

# **From the Heart**

**By Magali Ortiz**

## Chapter 1

Kayla and her new legal guardian were in the parking lot of one of their four local grocery stores. She noticed that Diana was looking for something in the floor of the car as soon as she got out of the car. They'd been frozen in the parking lot, without going anywhere else for the next twenty minutes. It got to the point where Kayla really thought that they would never get into the grocery store and get their grocery shopping done. Annoyed, she blurted, "What did we come to the grocery store for, to loiter in the parking lot?"

Angry, Diana responded, "Can't you be just a little patient, Kayla Michelle? I'm looking for my car insurance papers!"

Kayla didn't know whether to laugh or scream in utter ennui. "Aren't you a slob? I thought that your car insurance papers were supposed to be in the glove compartment!"

Diana got out of the hole she'd figuratively put her head in for a few moments, looked Kayla in the eyes and said, "Don't dare to call me names ever again, Kayla Michelle Brown!"

"That's right," said Kayla, smiling evilly, "I am Kayla Michelle Brown - Lovett, and I hope that you don't go to court and file for a name-change for me, because although I can't support me economically, I am an adult, and I'm the only one that should decide what name to carry. Furthermore, I decided to keep my name. I don't want your name. God forbid that I ever become one of your kinds!"

"Excuse me?"

"You're excused, although I didn't hear you pass gas or belch," Kayla said.

Kayla was handicapped. She had mild cerebral palsy. The only things that she couldn't do were to walk and to talk coherently. She wouldn't talk normally. If she didn't talk too quickly, she would talk too slowly. It wasn't her fault. Her late parents never imagined how badly she needed speech therapy. Besides her legs and her mouth, the rest of her body was fully functional. She could perform the basic tasks completely on her own: bathe, dress, cook for her and anyone that lived with her, do the dishes, do her own laundry, drive to the store to get her guardian and anyone else that lived with her; whatever that he or she needed. Right now, however, Kayla's feeling of independence crumbled when her parents died, and, thinking that she could live on her own; thus she didn't need anyone to do anything for her, she lived at her parents' house, after their horrible and deadly car accident, for six months. Kayla quickly learned that she could do everything for her, except support her financially. She couldn't administer her disability-benefit money on her own because a cruel and severe depression broke her down, and she was desperate. Sick of feeling abandoned, Kayla called 911 and asked to be taken out of her house and placed in a hospice where age didn't matter for a person to live there.

"I don't know what I was thinking when I took custody of you."

"You were probably drunk, Diana," Kayla fired back, "but that's not for you to worry. You're not the only human being that's ever done something as stupid as accepting to live with someone that he or she abhors!"

Diana grabbed Kayla by her neck and said, "You wait \_till you get home, bitch! You have no notion of what's coming your way from this day forward. You've just given me the green light to give you a life of even more suffering!"

A very handsome cinnamon-skinned, magenta-eyed, black-haired, very brawny man passed by the two angry ladies. He noticed how Diana was slapping Kayla for no justifiable reason and he decided to intervene, not giving a rotten pickle of what would happen to him after

this moment. He ran up to them. “Hey, hey, madam...! What in God’s world do you think you’re doing?”

“Mind your own business, Rambo! This is my bitch! I deal with her!”

“I’m not your bitch, Diana!”

Without saying one more word, the man lifted Kayla, removed her from her transport wheelchair, and carried her; her body from the waist up on his shoulder, her head hanging from his back. She lifted her head so that the witnesses of this bizarre spectacle didn’t think that he was abducting her right off of the arms of her guardian.

Diana vainly tried to struggle her away from him. He wanted to use no violence against the lady. He thought that treating a woman violently was an act of the worst kind of cowardice. He simply placed her hand firmly against Diana’s head, paralyzing her, allowing moving nothing but her wobbling chubby arms. “You son of a bitch, let go of me!” she yelled.

“My mother has nothing to do with this, so I would appreciate it if you kept her out of this,” he sweetly replied with a smile on his beautiful face.

Another passerby looked up at them. He saw Diana fighting against “Rambo”, dialed 911 on his mobile phone, said a few words to the operator and ran away from the scene. He didn’t want the protagonists of this incident to know that he’d been a witness of this sad show until it was too late for any of them to take any reprisal against him. Five minutes after, his red 2006 Ford Wind Star had completely disappeared from the parking lot.

The cops arrived less than ten minutes after. The mysterious man let go of Diana before the officers could even notice that he was holding onto her to keep her from hurting him. They ran to the scene. At first, everything looked like a kidnapping to them, and Diana wanted to maintain that erroneous notion to be able to take her home and beat her to a pulp—until Kayla explained to them what really happened. “She started slapping me on the parking lot, right here, in front of everyone. Before she did that, she grabbed me by the neck. I assumed at first that she did that in an attempt to calm me down, but then she started squeezing it, and I assume she didn’t plan on letting go until she’d see my face turning purple. She threatened me all of the while that she was doing this.”

Diana shook her head in her disbelief and heartbreak as she listened meticulously to every word that Kayla said. Solely by testifying against her on the parking lot, Kayla had just opened the doors to a destiny in jail indefinitely for Diana. Diana shed tears. She had no idea of what to say.

“What do you have to say for you, madam?” said Officer Jenkins.

“Nothing,” Diana said.

“Is what this young woman saying about you true? Did you really slap her repeatedly in the face and strangle her, right here on the Save-A-Lot parking lot?”

“Yes, it’s all true, and I’m sorry that I did all of this. I’m not asking you to give me another chance with you and let me take you home with me today, Kay,” she said, crying. “All that I can ask and will ask for you right now is that you don’t hold any resentment against me; that you forgive me.” She started sobbing. Her repentance was genuine. She couldn’t possibly have even contemplated putting on a show after what she’d done. Diana had a temper of one-thousand demons, but she really wasn’t an evil person, just someone that had been abused as a child. Her older sisters started abusing her physically since she was five and the abuse ended when she was fourteen. She didn’t know of any other way of expressing her discontent or disagreement than being aggressive with the person that she was interacting with. Kayla didn’t

know her well enough to know her reasons for mistreating her for the very first time. Diana had yelled at her a few times in the twelve and a half months that they'd been together, but she'd never called her any names or gotten physical with her.

Crying, Kayla responded, "I'm not going to press any charges against you, Diana Bentley," she said to Diana and sniffled, "but I am going to firmly declare that I can't go home with you tonight. If I was accustomed to receive this unjustified abuse from you, I would've taken this chance to press charges in order to finally escape from the claws of an evil tigress; but this is the very first time that you've ever abused me, physically and verbally. Therefore, I don't think you'll be able to adopt anyone until you get over whatever trauma or emotional problems you have, Diana, because it's clear that something's wrong with you. I don't know what that something is, but..."

Officer Levine interrupted Kayla and said, "I'm a cop, and not a shrink, but I daresay that this is an undiagnosed case of borderline personality disorder. Madam, being that Ms. Brown refused to press charges, rather than going to prison, you're going to a psychiatric ward."

"I agree with Kay. I think that I do have a mental problem."

"Very well, then. All that I need to proceed is some form of ID; a birth certificate, an ID or a driver's license, and a medical-insurance card."

"I don't have medical insurance."

"If it was legal for her to use my medical-insurance cards in order to pay for her treatment, I would gladly give them in," Kayla said.

The man put her down and let her sit on her wheelchair once again. Then he said, "Being that the woman can't afford the medical treatment that she desperately needs," and pulled out his wallet, "I authorize you to take my credit card with you and pay for her mental-institution stay with it. After all of that, I'll see what I can do to help the lady."

Officer Levine took his card from him as gently and kindly as he gave it in, read the name and the number on the card and said, "Very well, Mr. Bennett. Officer Jenkins, Ms. Sterling and I appreciate this that you're doing. I've never known anyone that's willingly given his or her credit card to a total stranger."

"Hey, what more can I do to show the young lady how deeply I care for her?" he said, referring to Kayla. "I think that the only thing that I can do is to help anyone that's directly linked to her the best way that I can."

Kayla smiled and said, "That's so sweet of you." "His name is Robinson Bennett," said Officer Levine.

"Thank you, officer," Kayla said and stretched out her hand to salute Robinson. "It's an immense pleasure to meet you, Robinson."

"I say the same, Ms. Brown."

"Let's get on with it now that we got what we needed, shall we?" Levine said. In less than ten minutes, Diana was in the ambulance. The paramedics closed the doors and the driver was ready to pull out.

Horrified and in tears, Kayla asked, "Where am I going to go?" "You're going to go to a hospice for a few hours."

"...To a hospice?" Kayla said, outraged. "Do you have a clue as to how horribly I was treated in the last hospice that I lived in?"

“Not all hospices are the same, Ms. Brown. Probably, those people at the last hospice, they treated you unfairly because they had a miserable life when they were your age, and they were taking it all out on you.”

“Come to think of it,” Robinson commented, “that is a very sensible explanation.”

Just when the officers were about to leave, Kay detained them and asked them, “Can’t I stay with a relative? I mean I really don’t want to go to a hospice. I know that every hospice is different from the other,” now she really started to cry, “but I couldn’t distrust nurses more. I distrust nurses so much that I wouldn’t even go to a hospital, no matter how badly I needed medical care.”

“Whoa,” said Officer Levine and looked at Officer Jenkins and then at Robinson, “is that how bad it was?”

“I know, right? Was your prolonged hospice stay so bad that you can’t go anywhere near a nurse?” Robinson said, astonished.

“Yes, Robinson and Officer Levine, Kay said, sobbing, “That’s how horrible it was.”

“You know, Officer Levine, if there’s no relative that Kay could stay with tonight, she could stay with me,” Robinson said.

“Why not?” said Officer Jenkins, smiling naughtily. “There’d be nothing wrong with it. Ms. Brown is not a minor anymore.”

“Not even close,” said Kay, “I’m twenty-six. I’m turning twenty-seven this upcoming August.”

“Wow, Ms. Brown,” said Levine, impressed, “at that age, I’m shocked at the fact you haven’t gotten married!”

“I haven’t found a man that would marry me.”

“That’s until you met me,” replied Robinson and then cleared his throat.

“Oh, my goodness,” said Levine, “it sounds like fate decided that you two should be together and stay together! You met less than an hour ago and now, first you offered your credit card to pay for the psychiatric treatment for the guardian, second, you opened to her the doors of your home, and last but not least, you just met her and you’re implying already that you’d marry her any day! Sounds like a match made in heaven!”

Robinson blushed and said, with the smile of a three-year-old boy in his face, “I’m just trying to be nice to the lady!”

Smiling naughtily, Jenkins reached out and patted Robinson on the shoulder and said, “Yeah, right, it’s more than notable that you are desperate to find a wife; so desperate that you’d think that you’d find her in the first woman you would bump into!”

“I’ve had plenty of mates, so I don’t need a wife right now. I’ve gotten too many good things from life not to have the heart to give back,” Robinson replied, looking Kay in the eyes, which was right beside him. “I reiterate,” He said, “I just want to show the ladies some love; love from the heart.”

“Well,” said Jenkins, now with a serious face, “you’re not the man that I thought you were, and I mean that in a good way.”

“I know, and even if you offend me, don’t worry about it. I know that everyone is entitled to their opinion, according to the North American Constitution.”

“I wish everyone thought that way,” replied Jenkins as he walked away from Kayla and Robinson, “if they did, this world would be so much better.”

Kayla stopped them once more and asked, “So I can stay with Mr. Bennett tonight?”

Jenkins turned around and faced them once again and answered, “You certainly can! As a matter of fact, you can live with Mr. Bennett indefinitely, starting tonight, if you like.” He walked away from them once again and he and Levine got into their police patrol, fastened their seatbelts, pulled out of the parking lot, and sped away silently, without sounding the siren.

Robinson helped Kay get into the passenger’s seat of his car a few minutes later. “Did you think it would be illegal for you to sleep over at my place?” he said to her and shut the door.

She put the window down and replied, “It might sound crazy, but yes, I did think that staying with you tonight at your house would be illegal.”

“Why?” Robinson said. “You’re an adult. You stopped being a minor nearly nine years ago.”

“It’s just the fact that I haven’t gotten a good job and I need a guardian in my life, solely for financial support.”

“Solely for financial support,” Robinson repeated. “If you don’t mind me asking, Kay, why haven’t you been able to get a job at age twenty-six?”

“My parents always told me that as long as I lived with them, I wouldn’t need a job.” As

Robinson caressed her face, he said, “Forgive me, but they were wrong in telling you that, and teaching you that. Whether parents or guardians do it in good or bad faith, it’s wrong for them to use the physical disabilities of the people that they’re taking care of to hold them back and overprotect them.”

“I don’t know if you’re right or wrong in saying that, but I agree with you. Besides, they’re not here to give me everything that I need anymore.”

“No,” Robinson agreed as he walked around the bumper to go to the driver’s door, and Kayla put up the window, “they’re not.” He opened the driver’s door, got in, closed it, locked all of the doors, fastened his seatbelt, placed the key inside the starter and started the car.

“Therefore, you should start thinking about getting a good paying job, just so that you see the day when you won’t need financial support from anyone.”

They had pulled out of the parking lot already and they were leaving the grocery store. Robinson was just waiting for the cars to stop crossing the road for a few minutes so that he could take a right turn and drive straight home. It was only two fifteen in the afternoon, but Robinson wanted to take Kay home because he knew how tired and depressed she was; so tired and depressed that there was no other place but home that he could take her to cheer her up. Right now, she just wanted to go to bed and take a good nap. Hopefully, that would help her to get over what had just happened to her and Diana.

“Do you have any college education by any chance, Kay?” “I only studied in the University of Miami for three years.”

“That’s not bad. How many credits did you get there?”

“I got enough credits to return to the university and re-enroll any day I want to,” she replied.

“That’s good,” said Robinson, deeply pleased when he heard this. “Do you think you are ready to re-enroll tomorrow morning?”

Kay turned her face to her left side to look at him. He looked back at her and then faced the road once again. “Robinson, I know that you’re advising me to do this for my own good, but I need at least thirty days to reunite the pieces of my jigsaw puzzle before I re-enroll.”

“Thirty days?” he said. “What do you need to do within the next thirty days in order to be ready? I’ll help you get ready. We need to get you back on track as soon as possible.”

“Let’s see,” said Kay and remained pensive for the next five minutes as she looked at the roof of the car to be able to concentrate on what she was going to say next; thus her next words would determine the days of the rest of her life, “I need to reapply for scholarships...”

“Yes,” said Robinson as he made a mental note of the list.

“I need to go to TJ MAXX and get like \$500 - \$1000 worth of clothing.” She didn’t mean any word of this. She just said it to see how he would react.

“We won’t get all of that until you’re like three days from starting your classes once again,” he said.

She was blown away, figuratively. She looked back at him and said, smiling, “You can’t be serious.”

“Oh, yes I am,” he replied. “I am very serious.”

“Well, I wasn’t serious about the TJ MAXX thing. I just wanted to hear what you’d say after I told you about it.”

“I was serious about the TJ MAXX thing and that’s the only thing that matters, so don’t worry about anything. I’ve got it covered.”

“Can you afford it?” she said, flabbergasted.

“Oh, yes, every penny of it, I mean; I don’t mean to brag, but I live very well. I’m not rich, but I can support me extremely well. I am the head of an enterprise.”

“You’re an entrepreneur?”

“Yes.”

“Tell me the name of your company.”

“It’s Bennett Records.”

“Oh, my God, you’re a record producer?” Kay said, excited.

“Yes, I am.”

“Do you work for many artists?”

“Not for many,” he said, “just for three of them.”

“What genre predominates in your label?”

“No genre predominates. We are different from other labels because we let our artist express their talent in any way they want to. We not only record music, but we also help them with any project that they might start; whether it be acting, cooking, writing... we have a publishing company and a school of the arts. Right now, our name, the name of our enterprise is Bennett Records, but my father is in charge of Bennett Publishing Company and my older brother, Robert, he is in charge of Robert Bennett Jr. School of the Arts. Our only limit is Hollywood.”

“I imagined Hollywood being your only limit,” said Kay, smiling brightly, “being that your family does so many things at the same time... Am I wrong or does every member of the Bennett family have an enterprise?”

“Not every member of the family; just the adult members,” said Robinson. “I mean I started my record label in the fall of 2005.”

“I can tell that you’ve been successful.”

“Yes, but I’ve only made music for three artists because my funding is limited and I can’t promote my label.”

“My godmother, Anna Christina, she’s rich. Maybe she can help you.”

“I don’t want to take advantage of anyone in your family, Kay. Your family has had so much grief lately and I don’t have the right to make things worse for them.”

“You must be kidding, Robinson Bennett. Seriously, tell me that you’re kidding. Godmother won’t think twice before doing anything for you after she learns everything that you’re planning to do for me, despite the fact that Bennett Records is struggling to stay on foot. If the funding for promotion is the problem, all that I have to do to take care of it is borrow your cell and call Godmother at Pacoima. She’ll be here in the time it takes a shooting star to swing by the sky.”

“I want you to wait until I execute my plans with you. I don’t like receiving anything without giving something first.”

“I’m Christian, Robinson,” she said, facing the road, with a beautiful smile in her face, “and I firmly believe that the fifty-fifty way of living is not right. I know that this will surprise you, Robinson, but I believe that the fifty-fifty way of living is wrong because God loves us unconditionally.”

“That’s beautiful. Tell me more about your religion. I want to belong to it. I need to belong to something or someone on this earth.”

Shocked, she turned her face to look in his eyes again and asked, “What do you mean by that, Robinson?” and said, “I don’t understand.”

“I have come from a planet that God created, but forsaken at the same time. My species, we’re not angry at God, but we believe that he’s abandoned us to focus on you, the Earthlings.”

With tears in her eyes, Kay asked, “What planet are you from?” “I was speaking metaphorically.”

Still impressed, Kay simply said, “Oh!”

He went on to say, “Because that planet hasn’t been created yet. God’s love for us is so minimal that He hasn’t even taken the time to create a planet for us to live in peacefully, like I assume that the Earthlings live.”

“You’re wrong in thinking that we, the Earthlings, live in peace, Robinson, because we don’t, and the saddest thing is that no living thing that belongs to your species has anything to do with our suffering. You see we didn’t even know that you were here.”

“We’ve come from the underground of the Earth.”

Becoming more curious by the minute and with every interrogative of hers that Robinson answered, Kay asked, “You’ve come from hell? Are you demons?”

“No, we’ve come from six feet under the ground, and no, we’re not the living dead. We are just... I don’t even know how we surged. Unlike humans, we’re something that \_just happened\_. We’re literally living things that came out of nowhere.”

Kay cried tears of deep sorrow. “Are you superhuman or subhuman?”

“We don’t know; none of us know. We’d have to undergo extensive and thorough DNA tests to find out.”

“Robinson,” she said and dared to hold his hand, which was on his lap, “I want you to know that just because you finally came up here after the Lord knows how long, you don’t have to worry about what we think of you. All that you have to do is obey our laws, both the heavenly laws and the earthly laws that we abide by.”

“We know that, but we’ve always lost sleep over what you think of us. We want you to accept us.”

“Robinson Bennett, the only one that has to accept you is our Heavenly Father!”

“With all due respect to passionate Christians, He’s clearly never accepted us. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have allowed us to dwell just two feet above from the pits of hell. If he put us there it’s because He thinks that’s where we deserve to be.”

“You’re so wrong once again, my love. He doesn’t deserve all of this blasphemy from you. He didn’t put you two feet above the pits of hell, we did.”

He looked back at her and asked, “You did? How did you?”

“We did things that caused the Earth to change. I’m going to have to investigate you. We don’t know how long ago you’ve lived here. God might’ve created you before he created us. You’re going to have to study the Holy Bible to know what really happened during the creation of Planet Earth. You’re probably just intelligent animals.”

“That’s funny,” Robinson said and laughed. “Charles Darwin has always labeled the human race as \_intelligent animals’.”

“That’s true but I don’t believe Darwin’s bull. I have passionately and firmly disbelieved him since I became a Christian and started studying the Holy Bible twelve years ago. At the time, I was an Atheist. I was so close from becoming a Satanist because I hated God so much— until Godmother Anna Christina came into my life after not being able to be with me for the last two years of my life, and prayed the Sinner’s Prayer with me.”

“I like the story. Tell me more.”

“It’s more than just a story, it’s my autobiography, and I hope that you’re memorizing every word of our conversation very well.”

“Oh, I am, trust me on that. Doesn’t trust me like you trust Christ, though; just give me the benefit of the doubt.”

“I appreciate you not demanding me to love you and trust you more than I trust Him,” said Kay, smiling.

“I know that if I demanded that from you, I’d be pressuring you to make me your god, and your Lord God is a jealous God. We don’t want to make Him angry, now, do we?”

“No,” Kay said, crying tears of joy, “we don’t.” She’d just found the man that she’d dreamed of ever since she became a Christian; a man that was a sinner, but at the same time was so passionate that every minute, he wanted to know more about the Word of God. This man wasn’t human, he was just a Y-chromosome living thing that belonged to God knew what species, but that didn’t matter to her. She preferred him a million times over an Atheist, a Satanist, or just a very cruel and heartless man, incapable of loving anyone but himself.

“We love him,” Robinson said, with tears in his eyes, “we just don’t think that he loves us. You see we’ve come from a species that humans helped extinguish.”

“You just said the most important phrase ever,” said Kay and repeated, “A species that humans helped extinguish.”

“That’s right, and God didn’t do anything to help us resurge and reproduce. I’m sorry, I’m wrong again.”

“That’s correct,” said Kay, “you’re wrong yet again, my beautiful tulip. I wanted to ask you this but I feared offending you somehow.”

“Ask me anything you want to know.”

“Are you hybrids?”

“No, we’re not hybrids, were pure breeds.”

“Oh, so, are you telling me that you morph into human form as soon as you come up here like some kind of alien or shape shifter...?” she laughed hysterically and then turned serious almost immediately and said, “There’s no pun intended.”

“There’s no pun taken,” he replied, smiling sweetly just to show her that he meant every word he said to everyone and he never used sarcasm to blow people off. “You’re partly correct. We do morph into human form as soon as we ascend, but we’re not aliens or shape shifters.”

“Oh, my God, what am I going to say when I start talking to my family and friends about you?”

“...About me or about all of us?”

“...About you,” silly,” she said, “about Robinson Bennett.”

“My whole name is Robinson Bradley Bennett.”

“That’s one of the most beautiful names I’ve ever heard.”

“What’s your whole name, Kay?”

“It’s Kayla Michelle Brown - Lovett.”

“You’re single and you have two last names.”

“That’s why I can’t take your last name if we get married because it would be funny to have three last names.”

“It’s weird to have three first names, too. My brother’s name is Robert Bradley Michael Bennett.”

Kay laughed. “Wow!”

“I know, right? I don’t know what my grandparents were thinking when they registered my dad because he’s the one that started the whole Robert Bradley Michael thing. Get this, he wanted to continue the tradition, and so far, he’s succeeded. My nephew’s name is also Robert Bradley Michael Bennett.”

Kay laughed and said, “He’s Robert Bradley Michael Bennett, III. Actually, the name I just said, it’s very nice. It sounds very nice.”

“Yes, it does, but at the same time it’s very difficult to write. Rob writes his name ROBERT B. M. BENNETT.”

“Robert B. M. Bennett is nice.”

“Yes.”

“Actually, I just had the craziest idea. If we get married, I will become Kayla Michelle Brown - Lovett Bennett. However, I could write my name KAYLA B. L. BENNETT.”

“That sounds nice. Actually, having so many names, you could go by different names in all of your documentation as long as you don’t have a different SSN for every name. You don’t break the law when you write your name different ways; you do break the law however if for example, Kayla M. Brown - Lovett retained her SSN and then Kayla B. Lovett - Bennett went on and got a different SSN.”

“Oh, my Lord, I would *never* do that.”

“Good. So, now that we’re talking about this, have you come to a decision as to what you’re going to change your name to *when* we get married? Because we *are* getting married, you know? I don’t know when that’s going to be, though. That is for you to decide.”

Open mouthed and wide-eyed, Kayla said, “So, you meant it when you said to the cops that you’d marry me any day.”

“Yes, I did,” he said, looking her in the eyes and making them water all of a sudden.

“Before I tell you when we’re getting married, I need to know why you’ve chosen me, Robinson.”

“I’ve chosen you for three reasons: because you’re the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen despite your physical disability, because you’re a Christian and a true Christian would never abort an unwanted baby...”

Kay interrupted him and said, “Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait... are you saying that you’ve impregnated woman and they’ve aborted every single one of your offspring?”

“Yes, Kayla Michelle, unfortunately, that’s exactly what I’m saying. I am the only specimen of my kind that has not been able to bear children successfully. Yes, I’ve reproduced, but none of those babies have been born.”

Horrified, Kay asked, “Why?”

“As soon as my mates noticed anomalies in their babies in the ultrasound, they decided to put an end to their pregnancy.”

“...Oh, my God, tell me, how many women have aborted your babies?”

“You’d think that these women are too many to count, but the fact is that I’ve only reproduced with five women of all of the women that I’ve mated with.”

“Five women you said?”

“Yes, five women.”

Immediately, a crazy idea came into Kay’s complicated but intelligent mind, an idea that would turn into a plan that she would eventually, but soon, elaborate. “Are there any women in your species?”

Surprised with the question, Robinson answered, “Certainly.” They were only five blocks from Robinson’s house right now. “But there are only three of them left.”

“Only three of them?” said Kay. “Who are they?”

“They’re all in my family. The first one is my mother, the second one is my sister, and the third one is my niece. Because these women are family, we can’t even think about mating and trying to reproduce with them, because although we have absolutely no morals and values, incest would make us bear monsters instead of children.”

“There’s no offense intended, but I thought you were already monsters.”

“Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” he replied.

She felt like human excrement. “I reiterate,” she said, crying, “I didn’t mean to hurt you.”

“You didn’t. I knew exactly what you meant. It’s worse to be a monster on the inside than it is to be a monster on the outside, because the monsters within are obviously the monsters that no human eye can see; the monsters capable of destroying everyone and everything that gets in their path.”

“That’s true.”

“Do you want me to morph right here in front of you for you to see what I’m really like on the inside?”

“I’m sorry to answer a question with another question, but, will this cause me to have nightmares tonight?”

“You don’t have to apologize for that. On the contrary, I thank you for asking. I promise this won’t cause you nightmares; tonight or ever.” He morphed in front of her. The only physical difference that he had with a human being was that his skin was golden beyond the imagination, his eyes were yellow, and they were shaped like cat’s eyes. The differences beyond the physical realm were unimaginable, however. Contrary to what they thought, these new beings were

superhuman, and they had no idea what we had in store for them after finding out the truth about them.

As soon as he morphed back into human form, she said, impressed, “Wow, I daresay you’re anything but monstrous!”

Smiling sweetly and brightly, and feeling good about him for the first time in his entire life, Robinson replied, “Thank you, likewise.”

She laughed. “I know what you meant by that. I knew you’d bounce it right back at me. A few minutes ago you told me that I was the most beautiful woman you’d ever seen and that you would marry me any day, but you never told me the third reason why you decided I would be your wife.”

“The third reason why I decreed that you and I would tie the knot is because you’re very fertile.”

Open-mouthed and wide-eyed, she asked, almost yelling, “How in the world do you know that?”

“I know how fertile a woman is just by looking at her.”

Confused and scratching her head, Kay asked, “Do you also know if a human being has a disease, any kind of disease, just by looking at him or her? What is that superpower that you possess that makes you do something so amazing?”

“It’s not a superpower. It’s unknown whether we have superpowers or not. The ability that we have to know what’s wrong with any other living thing just by taking one look at it, that’s nothing but an extraordinarily well-developed sixth sense.”

Kay laughed and asked, “Do you have a seventh sense by any chance?” and then said, “Let me clarify that I’m not making fun of you; I’m just curious.”

“I know it when someone’s making fun of me. Don’t worry about it.”

“Is that linked to the realm of your six senses?” “I think so. I’m not sure.”

“...Very well, Mr. Bennett, I’d like you to show me your amazing ability of seeing someone through. I don’t want you to read their thoughts and know what their heart is like, though; I just want you to tell me whether or not they have a disease and what that disease is.”

Rubbing his hands together without losing control of the wheel, and smiling like a mischievous little boy, Robinson said, “I see that you’re in the mood for a little non-sexual experiment. Let’s get on it. I can’t brag about my \_extraordinary abilities\_ without proving that I have them. I’m going to record this with my video mobile phone. I’m going to park right in front of my next-door neighbor’s house. Kay, you’re a very attractive woman. I’m certain that you’ll literally blow him away once that he sees you.”

“If I don’t want to have sex with you before we get married, I much less want to have sex with him. I just thought you should know.”

“I know that you don’t want to have sex with me or with him, but I want you to pretend that you want to have sex with him right away, and that I’m just a friend.”

“Let me guess. You’re going to show this video to Rob so that he will enroll me in the Robert B. M. Bennett School of the Arts.”

