devil were after her. All she could think of was to get to Sarah's as quickly as possible. Her heart was beating wildly and her thoughts were flying and tears streaming down her face. By the time she hit the outskirts of town she was going 80mph. With

vision blurred by tears, she miscalculated the curve and before she could stop, the car went out of control and flipped over and rolled, finally settling in the ditch.

Jordan woke and found the bed empty. He smiled and figured Maddie had gone back to her room to dress, so he got up and showered. It was early, but he felt great and didn't want to lie in bed without her. It was too early for Olivia, but he decided to make some coffee and then find Maddie.

The squeal of Maddie's tires on the gravel got his attention at the same time he saw the note. Swearing to himself he called Bill.

"Maddie just went flying out of here upset. I asked her to marry me last night and I think she is haunted by ghosts of the past. I'm going after her, but would you stop her? I'm sure she's headed for Sarah's," Jordan requested.

Bill hung up and immediately got in the squad car and started heading toward the highway. He had just reached it when he saw Maddie's car flip and roll into the ditch.

"Damn it!" he swore and called for back up and ran over to her.

Maddie was trying to get her door open a panicked expression on her face. She was so relieved when she saw Bill.

"Help me, I can't get the door open!" she screamed.

"Maddie, take it easy. I'll get you out," Bill told her. An ambulance and wrecker were already there and in no time they had Maddie out of the car and the car hoisted up.

Jordan came on the scene as the paramedics were putting her in the ambulance. He ran over to the door and reached for her.

"Maddie, what in the world happened?" he asked with a tremor in his voice.

She looked at his face and saw the fear and love and hated her rash behavior.

"I was scared. I had awful dreams, I'm sorry," she said and started crying.

Jordan turned to the paramedics asking them, "Is she okay?"

"She seems fine. No broken bones, no cuts, and no pain. Do you want her checked out in ER?" he said. Turning to the Sheriff he asked, "What do you want us to do?"

Maddie was violently shaking her head no. "I want to go home. I don't want to go to the hospital." She was crying hysterically.

Bill pulled Jordan aside. "I'm going to have to ticket her for reckless driving, but I won't insist on a hospital check, if you'll watch her. I'll bring the ticket by later."

"Calm down Maddie, I'll take you home," Jordan told her.

Maddie whimpered all the way home and when they got there, Jordan carried her into his bedroom and sat her on the bed, gently undressing her and then putting her under the covers.

"I want you to rest, then we'll discuss this running away." He tucked the covers around her and kissed her on the forehead. She was asleep before he left the room, and slept all day.

Jordan brought her some dinner on a tray and woke her gently. Maddie opened her eyes and closed them tight again when she saw him sitting there.

"Come on, sit up and eat," he plumped pillows at her back.

"I'm sorry," Maddie said softly as she sat up.

"We'll talk about it later, now eat," Jordan said and placed the tray on her lap. "I'll be back in a bit."

Maddie ate slowly thinking about how silly she'd been. Her fervent hope was that Jordan wasn't through with her.

Tears were starting to puddle in her eyes when Jordan returned and took the tray and sat down on the bed and pulled her into his arms.

"Do you have any idea how scared I was this morning?" he asked sternly, then continued, "I want to know why you did that? I'll not tolerate running ever again Madeline Louise Charles!"

Maddie stiffened at his words and tried to pull free. He held her tight and she relaxed.

"I'm waiting, Maddie, then you're going to find out just how displeased I am by this," he said.

"Do you still love me and want to marry me?" she asked trembling.

Jordan sighed loudly. "Yes, and you aren't to ever doubt me again," he said exasperatedly. "Now talk!"

Maddie haltingly told him about what happened in college and the nightmare she had and then laying there getting scared.

"I just got so scared, Jordan," she said. "I'm sorry. I realized as I neared town, that I was wrong and really loved you."

"I love you Maddie and always will, but you aren't going to be allowed to do this to yourself again. I'm going to give you a paddling that will assure you remember this in the future. This isn't

going to be a play one like yesterday. You'll think of this every time you sit for the next few days."

Without another word he flipped her over his knee and pulled her panties off. His hand resting on her bottom had the tears flowing.

"Please Jordan, I won't do it again, I promise!" she begged.

Without another word, Jordan began peppering her bottom and thighs with hard swats that soon turned her from pink to red. When her bottom was hot and swollen he pulled her up and looked at her.

"I want you in the corner thinking about this and what it could have cost us, then will finish this," he told her and turned her to the corner.

"I don't want to, I'm sorry Jordan really I am, it hurts!" Maddie cried.

Jordan led her to the corner swatting her hard. "When I tell you to do something Maddie you do it!"

For the next five minutes Jordan let her stand there thinking and crying. When her tears had subsided he called her back.

Maddie turned and ran back to him for a hug. He hugged her but then turned her over his knee again. "This is really going to hurt Maddie, and I hope I never have to do it again," he said as he brought the hairbrush down on her sit spot.

"Nooooooooooooo, stop, that hurts, I'm sorry," Maddie screeched, but he kept paddling until she was limp and sobbing. Then he put the brush down and gathered her in his arms.

"It's over now, shhhhh. You're forgiven," he told her softly and rubbed her back until she calmed down.

Maddie snuggled against him and finally quieted. "I'll be good from now on," she promised.

"I doubt it, but don't ever run from me Maddie. You have to trust me and talk to me. Promise?" he asked her.

"I promise, I will. If I get scared I'll tell you," she said into his chest.

Jordan hugged her tight to his chest, then bent her head back and kissed her deeply.

A year later, Maddie Charles Forsythe sat in her hospital bed smiling at her husband and at the small bundle in her arms. Boyd Charles Forsythe was suckling contentedly.

"I love you Jordan. Our son is going to have such loving parents and never want for anything," Maddie leaned back against her husband.

"Uh huh, but he isn't going to be spoiled. One in the family is enough," Jordan said and laughed, tweaking Maddie's nose.