“You guessed right.”

“Oh, my God, are you putting my talent as an actress to the test?”

“Yes, madam...”



## Chapter 2

“Well, let me tell you, I’m going to fail miserably because I can’t fake anything. I absolutely cannot. I am as real and hard-core as women come.”

“That’s what you need to pass the test of your talent in the arts, to make it as real as it could possibly be; to make it seem like it’s really happening.”

Scratching her head, she said, “Oh, silly me, I had no clue.”

“When it comes to life, my dear, you have so much to learn, and what you have to learn, it doesn’t have anything to do with sex. You will only learn how to make love and how to just have sex if you want to.”

“I do want to, just not right now. I’ve been ready to become sexually active for a long, long time. It’s just that I don’t feel ready to engage in any kind of sexual activity when I have the opportunity to do it. I don’t know, maybe the Lord is somehow protecting me from the sexual realm of the deadly sin of lust.”

“Oh, He’s definitely trying to protect you, and so far, He couldn’t have succeeded more greatly.”

“Praise the Lord,” she simply responded.

“OK, so here’s what we’re going to do,” he whispered in her ear. “I’m going to sound the car horn and he’s going to come out to see me. He loves me very much by the way. He does have a disease, a disease that will never even want to make you cheat on me with him if you suddenly transformed into a carnal Christian.”

“You got that right; I am a very passionately spiritual Christian. I am perfect much more accidentally than I would be on purpose.”

“That’s amazing. OK, so I’m going to tell you what disease it is that he has as soon as he starts making his moves on you.”

“Is his disease contagious?”

“Only if you French kiss him and he has an open sore or if you have any contact whatsoever with his genitalia.”

“Oh, my God, he’s got syphilis?”

“I’ll tell you when he comes out of his shell. By the way, those symptoms are not only symptoms of syphilis, but they’re also symptoms of many other sexually-transmitted diseases.”

“Oh...”

“OK, so here we go. I’m going to take my phone in my hand, activate the video camera, and start recording.”

“You’re going to pretend that you’re trying to call someone and you can’t reach him or her while him and me converse and record everything incognito.”

“...Exactly.”

“OK,” she said. “Let’s do it.” She rubbed her beautiful and delicate hands together. “This is so exciting.”

Kay and Rob executed their plan. Rob sounded the car horn right on the center of his steering wheel. After a few honks, his neighbor, Heber, he responded. Heber came out of his house with a towel wrapped around his waist.

“Oh, my God,” Kay whispered in Rob’s ear, “I haven’t been formally introduced yet and I feel like he’s seducing me already.”

“Don’t think that way about everybody. Not everyone has dangerous intentions with innocent people, you know? He was probably just taking a shower.”

“I’m scared. What if he finds out that all of this was a prank and decides to take reprisal against me by raping me?”

“Heber’s not like that. He doesn’t have an STD because he’s a bad person. He has it because the last woman he had sex with got him drunk and then had unprotected sex with him.”

“Oh, my God, he was raped?”

Heber crossed his arms across his chest and waited for Kay and Rob’s conversation to end before having them put their windows down and starting to talk to them.

“You can say that, but since it was a woman that did this, and since it wasn’t violent, it’s not considered rape.”

“Oh, my God, it makes me want to throw up every time that a liberal woman complains about the double standard that society has when it comes to men and women’s sexuality.”

“I think that those women want to turn Planet Earth into a very sick, disgusting and uninhabitable planet.”

“Does that make you and your family wants to leave?”

“Sometimes it does. Sometimes it makes Mom want to go out and kill them all before they make the planet become so infested with STD’s that a foreigner could become infected just by walking on this ground!”

“Oh, Lord...!”

Rob finally put the window down.

Kay thought; *don’t worry about that, Rob. We won’t let that happen.* She referred to all spiritual Christians.

“Hey,” Heber said, smiling. “How is it going?”

“It’s going so well for me that I actually made a new girl friend.” “I thought that you had a swarm of girl friends, Robinson.” “So did me until I met Ms. Kayla Brown.”

Heber walked around the bumper to go to the passenger seat of the car. Kayla put her window down and without opening the door, she and Heber shook hands. “It’s an honor to meet you, Ms. Brown.”

“...Likewise, Mr. Brady...”

“I told her your name was Heber Brady before I introduced the two of you.”

“Oh,” said Heber and laughed, “OK. Hey, Rob, would you invite me to your house for a few minutes?”

“Not for a few minutes, but forever, if you asked me to,” replied Robinson. “What is it that you want to talk to me about?”

“I got the name of the woman that gave me the HPV.”

Outraged, Kay screamed, “The HPV? What in the...?” Rob gently covered her mouth with his hand to keep her from disturbing the peace and getting reported for it.

“Yes, Kayla, the HPV... I got it three months ago, when she *raped* me, and I know that this is what she gave me because before I had sex with her, I was so fertile that I impregnated three of my former sex partners, and every time that I had sex, even if it was with the same partner, I got to the point where I had to use protection just to avoid unwanted pregnancy.”

“...And now that you’re ready to settle down and have children, you can’t,” said Kay.

“Exactly.... My wife is virginal. Since I don’t have any money for additional basic necessities, like condoms or a birth-control treatment for her, we haven’t been able to consummate our marriage because I fear passing on the damned virus. I don’t care if I have it, I just don’t want to leave anyone else infertile. That’s the worst thing that can be done to someone that wants to start a family, obviously.”

“Is your new marriage in danger of getting annulled?”

“I thank God that it isn’t, because we adopted my three children, which their mothers were unable to support, and since she’s not sexually active yet, she’s been able to subside her sexual needs. I thank God every day for giving me a wife like Anna Maria.”

“...Anna Maria; that’s Godmother’s youngest daughter!”

“You know Anna Maria and her mother? Her mother’s your godmother, Kay?” “Yes.”

“Perhaps I should arrange a reunion between the two of you. If you start living with Anna Maria, that’ll drive her mother, Mrs. Lovett, to come down to the Sunshine State and have her husband start a Floridian Church.”

“That would be great. Godmother and Godfather have wanted to do that forever. Fortunately, time is the only thing that’s gotten in their way.”

“Time is not an impediment for them anymore!” Robinson yelled, with his most excited voice yet. “This is so convenient for me because my enterprise needs her to come down here as soon as possible. We need her financial support to keep going. I’d really hate to cancel my singers’ contracts just because we don’t have the money to promote their albums.”

“Oh, my God, Rob, you never told me about your singers’ careers being at stake.” “Well, they are. I think that the only thing that would make Elder and Dr. Lovett refrain from supporting our company is the fact that we only produce secular music.”

“That’s not a problem. With Godmother and Godfather’s help, you could either start producing and recording Christian music, or help them to start a Christian Record Label with the lovely hands of your builders. What do you say?”

“I say that I finally got the chance to repay your godparents for their support even before they gave it to me. Praise the Lord, God; you’ve finally made me feel your presence!”

“We love you, Jesus!” Heber and Kay called out in unison. They called it out so loudly that they got their Christian neighbors excited and made their Non-Christian neighbors curious.

“OK, so let’s go to my house, guys, which is also your house.”

“My dear Robinson,” Heber replied, “you’ve made Kayla feel at home even before literally and physically letting her into your home.”

That day, Kay and Robinson decided to get married. They understood that they were right for each other and one couldn’t let the other get away. Kay was human and Robinson was supernatural, but they knew that they could make it. They knew that they belonged together. They were going to pull it off no matter what. They went to court and got their marriage licenses. The next day, they got married in court. There were no guests. For that, they would wait for their religious wedding, which would happen very soon. Everybody received them at home with a big party. They were so happy they couldn’t contain themselves. They had made a special three-layer cake. The first layer was chocolate, the second layer was vanilla, and the third layer was strawberry. It was covered in chocolate frosting, absolutely decadent. They partied and danced all night, like there was no tomorrow. Then, they went to visit some friends and finally called it a night at four o’clock AM.

Kay arrived at home in the morning, at sunrise, the day after the marriage ceremony, after sleeping over at Diana's house. After sharing her first kiss with Robinson the moment they were declared husband and wife, she experienced complete healing and all her physical handicaps were gone. It was as she hadn't been born disabled. She was like a thief in the night; she entered the mansion and no one noticed. She parked her car in the garage, got out of the car, went into the house through the door inside the house that drove to the garage, out in the back, came in where the extra rooms in the back were, passed by, ascended to the back room that drove to the secondary hallway of the mansion, through where the servants usually came into the mansion every time they went out. She went into her bedroom. She placed her purse in a safe place, where these strangers at her husband's mansion on the West Side, they wouldn't steal it away when she and Robinson weren't around. She went out to the back once again, to the pool. There, she very carefully got down to the edge of the pool and sat there, putting her feet inside of the water, not caring that she was still wearing her two-hundred-dollar high-heeled shoes. She held on to the edge with both arms, pushing her body down until she figuratively stood up in the water. In there, she took off the tank-top, short-skirted dress that she was wearing, and since women's underwear, to her, weren't appropriate to swim, thus her bathing suits were, she also took that off, unaware that she wasn't alone in the house, like she thought.

Robinson started French-kissing Kay's neck. She felt the greatest and strongest sexual excitement ever. She started taking his clothes off until his entire naked sculptural body was revealed from the waist up, and concealed with the help of the pool water from the waist down. He remains visible in the surface of the water until she gets down and starts practicing oral sex on him for the next sixty minutes, while the water concealed her act in a way that there was no way that anyone else could see what was happening. He literally felt so weak in the knees that with tears in his eyes, he fell to the bottom. She didn't know that she had caused so much excitement to him, excitement that instead of feeling pleasurable, felt excruciatingly painful. He was not as strong in the sexual realm as he was when he met her.

"Is something wrong?" she said.

"It's just that I can't have that done to me for so long."

"I think that I'd better try to get to know you. You're not as anatomically strong as you used to be. Could I have known?"

"Don't feel badly. Haven't you heard the saying, 'What you don't know could kill you'? Well, that saying perfectly applies to this situation. You never knew because I never told you. Silence is always our worst enemy. It's better to be straight with one another. I kept my mouth shut about exactly what was of me that had changed, and now I'm suffering the consequences."

As she scratched her head, she said, "It's quite uncommon for a human being to say, 'I'm to blame for this.' Human beings that declare that rather than trying to justify their bad deeds are a needle in a haystack."

Robinson and Kay spent the rest of the night together, just watching TV and drinking Sprite on their bed. Kay didn't think Robinson could handle any more sexual activity and she had to give him time to adjust to this lifestyle. This momentary weakness when he started something romantic with her let him know that she was the one, and that he'd married the right woman. From this day forward, their sex life would be exciting, and it wouldn't be painful for either one of them. Other aspects of marriage were more important now, like communication and family. They hadn't had intercourse yet, but Kay wasn't in a hurry. She knew that the time would come soon. Although she didn't understand the situation, she didn't reproach him for the

problem they were having. As they were soon to find out, they would have to work very hard to brush off detractors and stay together—detractors they had that they didn't even imagine, like Robinson's ex-girlfriend, whom, after aborting his baby, had the nerve to decide that she wanted him back and she was sure this time no one and nothing would get in her way. She was convinced that Robinson was still in love with her, and that he'd married another woman only days after meeting her just because he couldn't have her and he was using Kay to fill that void. She couldn't be more wrong.

Robinson and Karla were in court together, trying to figure out if Robinson could get a name change or not.

His attorney had important documents in her hand. She said, "Your first name has been changed. You are now Caleb Miguel Aguilera and you," she said, talking to Karla, "is now Karla Aguilera."

Caleb and Karla hugged.

Robinson arrived. "Hi, Caleb," he said.

They hugged, too. "I am so glad that you're here in one of the most important days in my life."

"I had to show you that you can count on my support, Caleb."

They all left the courtroom.

They went to Caleb and Karla's palace. That's right, palace. A house could not hold fifty children, so Karla had to get on ten-year birth control to keep from having any more children. There were twenty sets of fraternal twin's twenty sets of identical twins, and ten children that were born alone.

These people are called Underground People, as the Earthling Lunar aliens baptized them, they and the aliens, they had so many children that they had to purchase an entire community, pay those humans for their houses, and have palaces built in that community. It was called 'Eternal Love'.

The Ingram Castles were painted red, despite having been made of bricks. They wanted to add personality to their residences. They wanted to send the message that this was the Ingram Castle; Cole and Cyrus's parents.

They also built castles for their children, which were growing up too fast for humans to see them and not have a heart attack. Within nine years, they'd be eighteen, and able to mate and reproduce.

Meanwhile, there were six Brady castles, one for Haggai and his family, one for Heber and his family, one for Haggai and Heber's parents and the others were for the siblings and children of the Brady twins.

The friends had a reunion in the Brady castles. They ate dinner and even had all kinds of fun with a few uninvited human guests. They didn't have sex with the uninvited guests, though.

Caleb and Karla had not consummated their marriage yet. They needed to. Therefore, it was time to excuse themselves with their guests. "Have fun and enjoy our little party," said Karla.

"They've been married for three days and they haven't done the deed," said Big Belle. "What's happening? Do they hate sex?"

"No, they don't. They just took their time knowing one another better, you know, their personalities. In their marriage, sex is what comes last, not what comes first."

"They're weird," said Big Belle.

Meanwhile, in their bedroom, Caleb and Karla were lying in their bed, having intercourse. They did that for only forty-five minutes because the party was two hours from ending, and they didn't want their guests to leave without saying goodbye and think they were ignoring them after allowing them to be part of their party.

Suddenly, after they took a shower, separately, got dressed, and went back to the party, they found people of their species dancing with human beings! Nevertheless, from the way that non-humans danced with one another, male and female, they learned, the humans, that the non-humans were taken. However, they could mate among their species, so they booked rooms in the nearest and biggest three-star hotels. Humans weren't economically challenged they just didn't think they'd need that much money, thus they were going to a party in a castle. They used the money in their bank accounts to book the hotels.

As soon as the human beings left, the music was turned off and the party was over—until Ivy and Christian arrived. The music stayed off, but Haggai made more fresh food. Some people of this species never became tired. They didn't need servants. Was that possible with fifty adults and 1,000 children in each castle? No. They had to hire servants. Haggai placed an ad on the newspaper.

HAGGAI BRADY  
NO AGE  
...NEEDS SERVANTS IN ORDER TO GET HIS EIGHT HOURS OF SLEEP.  
NEEDS GARDENERS, COOKS AND MAIDS  
HAS 250 CHILDREN  
COMMUNITY 'ETERNAL LOVE'  
PAY: \$250 AN HOUR  
NATIONALITY OF APPLICANTS DOES NOT MATTER.

Haggai just had to place an ad on the newspaper. The entire Brady, Bennett, and Ingram families needed servants so they did the same thing. This was just the beginning of the real posh life for these families.

One thousand people came to Eternal Love looking to get jobs. Ten thousand more people were needed. They came from all the fifty states. They even brought their youngest kids to make friends with the special children.

Meanwhile, the human beings that went to the party uninvited, they were talking about it. "It's hard for me to believe that you've come back, Ivan."

"It's hard for me to believe, too," the real Ivan replied, looking around him. "I arrived here so quickly. Just thirty seconds ago I was in South Miami, and now, here I am, in North Miami."

"Don't try to figure out how you got here," said Natasha, placing his arms around his neck, and smiling sweetly at him as her lips pulled closer to his. She gave him a kiss on the lips. "What matters is simply that you are here. You came back to me."

"Yes, I did," he said, "and I'm here to stay."

They sat on the couch together as he held her hands. She replied, "I wouldn't be so sure about that if I were you. I mean, I still love you, and I still want you in my life, but we can't be together. I don't know if your mother still opposes to our relationship, but if she did, and if she said that we couldn't be together, right now, she'd be absolutely right."

Shocked, deeply saddened, and shedding tears, he said, "What do you mean?"

"Ivan..."

"First, you tell me that you still love me and you still want me, you and Preston to be a family, but at the same time, you tell me we can't be together. My mother was the reason back then. What's the reason now, Natasha? Tell me!"

"The reason is that I have the HPV, Ivan!" she replied, with thick tears going down her eyes.

"You can get treatment for this disease, can't you?"

"You mean you don't care?"

"No, I don't care. That's not a reason for us not to be together," he replied.

"What about the fact that we can't have kids?"

"I don't care about any of that. Do you know why? I know that I'm to blame for all of the heartache that you've had in your love life. I was the reason why your love life couldn't have been more horrible. I'm the reason why you got HPV. You know why? ...Because if I hadn't broken up with you way back in 1999, we'd still be together and you would never have gotten HPV. We'd be happily married and our child wouldn't be a bastard in the eyes of the law."

She was with his words. "Oh, Ivan..."

"I'm not saying it to put me down; I'm saying it because I know it's true. Rather than leaving you or turning against my mother for not accepting you, I should've done everything in my power to convince her that you were the right woman for me; that she was wrong about you."

"I agree with you, Ivan, but bringing back the past and all of our suffering with it won't make things right. What will make things right is if we try to start over? Stop thinking about what would've happened if you had behaved like a real man would've in our situation, and the things you should've done in the past; do them now. That is the only way you, Preston and I will ever be happy together."

They hugged again. Suddenly, Ivan's mobile phone rang. It was his mother, Sara. Sara would never call Ivan on his mobile phone unless she had an emergency with her health or another member of their family. She would only call him on his home phone once a day. They'd talk on the phone for the next fifteen or twenty minutes and then hang up. He was surprised when he saw his mother's number on the screen of his flip phone. "Hello, Mom. How are you doing? What do you need?" he said.

"I don't have an emergency this time. I just want to tell you how sorry I am for destroying your love life the way that I did, and to confess how wrong I was about Natasha Hoffman."

"Speaking of Natasha Hoffman," Ivan said, smiling, "I'm calling from her house. She's right here, sitting beside me. Would you like to talk to her?"

"I don't think I can confront her right now."

"Come on, Mom, it's no big deal. We talked about it intensely and passionately and I sincerely don't think that she's holding resentment for you or for me right now."

"I think it's better if we talk face to face."

"I think she would like that."

"You seem to know her so well, son."

"I do. I really do. If I didn't, there would've been no use in coming back to her and trying to work things out."

"I agree with you. Would you please put her on the phone so we can set a date and time to meet at her house?"

"You know what? I got the craziest idea. Why don't you arrange a date to meet at your house? That way, she'll know for sure that you've received her into our family with open arms, because, you know, I'm going to marry her. I'm not going to waste my time proposing and preparing anything. I'm going to take her to the Court House tomorrow and we're going to get married. We've been without one another for too long, so I think that the only matrimony ceremony that has to have preparation to work out smoothly is the religious one. The lawful one can take place right now."

She lip synced, "You can't be serious."

He nodded.

"I like your idea better than I like mine. OK, so I have to go. Why don't you ask her what we want to ask her and then have her call me back later in the day?"

"OK, Mom, that sounds good. I'm going to swing by your house later today. If we waited seven years to have sex, I think we can wait less than twelve hours more, don't you think?"

Sara laughed and said, "I agree. Your dad wants to talk to you, but you won't know the details till you get here."

"That's good enough for me. All right, I'm going to let you go. I'll see you later."  
He ended the call.

"Is Sara for real? Does she really want to meet with me?"

"You know what? She's faked a lot of things before..."

She interrupted him and laughed hysterically, "Oh, God, I don't even want to think about her faking anything!"

"Well, Dad says that she's never faked it in bed."

"Oh, my God," she laughed even more intensely now, "I'm thrilled to know how passionate your parents still are about each other."

"They've been happily married for thirty years now."

"But you're only twenty-five, Ivan, and you're the oldest."

"I know, but when they got married, they couldn't conceive for five whole years. It turned out that my mother was taking an antidepressant that was somehow preventing her from getting pregnant. As soon as the doctor told her what was happening, she stopped taking the drug, and the day that she stopped taking the drug, she got pregnant with me. I was conceived that day, February 2, 1981. I was born on November 16, 1981. As soon as I was born, she started taking it again. Then she stopped taking it and conceived my sister, Alana. Finally, her doctor reduced the dosage of the medicine and she could finally have the cake and eat it, too; take the medicine and get pregnant."

"That is one fascinating story. Have you ever thought about writing your autobiography?"

"Well, I am writing my autobiography, but it would be really difficult to try and think back to the key past events of my life, so what I'm doing are writing a ninety-day-journal about enduring my mental illness."

"...Your mental illness?"

"It's nothing serious; just OCD."

"You don't think OCD is a serious matter?"

"That's another reason why I don't care that you have HPV, because I'm not a happy camper either. How could I possibly demand perfection in a woman when I couldn't be more imperfect?"

"Do you think that OCD is what has caused your previous relationships to fail, Ivan?"

"OCD only caused the finalization of my latest past relationship. My ex couldn't bare my rituals. What caused all of my other relationships to fail before that, however, Natasha," he said and held her hands again, "is the fact that no matter how hard I try, I just can't get over you."

Crying tears of joy, and smiling sweetly, Natasha said, "I can't get over you, either, Ivan. I've gone to extremes to get a man to help me forget about you. I even drugged my next-door, very married neighbor and had sex with him, hoping that this extremely-pleasurable event would help me get over you, but, sadly, it didn't. Now, my life is on the line. He hasn't reported me for rape yet, but I know my life's in his hands, literally. The moment he decides to tell the police on me, I'm finished. Every night I pray that he and his wife get over it. There's just one problem. When I had sex with him, I didn't use protection, and I passed my disease on to him. That could ruin their marriage." Natasha couldn't help it but to start crying. Ivan held her sweetly.

"Don't worry about it," he said. "I will find a way to get him to forgive you and try to repair the damage done to him, his wife and his kids. I will pay for his treatment."

Natasha gave him a big hug, and crying bitterly and sobbing on his shoulder, she said, "Thank you! I don't know what I would've done if you hadn't come back!"

Two hours later, Ivan walked to Heber's house. He knocked tirelessly. There was no one home. However, Heber saw a man standing on his door from the guestroom window. He immediately opened the window, crawled out of the room and out of the house, closed it, and ran back to his house, to the front of his house; just when Ivan was leaving. "Hey!" he said. "Wait up!"

Ivan turned around and simply said, "Hi."

"Were you looking for me?"

"Are you Heber Brady?"

Heber placed both of his hands on his hips and said, "Yes, I am."

"Mr. Brady, I want to talk to you about Ms. Hoffman."

"Are you related to her?"

"No, I'm not, but I will be, soon. May I come in now that you're here?"

"Sure," said Heber. They walked together to the front door. Heber pulled his keys out of his pocket, placed the key inside the lock, gave it a turn and unlocked the entrance door. Then, he opened the door. They walked in together. Heber's three-year-old son, Seth, ran up to them and gave both of them a hug, although he didn't know Ivan. Heber and Anna Maria got Seth from his mother's arms the day he was born. The mother died of AIDS, but the doctors made it so that the baby wouldn't be infected with the virus, also. They succeeded. Despite it all, Seth was a perfectly healthy baby, and now, he was so tall despite his age that he looked twice his age. "Seth, sweetheart, would you please go to my room, get one of my CD's and play it in your mini-stereo, in your room, behind the closed door?"

Smiling, Seth said, "Certainly, Daddy," and gave him a hug and a kiss and ran out of the living room and into the hallway to do as told.

A few minutes later, the conversation between Heber and Ivan started. "What's your name, sir?" he said.

Suddenly, Ivan morphed into Haggai for a few minutes, and using Ivan's body and voice, Haggai said, "It's time, Heber. If you don't do this now, it'll be too late tomorrow."

Heber was so horrified that his eyes almost bulged out of their sockets. He looked like a zombie. He was paralyzed. Then he said, "Oh, my God!"

Horrified, Ivan said, "Are you OK, Heber?"

Shaking violently, Heber answered, "No, I'm not OK. I'm not OK."

"What do I do, call 911?" Without hesitation, Ivan ran to the kitchen phone, picked up the receiver, dialed 911 and placed the phone in his ear.

Within minutes, a male operator responded, "911 emergencies?"

"Yes, I'm calling for the proprietor of this house. I think he's having a seizure, a heart attack or a stroke. He's convulsing in his couch, right now."

"In that case, there's nothing you could do for him on your own. We'll send the paramedics out right now. Don't worry; it's going to be OK."

Fifteen minutes later, paramedics had Heber on a stretcher and they were loading him into the ambulance. Within seconds, the driver pulled out of the driveway, took a left turn and once on the road, he sped away.

Haggai was in the hospital, paying the doctor that would take care of Haggai, an incalculable sum of money, just so that he would inject his specimen directly into Heber's bloodstream through the vein in his arm. The doctor only accepted one-fifth of the money, claiming that he would take the whole thing, except Heber surely needed money to pay his bill, and he would use the money he initially rejected for that purpose. The \$450,000 that the doctor had just gotten for his own use, he planned to invest it on a good house for him and his family, not a mansion, just a comfortable house in which the children would be able to play tirelessly and everyone would be happy. This doctor had just lost his house to a crook that had taken his identity. The crook had horrible credit and therefore, he couldn't acquire anything on his own. That crook was just days away from a jail cell.

A few minutes later, Heber arrived at the hospital. Instead of taking him to the O. R. the doctor proceeded to inject the specimen into Heber's vein, not part of it, but the whole thing. He did that in the E. R. and five minutes after, the next thing he knew, Heber was perfectly fine, on his feet, completely clean, and his brain was perfectly stabilized. He couldn't be more joyous. He ran out of the E. R. leaving Dr. Burgess completely breathless and found his family in the W. R. He threw him at them and gave them such big hugs that they could hardly breathe. Anna Maria couldn't believe her eyes. Robinson and Kay were there. Within five hours, they'd be in a Court House, getting married before the eyes of the law. He wouldn't be the man that Kay would marry at church, and no, Kay wasn't going to commit bigamy in the future. By getting together with Robinson Brady, Kay Brown was getting her into a really tight and complicated situation. She was going to have to work very hard to be able to get her together from this day forward.

"Is it really you, Heber?" Anna Maria said. "Is it really you?"

Smiling sweetly, and behaving like he'd just been reborn, Heber responded, "Yes, it's really I. How are you doing? Were you worried I wouldn't make it?"

"Yes," said Robinson, "frankly, we were worried you wouldn't live one more day. A doctor came to us and said that you've suffered a major stroke and a massive heart attack simultaneously."

"Well, that's true, thus my tests show it, but I'm fine. Someone came through and saved me."

"I'd like to know who that someone was," Anna Maria said, crying tears of joy, "so that I can thank him or her."

"I don't know what happened. All that I know was that my brain was so damage a few minutes ago that my only sense that was left was my sense of touch. I felt someone injecting me

with something very hot and my skin was burning from the inside out. The next thing I knew," he said and sighed, "I found me getting up out of where I laid and running to the WR."

"That's great. Does that mean we can go home, Dad?" Heber's daughter, Hannah, said. "I'm hungry, and I don't want to eat out. No one cooks better than you do, although Mom cooks just as wonderfully."

Anna Maria and Heber laughed hysterically at Hannah's comment. "I didn't know that you didn't like eating out, honey," said Anna Maria. "If you had told me before, I would never have taken you to Mc. Donald's, Burger King, and Wendy's so much."

"I like Denny's," said Hannah. "Their food reminds me of my daddy's food. I love Sonics desserts. I have never tried their main courses or side dishes."

"What do you want to eat, kids? I want you to coincide today. I don't mind making four different dinners, but I'd like to know that you agree on something."

"We never fight, Dad. How do you know if we ever disagreed?"

As they all walked out of the emergency area of the hospital, Heber replied to his son, Roger, "Just because you never fought it doesn't mean that you never disagreed. You disagreed on many things, it's just that you didn't express your differences of opinions because you didn't want to give me and your mother a hard time," as he caressed Roger's face, leaving him gasping and speechless. Then, they walked to Robinson's car.

As Kay got in the passenger's seat and the kids jumped to the back seats of the mini-van, along with Robinson and Anna Maria, Heber got into the driver's seat. He'd never driven a van before and he wanted to know what it was like. Suddenly, Robinson asked, as the doors closed simultaneously, "So you want to go home, guys? I thought you wanted to swing by my house for a while."

"Thanks for the invitation, Rob, but I don't think that there are enough beds for us to spend the night," Hannah said and then gave him a hug to show her gratitude for the way he was treating her and her family.

"I don't have many beds, but I have plenty of Aero-Beds. I use them every time my parents and my brothers and sisters want to spend the night with me."

"You have a beautiful mansion, Rob," said Donovan.

"Yes, I know, but if I don't get the money that I need for my taxes soon, I might lose it."

"You need not worry about that," Heber said. "I can very well get my brother to pay your taxes for the next ten to fifteen years."

Amazed and open-mouthed, Robinson said, "Ten to fifteen years? You guys know how much money that is?"

"Let's see," said Heber and remained pensive for a few minutes, to calculate the sum of money in his mind. "It's \$10,000 of taxes per year, so it's \$1,000,000 worth of taxes. Oh, and your insurance for the next ten years would be over \$300,000."

"That's a lot of money, Dad!" said Donovan, worried.

"I'm sure your uncle Haggai will take care of it. He's got plenty of money to live the good life for the next fifty years and give enough money to 1,000 people for them to do the same."

The kids gasped. "Whoa!" they said in unison.

Suddenly, Haggai's Kia Sedona appeared out of nowhere. He had three \$500,000 Lamborghinis, three \$300,000 Bentleys, and he used that Sedona to take rides in town, whether it be to the beach or to take his kids to the park. As soon as Heber saw the license plate, he said, "Oh, my God, what's Haggai doing down here?"

"Uncle Haggai?" screamed Hannah in her sheer joy and amazement. "He's in Florida, right in front of us? Oh, my God, Dad, I want you to pull over! I want to say hi!"

Heber did as his daughter asked him to. He pulled over and just two minutes later, Haggai was getting out of his car. "Does someone in this minivan need me to pay his bills?" he asked, laughing and with a bright smile on his beautiful face.

Heber got out of the car and gave his brother a big hug. "I was so looking forward to seeing you, man!"

"So was I," replied Haggai. "Did you get my little present to you?"

"Your little present..." Heber said and suddenly recalled when the doctor injected the mysterious substance in his veins. He instantly figured out that it was a specimen that was injected in his bloodstream, not a sleeper substance or a medicine. "Oh, my God...!"

"That's right," said Haggai, smiling, and with his arms crossed across his chest, "I finally got what I wanted and you finally got what you needed."

"You did it? It's thanks to you that I'm now feeling like nothing happened?" "Yes!" said Haggai, smiling.

Heber hugged him again. "I was stupid to not want to do it willingly. Being like this feels so good."

## Chapter 3

“Does it?” Haggai said.

“I feel great. My self-esteem is at an all-time-high, I feel clean, and I’m not self-conscious of anything... I feel like I can take on anything.”

“That’s exactly what I wanted for you, but dear brother, you wouldn’t listen.”

“That’s OK,” said Heber, “it’s all over. Hey, what do you say you stay at my house all the while you spend here in the Sunshine State?”

“That’s just what I was thinking, brother, that I could spend the next three months in your house.”

“The next three months?” Heber said, amazed. “What are you planning to do, installing a Brady Dairy premise here in Florida?”

“Yes, in fifty-five different locations. I was thinking that perhaps you could help me and be the head of the enterprise down here.”

Heber could not believe his ears. “Are you serious, Haggai?”

“As serious as I is when I say that Brady Dairy Product fans can’t wait until the enterprise has an establishment in Florida. I’m at the top of the world, Heber. So close to world domination.”

“No, man, that’s not world domination. World domination is conceiving a thousand babies in one day.”

Haggai listened attentively. “...Interesting...”

“You don’t need to sleep with one thousand women and impregnate them in order to achieve that. All that you need is one woman with which you can conceive one thousand babies at one time.”

Haggai gasped. “...Really? And where do you suppose that I could find her?”

“Go back underground.”

“What?”

“There are plenty of women down there that could give you the pleasure of fabulous sex and the immense joy of reproduction, all at the same time.”

“I thought that the only women like us were the Brady and the Bennett women. I could never mate with Robinson Bennett’s mother.”

“You don’t have to mate with Bennett’s mother! Trust me; there are plenty of she-creatures down there! All that you have to do is choose one and get it on with her.”

“You invite me underground? Let’s go underground! Come on! Don’t worry about Anna Maria. She will stay with the kids.”

“Don’t worry about them. They can’t go down under anyway. They’d literally fry, and we certainly don’t want them to do that.”

“No,” said Heber, “we don’t. All right, let’s go. Do we have to dig in a specific location or can we just sink and go farther and farther down until we get to where we want to go?” Heber had never gone down there before.

“No, we don’t have to dig. All that we have to do is get back to the sand, outside the road, on the sidewalk, on some yard, and give three hard jumps. After we jump three times, we literally sink.”

“Whoa!”

“Yes! It’s like a giant gorilla!”

Heber laughed. “OK, let’s waste no more time. Let’s go.”

Haggai and Heber stood in a young woman’s yard. The ground felt soft and very penetrable. A few minutes later, they proceeded to jump. They gave three hard jumps that caused great tremors. It felt like an earthquake was shattering the entire city into a million and one different pieces. The lady and her kids, they were so frightened that they literally froze. They didn’t dare to do anything about it. They felt that if they were to get out of the house, the ground would swallow them whole. Unbelievably, nothing happened to any structure of the city. Houses and buildings were completely intact.

Meanwhile, the Brady twins started exploring the ground down below, digging and digging horizontally with their arms and legs. They dug and dug and dug until they were fifty-five miles from the location from where they started. Suddenly, five beautiful, but very abnormal and strange-looking women approached them. The first one visualized Heber with his wife and knew he was married. She totally lost interest in him. These women they didn’t like married men, and the men also preferred single women—ladies that didn’t even have boyfriends or casual lovers. She stepped away and left the other women alone with Haggai.

The woman and Haggai kissed. Rather than having sex with her, he just implanted his semen directly into the section of her body that her egg was closest to. This woman was a virgin and he didn’t want to corrupt her. He wouldn’t have sex with her unless they got married—and they wouldn’t. Another man was waiting to take that same woman to the altar—a human man. Human men were crazy about those women, and they wanted to meet them so badly that ten thousand of them had already died underground.

The woman got pregnant instantly. Her belly grew and grew until it looked like a nine-month-pregnant belly in only ten minutes. The woman lied down delicately and slowly, spread her legs open, and with one big push, she gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. It was ten pounds and nine ounces; absolutely stunning. He inherited his father’s and his uncle’s beautiful aquamarine blue eyes.

The woman smiled. “Like your new baby?”

“I love him,” said Haggai, “he’s beautiful.”

“Do you want me to give your brother a baby, too?”

“I don’t know if he wants a baby right now.” He turned to Heber and asked, “Want to have a baby with her, Heber?”

“Hmm,” said Heber, “I want to see if there’s a way that this woman could impregnate my wife by giving us our own baby. I don’t think Anna Maria would support anything being injected in her.”

“She hates needles, doesn’t she?” said the woman.

“She cries at the sight of a needle.”

“Oh, OK. Where’s your wife? I’m going to approach her, look her in the eyes for a few minutes, and when I leave, she’s going to be very pregnant. She’s going to give birth right where she is.”

Heber laughed and said, “I like that.” As Haggai carried his new baby in his arms, they parted from the scene. “We’ll see you later.” He didn’t know the woman’s name. “We’ll keep in touch.”

The women said goodbye to the twins. The first woman accompanied the twins outside. They ascended to the surface, like gophers. A five-year-old passed by. He was impressed. He said, "Hi."

"Hi," said Haggai, "would you please guide me back to Peasant Street?"

"Peasant Street? That's exactly fifty-three miles away." "Do you think you can take us there?" said Heber.

"Take you there?" the boy laughed. "...How? I can't drive. Besides, I can't go anywhere without my parents' permission."

"We didn't mean literally take us there. We meant that we want you to tell us how to go there."

"Oh, you want me to tell you how to go there." They knew how to go there. They were just testing the little boy's ingenious. They wanted to test his problem-solving skills. "If you want to, I can have my mom look it up on the Internet, in the white pages, and then she can print out the directions."

"That would be nice."

"Do you think you can wait?"

"Sure," said Haggai. "We can wait."

The little boy went inside his house and met his mother in the kitchen. She was making him a snack, brownies. They were made with healthy cooking spray and all of her love. He went up to her and gave her a hug and a kiss. "Hello, Mom."

"Hello, honey," she said, "your brownies will be ready in just a minute."

"Mom, I need you to do something for me while the brownies cook."

"Sure, baby, what is it?"

"I need you to get on the computer and print out driving directions to go to Peasant Street. I met three people outside who got lost and they asked me to take them there somehow. That's the only way that I could possibly think of to get them there, by giving them printed directions."

"I told you not to talk to strangers," she said and got on her knees and caressed his cheek, "but I admire your beautiful intentions of helping others."

"They're good people. Besides, they couldn't have kidnapped me because obviously, they didn't bring a car with them. Their car is in Peasant Street, I think."

"I thought they had brought their car."

"No, they didn't."

"Well, in that case," she said and held his hand, walking him to the door. She opened the door, "let's take our new friends to Peasant Street!" They sped out the door.

Heber and his family arrived home. Everyone got out of the car simultaneously. They went to the entrance door. Haggai observed the living room. He'd never been to Heber's house before.

Suddenly, he got a call on his cellular phone. Heber knew that the caller had fallen madly in love with Haggai, and he wanted to bring her closer to him. She saw Haggai's phone numbers with a picture of him on her computer desktop while she was typing up a report. She called Haggai immediately.

"Hello," he said, "this is Haggai Brady."

"Is it Haggai Brady," the lady asked, "the most beautiful and handsome man in the universe?" and then gave away a sigh. "Oh, my God, I must be dreaming!"

Haggai smiled. "Who am I talking to? Who just made my literally rainy day?" he said.

"I won't tell you my name until we meet in person," she affirmed. "If that's what you want," he replied, "that's what you will get." "When and where can we meet?"

"Hmm," Haggai said, and then suddenly remembered how Hannah said that she liked to eat at Denny's. Then he asked, "Why don't we meet at Denny's, tomorrow at six?"

"That's great!" the girl said. "I prefer going out at night." "Do you have a curfew?"

"Yes. I have to be back home and midnight. The older that I get, the later that I get to stay out."

Haggai smiled and said, "That's great! How old are you?" "I'm seventeen," she said.

"OK, then," he said, "we'll want to keep our relationship non-sexual until you turn eighteen."

The girl smiled and said, "OK, then, so, we've come to an agreement. OK, Haggai, I will see you tomorrow at six." She hung up, ran to her bed, turned around and threw her on it backwards. "I met you in a very strange way, and already, I can't stop thinking about you. I love you, Haggai Brady!"

Haggai flipped his cell phone closed. Heber passed him by as he walked to the TV to clean it with Windex and a paper towel. Haggai asked him, "You did that, didn't you?"

Heber smiled innocently and asked, "Did what?"

"Don't play," Haggai said, smiling. "I'm talking about you. You welcomed me to Florida by getting me a date."

Heber gasped, pretending to be surprised. "How did you know?" He had the bottle of Windex in the left hand and the paper towel in his right hand.

"When people do things, for me, or to me," answered Haggai, "I find out about those things right after people do them, especially when it's my twin brother doing those things," with the brightest smile in his face.

"However, you're doubtful about getting a date," Heber said and sat on the love seat right beside the couch, where Haggai sat, "is that right?" Heber somehow felt that Haggai wanted him to sit on the sofa, right beside him, so he got up, walked a few steps to the sofa, and sat right beside Haggai.

Haggai placed his arm around the back of Heber's shoulder. He said to Heber, "It's not that I don't need a woman in my life because I do. Every man and woman needs a mate."

Heber tried to finish Haggai's thought by saying, "You're just afraid that you're going to end up in a marriage of convenience."

"That's right," Haggai affirmed. "I don't want to marry a woman that will want me solely for my money."

"Well, you need not to worry about that for two reasons: you have the extraordinary gift of..." he said and remained pensive for a few minutes, "great charm and great looks."

"I know that's not what you meant," Haggai said as he and Heber laughed together, "but we're not going to argue over something so insignificant. What I'm going to do is give every one of those words back to you."

"OK," said Heber, "I am sure that I arranged a date with a great woman for you. That woman, whom preferred not to tell her name, she couldn't be better for you. She and her family

are poor, but she has the means of becoming a very successful entrepreneur. She's got the package, man!"

"Does she?"

"I assure you that she does. I hooked you up with la crème de la crème." They laughed together again and hugged. When Heber let go, he said, "You won't regret it, man. This I guarantee to you. She was meant for you, literally—born to spend the rest of her life with you."

They hugged again. Haggai said, "Thank you so much for this, Heber, for caring so much about me."

Heber simply replied, "I thank you for doing the same for me."

Rebecca was at home, in her room, writing her report. Luckily, she was almost done with it. Suddenly, Rebecca's sister, Dawn walked into her room. Dawn noticed an uncommon sheen in Rebecca's eyes as she looked in her eyes to get her attention. "Why are you so happy?" she said.

Rebecca stopped typing for a few minutes, looked Dawn in the eyes, gave Dawn all of her attention, and said to her, "I've got a date!"

Surprised, Dawn smiled and yelled, "You finally got a date!" Then, she turned serious and said, "I mean you finally said yes to someone that asked you on a date!" She was worried that Rebecca would get offended with the first comment that she made.

Nevertheless, Rebecca took it lightly. "Yes," she said, "I finally said yes to someone that asked me out on a date."

"Was it one of the guys of your school, or one of the guys from my school?" Dawn was five years older than Rebecca was. She was very popular in her college campus. Seventy-five percent of the guys on campus were her friends. Despite Rebecca's incredible and undeniable beauty, none of the guys that Dawn hung out with were interested in a romantic relationship with her because they knew that if they even tried anything with her, they would go to jail.

"It's neither one of those," Rebecca answered. "This guy is four years older than you are."

Dawn gasped. "Four years older than I am? Rebecca, that means that he's nine years older than you are!"

"I know," Rebecca said, "but that doesn't matter to me. There are women that have good relationships with men that are twenty and even thirty years older than they are."

Dawn responded, "Relationships are harder to keep when age difference is ten years or more."

"That's your opinion," Rebecca said, "and I respect it, but I disagree. This guy and I, we are going to have a relationship." Rebecca was notably angry.

Dawn sat in front of Rebecca, on Rebecca's bed, and said, "Now, calm down, Rebecca. I didn't mean for you to get angry. All that I'm saying is that..."

Rebecca didn't let Dawn finish her thought. She got up from her chair and said, as she walked toward the bedroom door, "I am going to turn eighteen within three months."

"Rebecca..." Dawn said, but once again, she'd have to swallow whatever it was that she had to say.

"Now, I'm not stupid," Rebecca said "to think that becoming an adult will empower me to do anything that I want, just to have a relationship with any man that I want."

Dawn got up and walked toward her. "Rebecca, listen to me, please," she said to her.

“That means,” Rebecca added as she turned the knob behind her, “that if I want to date and have a relationship with a sixty-year-old man, I can do it, and since I would have the favor of the law, nothing or no one could stop me.” Rebecca walked out of her bedroom and closed the door behind her, leaving Dawn literally speechless.

Suddenly, it occurred to Dawn to do something that would really hurt Rebecca, to get back at her for treating her so roughly. She immediately sat on the computer and clicked on the `_close_` button on the word-processor to eliminate Rebecca’s report completely. It didn’t occur to Rebecca to save her work. No one had ever done something like this to Rebecca before—getting into her personal business to do her harm. Rebecca thought that Dawn really loved her and she never thought that an argument between her and her only sister would drive her only sister to threaten her entire future. Then, Dawn closed the word-processor and opened the Internet Explorer to browse a few websites.

Haggai suddenly knew what had just happened to Rebecca’s report with the power of telekinesis, Haggai made it possible for Rebecca’s report to resurge out of the blue. Rebecca only needed one more paragraph; her thesis, to finish her report. In less than one minute, Rebecca’s computer retyped the entire thirty-page report, except the thesis. He wanted to make it look like Dawn had never closed the document without saving it. The things that Heber told Haggai about Rebecca, they made Haggai love Rebecca so much that he’d do anything to keep anyone from ruining her life.

To Dawn’s utter shock, the computer saved the document, naming it `_03/07/2006_`, after the due date, and closed the word-processor. Rebecca still had a few days to retype her report if it got lost for any reason, but she didn’t have the time to gather her sources to get her information from, rewrite the information on almost 1,000 index cards, and rewrite it by hand as a rough draft. Hadn’t it been for Haggai, she would’ve gotten a zero on her report and wound up failing the course; thus this report was worth forty percent of her final grade on the course for this semester. Dawn knew this and that is why she wanted Rebecca to lose her report, but Haggai ruined her evil and unjustified plot.

When Dawn pressed the `_start_` button on the desktop taskbar, and then went to open the word-processor to try and delete Rebecca’s report from the computer again, the computer shut down in less than three seconds. Dawn tried to turn the computer back on, but it wouldn’t come on. It was as if the computer had suddenly run out of power for damage done to the power supply. Dawn couldn’t believe what was happening. She raced out of Rebecca’s room to tell her that her computer had been destroyed from the inside out. She couldn’t make her lose her report, but she would tear Rebecca apart by making her believe that her report got lost when her computer broke down. This was the second plan that she had failed to execute because of Haggai.

Rebecca was in the living room, talking to her parents about her date with Haggai. From her parents’ reaction, it seemed to Dawn like Rebecca was talking to them about her favorite soap opera actor, and what happened to his character in yesterday’s episode. “Rebecca, we don’t have a problem with you dating Haggai Brady as long as you don’t let him take advantage of you,” Rebecca’s mother, Jessica commented.

Drew, Dawn and Rebecca’s father, he replied, “He’d be your first boyfriend, if you started a relationship with him, and even if he wasn’t, he’s the adult and you’re the minor. If he knows what’s best for him, he should keep that in mind.”

Dawn walked up to her parents, and as she stood right in the middle of the living room, she commented, "So, you wouldn't sell your little girl to Haggai Brady, knowing that he's one of the most powerful men in the whole world."

Drew and Jessica stared at Dawn wide-eyed and open-mouthed in their outrage to her comment.

"I can't believe that you just said that," Rebecca said to Dawn.

"Are you out of your mind, Dawn?" Drew yelled. "What's wrong with you?"

Rebecca got up from her love seat and sped back to her bedroom and Dawn grabbed her arm to get her to turn around and look back at her. Rebecca screamed, "Don't touch me!" and punched her out, knocking her down on the floor. "Do you think that Mom, Dad and I are like you? You've always dreamed of marrying a multimillionaire, so that you could have anything and everything that you could possibly ask for! That's not I!"

Dawn slowly got up and said to Rebecca, looking her in the eyes with all of her passionate hate, "You'll regret hitting me, I swear it!"

Rebecca ignored Dawn's threat and said, "You know I was never interested in Haggai Brady. He was the last thing on my mind until now. My love for him was sudden and I started feeling it before I even had a chance to breathe!"

"You're a liar, you know that?" said Dawn, humiliating Rebecca. "No one could possibly love someone before meeting them."

"Oh, you're just saying that because you haven't been in love, ever in your life!"

"Do I have to be in love?"

"Woman, forget about it! I am not going to argue with you!"

Dawn went after Rebecca as Rebecca went to her room, but Rebecca shut the door on her face and picked up the phone to call Haggai.

Haggai was in his office, picking up someone's formal complaint about one of his groceries, from his desk. The phone rang. Rebecca had no idea how she had dialed Haggai's office number, but she did, even though he never gave it to her. "Hello, Brady Foods, this is Haggai Brady. How may I help you?"

Panting heavily, Rebecca said, "Haggai, I need some advice. I would just leave my house but I can't because I'm not eighteen yet and I..." she said out of breath. "I can't take it anymore. My sister..."

"Your sister is making your life a living hell."

"Yes, how did you know?"

"She's the only reason why you want to leave, because your parents are very good to you and they would never do anything to push you away."

"How do you know that?"

"I know you, Rebecca. The only thing I didn't know about you before I met you was your face."

"How is that possible?" she smiled. "Oh, you're just saying that to enamor me," she said, angrily, "and guess what...! It's working," she said, smiling again.

Haggai laughed. "That's why I love you so much, because you're so sweet. I don't know if you know this, but within you, you have all the power to do what you want and get what you want. You have to use the power you have to completely shut out Dawn, completely ignore her, no matter what she says or does."

"...Really? How do I do that, Haggai?"

“All you have to do is just start to ignore her. If you ignore something, within the next minute, if you put all your effort to it, it’s literally going to be like it’s not even there. Just pretend that she doesn’t exist, and in the end, she will give up the crap and leave you alone. Hell, if she feels like she doesn’t exist, she will even leave the house.”

“Are you serious?”

“As serious as I is when I say my name’s Haggai Brady. Try it. I have to go, but if you need anything call me at my cell phone.” He dictated his cell phone to Rebecca and Rebecca wrote it on her little address book along with his work number and his home number, and his email address.

“Thank you,” said Rebecca. “I have to go, too. I have to make her leave,” Rebecca said and hung up.

Dawn went to Rebecca’s room to get on her nerves again. She was trying to get Rebecca in trouble with her parents so that Jessica and Drew would ground Rebecca. “You don’t throw the door on my face like that,” she said.

“Are you threatening me?” Rebecca said, falling into Dawn’s trap, but suddenly, she remembered Haggai’s words. *Ignore her completely. Pretend that she’s not there. Pretend that she doesn’t exist, and she will leave.* Rebecca took Haggai’s words to heart, kept her mouth shut, and started organizing everything in her computer desk, just to do something that would take Dawn off her mind.

Dawn insisted in bothering her. “Rebecca, I am not threatening you. I’m just saying... you need help, you know that?”

Rebecca said not one word.

“You are crazy.”

Rebecca still didn’t respond.

“Are you there?” Dawn said, swaying her hand in front of Rebecca’s face in the air, to get her attention. “Are you listening to me?” She yelled in Rebecca’s ear. “Did you hear me? You are crazy!”

Rebecca still said nothing.

“Oh, my God,” said Dawn. “I think Rebecca literally went crazy, and it’s my entire fault. I never meant for this to happen. No.” Dawn got out of the room. She didn’t want to tell her parents what had happened to Rebecca because she knew she’d be the one to get in trouble, so Dawn went to her boyfriend Greg’s house in her car.

Ten minutes later, Dawn arrived at Greg’s house. She got out of the car, walked to the entrance, and rang the bell.

From the way that Dawn rang the bell, Greg knew that it was she, so he had just gotten out of the shower, and instead of putting some clothes on, he just wrapped a towel around his waist and went to the living room to open the door.

Greg had a nice body. Dawn gasped. “Oh, my God, is that you?” she had seen him naked many times before, but he didn’t look this sexy before. She wanted to be with him because it was the only way that she could temporarily forget about what, according to her, had just happened to Rebecca. She was in the mood for some affection.

“Of course it’s me,” said Greg. “Come on in.”

Dawn went in. She grabbed Greg, dragged him to his bedroom as she kissed him passionately, slammed the bedroom door, dragged him to the bed, yanked off his towel, threw him on the bed, and got on top of him. She couldn’t stop kissing him. They were on his bed, in

vertical position, heads on headboards and feet on the foot of the bed. She kissed him and started having intercourse with him. She jumped and rocked his body so wildly that he couldn't stop moaning and wincing. All this went on for the next three hours, until they fell asleep, Dawn resting her head on his chest.

One hour later, Greg woke up. Dawn woke up, too. "Hi," he said to her.

Smiling, she said, "Hi."

"I know we've had sex many times, but that was... I can't explain it. That was... No woman had ever made love to me like that."

"I've never made love to a man like that, either. I guess I was just desperate. Something had happened between me and Rebecca and I just... rather than snapping and hitting her hard for the first time in my life I just came here and..."

"You used me to relieve your tension."

"Well, no, I didn't use you. I would've done anything to get over my stupid sister and pretend she didn't exist."

"That's ok, baby," said the always love struck Greg. "I am your toy. Any time you feel like you can take it anymore just play with me any time you like, any way you like, whenever you like." They kissed again.

Dawn and Greg put some clothes on and went to Greg's kitchen to get some ice cream. They were a little hungry, but they didn't want to eat anything heavy because they didn't feel like it. They just wanted something light that would satisfy them. Meanwhile, Rebecca called Haggai again, this time at home.

Haggai picked up the phone. "Hello."

"I am sorry to bother you again."

"You're not bothering me," said Haggai. "Tell me what's eating you." Rebecca sat on her bed. "I just got into a big fight with Dawn."

"Why?"

"We fought, well, I don't remember why we fought, but among other things, she told me that I only wanted you for your money."

"If that were true, I'd stay away from you because I would know immediately. That's the reason why I haven't gotten married, because all the women that I've had relationships with were gold diggers," he explained.

"Ouch!" said Rebecca, grinding her teeth. "Well, I've just got a lot of things on my mind right now."

"Do you think we can meet somewhere so you can talk about it?"

"I've got to ask my parents for permission."

"Why don't they come with us?" said Haggai, smiling.

"I don't want to talk about Dawn in front of them."

He turned serious. "Well, if that's the case, well, we can have some ice cream at Anita's and we can talk about it."

"Anita's is only five blocks from my house. Ok..."

"Ok, I will see you there," said Haggai and hung up.

Drew and Jessica were watching TV, in their bed, in their room. They were watching some stupid court show. It was boring, but they didn't feel like channel surfing. Drew had his arm around Jessica. Suddenly, there was a knock on the door. "Come in, Becks," said Drew and looked at Jessica. Jessica looked worried. Every time that their daughter wanted to talk to them,

it would always be asking permission to go somewhere or telling on Dawn for something bad she'd done to her. Drew and Jessica were so sick of this situation that they were about to kick Dawn out of the house. Dawn was an adult anyway, so she could take care of herself. The tense situation between Dawn and Rebecca made their parents wonder why they'd let Dawn stay home with them.

Rebecca came into their room, crying, and ran toward them. "I'm sorry to bother you." She threw herself into Jessica's arms and cried some more, while Jessica tried to comfort her.

"What's the matter now, honey?" asked Drew.

"I want to talk to you about kicking Dawn out of the house."

Drew and Jessica looked at one another, not surprised. They knew that this was coming. "I never thought it would come to this, but I can't stand her," said Rebecca, tears running down her eyes.

"We've been thinking of kicking her out," said Drew.

"Drew..." said Jessica.

"Dawn's an adult, Jessica. Why won't she just leave us alone and move in with Greg?"

"Now, Rebecca, Dawn's your sister. She's living with us because she and I have always had a good relationship."

"So, you're basically choosing her over me, Mom. I can't believe it, Mom! What the hell is wrong with you?"

Jessica got off the bed in a matter of seconds and slapped her daughter. "You can't talk to me like that."

Crying even more bitterly, Rebecca said, holding her cheek, "I'm moving in with Aunt Marissa."

Drew was so shocked he just sat on the bed, openmouthed. He didn't know what to say next.

"No, you're not. You are my daughter and you're staying here with me. Marissa loves you like a daughter, but she also knows not to touch you."

"Aunt Marissa loves you. She's your sister. Dawn doesn't love me." "Yeah, well, I don't love Marissa.

"That figures. I guess the story repeats itself, huh?" Dawn walked out of the room and closed the door behind her.

Jessica lied back down on the bed like nothing had ever happened.

Drew hissed, "Are you crazy?"

She looked at him with disbelief. "Drew, I love Dawn. I can't just kick her out just because Rebecca can't get along with her, and Rebecca's a minor, so she's staying here with me."

"Yes, she's staying here with you so you can make her life a living hell," he said as he got off the bed and put some clothes on. "Yeah, like I'm going to let that happen." He walked out of the room in a matter of minutes, and on the doorway to the room, he said, "You're out of your mind," and closed the door behind him.

Jessica took off her casual clothes, left her underwear on, wore some nice clothes in less than fifteen minutes to go to Marissa's house, and walked out of the room. In the meantime, Drew and Rebecca had already left together, and they were on their way to his brother, Richard's house. Jessica didn't know it, but Drew was planning to sell the house, which was solely in his name and was an asset he'd acquired before getting married to Jessica, and kick Jessica and

Dawn out to the street. He didn't love his wife at all anymore, but he loved Dawn, and selling the house was the only way for him to get her out of the house and for her to become independent. There was one thing Drew knew as he drove to his brother's house: since Dawn and Rebecca couldn't get along, they had to be separated.

"We're going to Richard's house, ok, honey?" said Drew as he focused on the road. "Does he have room for us?"

"Of course he does, honey. He has a guestroom that no one's ever used, remember? That room is going to be for you while I sell my house and get another one, and then, Richard is going to let me stay in Ron's room while Ron sleeps on the sofa bed, in the living room."

"Isn't the house yours, though?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you just file for legal separation and kick Mom and Dawn out?" "You know, I was so desperate I didn't think of that before. We don't have to go anywhere. They're the ones that have to go!" Drew made a call to Richard on his hands-free phone.

Richard took the call immediately. "Hello."

"Becks just gave me an idea. All I have to do is kick that bitch out and her daughter out."

"You know how hard it would be for you to kick them out, even if the house is yours?"

You'd have to take them to court in order to remove them from the house. Let's stick to the plan for now."

"But you only have one room available, and Rebecca and I can't sleep in the same room!"

"I know that, bro. Take it easy. Relax."

"I don't want Ron to sleep in the living room."

"Then, why don't you sleep in the living room?"

"Ok..."

"You know we have to stick to the plan. Your bitch of a wife has lived there with you for over twenty-five years, and you know that she's going to concoct some nefarious plan to take the house away from you. You ought to know how evil she is by now."

"I know. You've always told me, but I was so whipped I refused to listen." "Well, that's not exactly what I was going to say."

"But it's what you meant, Ricky! You know that. You've always thought twice about what to say before saying it, but I know you so well, I know what you're thinking. We've got that connection. We're identical twins!"

"Right..."

Rebecca sent a text message to Haggai on her phone. She didn't want her and Drew's arrival to disrupt the Riley home, so she decided to apologize to Haggai for not making it to Anita's and ask him for help. The message was short but concise.

SORRY I COULDN'T GO TO ANITA'S WITH YOU. DAD AND I NEED A NEW HOUSE.  
HELP.

Rebecca closed her flipping phone. Luckily for her, when she was typing the message, Drew didn't hear her texting, and never knew about the message, so she and her father continued on their way to her uncle and her cousin's house. Ronald always loved Rebecca like a sister. He'd never had a sister. Ronald only had his twin brother, Ricky, but Ricky, since they were adults, twenty-one years old, Ricky lived in his own house and Ronald lived with his parents because he still had no credit, he'd never bought anything with credit, so before moving out and becoming independent, he'd have to establish his credit first, by buying a house or a car, or getting a credit card, and he was afraid to do that.

Haggai replied to Rebecca's message, asking her the address of the house she was going to live at. Rebecca silenced the phone's keys and replied to Haggai's message with the address of Richard's house. Before Drew and Rebecca could get there, when they were just three minutes from arriving, Haggai appeared there and landed right on Richard's driveway. Ronald was watching TV, and suddenly something drove him to look right out the window. He blurted, "Haggai Brady, what the hell?" He did it just when Richard was coming into the kitchen.

## Chapter 4

Richard looked out the window and said, "Holy cow, I just saw him put his wings back into his back. I didn't know that Brady was a freakish creature."

"You don't want to know what the true anatomy of these creatures is, Dad," said Ronald as he opened the door for everyone. "They say that when you see the true face of one of those creatures, you literally have cardiac arrest and die. They don't even have a name for those creatures yet. They're called simply Underground Creatures." Ron opened the door and gasped.

Without saying a word, Rebecca just hugged Ronald, crying into his arms, and Ronald suddenly felt sadly. "Oh, God, you have no idea what I've been through Ron!

Ron could tell that Rebecca had never known the love of a sibling, and since he loved her like a sister, he could give that to her. Haggai hugged Rebecca also. Everyone went in. "It's going to be ok, dear," said Ron as he closed the door behind everyone and hugged his cousin again. "She's not going to hurt you anymore. I promise."

"You guys talking about Dawn?"

"Yes," said Rebecca, crying as she sat down on the couch.

Ronald hurried to the kitchen and got Rebecca some 'Kleenex' tissues. Then he went back to the living room and handed them to Rebecca. However, Rebecca decided it was better to wash her face. She said, "I'm going to wash my face," as she got up from the couch, and walked out of the living room, into the hallway, and walked straight into the hallway bathroom, right beside what used to be Ricky's room, and closed the door behind her, as everyone looked at her, saddened.

Ron said, "What happened? My Rebecca's depressed!"

"We've been through hell and back with Jessica and Dawn," said Drew as he sat where Rebecca was sitting.

"This makes me wonder: Does Aunt Jessica love Rebecca?" said Ron.

"No," Haggai answered, "she doesn't. In fact, she never has. That's why Rebecca has to stay away from her mother, because although Mrs. Riley has never abused her younger daughter physically, she continuously abuses her daughter verbally precisely because of Dawn."

Drew was shocked. He didn't know any of this. "Are you serious?"

"Yes, Mr. Riley, unfortunately, I am serious."

Rebecca had just finished washing her face and she came out of the bathroom and closed the door behind her. "What's going on?" Everybody was silent.

"Haggai just revealed to us that your mother has never loved you," answered Ron.

"Like I didn't know that," said Rebecca and sat beside her father.

"Anyway, this is what we're going to do, all right?" said Haggai. "First of all, you're going to do a quit-claim deed on your house, Mr. Riley," he said to Drew, "and give it to your wife, so there are no problems between you during the divorce proceedings."

"But Mom will fight for my custody," said Rebecca, worried.

"That's just it, Rebecca. Your dad will offer your mom the house in exchange of your custody," said Haggai.

Everybody gasped.

"She won't accept!" said Drew.

"Oh, yes, she will. If I knew that she wouldn't accept, I wouldn't even be suggesting this."

“Let’s do this right now,” said Drew and retrieved his cell phone from the front pocket of his long-sleeved, buttoned shirt.

Just when Drew was about to dial his home number to talk to Jessica, Haggai said, “Not so fast, Mr. Riley.”

Drew closed his phone. “Call me Drew, please. After all, you’re going to be my son in law soon,” and smiled. Everybody looked at him, stunned.

Haggai was so emotional that rather than crying, he just cleared his throat and decided to forget that Drew had ever made that comment, at least for the moment, while he finished his thought. “Anyway... you have to wait until I buy you a new house and put it in your name... Drew.”

Drew was stunned. “Say what?” Rebecca was just as astonished. She didn’t know what to say. She thought that when she sent those text messages asking Haggai for help, that Haggai would just provide her and her father with a place to live, temporarily. Haggai had two houses that he was renting to two different families, but one of those families had moved out after getting their own home, and Rebecca knew this.

“Yes, Drew, I am buying another house and putting it in your name. I know you’re going to suggest I do this with one of my rental houses, to just sign it over to you...”

“Yes,” said Drew.

Haggai interrupted him. “But I’m not going to do that because I just received a phone call from a woman whose family desperately needs that house because it’s equipped for handicapped people and she has a mildly physically-handicapped fourteen-year-old daughter, so...”

Rebecca said, “Mildly handicapped meaning...”

“That the only thing she can’t do is walk,” said Haggai.

“Oh...” said Ron.

“Like I was saying,” said Haggai as he walked closer to Drew and Rebecca, “I agreed to rent them the house and I can’t back out now. I am only asking for \$350 a month, \$350 deposit and no security because the family’s middle class and, you know, I can’t charge them what other landlords charge. That’s why I am just going to buy you a new house.”

“...A used house,” said Drew.

“...A new house,” Haggai corrected. “I’m the one who’s going to buy it, so I will decide if it’s going to be new or used.”

Everyone laughed and Drew said, “Ok, whatever you say.”

Haggai laughed. “Yes. It’s going to have three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room to receive guests and a family room. Of course, you’re going to have your own bedroom, Rebecca’s going to have her own bedroom, and the extra bedroom will be for when you remarry and have another child...”

Drew asked, stunned, “I’m going to remarry and have another child?” “Yes,” said Haggai.

“How can you predict the future?” asked Richard, stunned.

“I don’t know how. I just know I can. Before we change the subject I’m going to tell you this. The only reason why you’re going to have a child with your second and last wife even though you have two grown daughters is because your future wife is young and she doesn’t have any children yet.”

Drew repeated, looking at the ceiling, blown away, “Second and last wife,” and then asked, “Does this mean that I’m going to spend the rest of my life with this babe?”

Everyone laughed when he said, *\_babe\_*.”

“Yes, Drew that’s exactly how it means,” Haggai sighed, as Drew clapped his hands, smiling, excited, like a child who was about to get his favorite dessert after dinner. “Moving on... the house that I’m talking about, which I think is perfect for you; they’ve just finished building it. It’s in my neighborhood. I am going to purchase it. It’s going to be a couple of days.”

*Two weeks later*

After spending the best two weeks of their lives in Richard’s house, Rebecca and Drew were getting ready to move out. Ron gave Rebecca his laptop just so that she would have something great to remember him by. The computer was relatively new. Ron had only had it for two and a half months. Before giving her his computer, Ron didn’t delete his user account. All that he did was to back up his files on recordable DVD’s, and he had lots of them. Before leaving, Rebecca asked Ron to give her copies of his files so she could have his files with her forever, and Ron complied. Richard and his wife, Whitney, they bought some clothes for Drew and Rebecca because they didn’t want them to have to go back to what was now Jessica’s house officially. Just like Haggai predicted, Jessica gave Drew total and physical custody of Rebecca in exchange for what was now her house. Jessica didn’t do it because she preferred the house over her daughter, but she did it as true of her and Dawn’s true repentance for everything that they’d put Drew and Rebecca through. Dawn’s fiancé, Greg, he’d changed Dawn’s life forever. Their relationship started as a friends-with-benefits-relationship and now, it was a commitment relationship. Greg adored Dawn so much that he wanted to marry her and start a family with her. To Greg, this relationship had always been a commitment because he loved her so much. It was Dawn’s idea to make it a casual relationship because she told Greg when they got together, that she wasn’t ready to commit just yet because she was too young; only twenty-two years old. Nonetheless, Dawn wasn’t sleeping with anybody else. She was only sleeping with Greg, and she was faithful to him for two reasons: she was only having a casual relationship because at the time, she was too young to marry or get committed to anyone, and Greg satisfied her sexually in a way that none of her other three boyfriends had. In addition to that, Dawn’s third boyfriend, Warren, he made a fool of her by making her believe that he loved her when in reality, she was just his booty call, and she didn’t know. That’s the reason why all that Greg used to be for Dawn was her toy, and not her real boyfriend. Even so, Greg proposed to Dawn the day after Rebecca and Drew moved into Richard and Whitney’s house, and Dawn accepted because she realized that she would never find another man like him.

Richard and Whitney let Drew and Rebecca take with them the clothes that they’d bought for them, and in addition to that, Dawn and Rebecca took what was now Rebecca’s laptop, a spindle of fifty DVDs that contained Ron’s files, and a few brand-new music CDs that Ron had given to Rebecca. During these two weeks, Ron became Rebecca’s psychologist, figuratively, because everyday, when they were alone in Ron’s room, Rebecca would tell Ron the things that she’d never told anyone else, not even her parents; things that Dawn had done to her that no one knew. Everyday, they would only talk about Dawn and how much harm she’d done to Rebecca because the horrible things that her sister did to her, those were the only secrets that Rebecca was holding from everyone. Rebecca would cry when she would talk about Dawn with Ron, and everyday, Ron would simply listen to her without saying a word, and then hug her, like a brother hugs his sister. Now, just when Rebecca and Drew were on their way to their new house, for

which the closing took place just the day before, Rebecca's, cell phone rang. Drew was in the driver's seat and Rebecca was in the passenger's seat. Rebecca's laptop was on the backseat, in a box, and Drew and Rebecca each had their own suitcase for their clothes. The suitcases were on the backseat and the laptop was right between them. The DVD spindle was on the back, on the floor, and it danced around the driver-seat side as Drew drove to his new home.

When the cell phone had rung twenty times, Rebecca finally took the call. Her voicemail hadn't been set up yet, and she had her cell phone set to ring a maximum of thirty times. It was Dawn, but Rebecca picked up the phone anyway. Once again, Dawn was about to change the lives of her entire family by revealing news that would figuratively make their world turn around the opposite way. "Hello, Dawn," said Rebecca, annoyed. She couldn't believe that Dawn had dared to call her after everything that had happened between them.

"Hello, Rebecca. I know I'm the last person in this world that you want to talk to, but..." Rebecca interrupted her. "Yes, Dawn, that's exactly right." "...But I have something very important to tell you."

With no emotion, Rebecca said, "Spit it out and then leave me alone. I've got things to do."

"Rebecca, I'm pregnant."

Rebecca's attitude toward Dawn changed completely after that revelation. Rebecca was the third person that Dawn told this to. First, she told her fiancé, then her mother, then her sister. "What did you just say?" said Rebecca, crying.

Drew took one look at his daughter, and when he noticed that she was crying, without saying a word, he took Rebecca's phone from her, closed it, opened the window and threw it right out. Then he said, "When we all promised that we wouldn't let her hurt you ever again, we meant it, Rebecca." He was referring to the entire family, except Jessica and Dawn.

"Dad, she didn't say anything bad to me," said Rebecca. She couldn't believe what her father had just done.

"She didn't say anything wrong," said Drew, not believing that for a second. "Why are you crying, then?"

"...Because she told me..."

"What did she say?"

"She told me that she's pregnant."

Drew just had to pull over at a sidewalk at that moment to get a grip and digest this one, rather than to continue driving and causing a car collision. He was too shocked and emotional to drive right now, and Rebecca was just as shaken. "She's pregnant?"

"Yes, Daddy, that's what she, told me."

"Is it too late to get the phone back?" he said as he got out of the car.

"Wait, Dad!" said Rebecca and got out of the car, too, with his phone in her hand, and just then, Drew's phone rang. "I don't care about my phone. I can always transfer my service to another one." Then, she answered the phone as Drew walked back to his car. "Hello."

"What happened to your phone?" said Dawn. "The stupid machine says that your number's not in service!"

"Dad took it from me when we were talking just now, and threw it out the window, but..."

"...And a car ran it over, so it's destroyed," said Drew. "I'm sorry, Becks, I'm going to get you another phone." He went back into the car, fastened the seatbelt, turned on the car

without starting it, just to get the air conditioner running, and waited in the car for Rebecca to come back in.

“Why did Dad throw the phone out the window?” said Dawn, incredulous. This sounded crazy to her.

Rebecca got back in the car and fastened her seatbelt. Just then, Drew started the car, pulled out of the sidewalk and took the road. “Dad did this because he thought you’d insulted me.”

“I know it’s my fault that he doesn’t trust me because everything that comes out of my mouth for you is either an insult or a lie. I’m always putting you down.” Dawn started to cry.

Rebecca took the phone off her ear and put it on speakerphone.

“I’m sorry, Rebecca,” said Dawn, crying bitterly. “Mom and I, we’re both so sorry. This child that I’m expecting, he or she changed my life completely. The moment I found out I was pregnant, which was roughly four hours ago, I realized just how unfair I’ve been.”

“Dawn...”

“I’ve done a lot of harm. I’m the worst sister in the world.”

“Everyone can change, Dawn,” said Drew. Since the phone was on speaker, Dawn heard him very clearly.

“Don’t hate Mom. Please don’t hate her. She was only defending me, Dad, because you would always take Rebecca’s side, and Mom thought that you preferred her over me. She knew you weren’t being fair.”

“Dawn, I think you need professional help,” said Rebecca.

“I agree,” said Drew.

“Why hasn’t Mom called me?”

“She called you like twenty times today, but I guess your phone was off at the time. She left you over twenty messages. She was apologizing. She was with me during all the phone calls she made to you.”

“So, you both want to apologize to us,” said Drew.

“Yes, we both do, but we think you hate us.”

“I don’t hate you and your mother,” said Drew.

“I don’t hate you guys either,” said Rebecca.

“So where are you guys going now, to the store? Is everything ok at Uncle Richard’s house?”

“Yes, everything was great there, but we’re moving out right this minute,” said Rebecca.

Jessica was right beside Dawn, and Dawn had the residential phone on speaker, too, so Jessica was listening to every single word, silently, so that Drew and Rebecca didn’t know that she was there.

“Why are you moving out? What happened?”

“Do you remember when Dad signed the house over to you and Mom?” “Yes.”

“Well, Haggai Brady just bought a new house for us and he signed it over to us, too. He gave us the title a few hours ago.”

“Why don’t you come back to this house?”

“...Because Daddy has custody of me now.”

“So...?”

“I don’t think it would be right.”

“So Dad is divorcing Mom anyway.”

“Yes, Dawn, it was a divorce of mutual agreement. Jess and I think that there’s no way we can save our marriage after everything that’s happened, and we’re moving on with our lives.”

Jess lip-synched, right in front of Dawn, “That’s right, Dawn,” and Dawn had the talent of reading lips, so she got the message loud and clear although it was delivered silently.

Neither Rebecca nor Drew dared to tell Dawn that Drew was destined to marry another woman. They thought that Dawn would become angry and return to being the bitch that she was before. “That’s, that’s great, I guess...” said Dawn, shocked. “Well, now that you have a new home, we want to know if we can visit you.”

“Yes, you can visit us anytime,” said Rebecca.

“Would you like to spend time with your first grandson, Dad?” asked Dawn innocently. “Of course, I would love to spend time with you and my grandson, honey.”

“How far along are you?”

“...Four months,” said Dawn.

“You’re four months pregnant and you didn’t find out \_til today?” yelled Rebecca, outraged.

“Yes, that’s right. You know that I’m diabetic and I thought that my gain weight and my other symptoms were due to my diabetes. You know we think that we’ve got it under control and suddenly we eat a little too much sugar and the next thing you know, you faint or you feel like you’re dying and all. I’ve been putting up with all this for four months until I couldn’t stop fainting and throwing up. Right then, Greg suspected that there was something else going on with me, so we went to the doctor this morning. I had a pregnancy test done, and I had other tests done and it turns out that my condition *is* under control and that I’m pregnant.”

*I’m going to have to talk to Haggai to see if there’s a way that we can cure my sister’s diabetes because I don’t want the baby’s life to continue to be in danger.* “That’s great, Dawn.” Rebecca was nervous. “That’s awesome.”

“Is something wrong, Becky?”

“No, nothing’s wrong.”

“You sound happy, but at the same time, you sound worried.”

“I’m just worried about your diabetes and the baby, and...”

“Don’t worry!” said Dawn. “I will take good care of me and my baby.” Dawn was smiling. “We’ll be fine. I know we will.”

*And I will make sure of it.* “Ok, Dawn, we’ve got to let you go because we’re on our way to our new home, and we don’t have a lot of stuff to unpack, but, you know, we have to buy all the furniture and all, and there’s a lot of things that have to be done, so... yeah...”

“Ok, I will talk to you later,” said Dawn. “Bye.” She hung up.

A few minutes later, Drew and Rebecca arrived at their new home. They didn’t know it, but contrary to what they thought, the house wasn’t empty. In fact it was anything but empty. Something strange happened when Drew pressed the button to open the garage door. The garage was pitching black. They got out of the car, went in through the entrance and the house was also pitch black.

“What’s going on?” said Drew as he explored the house. He bumped into a luxurious chair and knew he was in the dining room. It was now 5:00 PM, EST, but it was the summertime, so it was still sunny and bright outside, but the house was as dark as could be because all the blinds were shut. Drew kept bumping into furniture and said, “What in the world,

this house is furnished?" He suddenly heard a little kid's laugh, but it was very faint, almost nonexistent, and for a moment Drew thought he was having auditory hallucinations, so he ignored it.

Suddenly, when Drew and Rebecca least expected it, all the lights of the house came on and a multitude of people yelled, "Surprise!" at the top of their lungs, and then clapped endlessly.

Drew and Rebecca were so shocked that they were openmouthed and their eyes were bulging out of their sockets. Usually, nothing would surprise them, but this totally blew them away. Haggai was the front man in this group, and the group consisted of family members and neighbors. There were a total of forty people in the house, but the house was so gigantic it could accommodate all of them with no problem at all. Haggai smiled brightly, holding both his hands in front of him, and he said, "Drew and Rebecca Riley welcome to your new home."

Jessica, Dawn, Greg, and all of Rebecca and Dawn's uncles, aunts and cousins were there, including the always-beloved Aunt Marissa. Marissa's daughters: sixteen-year-old Marissa, twelve-year-old Desiree, and nine-year-old-Suzanne went up to their cousin Rebecca and gave her a big hug, and they did the same thing with Uncle Drew. Then, the Riley twins, Ricky and Ronald, followed suit. Next thing that everybody knew they were wrapped in a big family hug. Jessica's parents, Joanna and Myles, and Drew's parents, Darla and Drew, Sr. were also there. Jessica and Drew's younger siblings were there as well. Everyone was there, along with a few neighbors, Haggai and Heber Brady, Anna Maria Brady, and all the Brady children were there. Rosemary, a beautiful forty-year-old divorcee who still lived alone was also there. Rosemary's children, twenty-year-old Anne-Marie, eighteen-year-old Rosalinda and sixteen-year-old Mary-ellen were in California with their father. Rosemary and her ex-husband, Michael, they loved each other, however, but only as friends, not as lovers. They divorced because Michael made a mistake and cheated on Rosemary with a coworker, and since Rosemary's parents always taught their daughter that the only justifiable reason for divorce was infidelity, she put an end to the marriage, but now, five years after getting divorced, they had no mates, and they realized that they belonged together, and after all this time, they loved each other as friends, but strangely, since the moment that the Brady twins moved into this friendly neighborhood, everything changed for the Sparks family and Rosemary and Michael's romantic and passionate love for one another was instantly rekindled.

The only reason why Rosemary and Michael weren't together was because, despite how much they yearned for one another, they were afraid of each other's reaction once they would be face to face. Anne Marie and Rosalinda were ready to move to Atlanta with their mother, just for a few months, while they each got their own houses. Mary Ellen was just there, waiting for her parents to reunite and remarry each other again. Ronald knew about all of this because from the very moment that he arrived at this house and met Rosemary, Rosemary told Ron and Ricky about her older daughters, and how much she would love for her daughters to marry such handsome and sweet studs like them. Ricky wasn't interested in getting matched with a girl right now because the wounds of a relationship gone wrong hadn't healed yet. Ricky's ex-girlfriend, Geri, she cheated on him with his best friend, Marlon. Ricky had been faithful to Geri since the moment their relationship started, when they were both seventeen years old, when their high-school senior year had just started. Therefore, Ricky just couldn't forgive Geri for what she had done. It was a mistake. Both Geri and Marlon were drunk up to their butts and they were so out of it they had no idea of what they were doing.

The night that Geri and Marlon betrayed Ricky, they were so drunk and so sick they had to be taken to the hospital. This happened one year before. They exaggerated on the lovemaking so much that Marlon had a heart attack and died, right there on the bed they'd made love, and Geri had severe damage in her private parts. It was as if she had had sex with several men at the same time, nonstop. Geri's private parts had to be reconstructed, but before the operation, during her ride to the hospital and when tests were being performed on her, she didn't feel any pain at all. It wasn't until three days after that she started to feel the pain. Ricky could've taken that into consideration, the fact that they were drunk up to their eyeballs, forgiven Geri, and continued to live with her, and even had a child with her... however, the relationship couldn't continue to flourish because Geri told her boyfriend that she'd always been in love with his best friend. There was always that sexual tension between Geri and Marlon. They'd always wanted to make love, and that fateful night, the sex they had was just to get it out of their systems. It turned out that Geri had gotten Marlon drunk, and she had gotten drunk, as well, so that she could cheat on her boyfriend and get away with it. Nonetheless, Geri and Marlon got just a little too drunk, and they were literally out of control. Geri's plan had backfired. Not only had her relationship with Ricky Riley been doomed that night, but she'd also been seriously hurt.

Physically, Geri was having a normal sex life, but psychologically, she was in very bad shape because every night, every single night, she would dream about being savagely raped by a man who was more than twice her size, like Marlon, but she couldn't see her tormentor's face. Right now, Geri had serious psychological problems. She had schizophrenia and she was bipolar. She was currently taking three medications, lots of milligrams of them, everyday to keep her under control because she just couldn't function without her medication. All that Geri wanted in life was either a millionaire husband, or a husband who had inherited a substantial fortune, enough for her to fulfill all her monetary desires. Marlon was the man that she really loved, but she wanted Ricky for his money. Marlon's death was what caused all of these mental disorders that she suffered from. It had destroyed Geri's life completely. It was hard for her to have a serious relationship because the men in her life just couldn't bear her constantly-changing moods and her physical and verbal abuse towards them. However, there was a third man who had always been desperately in love with Geri, and the only man in her life that hadn't even touched a strand of her hair, besides her father and her brothers.

This man was no other than Nathaniel Rivers, retired psychiatrist, who now had the liberty of using proven techniques of keeping a mentally-ill person under control, without prescribing her any medication of course. Nathaniel had retired from the medicine branch of psychiatry at forty, despite having been a psychiatrist for over fifteen years, because one of his patients had turned his world upside down, gotten him to suffer the most severe and shattering depression that a living thing could endure. Now, Nathaniel owned the most popular, expensive, and sophisticated jewelry store in the U. S. and he was making great money. Geri knew him, but she didn't know that he was in love with her. However, there was something about Nathaniel Rivers that made him stand out among other men. He was also superhuman. He was a lunar alien, waiting for his physically or mentally-imperfect human female mate so he could make her healthy and enjoy 800 years of life on earth with her. Therefore, while the Riley and Brady families were having fun with the Riley family and its new neighbors, Nathaniel was finally ready to make his move. Without a doubt, because of all of the superpowers that Nathaniel had, he would become the man of Geri's life. Nathaniel arrived at Geri's house with a small bouquet of red roses in his hand. He wanted to impress her, not to scare her by exaggerating with the

flowers or with anything. Geri's life was already more than filled with dangerous excesses. He didn't want to make it worse for her.

The moment that Nathaniel knocked on the door, Geri was taking a shower. Nathaniel only knocked the door once. He waited as Geri turned off the shower, covered her body with a towel, stepped out of the shower, went to her room, put on a rose robe, removed the towel from underneath the robe, walked out of the room, walked the hallway to the living room, and then walked to the door and answered it. All that happened in twenty minutes, but Nathaniel would wait forever if he had to. "Hello, Geraldine. How are you doing?"

Geri smiled. "Hi, Nathaniel, how are you?"

He handed her the flowers and said, "These are for you. I couldn't be better now that I'm with you."

None of the men in Geri's life had ever told her anything romantic, except for Ricky. Ricky had told her the most beautiful things that he could ever tell a woman because Geri was his first love, and he adored her, but she was never in love with him. Ironically, Ricky had also been Geri's first love and first mate. When they started, neither one of them had been with anyone before. Geri wasn't in love with Ricky because at the time she was too young to be in love with anyone. Then, when she met Marlon at age eighteen, the same day that Ricky met Marlon, everything changed. It was then that Geri fell in love; really fell in love, for the very first time. At first, Geri felt that Marlon was only her platonic love. She couldn't have him because she was committed and engaged to his best friend, Ricky Riley. The night that their love became physical, she felt like she was in heaven, despite the fact that her body was enduring the most excruciating pain. The moment that she found out about Marlon's death, her world had come to an end. This man that was in front of her right now, he was incredibly-gorgeous, like Marlon was. He had the body of a bodybuilder, like Marlon did. He had the smile of an Adonis, like Marlon did. This man reminded her of Marlon entirely, and that made her smile and recall all the moments she'd shared with the love of her life, but there was something different about this man, something different from Marlon and every man she'd met. This man, like every other supernatural man, his irises were of a different color. Nathaniel's eyes were not brown, green, blue, or hazel. They were a really-bright lilac color, and his pupils were very bright also. The intensity of this man's eyes was too overwhelming for Geri, but she loved every minute of it. "Come in," she said, kindly.

"You've never invited me in, Geraldine," said Nathaniel, awed, as he came in and she closed the door behind him.

"Do you want some coffee?" she asked, smiling.

"Yes, please," he said, surprised, and still openmouthed. "I'm kind of tired. May I sit down?"

"Sure," she said as she walked to the kitchen to get started on the luscious cappuccino that she was about to make for him.

"So, has life been kind to you, Geri?" he asked as he picked up the remote control from the coffee table, and turned on the TV.

As Nathaniel browsed the satellite TV guide for something that he wanted to watch, Geri said, "Life sucks. Marlon's gone. The only man I've ever really loved is gone, and the man that I was about to marry, he doesn't want anything to do with me."

*Marlon's not gone. Marlon is here with you. I am Marlon. I am going by the name of Nathaniel Rivers because Marlon Smiley is legally dead, so until I solve that little problem, I will*

*be Nathaniel Rivers, but tonight, you'll see the real me. I am back. I am in your life and this time, I am not going to leave you here by yourself. I am here to stay.* “You know, I think you’re suffering because you’ve never really moved on. Ever since we met...” he finally found something to watch and he tuned to the show. It was a stupid soap opera on one of the local channels, but he liked it. He enjoyed drama in any form. These TV shows gave him hope that these meaningless beings that called themselves human, that they had feelings and emotion, and they were not as evil as they seemed to be. In reality, Marlon Smiley was never human. He did everything imaginable to seem human. He had numerous procedures done on his face, including his eyes. He made his pupils seem dark, like everyone else’s, and he even got those ridiculously-expensive contact lenses that he’d created, that, if worn for more than three months, would permanently change the color of one’s eyes. Marlon changed his eye-color from lilac to green, the normal, but bright green. In reality, Marlon was so incredibly beautiful that now that he was showing his true face to his true love, he was just like the Brady twins, Robinson and Caleb, and like all these other extraordinary living things. His physical and inner beauty could not be measured. “...You’ve been talking to me about Smiley. His death really broke your heart, didn’t it?”

Geri came to the living room with the cup of cappuccino in her hand. It had chocolate-flavored creamer on it, and the coffee mix had a little bit of chocolate flavor in it also. She wanted to impress him just the way that he’d impressed her. “Yes, Nate, it really broke my heart. That’s why I’d appreciate it if we didn’t talk about him right now, or ever. I’m sick of ruining every moment we share together by talking about him. Me talking about him, I am not going to bring him back to me, am I?”

*That’s what you think.* “I think you’re right,” he said as she sat beside him and he took his cup of coffee in his hand, and finally, he took a sip and a few swallows. She’d been incredibly successful at impressing him. She knew that he absolutely adored coffee, but this particular cup of coffee was perfect. The coffee was hot, not too sweet or unsweetened, it was creamy, and delicious... the coffee that he’d craved and couldn’t have since this morning, when he had to rush to work because he had woken up late. Just sixty seconds later, the coffee was gone. Nate put the empty cup down on the coffee table and stretched his legs on the coffee table, just like he’d done since he first met Geri by coincidence, and she invited him into her home, just because she needed someone to talk to at the moment, someone with whom she could share things that she’d never told her family about Ricky and Marlon.

“For some reason, you are starting to look familiar,” said Geri, his arm around the back of her neck and on her shoulder. He didn’t dare to lay his hand on her big and welcoming breast because they’d been friends for almost a year, and he respected her as much as he loved her. They met one afternoon when Nate’s beloved cat, Mia had gone missing, and he was searching for her around the neighborhood. He went to each house and knocked on the door. The men that answered the door would simply say that they hadn’t seen any cats and shut the door right on his face. The women that answered the door would invite him to come in and seduce him. That totally turned him off because he knew that all of these women were married and he wanted a woman for him. He didn’t want someone else’s woman. Geri was crying when she answered the door for him that day. She told him that she hadn’t seen a cat with the characteristics that he gave her, and that she really wanted to talk to someone, so she invited him in, they started talking about Marlon, and from that day on, every night, they would drink coffee together and talk about

Marlon and her memories with him. Finally, tonight, things would change. They wouldn't talk. They would just do what came naturally to them and let nature take its course.

"I look familiar to you?" he asked. "Who do I remind you of?"

"I decline to answer that question because we agreed not to talk about... that person."

They looked one another in the eyes. "Still, I want to know what he and I have in common."

"No," she said, caressing his black hair. These living things didn't really belong to any race. They were just they. They weren't Caucasian, African American or Latino. That's why on their birth certificates, the race pane was always blank. They could come from so many ethnic groups and have so many characteristics from all of them that their race was hard to determine. Nate had black hair, lightly-colored, but not white skin, and light-colored eyes just like Robinson and Caleb did, but he looked nothing like they did. The secret of his colossal beauty lied in the fact that when it came to him and others like him, they were totally indescribable. The only way they could be physically described was if someone took a picture of them and showed it to the person who wanted to know what that living thing looked like. "I don't want to talk about him, not even by telling you why you remind me of him. I just want to talk about us. Think what you want," she said as she took her lips closer to his. "You can think I'm easy, but I just want to try this time..." she started French-kissing him. "...And see if this time I'll succeed." They continued to kiss passionately until they couldn't contain themselves. They lied down on the couch with the TV still on. Garment by garment, she took all her clothes off and he did the same thing. Without looking at the TV, Nate picked up the remote and turned off the TV. Then, they continued to kiss and she kissed his whole body. Just then, someone rang the bell, and whispering obscenities, they put their clothes back on. They finished getting dressed in less than three minutes and then Geri went and opened the door. She gasped. "Ricky?"

Nate gasped, screamed, "Who?" and ran to the door to see who it was.

"I know you're busy, Geraldine, but I have to talk to you."

"That's not a problem," said Nate and walked out of the living room and then slightly yelled, "I'll be waiting for you in your room, cupcake."

"That's great," Ricky sighed. "So, may I come in?"

"Sure," she made way for him.

"Are you sure I won't ruin your fun?"

"Don't worry about it. It seems that nothing turns off my new lover, not even interruptions."

"That's great!" repeated Ricky, this time with more emphasis, enthusiasm, and a sarcastic smile on his face, as he went in and closed the door behind him. His smile quickly disappeared. "Ok," he said as they walked together out of the living room and into the kitchen. "Let's cut to the chase, shall we?"

"Yes," she said as she washed the carafe to make Ricky some of her magical coffee and try to lighten his mood.

## Chapter 5

He sat on the bar right in front of the kitchen, exactly in the chair that Nate would always sit on. "I found out something about you."

"What did you find out?" She was doing what she usually did when she prepared the cappuccino that would always impress her guests.

"I found out that, three years ago, we had a child together, and you gave him up for adoption."

She turned around and looked directly at him, gasping in disbelief.

"Who the hell told you that, and most importantly, why didn't he or she tell me? I didn't freaking know!"

Ricky became angry instantly. "Are you freaking serious?"

Nate noticed there was something wrong, and just seconds later, he appeared before them. "What the hell is going on?"

Ricky got up from the stool, pointing at him. "Now you butt the hell out!" Nate punched out Ricky.

"No!" Geri screamed. Just when she was about to drop a full carafe with screaming-hot coffee on the floor, Nate grabbed the carafe like he was grabbing a glass of room-temperature water and placed the carafe back on its place.

Ricky got up, crying for the third time in his life, literally. His heart of iron became butter. "Dude, I just came to confront the lady about a personal matter! Why do you have to treat me like this?" Ricky screamed, waking up the neighbors, and an angry eighty-year-old neighbor called the police immediately.

"Why were you rude to her?" said Nate. "This is supposedly the mother of your child! Are you fucking crazy?"

"Who the hell are you?" asked Ricky, confused.

"Answer my question!"

"Who the hell are you?" repeated Ricky.

"I'm Nathaniel James Rivers! Does that answer your question?"

"No, you're not Nathaniel James Rivers! You're usurping someone else's identity! You're..."

Suddenly, the cops rang the bell. After being frozen for nearly ten minutes, Geri walked to the living room and answered the door. She gasped again, but this time she started to tremble. "What the hell is going on? First Ricky Riley shows up at my door and confronts me about a child I never even conceived, and now you guys show up at my door!" Geri was out of control.

"Calm down, madam," said Officer Jenkins. "We just came to talk to you."

"What the hell am I accused of now? I will rephrase my question. What else am I accused of?"

"Ma'am..." said Officer Imbruglia, the female cop.

Geri interrupted her. "What the hell...!" she screamed at the top of her lungs and then collapsed on the floor.

While Ricky sat on the floor right next to the bar in the kitchen, drooling like a three-month-old-baby, totally silent and having lost his mind completely, and openmouthed, and Officer Blanc assisted him, Officer Imbruglia said on her radio, "This situation's worse than we expected. The owner of the house, Geraldine Costas is unconscious on her living room floor,

right at the entrance, and Richard Riley, the alleged... father of her child is sitting on the floor of her kitchen counter, drooling, surely insane, and then there's a third man, unidentified, holding Ms. Costas and trying to bring her back to consciousness. I need two ambulances right now."

The 911 operator said, after she received the same message from another cop, "Don't worry, Imbruglia, I am going to send the ambulances right away." And the cop that was mediating said, "Make sure no one's physically injured."

Officer Blanc noticed that Ricky's cheek was swollen and he had a black eye and a broken nose. "Yes, Imbruglia, this man is injured."

Nate tried to stay calm and collected and after a big sigh of preoccupation, he explained everything to the cops. "First of all, this woman, Geraldine Costas suffers from two different and grave mental illnesses," he said as the paramedics placed Geri on the stretcher and tied her down. Then, they placed a respirator on her, and three more paramedics did the exact same thing with Ricky. "Those illnesses are schizophrenia and bipolar disorder."

The cops just sat there on the sofa and listened. They instantly knew that this wasn't some random man that had come over for sex with the sensual and beautiful owner of this house. He knew what was going down.

"When something unexpected happens, whether it's good or bad, she becomes upset, and she always reacts negatively to unexpected things, like the father of her alleged child showing up and confronting her about that three year old child they supposedly had, and then you come over and... man, she just lost it... Don't you understand?"

"Yes, we do understand."

Officer Blanc found Geri's medications in her upper kitchen cabinets, right above the kitchen sink, and showed them to his colleagues. "He's absolutely right. Here we have Danklester, Oscribazen and Lillipeen, three powerful anti-psychotic medications. Oh, and all of them are high-dosage, 900 milligrams each. Holy crap! I wonder how this poor lady remains awake during the day."

"In that case we are going to have to Baker-Act her," said Imbruglia, and let the other officers know about this on her radio, that right after going to the hospital, Geri had to be admitted to the nearest psychiatric ward. Then, she got a '10-4' and ended the call. "Do you know anyone in her family, sir?"

"I don't know any of her family members in person," said Nate as he wrote down the mobile number of Geraldine's mother in a little notepad that he would always carry around in the back pocket of his pants, ripped out the little page and handed it to Officer Imbruglia, "but this is the mobile phone of her mother, Sandra Lee Costas."

"This is perfect." Imbruglia took her phone from inside her jacket and dialed Sandra's mobile number.

Unfortunately, at that time, Sandra and Peter, Geri's parents were sleeping soundly in their bed. Suddenly, Sandra's cell phone rang and she flipped it open and answered it, annoyed. "Hello."

"Mrs. Costas, I think I have some bad news."

"Who the hell are you calling me at this time of night?" said Sandra, angry as Peter woke up, confused about the situation; thus his wife had never been this rude to anyone. "Don't you have anything better to do?"

"Honey, honey..." Imbruglia heard Peter in the background, trying to pacify the mother of his children.

Imbruglia said, "I'm sorry," treating Sandra just as rudely as Sandra had treated her, "but I'm afraid your daughter Geraldine has been Baker-Acted."

Sandra was so upset that she got off her bed. "What the fuck are you talking about? There's no reason to do that to Geri!" Peter became upset when he heard this, got off the bed as well, and walked closer to his wife and started rubbing her shoulders in an effort to get her to quiet down. "Geri has never gotten violent with anyone!" Sandra screamed as Peter said, "Shhh..."

"Geraldine got violent with us, ma'am."

"Either you stop being an insupportable, heinous bitch, or I'm going to hang up on you, you fucking tommyknocker!"

"Sandy, please!" said Peter.

Imbruglia was shocked. She realized she'd taken the I treat the way I'm treated approach a little too far this time.

"Knock it off, you fucker!"

"Sandra, you're talking to a cop!"

"I don't fucking care!"

"What's going on, Imbruglia?" said Blanc, in front of her, with both hands on his hips. "Nothing, nothing," she said, "nothing, I'm just... it's not a big deal, ok?" "Are you sure?"

"Sandra, you're talking to a policeman. Don't act like that," said Peter, as calmly as he could as he caressed her cheek. "He or she will press charges, sweetheart."

*At least now I know who she got her bipolar disorder from.* "Listen, Mrs. Costas, I am sorry I was rude to you. Fighting with me won't change the fact that your daughter is on her way to a psychiatric ward right now, just, please..."

"I'm not going to Baker Act the poor woman's mother for being upset with you for calling her after ten o'clock at night and then being a total bitch to her, Imbruglia," warned Jenkins. "Just letting you know..."

"Jenkins, it's ok. I'm going to go over to her house, and..."

"Not, uh," said Jenkins, saying no with his index finger, "you're not making things worse."

"I'll go with her," said Nate.

"No, I'll go to the Costas home. Imbruglia, it's a long night, and you've got better things to do than to try to make peace with a woman whose night you've just ruined."

Profoundly preoccupied, Imbruglia asked, "Will this cost me my job?" This situation had gotten out of control, all because of a little bitchiness.

Officer Jenkins just ignored Officer Imbruglia and walked out the door.

"No," said Nate, patting Imbruglia on the shoulder. "Don't worry about anything. I will intercede for you before Geri's mother. Everything's going to be ok. You'll see it."

Nate followed Jenkins while Imbruglia just stood there, crying. Suddenly, Nate's twin, Norman walked into the house, having appeared out of nowhere. While Imbruglia cried, he suddenly placed his big, strong hand on her shoulder. Imbruglia turned around and looked him in the eyes. "Mr. Rivers?"

"No, I am not Mr. Rivers. I am Mr. Smiley," he said, looking her in the eyes sweetly, smiling.

"Mr. Smiley?" she asked stunned.

“Yes,” said Norman, Marlon’s identical twin, smiling.

“...But you look just like Mr. Nate Rivers.”

“Nate Rivers doesn’t exist. It’s just a name that my identical twin, Marlon Smiley goes by.”

“Marlon Smiley? Didn’t Marlon Smiley die?”

“Yes, but with my help, he came back to life with a vengeance.”

“...With your help? You brought him back to life?” “Yes, ma’am...”

Imbruglia looked at the ceiling for a few minutes, openmouthed and then said, “You can bring people back to life?”

“My brother is not a human being. He’s an alien.”

Imbruglia looked directly into Norman’s shining eyes and trembled. “Oh, my God, you really are otherworldly.”

“Yes.”

“...And your name is Norman Smiley.”

“Yes, my name is Norman Alexander Smiley.”

Imbruglia pulled out a little sheet of paper that had been useless because it had some random crap written on it... useless until now. She pointed her pen’s tip at the little piece of paper and asked, “What’s your brother’s full name?”

“It’s Marlon Xavier Smiley.”

Imbruglia wrote the name down. “What’s his date of birth?” “Our date of birth is April 29, 1981.”

From this point on, she would write down every piece of information, cram it on the paper. “And why is your brother using a false identity?”

“It’s not a false identity. He’s going by the name of one of his best friends, Nathaniel Rivers.”

“Why is he usurping Mr. Rivers’ identity?”

“...Because Nate asked him to. Nate didn’t want his family to find out that he’d been murdered, so he gave my brother his will,” and handed the very important document to Officer Imbruglia, stunning her, “and in his will, he left my brother the most important thing that a living thing could ever possess: his identity.”

Imbruglia couldn’t close her mouth. She had never heard of anyone giving his or her identity to anyone else before. “Oh, my God, this can’t be!”

“That’s why my brother has Nate’s birth certificate, his driver’s license, and everything. My brother is living the life of Nate Rivers. It is a crime, but...”

“I don’t know if it’s a crime or not because I’m a policewoman and not a lawyer, but your brother must stop doing this. He must stop. This is not right. He should violate the last will of Nate Rivers and give his identity back to him, tell the truth to Mr. Rivers’ family, and hand in all of Mr. Rivers’ documents. He must get back all of his true documents and start living his own life, now that he no longer has Mr. Rivers’ face.”

“That’s what he intends to do. That’s why he morphed into his true self, permanently.”

“Ok, that’s the first step. Don’t worry about anything.” Officer Imbruglia handed her personal card to Norman. “Tell him to come to my office tomorrow morning accompanied by his personal attorney and I will help him get his identity back without getting in trouble for breaking the law. Mr. Rivers wasn’t really his friend. I am not one of you,” she said, her index finger in

Norman's chest, "but that I know for sure. Someone who cares about you and proclaims to be your friend would never even advise you to break the law in any manner, do you understand me?"

Norman sent Imbruglia's message to his twin brother telepathically, and Marlon was listening to it in his mind, as if his companion were talking to him with his voice. He literally heard Norman's voice in his head, and he heard Imbruglia's voice talking to Norman. "Yes, madam, I understand."

...Just when Officer Imbruglia was about to walk out of Geri's house, Norman said, "Wait..."

Imbruglia turned around with her hands on her hips and said, "Sir, don't worry, I am going to help your brother, ok?" She couldn't stop squinting because she couldn't stand the pain of looking him in the eyes.

Realizing that the light in his eyes was hurting her eyes, Norman dimmed the light of his eyes and made his eyes appear normal, like the eyes of a human being, but with a peculiar eye color. "I'm sorry for causing your eyes to hurt."

"It's ok. I could tell you didn't know you were hurting my eyesight." "I just wanted to tell you... with all due respect..." "Tell me what?"

He let his head down and said, "I wanted to tell you that you're incredibly beautiful."

"Thanks for the compliment."

"I'm sorry if I was disrespectful."

"You weren't. If you had been I would've arrested you for indecent conduct toward a police officer."

Norman dared to hand Imbruglia his personal card. "Call me if there are any updates on my brother's criminal case."

"I will, but it's not a criminal case until the state attorney says so. I am only human, but you can trust me when I say I'll help Marlon Smiley, your brother. I never make promises that I have the certainty that I can't keep."

"Thanks," he said, smiling.

"Thank you for taking all my preoccupations off my mind." "You did the same for me, Officer Imbruglia."

"That's good to know." She finally left and went on to her next mission like the incident with Sandra had never happened.

Finally, Marlon and Officer Jenkins arrived at Sandra's house to intercede for Officer Imbruglia and try to justify her action. Officer Imbruglia was a little too tough to the criminals that she dealt with just because she was a woman, and she wouldn't let anyone walk all over her. When she was growing up, she was a victim of constant taunts and unjustified bullying just because of her incredible physical beauty. Other girls couldn't look like her no matter how hard they tried, so instead, they tormented her just to feel better about themselves. They would verbally and physically abuse her nonstop, to the point where she and her parents had to move here to Georgia, all the way from Montana, to protect their daughter from such cruel abuse. It got so out of hand that the cruel girls sent a young and tender Destiny Imbruglia to the hospital. The girls faced charges of aggravated assault and faced jail time, over eleven years to be exact. Now, those girls were working at Hooters because their criminal records prevented them from going to college and getting a good career. It was ironic because the girls were always accusing young

Destiny of flirting with all the boys and leading them on, when in reality, if a boy approached her with nefarious intentions, she would literally kick him in the groin and run away. Destiny never got in trouble for this because every time that a boy tried to take things too far, there would always be witnesses of the attack, sometimes multiple witnesses and sometimes just one witness. Nonetheless, one witness was more than enough for the members of the school administration to know that Destiny always acted in self defense. In addition to that, there would always be proof that Destiny's tormentor had touched her inappropriately or kissed her without her consent.

Now, Officer Destiny Imbruglia, who had become a policewoman to show her tormentors how tough she was, in reality she wasn't that tough. She may have been Hulk as a child, but as an adult, she was more delicate and vulnerable than ever. Officer Imbruglia had a friends-with-benefits-relationship with another policeman who moved to California, and then, she didn't have any more men. Casual or romantic, that was her only relationship. Because of her negative experiences with boys in her teenage years, she would never let a man get close to her. Any man that courted her, she would push him away, violently, literally. Officer Imbruglia had many horrible demons within her, figuratively. She had a lot of issues in her life that she didn't even try to solve because she thought that when she grew up, she would be this She-Ra woman able to solve her problems with her fists and her kicks, and that since she was a cop, she wouldn't get in trouble for it as long as she was defending herself. That wasn't true. She needed professional help. Otherwise, her romantic life would be anything but romantic. She didn't need a man now, and that's why she was pushing this gorgeous hunk away that she'd just met. She didn't know it, but what she needed, was a shrink, urgently.

At the Costas house, everything was serene thanks to the presence of Officer Jenkins and Marlon. Marlon literally erased all the traumas that Sandra had in her life, literally curing all of her psychological disorders. Unbelievably, he didn't touch her brain or hypnotize her. All that he had to do was to get her alone in the back porch and talk to her about everything she had in her mind. In several hours, she unwittingly opened her heart up to him and told him things that she hadn't even told her parents. There was a lot of verbal abuse in her life, and although the abuse never turned physical, it scarred her deeply. Her late parents and her siblings would abuse her verbally all the time for the stupidest and most insignificant things. It got to the point where she had to be taken away from her parents and at fourteen, she wound up in a foster home. She was already schizophrenic.

What literally saved Sandra Costas' life, Costas being her husband's name, was the fact that contrary to her birth parents, her foster parents were very tender and loving to all the children that they were taking care of, so much so, that at eighteen, her foster parents, Patrick and Diamond Paisley, they didn't want her to move out of their house. Therefore, she continued to live in the Paisley home until she got married thirty years before, at age twenty-two. It was beneficial to the Paisley family the fact that Sandra stayed, because Sandra would help take care of their foster children. Sandra was big in the life of the Paisley family because she would babysit for the Paisleys' biological daughter, Diamond Cherie. Diamond had five children and Sandra would baby sit all of them. Every morning, Diamond would take her children to the Costas house and pick them up at exactly thirty minutes after three in the afternoon, at the time that she would return home from work. Then, when the children grew up and were of school age, the family needed more money, so Diamond and her husband, Christian, they got one more job, and started working sixteen out of the twenty four hours of the day and the children would be at

the Costas house from three o'clock in the afternoon to eleven o'clock at night. Finally Diamond and Christian would talk to their kids about school for one hour. Then, they would go to sleep.

Now, those children were all grown up. Diamond Jolie and Christian Miguel, Diamond Cherie's children, now Sandra was babysitting for them. Diamond Jolie's little kids, Diamond Shay and Christopher Michael were two and three years old, and just like Grandma Diamond, they would drop off their babies at the Costas house, leave for work, work during the day, and then they would pick up the babies around four o'clock in the afternoon, so Marlon's intervention on this family's private life, despite being a seemingly total stranger to them was more than a godsend. It was extremely necessary for Sandra to be able to continue to babysit for the wonderful family that gave her so much love and support when she needed it the most.

That morning, at eleven fifteen, Sandra was figuratively in love with Marlon. Marlon had come clean with her in all this time and just the way that Sandra confided all of her biggest frustrations to him, he confided his biggest conundrum for him at the moment: literally living someone else's life. Just when he was about to say goodbye, Sandra did what was unthinkable to him. She allowed him to take a shower in her house and borrow some of Peter's clothes so he wouldn't delay his work day any more. What she didn't know was that Marlon wasn't going to work this morning. Minutes later, he and his attorney, Esq. Kessler, they were on their way to the police station. Officer Imbruglia was waiting for them in her office. She asked Sheriff Watson to give her the day off her normal responsibilities just to dedicate her time to try to solve the problem that Marlon was in for usurpation of identity.

Marlon was nervous. He and Attorney Kessler brought with them all of the documents and voicemail messages that proved that Nate Rivers had left for him, convincing him of taking over his identity and his life when he were gone. Nate was living a double life. He owned a jewelry store, the most prestigious one in the U. S. by day, but by night, he was a drug trafficker and he owned the most dangerous criminal organization in Georgia. After years of persecuting him and investigating him, the police gathered proof against him, enough proof to put him in jail for three consecutive life sentences for countless murders and drug trafficking. Therefore, Nate knew that he would die, so before leaving this cruel world, Nate made sure that someone else would go to jail for his crimes while he was literally burning in hell. Nevertheless, Officer Imbruglia found out about the whole scheme in a matter of hours by accessing the files in Nate Rivers' closed case, closed due to his death, and in just a few days, Marlon's problem was solved. Marlon had gotten his true identity back, and he was in college getting the necessary education in business administration.

### *One year later*

Marlon was in his own office, in a prestigious computer company. The office was painted crimson-red. The doors, doorways and trims were iceberg white. His computer desk was pure cherry wood. He had a stylish, not too big, not too small laptop with everything that a business man could possibly want. It had all the applications that were related to business, applications to download different entertainment media like music videos, other kinds of videos and all kinds of music files. It also had games on it. The computer was ready for anyone to use, from a three-year-old-child to an eighty-year-old-man. It had a 320-gb hard drive, a DVD burner, a slot for an internet card, Ethernet connections, two USB ports to connect any kind of media and transfer files, beautiful and natural crimson-red color, and a stylish fifteen-inch screen. Incredibly, that

was what computers would be like in 2009, but right now we were in July of 2007, which meant that Marlon Smiley had built that computer from scratch. He'd built every single part; the hard drive, the DVD burner, the screen, the keyboard...everything. Marlon was not only a big-time computer CEO, but he was also a computer technician whom, in his spare time, would build computers from scratch for people that couldn't afford to go to the store and buy a computer. He would give these computers to these people. That's why people would call him day and night asking him for a computer and telling him exactly how they wanted it.

Since Marlon was anything but human, he could literally do several things at the same time: work full time at the office from nine to five, go home, take a shower, put on fresh clothes and build a computer for another customer, spend time with his baby twins, Marvin and Merlin, and comply with his husband duties; thus he was married to Geri. Geri was a completely healthy woman now, and she and Marlon lived happily in the same neighborhood as Sandra and Peter, her parents, and Maria and Scanlon, his parents. Mr. and Mrs. Smiley lived next door to them in the left-hand side and Sandra and Peter lived next door to them in the right-hand side. They lived in a lavish community for multimillionaires. Each family had his or her fortune. As incredible as it may sound, Sandra and Peter had accumulated a fortune from all the babysitting they did without knowing it and they'd just discovered it and spent \$30,000 on new furniture for their exclusive \$800,000-home that Haggai and Heber had just bought them. Marlon had bought his house and his parents' lavish home which was actually estimated at \$810,000. Geri and Marlon's mansion had seven bedrooms, five bathrooms, two living rooms on the first story and one big living room on the second story, a gigantic kitchen, a laundry room, a shed, a porch on one side and a pool on the other side. The three mansions were the same, except one was painted crimson, Marlon's mansion, while Sandra and Peter's mansion was beige and Maria and Scanlon's mansion was lime green, on the outside, and on the inside, each room was painted a different color or a different hue.

Each house had three satellite dishes so that the owners of the home could watch all different kinds of programming. They had satellite-TV packages that had over 200 channels of different categories, plus fifty movie channels and 100 channels in high-definition. They had huge HDTV's. They were enjoying the lush life, the life that everyone, even some rich people dreamed of. Then again, the Smiley twins were not only making everyone in their family happy, but they were making a lot of people happy. Together, the Smiley, Bennett, and Brady families were employing over 2,000 people in different positions in their companies, and those 2,000 people were starting to have companies of their own in the meantime. A couple of months later, these preeminent families and their former employees, they'd created over 600,000 jobs of different kinds, improving the financial condition of the state.

However, the kind-hearted supernatural families weren't happy. They didn't stop there. They started communicating with other supernatural beings and their families so that they could literally spread new jobs all over the country, and within a few years, all over the world. The families had created a prosperous country. The President of the United States, Gordon Hague, was very happy. He didn't know where all these fantastic opportunities came from, so he couldn't really thank anyone, but the United States had literally once again become the most powerful nation in the world. It hadn't become powerful enough for everyone to be rich, but the middle-class people were living a good life, lacking nothing, and the poor people had become middle-class. Everyone had food on the table. Everyone could pay the bills. Everyone could buy clothes when they needed them. People with good credit could get a loan and buy a decent home,

and people with bad credit could rent a decent home while they either fixed their credit or got a family member or a friend to help them out.

Then, all of a sudden, something changed. Seeing how prosperous the United States were, people started coming over from other countries, from all the continents. The American populations grew almost uncontrollably until the good things started speeding things up, moving to those countries indefinitely and do for those countries the same things they did to the U.S. and then the immigrants moved back into their countries of origin. There were very few immigrants in this country now, and they were really working their way up the ladder. In a matter of months, they had gone from agricultural workers to business men and business women. The game had changed when it came to family life. If they wanted the economy to continue to flourish, both the man and the woman had to work hard when they were living together. The children were with their babysitters for eight hours of the day, or in school, and despite people being tired, everything worked out just fine. Their married or family lives weren't affected.

Dawn and Greg were so happy with their new baby, the second one. She was five months pregnant after having her first baby, Donovan Drew. Already, they were at a store buying the baby's crib, the baby's musical toys that went above the crib to help him sleep, his or her clothes, and at another store, they ordered the furniture for the baby's room to be delivered within the next four months. Next, they needed to paint the baby's room. Fortunately, before formalizing his relationship with Dawn, Greg lived alone and had two additional rooms at his house that he wasn't using for anything. He didn't think that he'd have another baby so soon after his first one. He thought it would happen within the next few years, and he never imagined that Dawn would be the mother of his children. His spare bedrooms, each one of them only had a bed inside it. The room that Dawn and Greg had chosen for the baby was the largest room after Greg's room, the master bedroom. Dawn wasn't aware of it, but Greg had a surprise for her, a surprise that would change her life forever.

They accommodated all of the baby's new clothes on the backseat of Greg's minivan, in the bags.

"This is so exciting," Greg said. "Not too long ago we were in a friends-with-benefits relationship and now we have a son and another baby."

"I can't believe it either," she said as she got on the passenger's seat of his car and Greg got on the driver's seat. They fastened their seatbelts at the same time and in no time, Greg started the car. "Although I always liked you and you're handsome and desirable, I have to admit I always thought that you were the last man on earth with whom I would have a child."

He laughed as they pulled out of the parking lot. "You thought Haggai Brady would be the father of your children, huh?" Within minutes, they took the road once again.

"Yes, I did, foolish me. How could I have possibly dreamed that man would ever love me? He wasn't meant for me. He was born to be with my baby sister, Rebecca. Speaking of Rebecca, I was always so jealous of her."

"Yes. You would tell me all the time when we talked."

"This was serious. It wasn't just jealousy. There were times that I wanted to kill her. I just didn't have the courage to do it. I guess I wasn't born to be a murderer. I would spend hours daydreaming of one thousand different ways of killing her."

"You never told me the reasons for your intense hatred."

“I was Mom’s favorite and she was Dad’s favorite. At least that’s the way I felt while we were growing up. Fortunately, now I can see that I was wrong. Dad has always loved us both the same. It was just that when we fought, Dad would always take her side.”

“Your mom would always take your side. How did that make Rebecca feel?”

“I think she hated me for it. She just never did anything to show me how she felt. She would never do anything wrong to me, I mean really wrong. She would do things that I didn’t like, but her intention was never to make me angry. She would do something, it would bother me, and when she realized it, it would be too late, and we’d start fighting.”

“How do you feel about Rebecca now that you’re going to be a mom?”

“My children have changed my life. I will never be the same again. We would always use protection during sex, but now I think back and realize that the condom broke for a reason. This was meant to happen. It was a true blessing. Gosh, do you remember when the condom broke and we freaked out, when we conceived Don?”

“In reality, I always wanted to have a baby with you. I always wanted to marry you. I freaked out, not because I wasn’t ready to have a baby, or because I simply didn’t want one, but because I was afraid of what you would do when you would eventually find out that you were pregnant. I was afraid you’d…”

“Don’t even say that. Don’t even think about that,” she said without letting him finish his thought.

“You mean you’d never do that?”

“No. If I didn’t want my baby, if I really didn’t want it, I would give it up for adoption. I’d never kill it. I was born with several complications that were never detected in any tests that my mom had done during her pregnancy with me. No one thought I would survive, but I did. I would never kill my baby knowing that God saved me, that He gave me several chances just when everyone thought I would die. I can’t even count the times I cheated death when I was little.”

“So you do believe in God. I always thought you were an Atheist.”

“Just because I don’t go to church that doesn’t mean I’m an Atheist. I read the Bible every day. I reckon I don’t always do what it says.”

“No one does what the Holy Bible says to the letter. We always fail no matter how hard we try.”

“Still, it’s very entertaining. There’s no wonder it’s the best-selling book of all time.”

“I hear you.”

Caressing her belly, she said, “And now God gave me this miracle,” looking down at her belly. “I am going to get excellent prenatal care to make sure that history doesn’t repeat itself with my baby.”

“Oh, no, God forbid,” said Greg. “I’m going to make sure that doesn’t happen, ever.”

They held hands while Greg drove without realizing it.

“I can’t wait to get home. I have something important to tell you.”

“Oh,” she said, “I wonder what it could be.” “Just wait. We’ll be home soon.”

A half an hour later, Dawn and Greg got to Greg’s house. They didn’t live together yet. Dawn still lived with Jessica, but in his heart, throughout their relationship, Greg always knew that he would share this house with her one day. This was Greg’s first house and he’d bought it with his hard-earned money. Greg made very good money as a computer technician and he was

able to buy this house without making any mortgage payments. He would only have to pay the taxes once a year and that was a no brainer for him. His house was slightly luxurious. It was a one story house with two living rooms and a family room, a comfortable kitchen with brand-new cabinetry installed a brand-new refrigerator, new flooring installed, a new range, a new dishwasher, renovated roof, two dining rooms, three bedrooms and two bathrooms. Everything in the house was renovated and freshly installed. Everything was brand new, and Greg had remodeled this house only months before. Dawn never understood why Greg was making all these home improvements, and she worried about how much money he was spending. The only thing that Greg hadn't changed about the house was the walls. He'd even changed the colors of the rooms and every room and hallway was painted a different color. When she would visit him months and even weeks before, she didn't pay mind to the renovations he was making. She thought that perhaps the house needed these improvements and there were imperfections that she hadn't noticed when she first came into this house, but then again, everything seemed fine. Nothing needed to be fixed. This was just one of Greg's surprises for her. She wasn't expecting his next surprise.

They sat at the guest living room together in the sectional sofa, holding hands. She couldn't stop looking at Greg's brand-new sixty-inch HDTV and his digital video recorder provided by his satellite-TV company. Now, she asked the question that she'd been yearning to ask before, but didn't dare to because she feared that he would get angry and think she was intruding when she really meant nothing to him than a few hours of fun—or so she thought. She felt that way about him, he was just a booty call to her, but he adored her from the moment he met her. “Greg, why did you make all these renovations on the house? It was fine when I met you and I came here for the first time. As far as I could see it needed no improvements.”

“No, it didn't need any improvements, I admit it.” “Oh...”

“I did all this for you, Dawn.”

“You spend thousands and thousands of dollars renovating the house...for me?”

“I always knew that our relationship was casual and that was very unlikely to change. However I always dreamed that we would one day share this house, that it would be mine and yours, and I wanted you to enjoy all this. I mean if things change radically for one minute to the next...”

“You got that right that things change from one minute to the next,” she said. “My whole life changed the minute that pregnancy test resulted positive.”

Finishing his thought he said, “I always hoped that things would change for us one day.” “Well, they did,” she replied, “big time.”

He retrieved a little squared, red-colored jewelry box from the inside of his jacket. “You were always the woman of my dreams, and you always will be,” he said as he opened the box and the diamonds in his engagement ring came to light and shone intensely. She covered her face with both hands and started crying. “Will you make me the happiest man in the world by becoming my wife, Dawn?”

She had to continue crying for a few minutes. She couldn't help it. This was beautiful and unexpected. Now was when she knew just how much he loved her. He wasn't just saying it during their intense moments of passion. He wasn't sucking up. He really, really loved her. Every word that he was telling her came from the bottom of his heart and she could see it in his eyes. She broke the silence and said, “Yes, Greg.”

He couldn't believe his ears. "I'm sorry, what did you say? I couldn't quite hear you." "I said yes, I want to marry you," she said, smiling. "I want to be your wife. It would make me the happiest woman in the world because no man has ever loved me the way you do and as much as you do."

They hugged and he cried on her shoulder like a baby. His lifelong dream was coming true right before his eyes. The love of his life had accepted his marriage proposal, she was going to give him a baby, and they were going to share a beautiful house. What more could he possibly ask for?

Karla was in her living room that afternoon, sitting on her sofa, reading a celebrity-gossip magazine. Caleb had just come home from work and he was unlocking the door with his key. She looked up at the door. She still wasn't used to this married life and she wondered if Caleb was an old-fashioned, chauvinistic man or if he was a modern man adapted to the twenty-first century, accepting of the fact that everything had changed. She hadn't made him any dinner. He would work all day in his office as the president of a new electronics company that was on business since days after his marriage to Karla. Obviously he would bring all the money to the house, and lots of it. He was fortunate to make millions and millions of dollars a year. For a moment, Karla was afraid of Caleb's reaction when she told him that she hadn't made dinner for him. Caleb never hired any chefs because he loved Karla's food. He finally came in, closed the door behind him, took off his jacket and accommodated it on the sofa. He walked closer to her and gave her a hug and a kiss. "How are you doing?"

"I'm doing well. How was work today?"

"Oh, same old, same old, but it was good." He walked around the sofa and then sat beside her. "Ahh," he said with a sigh, "it's a routine that I love and one that brings food to our table every day."

"You seem to be thinking a lot about food this afternoon," she noted, with her magazine closed up, looking him in the eyes.

"I'm hungry. It's almost five. Of course I can't stop thinking about food." "I didn't make dinner for us today," she said, scared.

"Ok," he said. He didn't understand why she was acting like this.

"I thought you'd be angry."

"Angry, are you kidding? We could order some pizza for you and me. The kids can't eat that stuff yet. They eat the delicious Gerber food and cereal and fruit...awesome things like that. They won't gain too much weight if they eat junk food, but we don't want them to get used to eating junk food, now do we?" he got up and walked to the phone in the living room right by the sofa.

"We want the kids to eat healthy most of the time and eat junk food sparingly, but they're much too young to eat junk food."

Caleb ordered two large pizzas for him and Karla, one pepperoni, her favorite, and one supreme, his favorite. He paid for it with his debit card. Then, he hung up and said, "You don't have to cook every single day, you know? Actually you can cook only when you want to. I don't mind. I love your food."

"Thank you for being so understanding, Caleb," she said, smiling.

They shared a hug.

## Chapter 6

That day, Rebecca and Haggai were talking in the living room of Rebecca's new house. Rebecca had just turned eighteen and he realized that this was the right time to get married and start a family.

"Do you think that it's too soon for us to get married, Haggai?" she said. "I mean I know we fell for one another really intensely but we've only known each other for a little over a year. I reckon that we've had a beautiful relationship. You've respected me all this time. There was no kiss, nothing, just dates, movies, popcorn..."

"The fact that we met not too long ago, that doesn't mean that we don't know each other. We've known each other our whole lives. We've been dreaming of each other, living our lives separately for years, meaning that I've dreamt of everything you've done in your life and you've dreamt of everything I've done in my life."

Rebecca gasped. "You mean that mysterious man whose life I've dreamt of all this time, that man is you?"

"The only thing we hadn't seen before we met, it was our faces."

She gasped again. Jokingly, she said, "So we even know our social-security numbers, huh?"

"Yes, I know yours and you know mine."

"Oh...!"

"Yes. Now that we know that, we can get married in court the day after tomorrow and we can have the religious wedding whenever you want it because there's not enough time for us to get ready for our religious wedding, our reception, and our honeymoon," he explained.

"I just turned eighteen."

"That's precisely why I chose to get married this week, in honor of your birthday."

Rebecca smiled.

Jessica, Rebecca, Haggai, and Dawn were in court getting Haggai and Rebecca's marriage license. Jessica and Dawn went with them just to show their support, that they agreed with all this. Within hours, Rebecca and Haggai were ready to get married.

That day, Dawn applied for the job that Rebecca had applied for before and she got accepted. She figured that Rebecca didn't need it because all of Haggai's fortune was now hers, but Dawn wasn't about to get married to a multimillionaire, so she did need that job. She would apply for another part-time, work-at-home job to be able to finish college and she would place all the money earned on one job in a savings account and all the money earned on another job in a checking account. Luckily for Dawn, she found another work-at-home job that would pay fifteen dollars an hour and she got accepted. She would be working eight hours a day and earning a lot of money.

*Three days later*

Haggai and Rebecca exited the court room as a married couple. All of the guests applauded. The local and international press were capturing every moment with their cameras. Dawn was the one that told them that Rebecca and Haggai would get married today. Haggai and Rebecca both knew this, but they wouldn't confront her about it because they knew her intentions were not bad. A few minutes later, they went to Haggai's mansion together. She was wearing a white dress with

straps, sleeveless and he was wearing a black suit, like his hair. They looked absolutely adorable. Haggai had to go out to get Rebecca's computer at Jessica's house. What she didn't know was that he would get her a brand-new laptop for her to take anywhere she would go, a new copy, print, scan and fax machine just like Dawn's except it was a different brand and a different color, a digital video camera that also functioned as a digital camera, and a webcam, a new DVD player and a new MP3 player. Haggai would spend a total of twenty thousand dollars on her in one day. He was also planning to buy her clothes and food from her favorite restaurant. Tonight would be a night she would never forget.

Rebecca started reading her email from Haggai's desktop computer, which he only used for gaming and other means of entertainment. Haggai would only use his laptop for work. This desktop was all black and brand new. It had 750 GB of hard drive space, four gigabytes of RAM, a DVD super multi drive, a twenty-two inch LCD monitor and the most popular but expensive programs available, which were only using twenty gigabytes of all that hard drive space. Haggai would only create manuscripts in that computer, his poetry books and his mystery novels. He would never download more programs than the computer had because there were programs that could do anything he could think of. If he wanted to do something on the computer that there wasn't a program for, he would have to create a program that could do that—and if he did that, he would literally become the richest man in the world.

Rebecca read an email that totally shocked and horrified her.

DEAR REBECCA,

THE FACT THAT YOU MARRIED HAGGAI TODAY, IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT I CAN'T TAKE HIM AWAY FROM YOU. HE WILL BE MINE EVEN IF I HAVE TO KILL YOU IN ORDER TO GET HIM. ACTUALLY, I DON'T HAVE TO TOUCH YOU. I JUST HAVE TO SEND YOUR HUSBAND AND YOUR FAMILY A VIDEO, A PORN VIDEO THAT YOU MADE WITH TWO GUYS. THAT'S RIGHT. SO IF YOU DON'T DIVORCE HIM AND GET HIM TO MARRY ME, YOUR LIFE AS YOU KNOW IT WILL BE OVER. LOVE,  
VANESSA, YOUR BEST FRIEND

"A video of me with two guys, that can't be!" she said and fainted.

Vanessa sent her the video just to show her what was coming to her, but it wasn't Rebecca in the video. It was a woman that looked exactly like Rebecca, with Rebecca's best buddies, Zack and Ike. This woman was from Australia, and the guys met her and had a good time with her, until now. Fortunately, they were both eighteen.

This video would destroy the lives of Rebecca's friends, the Australian woman, and even Vanessa's life because a lawsuit for libel would put Vanessa on the streets. She would regret this.

Mila, Haggai's Indian maid, woke up Rebecca. "Mrs. Brady, wake up, please! I don't want Mr. Brady to see you passed out!" She had a notable accent, but she could speak English fluently.

"What happened?" Rebecca said as she put up her head and suddenly she saw the porn video on her computer screen. "Oh, no...!" she said and turned off the monitor.

Fortunately, Mila did not see the Australian woman's face. "You don't like porn, do you?"

"No, I don't. I mean..."

“You better get used to it because in a matter of hours, you’ll be making a porn movie of your own, metaphorically.” Mila left the room, leaving Rebecca stunned.

Four hours later, Haggai returned home with all the things he had bought for Rebecca. He found Rebecca on her bed, lying on her stomach, with her head down, crying.

He caressed her hair as he sat beside her at the foot of the bed and said, “What’s wrong, sweetheart?”

“Vanessa has a porn video of me having a threesome with Zack and Ike,” she said, sobbing. “However, I swear to you, Haggai, I don’t remember having sex with them, and they’ve known me since the first grade! I don’t think they’re capable of doing that to me!”

“I don’t remember visualizing you having sex with your friends, voluntarily or involuntarily. Do you know why? It’s because it never happened!”

Shocked, Rebecca said, “But I saw me in that video, Haggai!”

“That wasn’t you, Rebecca. That was some look-alike. I want to see the video to know exactly who it is.”

“I don’t have the video on your computer because I don’t want you to get in trouble for having porn on your computer, but somehow the video got opened on my email and I saw a few seconds of it after I read Vanessa’s email and I fainted...”

“Wait a minute,” he said, outraged that Rebecca’s best friend would do this to her. He wished he could’ve warned her about it, but he was a fool for a long time and he thought that Vanessa would get over him and let him be happy with the woman he loved. “She emailed you before she sent you the video?”

“Yes.”

“I want to see what she sent you, the message, the video...everything!” He was furious.

In a matter of minutes, Rebecca showed Haggai everything that Vanessa had sent her. After watching fifty-five seconds of the video, because he didn’t like watching other people having sex, he said, “This is not you. This is an Australian woman named Destiny Caldwell.”

“Oh, my God...” she said.

“I am going to email her and tell her everything that’s going on. Unfortunately for her and her one-night flings, Vanessa has that video and if you don’t present our annulment papers to Vanessa, she’s going to upload that video to some porn site on the Internet and in a matter of hours, it will be all over the web and it’ll be impossible to take down. Vanessa’s going to sell it on the Internet. We don’t want that poor woman to lose everything she has over a wild night of passion.”

“You’re not worried about what Vanessa said on that email?”

“No because I know the truth. She has nothing on you.”

“What about the secrets that I told her?”

“If those secrets could ruin your life, I’ll make sure that they never come out.”

A few minutes later, while Rebecca was in the kitchen drinking a sixteen-ounce bottle of water, Haggai was composing an email message for Destiny.

DEAR DESTINY,

I KNOW YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS BECAUSE I AM WHAT CRAZY SCIENTISTS CALL AN EMADORIAN, AN UNDERGROUND SUPERHUMAN EARTHLING, U. S. H. E., WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL ME! I KNOW EVERYONE’S EMAIL ADDRESSES,

BUT I ONLY EMAIL MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY. I AM WRITING YOU TO TELL YOU THAT YOUR PRIVACY HAS BEEN INVADED. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU AUTHORIZED IKE AND ZACK TO MAKE A PORN VIDEO OF THE THREE OF YOU. ALL I KNOW IS VANESSA SNYDER HAS IT. I MEAN, I'M SORRY...ZACK HAD IT AND SHE HAD SEX WITH HIM JUST SO THAT SHE COULD STEAL IT FROM HIM, AND NOW, IF REBECCA AND I DON'T ANNUL OUR MARRIAGE WITHIN THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS, SHE'S GOING TO SELL THAT VIDEO TO A PORN WEBSITE AND BECOME A MILLIONAIRE. HER EMAIL ADDRESS IS [VAN\\_WILDE@RIDICULOUS.COM](mailto:VAN_WILDE@RIDICULOUS.COM). SINCERELY, H. BRADY

Destiny received the message immediately because she was in an instant-message conversation with her sister and her instant messenger notified her of a new, urgent email message. Stunned, she typed to her sister, BE RIGHT BACK, I HAVE TO READ AN URGENT EMAIL MESSAGE, and marked her status as busy. She read the email message and became angry. She replied, without saying hi or signing the message at the bottom,

GIVE ME HER HOME ADDRESS RIGHT NOW!

...And clicked the send button. Haggai received Destiny's message and complied with her request.

The next day, Destiny went to Vanessa's house with the police. Vanessa's mom, Michaela opened the door. She gasped when she saw Destiny and the police officers and the only thing she could say was, "What did we do?"

"You did nothing, madam," Officer Cook said. "Your daughter's the one that's in trouble."

"You may come in," Michaela said. "What did she do?"

"She has a sexy video in her possession, and we won't leave here until she gives it to us," Officer Scalia said.

"I'll go get my daughter," said Michaela.

*Ten minutes later*

Michaela and Vanessa went to the living room and met the officers who were still standing outside. Vanessa had the DVD-R disc with the porn video in her hand, but she was smart. She had one extra copy to keep blackmailing Haggai and Rebecca with it. Nevertheless, Haggai was smarter. He wouldn't let anyone hurt him in any way. He had killed a few people that have hurt him before. He got away with it because Emadorians could be anywhere at any time. One minute they could be in the United States and the next minute they could be in Japan. That's why police figured it was useless to put them in jail. People would say that just because of their ability to go from one place to the other in a matter of minutes, Emadorians did not deserve to live because they were as powerful as God was. However, that wasn't true because God was everywhere at the same time, literally. Going from one place to the other within seconds was powerful, but being everywhere at the same time and invisible to eyes on earth was something that no other living thing could do except for God and the devil.

Haggai knew everything about everyone. All Emadorians did. If they ever wondered what someone was doing at that very moment, or whether someone had done something or not,

all they had to do was visualize it. Haggai visualized the copy of the video that Vanessa had on another disc and on her computer. He sent Destiny a text message saying,

**SHE'S GOT TWO MORE COPIES OF THAT VIDEO! GET THOSE COPS TO GET A SEARCH WARRANT!**

Destiny read the message and said, "Oh, my God, officers, you've got to get a search warrant! That's not the only copy of the video that she has!"

"What?" Officer Aparizzio said. "How do you know that?"

"An Emadorian just sent me this message," she said and let him see the text.

"Emadorians never lie, you know?" said Officer Cook.

"That's true," Officer Scalia said. "We're going to get a search warrant first thing tomorrow morning."

"Wait a minute," said Vanessa approaching the officers, "you're going to search our house just because of something that some freak said?"

"We don't owe you any explanations," said Officer Cook. "You're just one more criminal."

"Fuck off," Vanessa said as she turned and then walked away from them.

"Vanessa," Michaela said, "how dare you?" Unlike her daughter, Michaela was a good person, incapable of the horrible things that her daughter would do on a daily basis. "Forgive her," she told the officers. "She doesn't know what she's doing."

"We can't do anything unless she touches us," Officer Scalia said, "so she can say anything she wants." In a matter of minutes, the officers walked out of the house and left the Snyder's driveway.

The next day, Vanessa was ready for the cops. She lied to her friend, Shawna, saying that the disc contained music that was downloaded illegally using a peer-to-peer program, that she'd been caught, and that she feared being sued, so she'd showed the cops that she'd deleted all the music from her computer. That was a fantastic story, but it couldn't be more untrue.

Shawna's brother, Sergio, he was an Emadorian also because Shawna's mother, Victoria, was having problems getting pregnant in the beginning of her marriage so she had an in-vitro fertilization, and the sperm turned out to belong to an Emadorian named Elias Molina. Sergio was the only Latino person in his family. Everyone else was Caucasian. Nevertheless, the Snyder family loved having an Emadorian in their family. Sergio would always help his parents do their taxes, since he was only three years old. He would help his brothers and sisters with their homework at age seven. That's why Shawna, Victoria, the third child of the family her little sister, Sheridan, and their brother Simon had straight As in school, because besides helping them with their homework, Sergio taught them to study in a way that they would never forget what they'd learned.

Sergio figured it all out when he first had the disc in his hand. He didn't even have to watch it. He had to talk to Shawna.

Shawna went into the room where she had hidden the disc. "What's wrong, Sergio?" She saw the disc in his hand and gasped. "Oh..."

"Vanessa lied to us, Shawna. There's no illegal music in here," he said, holding the disc. "What's in here is a porn movie that doesn't even belong to Vanessa. It belongs to Zack and Ike. We have to go to the police."

So they did. The only things that Shawna wouldn't forgive anyone for were talking dirty about anyone in her family or in her friends' circle, and lying to her. She was very angry with Vanessa, so angry that she got transferred to another school to avoid seeing Vanessa's ugly face, ugly to her. The new school was twenty miles away from Shawna's house.

The police now had in their hands the only copy of the video that were left because, to save herself from the police, Vanessa deleted the video from the computer when the police searched her house with Michaela's permission. They didn't even have to get a search warrant because Michaela was very cooperative.

Later in the day, the police arrested Vanessa for blackmail, sexual harassment and malicious theft. On top of that, Destiny had just filed a lawsuit against Vanessa. Luckily, Vanessa's parents, Michaela and Hugh didn't have to worry about this because they weren't in any part of the lawsuit. It was just Vanessa being sued. It was a two-million-dollar lawsuit. Vanessa wouldn't be able to get out until she paid five hundred thousand dollars of it, and then she would pay the rest after getting out of jail.

Vanessa was really sorry for what she did. She had done a complete 180. Her fellow inmates would never lay a hand on her, but they wouldn't stop yelling at her and getting in her face for all of the despicable things that she'd done in her life. That broke her down in such a way that she decided to change her ways. Two months passed, and today, she was praying for a short sentence. She knew that it was too late for Destiny, Haggai and Rebecca to drop the charges.

Suddenly, Destiny arrived with her attorney to see Vanessa and Vanessa was notified that she had new visitors.

Vanessa gasped when she saw Destiny. She picked up the phone handset. "What are you doing here?"

"Don't you want us here?" Destiny asked, confused.

"No, it's not that. I just thought you hated me and I was the last person you wanted to see."

"No, I don't hate you. Haggai and Sergio told me that you were sorry and that you've changed, that you've become another person. We've just pardoned what you did to us in the court. That means you should be getting out of here any minute now."

Vanessa cried tears of joy. "You really did that for me?"

"I'm a firm believer everyone deserves a second chance and if we don't forgive others for what they've done to us, God won't forgive us for what we've done to other people. I am not Christian, but I read what I just told you in the Holy Bible and it totally changed my life. I literally went to everyone that did horrible things to me in the past and I told them that they were forgiven, even people that have bullied me online."

"Wow, how did you track down all those people?" said Vanessa out of curiosity.

"I meditated on it and wrote down the names of everyone that had ever done something bad to me. I used the Internet to find the email addresses and their phone numbers of those that didn't have computers and I told them they were forgiven. Most of these people told me that I had nothing to forgive them for, but then, I don't know what happened. A few weeks later, they called me back, apologized for their attitude and thanked me for forgiving them. I did it from the bottom of my heart. I don't even remember their offenses anymore."

"You must be pretty special then," Vanessa replied.

Destiny smiled.

The guard came out and said, "Visitation time has ended for today."

Destiny and Attorney Rosa got up. "I guess that means we have to go," he said. "Have a good day," she said to both of them and then asked Destiny, "May I visit you when I get out?"

"Sure," Destiny said.

Attorney Rosa just smiled.

Destiny and Attorney Rosa left and Vanessa went back to her cell.

Just two hours later, Vanessa's lawyer, Attorney Mc. Namara, entered the prison and went to pick up Vanessa.

Vanessa got out of prison a few minutes later with a change of clothes, pretty clothes, and got into his Lamborghini. They pulled out of the parking lot and took the road. Attorney Mc. Namara took Vanessa to her parents' house. They knew that she would be released from prison any day now, but they didn't know that she would be released today. They arrived at Vanessa's house and got out of the car. They walked to the entrance and rang the bell.

Michaela opened the door. "Oh, my God, Vanessa, Attorney Mc. Namara, come on in!" She made way for them to enter the house. They went in. Michaela closed the door behind them. Vanessa's father, Hugh was working. "Everyone," she said to her brother and her sisters who were visiting at the moment "get some champagne! Let's make a toast to Vanessa!"

Everyone was happy that Vanessa was back. They got all the bottles of champagne that they had and gave Vanessa Coca Cola in a wine glass and they all made a toast. Vanessa's aunt, Vivian said, "This goes to Vanessa for regaining her freedom." They made the toast and drank their champagne while Vanessa drank her soda.

Vanessa went back to her room. It was nice to see everything was the way she'd left it. Suddenly, the phone rang. Shawna found out from Sergio that Vanessa had repented of everything that she had done, and she was calling her to reconcile with her. Vanessa answered the phone. "Hello."

"Hello, Vanessa. I wanted to congratulate you for regaining your freedom."

"Do you forgive me? You've never forgiven liars." "I forgive you."

Vanessa started to cry. "I didn't graduate high school because I had to go to jail!"

"Don't worry, Vanessa. There's a program that can help you get your high-school diploma?"

"Will it help me get my diploma, and not just a GED?"

"You will get a diploma."

"It sounds great. Where do you take the courses?"

"You do it online." Shawna gave Vanessa the URL of the web site.

Vanessa wrote down the URL. "Is this free?"

"Yes, it's free."

"Thank you, Shawna."

"You're welcome."

"I've got to go. I'm going to start working on this and I've got to concentrate," Vanessa said.

"Ok," said Shawna, "I will talk to you later."

"Bye, Shawna," said Vanessa and hung up.

Vanessa got on her computer, logged on to the web site, created a user name and a password, and right then and there, she started taking the courses to get her diploma. All that she had to pay for was her textbooks. She paid for them with Michaela's credit card, whose number she knew off the top of her head, although she'd only used it to pay her parents' bills because they both worked full time and they didn't have time to pay the bills or do anything online for that matter. The transactions were successful and her textbooks would be in her hands within the next four days. For now, she had an account with this web site and she could ask questions to the professionals and chat with other students.

Meanwhile, Rebecca and Haggai were eating dinner together at a restaurant. They were as happy as could be. The only person that could threaten their love was out of jail, but she was also out of their lives, and Vanessa had vowed to do everything in her power to get over Haggai Brady. Rebecca was pregnant with their first child.

Suddenly, man approached them. "Say, lady, why don't you leave your boyfriend right here and run away with me?" he said. He was fascinated with Rebecca from the moment that he saw her and he dared to make his move. He didn't give a damn that she had a man.

"He's not my boyfriend," Rebecca said and showed him her wedding ring. "He's my husband."

"Oh," said the man, "he's your husband." He pulled out a gun from the inside pocket of his jacket and pointed at them. Rebecca's eyes bulged and she gasped. She couldn't believe what was happening. "I've never done this for any woman, lady, but I want you and you're going to come with me, like it or not!" He admired Rebecca's beauty, but in reality, he didn't want her for himself. He was a struggling actor and he was improvising an action movie scene to show it to independent-film producers to land a role in a big film and finally be recognized. Everyone saw the video camera and other people at the restaurant started whispering things to each other.

Haggai knew what Jose wanted to happen next, so Haggai improvised another shocking scene, like he was following a script word for word. "You are not taking my wife!" Haggai screamed. "I will kill you first!" He knew that he had to make this scene as real as possible without really hurting Jose, so he grabbed Jose by the shirt, lifted him like lifting a feather and placed him on his and Rebecca's table, but he made it look like he'd thrown Jose against the table with all his might, breaking the table in half. Emadorians could create illusions and make them seem so real that no one could unmask them, but this was only the first time that Haggai had done this.

After all that, Haggai made it look like Jose was covered in blood and had broken all of the bones in his body and people who would later watch this film could even see Jose's shattered bones popping out of his skin. It was really gory. He communicated with Jose telepathically and asked him to pretend to be dying, saying his last words to Rebecca and then die, that he would make it all seem real. Jose did as told. He faked his death lying down on the floor. The director, Jose's best friend, Carlos, yelled, "Cut! It's the end of the first and final scene!" The recording stopped.

Jose got up and shook Haggai and Rebecca's hands. "Thank you for helping us. We've got the trailer of our movie and if you agree," he said looking Rebecca and Haggai in the eyes, "we will start filming this month, and the film will last only one month because it's not a big film, and the running time will only be one hour."

Enthusiastic with the idea of superstardom and smiling, Haggai said, "When do we sign our contracts?"

“You will do that as soon as our producers watch this little scene that we made, they will call you, if you give us your phone number.”

Haggai and Rebecca didn't have pen and paper at hand, so they made a new address-book entry on Jose's cell phone under the name HAGGAI AND REBECCA BRADY.

“Ok,” said Carlos. “Haggai and Rebecca Brady, this is good. You guys have biblical names, huh?”

Looking at one another, somewhat surprised, Rebecca said, “That's funny, we've been going out for a little over a year and we've been married for two months, and we never noticed that. That's so cool!” Everyone laughed.

“Ok, we're going to call you and let you know how our producers liked it.” Rebecca and Haggai's two new friends walked out of the restaurant.

As Carlos, Jose and their crew left the restaurant, Ryan commented, “That was a great improvised scene!”

“This is wrong, and I know it,” Jose said to Carlos, “but I really fell in love with that woman. I've never fallen in love with anyone at first sight before.”

Carlos was extremely conservative. He was known as ‘the man from the seventeenth century’ in his circle of friends. “How can you say that, Jose? She's married!”

“It's not like I'm ever going to touch her...” Jose replied as they walked to their car and the cameramen placed their equipment in their big van.

“It's nice of you to clarify that,” Carlos said, interrupting Jose's thought.

“...But she's the most beautiful woman I've ever met.”

“You've got to get over her, man. Her husband is an Emadorian.” They got into the car.

“Oh, crap...!” They were in their car fastening their seatbelts. Carlos was the driver and Jose was the passenger.

“That's right, and you're in serious trouble if you don't get over her within the next thirty days. If that's not possible for you, then we're not going to be able to film this movie and we will lose the opportunity of a lifetime.”

“You're right, man, Carlos. I've got to get over Rebecca for the well-being of all of us.”

“That's right. Before this project is launched, don't communicate with her in any way. Don't call her. Stay away from her and find another woman that will be yours and yours alone.” Jose got home and he couldn't stop thinking about Rebecca. The right thing to do was to tell his friends that he was way too infatuated with Rebecca and he couldn't get over her, not to do the film. However, he didn't want to make his friends redo that scene with different actors because he knew how difficult it would be to make the scene so believable and outstanding. It was very unlikely that he would find another Emadorian at least one who was willing to do the same thing Haggai did, without Jose having to pay him any money. He had to keep his feelings secret, at least until the filming of the movie was finished.

He wrote Rebecca a letter that would never get to her, telling her that he loved her and he wanted to be with her, but he couldn't because she was married, because his conscience wouldn't let him even try to conquer her. Jose started to cry as he wrote the letter. When he fell in love with a woman, he would fall pretty hard. He'd only had one short relationship and that was because she got bored and tired of him, dumped him, and conquered her next victim. She went to jail for that because she was abusive to Jose. She used to beat him up for no reason. He was twenty at the time and she was twenty-nine, much older, and certainly more experienced than he was. This woman was physically and verbally abusive to all of the men she had in her life. Her

other boyfriends never reported her to the police because they were ashamed of being overpowered by a woman, but Jose stood up for himself and decided to put an end to her abuse—the day that she dumped him, and needless to say her new relationship with the man after Jose didn't last, even a day.

Now, Jose needed someone to love. Just at the moment that he was sitting in his dining room, with nothing productive to do in mind, a girl knocked on his door, crying, looking for her dog because she was walking by Jose's house at that instant and she saw Jose's dog, which looked just like the dog she lost. The dog ran away from home seeking the love of a female dog of his same breed, and now he was doomed because he never found his ideal female and he'd lost his way home.

Fortunately for the dog, someone picked him up twenty miles away from home when the dog passed by the Good Samaritan's house because he thought the dog was a stray dog. The girl had no idea of what had happened to her dog.

Jose's mother, Riley, answered the door. "Aww," she said to the girl and gave her a big hug. "What's wrong? How can we help you?"

"I just lost my dog, and I think he's here!" the girl said, crying bitterly.

"You're talking about our dog? You think our dog is your dog?"

"At least it looks like my dog," replied the girl even more saddened.

"I'm sorry," Riley said.

"I can't live without my Roy!" She started crying in Riley's arms. "Don't cry," Riley said to the girl, trying to remain calm. "Jose! Jose!"

Jose went to the living room in a matter of minutes. "What's going on, Mom?" He saw the girl crying. "Ah!"

Riley explained, "She lost her dog and she thought for a minute that Joe was her dog." "I'll tell you what," Jose said, "I will give you my dog and then I will buy another one for me."

"But you've had a relationship with your dog for quite some time! Why don't you buy me a dog, if you insist on buying a dog, and keep your dog?"

The next day, Jose went to the dog pound with Kelly instead of going to the pet shop because his cousin, Suzy had bought a kitty at a pet shop and it died three weeks afterward. He didn't want that to happen to Kelly's new dog. Kelly loved her lost dog so much that she chose a dog that looked exactly like him.

"Now, all we have to do to be able to tell Joe and Levy apart is to put different-colored collars on them."

"That's a good idea, Jose. Speaking of that, if your name is Jose, why did you name your dog Joe?"

"That wasn't me. That was my former father—I mean stepfather. He hated me so much that he'd do anything to make me angry. He named the dog after me ever since he was a puppy. He says that the dog's real name is Jose and his real name is Joe."

"Why don't you just change the dog's name?"

"He's responded to the name Joe for so many years..." "We can train him to respond to a different name." "What name do you suggest?"

"I suggest Jon. It's a similar name and the real name would be Jonathan."

"I am going to name him Jonathan."

“Don’t worry. I’ll help you train him to learn his new name. I’m a dog trainer. My parents don’t work because I earn very good money. I train celebrities’ dogs.”

Pulling out his wallet, as they walked Levy to Jose’s car, Jose said, “Oh, really?” Surprised, she asked, “What are you pulling out your wallet for?” “I’m going to pay you.”

She put down his wallet with her hand. “No,” she said. “When someone does something nice for me, and that person needs my services, I don’t charge the person for them.”

“Ok,” Jose said and put his wallet back in his pocket, “thank you.”

“It’s the first time this has happened though,” she said while Levy got into the backseat of the van and Kelly opened the left-hand-side door and put the window down so Levy could let his head out the window as he took the blissful ride. They went to the front doors and Jose got in the driver’s seat while Kelly got in the passenger’s seat. Minutes later, they left the parking lot and took the road.

A half an hour later, they arrived at Jose’s house and got out of Jose’s car. They went to Jose’s door and knocked the door. “May I ask you a personal question, Jose?”

“Sure.”

“Why are you still living with your parents at age twenty-three?”

“That’s because I’m legally incompetent.” Stunned, Kelly said,

“I’m sorry.”

“Nonetheless, the process to invalidate that is almost finished.”

“Let me guess,” Kelly said while Jose’s dad, Jonas, put on a bathrobe and walked to the door to answer it, “your stepfather forced your mother to declare you legally incompetent and prove that you were, of course.”

“You guessed right.”

“Oh, my goodness...”

Jonas opened the door, smiling. He was surprisingly handsome. He was forty-two, but he looked thirty. Jose looked exactly like him except Jose had blue eyes and Jonas had brown eyes because Jose inherited his mother’s eye color. They had short black hair, rectangular-shaped faces, thin lips and bright and perfectly-aligned smiles that could kill and that caused other men to envy them. They had athletic bodies. They would both exercise regularly. “Hello, Jose.” He and Jose hugged. “This must be Kelly. Come on in, senorita.”

Jose and Kelly went in and Kelly went in and Kelly shook Jonas’ hand. “Yes, I’m Kelly,” she said while Jonas closed the door behind her and Jose. “It’s very nice to meet you, Mr. Milian.”

“I feel the same way,” Jonas replied. “I just made a supreme pizza, extra large. Would you like some?”

“I am hungry,” Kelly said. “Thank you.”

“They don’t have extra-large pizza at any store,” Jonas commented, “so I made it from scratch.”

“That’s nice, Mr. Milian,” Kelly said as they walked to the dining room.

“I am a retired chef. I had to retire to take care of Jose.” Jonas became saddened all of a sudden. “I hope that court order that made my son legally incompetent becomes null soon.”

Just then, the mailman arrived.

“I’ll serve the pizza,” Jose said and walked several steps to the kitchen.

Jonas went out to get the mail. Since it was the end of the month, Jonas got the bills of their utilities, a package that Jose had ordered online and a letter from the courthouse. This was it. This was what the Milian family was waiting for. It was the letter that stated whether Jose was now competent or still incompetent. Jonas went inside and walked to the dining room. Jose and Kelly were each eating a slice of pizza. Jonas placed the mail on a corner of the dining room table that the pizza hadn't occupied despite its colossal size. He kept the letter from the courthouse in his hand and said, "The grand moment has arrived," he said as he opened it. "Your life is going to change forever, son."

Kelly held Jose's hand and then squeezed it hard to show Jose her unconditional support.

## Chapter 7

"Oh, my God," Jonas said and handed the letter to Jose.

Smiling and laughing, Jose said, "Kelly, I'm not incompetent anymore! It's been proven that my mother was coerced to have me declared incompetent!"

"I don't get it," Kelly said. "Why would that lollipop licker..." Jonas and Jose cracked up laughing. "Oh, no, she didn't," Jonas said.

"Considering that insult has a double meaning," Jose commented, "that sounded so wrong!"

They couldn't stop laughing.

"... Want Jose declared incompetent?" Kelly asked, finishing her thought.

"He wanted to do as he pleased with the disability check that I would get after being declared incompetent irrevocably," said Jose.

"It was a really fat check, too, five thousand dollars," Jonas said, "You see Jose is schizophrenic and what this imbecile did was to deny Jose access to his medications and make sure that he wouldn't get them. He would flush them down the toilet and then Jose couldn't get a refill or another prescription. Jose would go crazy he'd have him institutionalized. Doctors and nurses would give Jose a new medication because they thought the medication they were giving him wasn't working. They really tried all the medications for schizophrenia available and Martin wouldn't give them to Jose or let Riley give the medication to him and they thought that Jose was so sick that he couldn't do anything for himself, so he had to be declared incompetent. Riley didn't want to do it, but Martin convinced her to sign the papers."

"Why did Martin hate you so much, Jose?" Kelly asked.

"He hated me because one day, when I was thirteen, he and I argued, I said something that he didn't like, he punched my face in, and my mom saw me crying. I told Mom what happened and she took my side because only she could hit me, and ever since that day, he's abhorred me because Mom would always overrun his authority over me," Jose explained.

"That man must be mentally ill," commented Kelly.

"He's not mentally challenged, he's evil," Jose replied.

"I agree."

"I thank God that I had the chance to come back and fix everything that was done wrong." Jonas sat down in the dining room beside Jose and started eating his first slice of pizza.

Riley arrived and heard Jose, Jonas and Kelly in the dining room and went straight to the dining room. "Oh," she said, "that pizza looks delicious," and took a slice in her hand.

“Do you want me to make another pizza for you, pumpkin?” said Jonas. “There’s only one more slice left.”

“Tell me something, Jonas.”

“Yes, my exotic strawberry.”

Kelly and Jose looked at one another, smiling, surprised with this conversation.

“Yes, my exotic strawberry,” he said.

“Why did I divorce you?”

Kelly and Jose smiled.

“I don’t know the answer to that question to this day, but that’s in the past and we’re together now. That’s all that matters.”

“There’s an *Otis Spunkmeyer* muffin left in the fridge. Get it for me. You don’t have to make another pizza. This pizza is New-York style. The slices are huge!” Riley said to Jonas.

Jonas went to the kitchen, to the refrigerator, put it in the microwave and heated it for thirty seconds. When it was done, Jonas took it out of the microwave and took it to the dining room. He handed it to Riley. Riley took the wrapper off of it and took the first bite. It was apple-cinnamon flavor.”

“What do you want to drink?” he asked.

“I’ll get her something to drink now that I’m done eating,” Kelly said, got up and walked to the kitchen.

Jonas sat down.

“I want some Coca Cola, please,” Riley said.

Kelly walked to the kitchen and went to the refrigerator. She opened the refrigerator, retrieved a can of Coca Cola from the top rack, closed the refrigerator, closed the refrigerator and took the can of Coca Cola to the dining room.

“Thank you, Kelly,” Riley said and popped the soda open. She took her first sips. It was so ice cold that it nearly froze her throat. Kelly sat down once again and Riley went on to say, “Tell us more about you. Do you have any siblings? What do you do for a living? How old are you?”

“I’m twenty-six, I have three sisters, and I am a professional dog trainer,” Kelly answered.

“She trains celebrities’ dogs,” Jose added.

“Wow,” Jonas said, impressed, “you really train celebrities’ dogs?”

“Yes,” Kelly said, “but I also train dogs of regular people.”

“How much do you charge?” Riley said. “Regular people I mean.”

“Actually, I came here to train your dog to learn a new name and teach him the tricks he learned before, with a new name, and since Jose got me a new dog, which is still in the back of his van...”

“I’ll go get him so that Jonathan can make a new friend,” Jose as he got up and then he left the dining room.

“He’s renaming the dog Jonathan?” said Riley. “I’ve never met a dog named Jonathan.” Kelly finished her thought. “I won’t charge to train Jonathan.” “That’s very nice of you, Kelly,” Jonas said.

Kelly smiled and said, “I like Jose a lot. He is really handsome. I don’t know if it would be ok with you if we dated because I’m three years older than he is.”

“According to this document,” Jonas said, holding up the letter from the court, “Jose is competent.”

Riley gasped and said, “Let me see that,” as she took the document from him.

“That means that we can’t make decisions for him unless he allows us to or unless he’s on child support, and even then, if he’s married by the time that something horrible happens to him to put him on child support, God forbid, it’s his wife that has to make that decision for him.”

Kelly leaned closer to Riley with both arms on the table and said, “That won’t happen if our future relationship becomes serious and I marry Jose. That decision will be too hard for me to make, since by that time I will be hopelessly in love with him, so in that case, I would sign a document stating that should something like that happen to Jose, you will make that decision.”

“Are you falling for him?”

“Yes,” Kelly said, shedding tears, “I do. I just met him and I’m already thinking about a future with him.”

Jonas took the liberty to give her a big hug.

Meanwhile, Jose was outside playing with Jonathan and Levy. They were playing fetch. Suddenly, Kelly went outside through the back door of the house and called the dogs over by their names. She was so good at this that without knowing her, they came to her immediately. She started training both of them at the same time. In a matter of hours, they learned three commands. Kelly had to go now because she had training for the puppy of a famous band scheduled two hours from now, and she had to take a shower and get a change of clothes.

Jose walked Kelly to her house. It was five blocks away from Jose’s house. It was a three-story mansion. Her parents and her sister lived with her because they went through a rough time and had to sell their house. Luckily, Kelly had just started earning millions when that happened. They moved to a two-story house, but suddenly, they learned the hard way that a two-story house was not big enough because Kelly’s twenty-year-old sister, Kendra got pregnant and she and her boyfriend got married a few months before their baby was born, so they moved to that three-story house that had nine bedrooms, three bedrooms in each story. Kelly would get married one day, and she would want to stay home with her family. There was no celebrity that this family didn’t know. Kendra and her husband, Brian was working at the moment.

As Kelly and Jose went into the mansion, she said, “So this is my house.”

“I’m beyond impressed,” he said looking around him. “How much money do you make, if you don’t mind me asking?”

“I’ve made three hundred thousand dollars in one day because I charge...”

Jose interrupted her. “Wait a minute,” he said, astonished. “What?”

“I charge one hundred thousand dollars per dog.”

“How much do you charge regular people?”

“The one hundred thousand dollar charge is not for all celebrities, though. That’s only for Hollywood superstars because that’s chump change for them. They usually spend that and much more on a daily basis. It’s not uncommon to hear that X celebrity went on a one-million-dollar shopping spree.”

“How much do you charge singers?”

“I charge them ten thousand dollars. For instance, I have HX2 coming over in about one hour and forty-five minutes, and I’m only charging them eight thousand dollars.”

“Nice,” said Jose. “I guess I better go. I don’t want to take any more of your time.”

“I have all the time in the world for you. Actually, do you want to come over later to meet HX2? They’re younger than you and that will probably make you feel kind of weird, but they’re very nice.”

“That’s my eleven-year-old-niece’s favorite band,” he said as they walked out of the mansion together, saying goodbye. “It will be nice of me to take pictures with them and give the pictures to her.”

“Do you have siblings?”

“Yes, but they’re all older. The oldest is thirty-six and the one before me is twenty-six. Jonas, my thirty-six-year-old-brother, is the father of my adorable eleven-year-old niece, Paola.”

They figured that their conversation was taking longer than they expected, so acting as if they were crazy, they went back into the house. It seemed that they couldn’t make up their minds whether they wanted to be inside or outside. “Tell me the names of your brothers and sisters.”

“Yes, that’s right, I forgot to tell you about my other siblings,” he said, laughing. “I only told you about two of them. Jonas is thirty-six, Maria is thirty-two, Pablo is twenty-nine, Joanna is twenty-seven and Sabrina is twenty-four.”

“That’s amazing. Well, I have two older sisters named Jennifer and Joy. I’m Kelly, of course, and then we have my younger sister, Kendra, the baby of the house. She’s twenty and she just had a baby.”

“Cool,” Jose said.

“Make yourself comfortable while I get ready to receive the band. I decided that it’s better for you to stay so you don’t have to leave and then come back.”

Jose sat down on the couch. “May I watch TV?”

“Sure,” Kelly said. “This is our guests’ TV. Our personal TV’s are in the family room and in our bedrooms. I’ll be right back.” She left.

Having heard an unfamiliar voice, Jennifer went downstairs to the guests’ living room. “Hello.” She wasn’t married but she had a boyfriend. Kelly’s mother was conservative and she would not allow her daughters’ boyfriends to live with them. “I’m Jennifer, Kelly’s sister.”

Jose got up and they shook hands. “I’m Jose Adrian Milian.”

“I’m Jennifer Cambridge. It’s very nice to meet you, Jose.”

“Likewise,” said Jose.

She sat by him. “When did you meet my sister? How did you meet her?”

“I met her last night. I guess she saw my dog Jonathan outside while she was walking down the street and she confused him with her lost dog, and she went to my house looking for her dog.”

“Yes. We will miss Roy.”

Suddenly, they turned around and looked out the window sensing that someone was looking at them and they saw Jonas from the window bringing Levy over to the Cambridge mansion with a collar and a leash.

“Look who is coming! It’s Levy, your new dog,” Jose said and got up to open the door.

Jennifer couldn’t believe her eyes as Levy came into the house and greeted her. “That’s a good boy,” she said to him, petting him. “It feels like Roy had never left. The new dog is acting like he knows me.”

“Well, I have to go,” Jonas said. “I have to start the process of starting to work at Stacy’s Palace all over again.”

“So you don’t have to go to culinary school again, Dad?” Jose asked, surprised.

“No. I have my degree.”

“All right, Dad, have fun.” Jose gave Jonas a big hug. “I hope you start working tonight.” “It’s very unlikely that I’ll be able to start working tonight, son, but I appreciate that.” “Good luck, Mr. Milian,” Jennifer said.

“Thank you,” said Jonas and walked out the door.

Jennifer said, “Your dad is handsome. You look just like him.”

“That’s what all my friends say,” Jose said. “Some of my friends, female friends, have told me that they have fantasies with my dad. That makes me feel so weird. That’s like my male friends telling me that they would like to sleep with my mom.”

“Can you blame your girl friends?”

“I’m a man and he’s my father, so I can’t really tell if I can blame them,” Jose said and then laughed.

“All you have to do to decide if your friends are right in thinking that he’s hot or not is to look in the mirror.”

#

Rebecca was in her room, checking out pictures of her favorite singer, Roy Dawson Summerville, on her computer, on a website. Suddenly, the phone rang. Haggai was working. She answered the phone. “Hello.”

“Hello, Mrs. Rebecca Brady?”

“This is she.”

“This is Trent Goodman, producer of the film *Obsessive Love*. I am calling you about your magnificent performance in what we decided would be the ending of the movie.”

“Magnificent performance?” asked Rebecca, excited.

“Yes, ma’am, and we want to offer you the role of our heroine, Cynthia Lieberman.” “That’s great!” Rebecca said. “When do I start?”

“The official start date is October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007.”

“How will I get my contract?”

“Give me your fax number, and I will fax it to you.”

Rebecca dictated her fax number to Trent. Trent wrote it down on his yellow notepad.

“Thank you,” said Trent. “I am going to fax the contract to you right now, and I want you to read it and sign it only if you agree with the terms. If you don’t agree with the terms, email me at [trent\\_the\\_clown@insane.com](mailto:trent_the_clown@insane.com).”

“I’m going to call my husband for him to help me decide.”

“You do that and I will talk to you later.”

“Goodbye, Mr. Goodman,” said Rebecca and hung up.

Rebecca called Haggai at work and Haggai answered the phone. “Hello.”

“Sweetie, this is Rebecca. I’m sorry for taking your time, but this is very important. I need you to help me make a decision.”

“I always have time for you. It’s nice of you to consult this with me, my love,” he said. “I’m going to fax you a copy of my contract with Trent Goodman for the main role in the film *Obsessive Love*, and you’re going to tell me if I should sign it or not.” “That sounds like a plan.”

In a matter of minutes, Rebecca faxed the document to Haggai. Haggai read it very carefully and then called her back.

Rebecca answered the phone fast. "Hello, cupcake!"

"You should definitely sign. Even though these people are independent filmmakers, they are multimillionaires, and they want you to be in the movie so badly that they will give you anything you want."

"I read it and I liked it but I thought I would consult with you first." "I'm going to sign my contract, too."

"Should I call these people back and ask them if they could fax your contract to you?"

"Yes, please."

"Their number is on the caller ID so I'm going to call them." "Tell them to fax the contract to me here."

"Ok," Rebecca said and hung up. Then, she dialed Trent's home number.

Trent's secretary answered the phone. "Goodman Productions, this is Olivia. How may I help you?"

"Hello, Olivia, this is Rebecca Brady..."

Olivia interrupted Rebecca. "It's Rebecca Brady, our new star! How are you?"

Rebecca laughed. "I guess I'm not the girl next door anymore. May I speak to Mr. Goodman?"

"Sure," said Olivia. "Hold on." Olivia transferred the call to Trent.

Trent answered the call while working on the prospects of another new film on his computer. "This is Trent Goodman."

"Sir, this is Rebecca Brady."

"Rebecca, how are you?"

"Great," said Rebecca. "I just wanted to ask you if you could please fax Haggai's contract to him at his office."

"Haggai Brady's not getting a contract. He's not an actor." This shocked Rebecca. "Are you serious?"

"Unfortunately, I..."

"You know what? If my husband is not going to be on the movie, I am not going to be on the movie, either..."

"Rebecca..."

"Go to hell!"

"Don't you know that making a movie with your husband as your costar is bad luck?"

Rebecca hung up on Trent.

Saddened, Trent said, talking to himself, "I couldn't tell her that I can't include Haggai on any of my projects because he's an Emadorian."

Rebecca called Haggai. Haggai already knew what had happened, and he'd already contacted Robinson to do the film with his producers. In addition to that, Rebecca had a different character on Robert's new movie named Naomi Pollard. Meanwhile, Goodman Productions had emailed the video of the ending of the movie to Carlos and Jose just in case they needed to delete the video and Trent told them to find another company to produce the movie with.

Rebecca was crying while talking on the phone with Haggai. "Haggai, you won't believe this! Trent Goodman rejected you because of who you are, and..."

He interrupted her just for a second. "It's ok," he said. "Robinson Bennett is going to help us out. He transferred ownership of his record company to his little sister, Rhonda, and he's a film producer now. We're going to do the movie together."

Sighing, she said, "Oh, Haggai..."

"In Bennett Films, Emadorians are preferred. You know that. Everything will be ok. Everything is ready. We've got written authorization from Carlos Roman and Jose Milian to use the resolution of the movie. All we have to do is film the rest of the movie. Since we don't have to do any special effects, because we can make humans believe that something happened in the movie when it really didn't happen, the movie can be finished in thirty days instead of ninety or more, so it can be released within two months, and people can see the movie within the next three months."

"There's one thing that I'm worried about. What about the murder scenes and the sex scenes? Do we really kill people and have sex in the movie?"

"This is why Emadorians are preferred in Bennett Films, because we make make-believe so real that the viewer thinks that it really happened. We make it more realistic than humans do in their films. That's why no other filmmaker would accept us, because we can make the scenes more vivid and real, and it's more interesting to our viewers. There's no such thing as bad acting."

"Oh, I get it. So if I have sex with another guy in the movie, it will seem real, but it won't be real."

"Exactly, but you really don't need to act because you've got my money and you can do anything you want with it."

"That's sweet, but what will happen if we divorce?"

"We will never divorce. We were meant for one another. That's why we got married."

"So no one and nothing will tear us apart."

"Only death will."

"Ok, I guess I got carried away. I have to let you go because you're working," she said.

"Ok, I will talk to you later," he said.

They hung up.

#

Jose was at home, in his room, editing video in his laptop. Suddenly, Jose felt like calling Trent and telling him off. He dialed Trent's phone number. Olivia answered the phone. "Goodman Productions, this is Olivia. How may I help you?"

"I want to talk to Mr. Goodman."

"Who is it?"

"This is Jose Milian. Do you no longer recognize my voice?"

"I'm sorry," Olivia said, pretending not to be able to hear Jose. "I can't hear you. Would you please speak up or put the phone mouthpiece right next to your mouth?"

"Don't play stupid with me, Olivia. We both know that you can hear me very well," Jose said, notably upset.

"Don't put your phone on speaker. You may be able to hear me all around the room and all around your house, but I can't hear you if your phone is on speaker."

"Olivia, you're stupid!" Jose yelled at the top of his lungs. "Can you hear me now?"

“This is abuse, whoever you are!” she yelled back. “Did you know that I can report you for this?”

“Go report your mother, bitch!”

Olivia was astounded. No one had treated her like this.

“Go screw your mother for all I care!”

“Person!” she screamed.

“You are so pathetic! Go to hell! If I can’t talk to him on the phone, I will find some other way to contact him! I’ll see you later! Actually, I hope I never see you again, you moron!” Jose hung up.

Trent called Olivia at her extension.

Olivia answered the phone knowing it was him because she’d assigned a special ringtone for his calls. “Yes, Mr. Goodman.”

“Was that phone call for me, the phone call you just received?”

“Yes, sir, but I thought you didn’t want to talk to Jose Milian, so I pretended not to hear a word he said, and after a couple of horrible insults, he hung up on me.”

“Jose Milian, you said? I am going to call him back. I can’t lose him. He’s a very talented actor. I am going to call him back right now. Thanks, Olivia.” Trent hung up.

Olivia was stunned. She was trying to protect her boss from Jose, and her boss actually wanted to talk to Jose. Olivia was afraid that she would lose her job because of what she did to Jose. She couldn’t let that happen. She had to call Jose.

However, it was too late for Olivia to do anything about it. Jose was talking to Trent on the phone already. He’d called him directly to his phone instead of talking to Olivia first. “Are you blaming me for what happened because I put an Emadorian on the movie scene? I didn’t know the damned man was an Emadorian!” Jose yelled.

“No, Jose that is not what I’m saying at all.” Trent tried to stay calm.

Jose got notification of a new phone call on the other line. “Hold on a second. I have a phone call on the other line.”

“It might take a long time, so I will call you back later.”

“Bye.” Jose terminated the call and took the call on the other line.

“Hello.” “Jose?”

“Yes, Olivia, what do you want?” he said, annoyed.

“I’m sorry for treating you earlier like you didn’t exist, like I didn’t know you.” “You know something? How I take something that someone tells me depends on who tells me. You mean nothing to me. Just like I’m nobody to you, you’re nobody to me.”

“Jose...”

“You are no one. You are stupid. You made me feel stupid, only for an instant, but that’s ok because if I’m stupid, you’re worthless, and I think being stupid is far better than being worthless because when you’re stupid, you’re *something*, but when you’re worthless, you’re *nothing*. Therefore, from now on, I’m going to live my life like I never knew you.” He was writing a new journal entry on his computer, typing it with his right hand while he held the phone handset with his left hand, saying how much he loathed Olivia.

“Jose, please...”

“I say goodbye to you forever.” He hung up.

Olivia hung up and started to cry. These words really hurt her. Jose's words were stakes to her heart. That was because Jose was an Emadorian, too, but his superpowers and his true nature hadn't been manifested yet.

Two hours later, Jose was making another movie scene, the scene where the story started, to give Don, one of Robinson's fellow producers, an idea of what the movie was about, like a synopsis in a novel.

Just before Jose could start the narration of the story, the phone rang.

Carlos yelled, "Cut! Don't edit out this scene!"

Jose answered the call. "This is Jose Milian."

"You are a charlatan! How dare you?"

Jose recognized Trent's voice. "What are you talking about?" He put the phone on speaker.

"How dare you to break Olivia's heart like that?"

"I still don't know what you're talking about."

"You told Olivia the worst things that a human being could say to another, you son of a bitch! I am not going to allow her to kill herself because of you!"

"Ok, first of all..."

"You're swine!"

"I want you to stop talking shit and listen to me, ok?" yelled Jose at the top of his lungs.

Trent just had to shut up and listen.

"She made me feel like I was stupid. I would talk to her and she wouldn't stop talking shit, pretending not to know me and then pretending not to be able to hear me! I had to give her a taste of her own medicine."

"Still, you had no right to..."

"I had every right to defend my self-esteem and the little pride that I have left!"

"I was going to offer you a role in one of my movies in which you would've had sex with the entire female cast, but..."

Jose interrupted Trent by replying, "Don't bother. I'm an Emadorian," and hung up.

Carlos, Rey and Sebastian laughed.

Rey said, "You lied to him telling him that you were an Emadorian. You are something else."

"I had to get him off my case somehow."

Trent called Jonas at his workplace after searching the Net for the Milian family's personal information, until he got tired of it.

Jonas couldn't pick up the phone because he was working at the restaurant and employees weren't allowed to receive and make phone calls unless it was an emergency, so Jose's manager, Celia, answered the phone. "Casa Bella Restaurant, this is Celia. How may I help you?"

"One of your employees needs to contact me as soon as possible."

"Is this an emergency?"

Trent had crumbled a whole bunch of sheets of printer paper for no reason. He was too infuriated to think straight. "Well, yes, it is," he responded. "Jonas Milian's son has made my secretary suicidal and since his son is legally incompetent, I hold Jonas responsible for his son's actions."

Celia laughed. “Sir, I think you’re misinformed. Jose Milian has recently been declared competent by the court, and that’s why my employee, my head chef, Jonas Milian, returned to work today. I don’t know what you’re going to do to solve your huge conundrum, but whatever you do, don’t call here again.” Celia hung up.

#

Sergio called Jose to let him know the danger he was in at the hands of Trent if he didn’t do anything to defend himself.

Jose answered the phone in an instant. “Jose Milian.”

“We don’t know one another, but I’ve got something very important to tell you.” “Who is this?”

“Who I am doesn’t matter. What matters is what I have to say, so listen very carefully.”

Jose kept quiet and listened.

“Since Trent Goodman couldn’t do anything against you, he’s planning to hire someone to make someone in your family love that person dearly and then destroy that relationship and make your loved one kill him or herself.”

“Oh, my God, who is this family member?”

“I can’t tell you right now. All that I can tell you is that your family member is going to be contacted on the Internet.”

“On the Internet,” Jose repeated.

“That’s right. I’m going to give you the information as soon as I make sure that the person Trent will hire is not an Emadorian.”

“Ok.”

“It’s going to take place within fifteen days, that’s when it’s going to start. In the meantime, make sure to tell your brothers who are still single to ignore every single woman that contacts them on the Net.”

“I don’t know who you are, but I thank you for this. I will warn Pablo,” Jose said and hung up.

Pablo was on the Internet talking to a couple of cybernetic friends. He was suffering from borderline-personality disorder and that’s why he’d had a lot of flings, but he hadn’t had any serious relationships. As soon as a woman noticed something strange in Pablo’s behavior, she would leave him. Suddenly, he received an anonymous email message. The message had no email address on the heading. It just had a body.

DEAR PABLO,

I KNOW YOU SHOULD DISREGARD MESSAGES FROM PEOPLE YOU DON’T KNOW, BUT I HAVE TO WARN YOU...DON’T PAY ATTENTION TO ANY WOMAN THAT TRIES TO CONTACT YOU ON THE INTERNET UNLESS IT’S ONE OF YOUR SISTERS.

A CRUEL REVENGE HAS BEEN PLOTTED AGAINST YOU TO ENAMOR YOU AND  
THEN LEAVE YOU AND CAUSE YOU TO KILL YOURSELF.

The message had no signature on the bottom. Pablo gasped when he read it. He thought, *I don't know why, but I believe you. Nevertheless I hope that you reveal your identity soon.* He forwarded the email to all of his siblings and to his best friend, Veronica.

Veronica kept a lookout for Pablo. From here on, he gave her the password to his email account and she took it, forever. She would change the password and never give it back. Pablo didn't have email from that moment on, and he didn't have accounts on any web site. Veronica took all of his accounts. He would make purchases at his favorite online stores as a guest.

Veronica would play this game with Emma, the woman that Trent hired to do his dirty work. She would pretend to be Pablo and enamor her. The consequences would be deadly.

Robinson found out about the plot and decided to play a game of his own. No one would ever destroy someone that belonged to his species because all those living things were good and they all would stick up for each other. It would be two men enamoring Emma, a cybernetic man and a man in her real life. Someone would die, and this love between them would be anything but real.

Emma started contacting the man she thought was Pablo, on a chat room, by pure coincidence. Emma and Veronica chatted for hours, and they took it to the instant messenger. Emma never demanded to see Pablo on webcam. This was a big mistake.

Robinson took advantage of the fact that he looked exactly like Pablo, and he pretended to be Pablo on webcam three days after Emma and Pablo supposedly met online. They got on a webcam and microphone conversation. Both Robinson and Emma's webcams had integrated microphones. The game started.

"Hello, beautiful!"

"You think I'm beautiful?"

"Yes."

Smiling, she said, "You're not so bad yourself, Pablo Milian!"

Robinson thought *Poor fool!* Then, he said, "Way to go, Emma Kane! I just got in and you're already calling me beautiful!"

Caleb was taking Robinson's place at his office.

"That's right because you are."

To perpetuate the lie, Robinson had moved to Pablo's house. Pablo had moved to Robinson's house, and although everyone knew that they had switched places, they were treating Pablo like a king.

Robinson said, "So, tell me more about you."

"What do you want to know?"

"Am I the most handsome of all the boyfriends you've had? I'm not asking you how many you've had."

"I haven't had many boyfriends. I've had like five in all my life." She was telling the truth. "However, it amazes me that you already consider yourself my boyfriend!"

"Aren't I your boyfriend after we had cybersex on IM two days ago?"

“Well...” She would’ve said that cybersex meant nothing to her, but she wasn’t supposed to break his heart just yet. It wasn’t time. “We’re not boyfriend and girlfriend until you ask me to be your girlfriend?”

“Ok, Emma, do you want to be my girlfriend?”

She was scared of having a relationship, casual or serious, with a borderline man. She had to do it, though. “Yes, Pablo, I want to be your girlfriend. As a matter of fact, let’s do something stupid together, to celebrate, sort of, like telling dumb jokes knowing they’re dumb.”

They did this, for hours.

Pablo was having his favorite, a chocolate milkshake, in the dining room. Suddenly the phone rang. He got up and answered the phone. “Hello.”

“Is this Robinson?” The woman that was calling knew the truth, but she had to keep up appearances.

He had to do the same thing. “Yes, it is.”

“Hello. This is Hannah. Do you remember me?” Hannah was Robinson’s ex.

“Yes,” he said, “of course.”

She tested him. “Do you? Who am I?”

All of a sudden, Sergio came into the other line and started listening to the conversation and using telepathy to help Pablo get out of this predicament. *She’s Robinson’s ex!* Pablo heard a voice talking to him in his head, but it was real.

“You’re my ex!” Pablo said.

*Her name is Hannah!*

“You’re Hannah.”

“That’s right, I’m Hannah. I have some bad news for you. I know you’re married, but we have a baby together.”

*Holy cow! He wouldn’t be pissed, but he wouldn’t be thrilled, either!* Pablo heard Sergio’s voice in his head as if each word said was his own thought.

“That kind of ruins my plans, but it’s not bad news,” Pablo replied.

“I’m sorry, Robinson. This wasn’t in my plans, either. You know we both used protection.”

*Stupid humans! Don’t they know that the only contraception method that works when they’re with us is to not have sex with us at all? We, male and female Emadorians are the ones who decide if we should have a child or not, not they! Most of the time they think it’s ok to have a child and then they wind up regretting it and either give their child up for adoption or find some other way to get rid of the child!*

It totally shocked Pablo to hear all this.

## Chapter 8

“I know, I know,” Pablo said. “I don’t blame you for anything. Just tell me how much money you want for child support and I will pay it right away.”

The real Robinson knew what was happening because it was on his mind, playing like a movie.

“I will pay fifteen thousand dollars a month, if that’s ok with you.” “That’s more than ok. That’s great. That means that I don’t have to work.” Robinson wrote, FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR CHILD SUPPORT –

HANNAH LEYVA on his notepad and underlined it twice.

“No, all you have to do is stay home and take care of our child,” Pablo said. “That sounds good to me. I’ve got to tell you, though, that I am sorry about what happened. I didn’t plan this. I didn’t want a child. I was going to give him up for adoption, but the first time I had him in my arms I just couldn’t do it. I didn’t sign the papers. My baby was so adorable. I just couldn’t do it.”

Robinson dialed the number of the couple that almost became Robbie’s parents.

Tatyana, the woman that was going to adopt Robbie, answered the phone. “Hello.”

“Is this Tatyana Jacobs?”

“Yes.”

“So you know what I’m talking about?”

“Of course, you’re talking about the child that my husband and I would’ve adopted and named Nolan Jacobs, but in the end, his mother, Hannah Leyva backed out.”

“I just wanted to confirm if it was true.”

“Yes, it’s true.”

“How are you doing? Could you adopt another child?”

“Yes,” said Tatyana, smiling. “We adopted a child shortly after named Cyrus Jacobs and I’ve got another baby with my husband that’s due in four months.”

“That’s fabulous, Mrs. Jacobs. Congratulations. Well, I have to go.”

“Goodbye, Mr. Bennett.”

Robinson hung up.

Pablo was sitting on his computer, talking to a friend on his instant-messenger, thus he had decided that if he had brand-new accounts, no one would be able to contact him. He even used a fake name. All of a sudden, another woman contacted him on his new email. “Oh, no,” he said, but this woman had nothing to do with Trent or Olivia. This was just a lonely woman who’s been locked up in her house all this time because her mother was demented and she made her a prisoner in her own home. Now, the woman was living in her aunt’s house and her mother was in a mental institution. The woman was twenty-four years old and her ability to contact him despite not knowing anything about him was a supernatural occurrence. It happened because it was meant to happen, although no one knew how.

The woman sent Pablo a message. HEY, DAVIAN!

He ignored it.

Patience, she waited and then typed, HEY, DAVIAN once again.

He heard a voice inside his head saying, “Talk to her! She’s the love of your life! She has nothing to do with the man that wants to hurt you!”

Pablo started typing messages to Maria. HI. HOW ARE YOU DOING?

She typed IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU STARTED TALKING TO ME! I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T INTERESTED IN ME!

He responded, GIVE ME YOUR PHONE NUMBER. I CAN'T TALK TO YOU ON THE NET. IT'S NOT SAFE. I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.

Minutes later, Pablo called Maria to her phone. Maria was in her living room, on her laptop, and she usually had the laptop sitting on the coffee table when she had it in the living room. For some reason, she was afraid to put her laptop on her lap. She was afraid it would fall. "Hello."

"This is Pablo."

"Pablo? I thought your name was Davian!"

"I had to lie to you to save myself."

Scared, she said, "Save you from what or whom?"

"Let me explain. This crazed son of a bitch had a problem with my younger brother, Jose and he's trying to use a woman to enamor me and then break up with me to make me kill myself."

"What kind of psycho would come up with something so evil?"

"I don't even know the dude and he wants to cause me to kill myself just to hurt my brother."

"Oh, my goodness, this is incredible!"

"So now I can't be me. I have to usurp someone else's identity. I moved to this guy's house, I am using his money and all his Internet accounts and pretending to be him in every aspect."

"That's terrible." Suddenly she realized something that she didn't even think about before. "Oh, my God, did you make sure that the phone line wasn't tapped?"

"No one knows about the plot that this guy and I came up with to keep me safe." "Why don't you just go to the police? I mean if you guys don't stop doing this, you're both going to go to jail, you for taking his identity and he for letting you do it," she explained.

"I don't have proof of what this evil man is doing." Pablo heard a voice in his head that said, *that is wrong!* Then, all of the messages that Trent and Olivia sent to Emma talking about their scheme, printed on paper, appeared right on top of Robinson's desk right beside Robinson's laptop. Pablo said, "What the hell?"

"What happened, Pablo?"

"These email messages appeared on top of his computer desk, right beside his laptop, in front of me, out of nowhere." He sounded calm but in reality he was freaking out.

"How can email messages prove someone guilty?"

Suddenly, a CD with audio recorded on it appeared, supporting the email evidence against Trent and Olivia. Pablo played the CD on Robinson's laptop out of curiosity and heard everything that was in it. He was still on the phone with Maria. "Oh, my God, I just listened to audio clips of Trent, his secretary, and the woman they hired to break my heart!"

Sergio had recorded every single conversation with a miniature digital-voice recorder he had secretly placed inside Trent and Olivia's home phones, and he used telekinesis to do it. Pablo acted immediately. He and Robinson switched identities again and then Pablo took all the evidence against Trent and Olivia to the police. Strangely, the police didn't consider the evidence illegal and inadmissible because it had come about supernaturally, and they didn't think they

could fight against that. There was no proof that Trent and Olivia's phones had been modified in any way.

Trent Goodman and Olivia Smith were charged and arrested. In a matter of months, Trent had to sell his company and of course, Robinson bought it despite the fact that he was the last person Trent would ever consider selling it to, but Trent was desperate, so he couldn't turn out the offer. Robinson then became the biggest and most renowned film and record producer in the United States. Trent abhorred Emadorians and he was deeply hurt that now an Emadorian owned his company, the company he'd worked so hard on for so many years. He was locked up, poorer than a rat, and crying like a child.

Meanwhile, Olivia's six, ten, and twelve-year-old kids were visiting her in jail. Olivia's husband and the kids' father had taken them. They were wondering why their mother would do something that they found so stupid and so not worth going to jail for.

They knew nothing about Emadorians and the psychological and physical damage they could do to a human being when they wanted to. Still, now Olivia and Trent knew that they should not have done what they did. They thought that the police would not take their crime seriously. They didn't even think it was a crime.

Octavia, Olivia's older daughter asked, "Why did you do this, Mom?"

"I did it because my victim brought my self-esteem to an all-time low and I wanted to make him pay."

"I understand that when you have a high self-esteem, only your loved ones can bring you down. You take it according to who it comes from."

"You don't understand, Octavia. There's a new species of... people called Emadorians and they treat us humans like puppets."

"I'm going to do my research on them, Mom, but please, don't do stupid things because of them. A child always needs his or her mother, and right now, we can't count on you because you're in jail! Who's going to take care of us now?"

Olivia shed two thick tears.

"Come on, Olivia. Don't make your mother feel like that. I will take care of you," said Alex, Olivia's husband.

"Yes, I know, but who's going to be our mother now?" Octavia insisted.

They left the prison and as they went to the car, Alex said, "Come on, Octavia, don't be like this."

"Don't be mad at Octavia, Dad," said Seth, Octavia's younger brother. "I'm sure that she doesn't mean to make Mom feel guilty. She just wants to make Mom realize that what she did was wrong, that she would've gotten back at that Emadorian without having to commit a crime."

"You are all right. It's just that you shouldn't question your mother's actions," Alex said. "We're your parents, and if one of us has failed, our conscience will tell us so. We don't need you to judge us. Remember you should honor your father and your mother."

"I apologize, Dad," Seth said, but then thought, *but I still agree with Octavia one hundred percent.*

The next day, nothing was the same for this family without Olivia. Now, Alex was the one who had to send the kids off to school, do the chores, and go grocery shopping, as Olivia would do every day before going to work for Trent at one o'clock every afternoon from Monday to Friday. Alex was on his way to the store to get some groceries, and all of a sudden, he had to pass by this violent neighborhood because the road that he would usually take was closed.

Sixteen angry teenagers decided to bang on Alex's car window until one of them broke the window with a baseball bat. When these demons had access to Alex, they pulled him out of the car and started beating him savagely with everything they had.

Three hours later, the beating stopped, and when the youngsters noticed that Alex would die if they didn't stop, they ran away, like scared little children. Casually, Kris, an Emadorian passed by and noticed the dying man. He walked up to Alex, got down on his knees, bit his own wrist, and placed his bleeding wrist on Alex's open chest, healing all of Alex's wounds from the inside out. Fifteen minutes later, it was like Alex had never been beaten. Even his clothes were clean. He got up. He stretched his hand to salute Kris, but Kris rejected him. "Forget it, man. I know you hate us because two of us are the reason your wife is in jail."

"Wait!" Alex said as Kris walked away from him. "I don't hate you. I never have." "You hated us before I came. Don't deny it."

Crying, Alex said, "Listen, man, I can't hate you, any of you, after you saved my life, not even Jose Milian."

"Jose Milian is one of my best friends."

"I've just realized that my wife is in jail, not because of Jose and his brother, Pablo, but because of what she did to get back at them. Olivia should not have done that. If she felt horrible about what Jose told her, she should've come to me and her children for comfort. I always know how to make her feel better."

Kris shook Alex's hand. "Now that you know the truth, how are you going to deal with this situation?"

"I don't think I will have to worry about her for long." "You don't love her anymore?"

"How could I possibly love a woman who's capable of causing someone's death just because someone close to that person hurt her feelings?"

"I have to go, man."

"Would you please give me your phone number?"

Kris grabbed Alex's hand, pulled a pen out of the pocket of his pants and wrote his phone number on Alex's hand. "There you go. I know you need a woman in your life, so just don't worry about it for now. She's coming soon." Kris left.

Olivia knew that there was no way she could get out of jail unless Jose and Pablo dropped the charges against her, and she knew that this was never going to happen. She had to escape, but she didn't know how.

Suddenly, her cell mate got back from the visitation room after seeing her attorney. She asked Olivia, "Would you like to get out of here?" The woman had just become an Emadorian because an Emadorian child spit on her eyes after she made a rude comment to him when he was singing a song to his mom's best friend, one of the inmates. "I can get out whenever I want."

"How can you be so sure about that?" Olivia asked. "Do you know a way to escape?"

The inmate simply disappeared, leaving Olivia stunned. She reappeared in Sweden, inside a clothing store, where she changed her clothes. Sergio got in touch with this new Emadorian and started helping her out. He gave her his credit card with a thirty-thousand-dollar line so she could buy anything she wanted, because Sergio had his life savings in the bank, one million dollars. He could easily pay the credit card off if she spent all the money, but this was someone else's card, so she would never do that. All that she wanted was some clothing, some food, and plastic surgery to change her appearance totally.

The woman didn't know however that she didn't need plastic surgery. All she needed to do was think about the woman she wanted to be and Sergio would help her become that woman. Sergio communicated with her telepathically and told her this. As soon as she followed Sergio's instructions, she reappeared in jail and died there inexplicably. Then, a new woman surged with her spirit inside.

She didn't have to stay in Sweden. She went right back to the United States to assume a new identity. She had new identity documents and she started living a brand-new life. It was like she was reborn. She had no family, but she would start one sooner than she thought.

Since she had just started building her credit and working on her new job, she didn't think that she could buy a new home. Out of the blue, a single thirty-five-year-old man came walking down the sidewalk of her rented house. He was listening to soft-listening music on his iPod as he walked. Rapidly, he noticed this gorgeous brunette getting her mail. His fiancée had just broken off the engagement and left him because he had obsessive-compulsive disorder and she could not handle it. When he saw this woman, everything changed. He forgot completely about all his obsessions and compulsions. She touched his heart. With Sergio's help, in a matter of seconds, the man knew everything about her. Her body was brand new and no man had touched it. This fascinated him.

He made his move and approached her just as she was walking to the entrance of her house. "Hello."

She turned around to face him and smiled at him. He was very handsome. "Hello. Do you live around here?"

"Yes. I live three blocks down," he said, smiling. "What's your name?"

"My name is Shelly Lockhart. Some people think my real name is Michelle when I tell them my name is Shelly, but my name is Shelly."

He shook her hand. "My name is Reginald. My nickname is Reggie." "It's nice to meet you, Reggie. You are scorching hot."

He laughed.

"I've never seen eyes like yours."

Reggie smiled. "Thank you. How old are you, if you don't mind me asking?" "Of course I don't mind. I'm twenty-seven."

"I'm thirty-five," Reggie said. "Is that too old for you?"

Shelly smiled and said, "As long as you can still conceive, you're not too old."

He laughed and said, "You just met me and you already want me to be the father of your children?"

"Why is that so hard to believe?" She gave him a kiss on the lips. "Do you want to come inside?"

Reggie was a scared little boy now. No woman had ever been so forward with him. Sure, she was desperate for a boyfriend and he knew it. He thought *it seems that I'm going to get married within three months after all*. A mysterious woman had predicted his future and told him that he would get married within three months with a woman he'd just met. She had just died three days before, and he didn't know this.

Reggie and Shelly went inside Shelly's house. Right at the entrance, as Reggie closed the door behind him he found a reference book about Emadorians on the wooden living-room coffee table. Shelly was in such a hurry to make a meal for her and her guest that she didn't know the book was there. She went right into the kitchen. Sergio had finished writing that book five days

before, and he'd published it twenty-four hours before, with the Bennett Publishing Company. Reggie sat down, picked up the eight-hundred-page-tome and started reading it. In less than two hours, he'd already read one hundred pages. He knew enough about Shelly to either marry her or run away from her, move out of the neighborhood and even the city, and never see her again. He had made his decision, nonetheless. He would marry her, not within three months, but within one week. He never knew a woman as well as he knew Shelly, not even his own mother. He got up and went to the dining room as soon as he heard Shelly serve their dinner: beef stew.

He sat down and said to her, "Shelly, let's get married." Shelly smiled. "Are you serious?" "Yes. I want us to have a big wedding."

"Are you sure, Reggie?"

"I'm positive. I know you. In fact, there's nothing I don't know about you." She smiled and thought *Sergio is helping me*. She saw Sergio smiling in her mind.

"I know what you like and what you don't like. All I have to do is avoid doing the things you don't like and we won't have any differences."

"I love everything you do," she said as she sat down and held his hand. "Let's get married, baby." He gave her a kiss on the cheek and she smiled.

One week later, everyone Reggie and Shelly knew was at their wedding. She was wearing a pink dress instead of white because she had no idea that she had been reborn in every sense of the word. Reggie was wearing a white tuxedo. They looked awesome today. They said their vows three hours after the ceremony began. Since Shelly had never gone to Reggie's house, she didn't know that he made seven hundred thousand dollars a year working for Vidal, the world's leading company of computers. He only had five hundred thousand dollars in his bank account though, in case of an emergency. He would place fifteen thousand dollars in his checking account every month to pay all his bills including his credit-card bills. He seldom used his credit cards, however.

They arrived at the reception at Reggie's mansion minutes after and there they danced, ate, and had a great time. Nevertheless there was no alcohol, not even for the toast because Reggie was a recovering alcoholic. He became an alcoholic after he found his first formal girlfriend in bed with another guy three years before. He'd been with that woman for three years.

Reggie's ex fiancée, Stacy, she was deeply sorry that she'd left Reggie. She never loved him. Nonetheless, she only wanted him because from the moment that they got engaged, she could use and misuse his money all she wanted. She knew that Reggie got married today. She managed to steal a photo of Shelly that someone had taken with an old-fashioned camera from the year 1990. She tore Shelly's head off in the photo and she was planning to kill her in real life because she was sure that Reggie still loved her and if Shelly died, she would be able to get back together with Reggie. What she didn't know was that if she tried to kill Shelly, Shelly wouldn't die.

Stacy went to Shelly's house while Reggie was working for the last day before their honeymoon, which would start tomorrow.

Shelly opened the door. Stacy was disguised as a home-health aide. She made up a story.

"I'm a home-health aide and I was hired to bathe, dress, and give a respite to Mr. Tim Matthews' wife, you know, take care of his wife."

"I know who you really are. You're Stacy, my husband's ex fiancée."

Since she was figuratively stripped, Stacy decided to pull her silent pistol off the pocket of her pants and yelled, as she closed the door behind her, “Yes, that’s right. I am Stacy Thurman, the true love of Reginald Goldstein’s life, and I came here to end yours!”

Shelly pretended to be frightened, pulled back, and walked a few steps back. Stacy shot her in the chest five times. Stacy was amazed when Shelly just stood there, motionless for a few minutes. Then, she looked down at the five holes in her skin and they healed in a matter of minutes. Stacy didn’t know what to do next. She dropped her gun, covering her face with her hands and started to cry.

Shelly picked up the gun and pointed it at Stacy. “You know that nothing will happen to me if I shoot you, right, because you’re in my house!” Shelly chased Stacy with the gun for a few minutes, but she didn’t want to kill her because Sergio told her not to do it. Because of his help and his guidance, Sergio was officially declared the Emadorian Assistant and Guide worldwide, as he was born to control the minds and actions of these beings. No Emadorian could do it. Everyone applauded Sergio as he stood there, with his award in his hands, crying tears of joy. With his mind he could control every Emadorian that needed help at the same time, with his mind, as he did other things that humans usually did.

Meanwhile, Shelly and Reggie were having a blast in California. Every three days they would go to a different place in the world and take a tour around the capital of that country or state. They would really travel around the world in one hundred and eighty days because that was the time that Reggie was given for vacation.

Shelly and Reggie shared a passionate kiss in their room that led to a night of bliss. As they did the erotic dance of love, they discovered that they really loved each other. Five hours later, it all ended, and they were so sweaty that they had to take showers separately with cold water in order to be fresh. Then, they went to an authentic Italian restaurant in Italy. Shelly had a bump in her abdomen and it was hard. It was not a full belly, though. Shelly was pregnant, and the gestation period of female Emadorians was only three days long, but Emadorian babies would age in a yearly basis, like human babies did. However, they would be a lot more intelligent and they would graduate high school at the age of eight. By age twenty, they would be doctors in all branches of medicine, computer technicians, teachers, among other six-figure careers and earn great money.

Sergio was exiting a store. He used his keyless-entry remote to unlock the driver door of his car. Suddenly, a couple of Emadorian haters splashed a chemical on him, all over his body that kept him from being able to defend himself and reverse any damages that were done to him. Then, they hit him on the head so severely that they crushed his skull and damaged his brain. They knew that Emadorians could not be killed and that they could only die of old age at 300 years old, so they thought they had damaged his brain and he could no longer help all the other Emadorians with their problems. Sergio screamed, “Help!” at the top of his lungs, hoping that someone would hear him somewhere nearby.

All of the other Emadorians got connected to Sergio, and the next thing he knew all of them, all ten thousand of them were surrounding him. No one could see his naked body as they stripped him and bathed him with soap and water. However, the only way to reverse the damage that the chemical had done was to get a very special Emadorian to literally bathe Sergio with his blood and get his skin to absorb it. That Emadorian was Angel Ray, and fortunately, he was there right at that moment.

Angel walked closer to Sergio and cut open all his veins with a knife, soaking Sergio with his blood. Just by drinking a sixteen-fluid-ounce bottle of purified water, he recovered all his blood and the water caused his wounds to close up.

Covered in blood, Sergio recovered from his injuries and got up. An ambulance was standing by, and the paramedics had them tied down and taken to the hospital.

In the hospital, Sergio received the best care available to a living thing, superhuman, human or subhuman. That's when he decided to become a doctor, to heal those that were in need. He wanted to become a physician, and he did it in a matter of months. He got his degree and started practicing general medicine right away.

The first patient came into his office. She was twenty-three years old, and she was instantly in love with him. She loved the shoulder-length, silky, ebony hair, the perfectly-shaped squared face, the stunning green eyes, the beautiful smile, and the athletic body. Sergio smiled at her. "How may I help you today?"

"My physician doesn't want to help me anymore because thanks to my former best friend I lost my health insurance, and he knows that I am poor and I can't pay for his services. I just became disabled and I can't work, possibly never again, but my so-called friend hired a look-alike of mine that came from God knows where and they made everyone think that I can walk and do everything without anyone's assistance. Look at me. I can hardly use my hands now. I can't type and that's why I can't work." She covered her face with both hands and started to cry.

Sergio grabbed the leg rest of her wheelchair, pulled her closer to him, held her hands, sending electricity through her veins that went directly to her brain, making her hands function like the hands of a healthy person. Then, he asked, "Do you feel better now?"

She smiled, looking down at her hands and answered, "Yes, I do."

"I could heal you completely, but I'm not going to do that because you need your medical insurance and I am going to help you get it back. Since I really prescribed you nothing and gave you no advice, I am not going to charge you a penny for this visit. I want you to do one thing for me, though," Sergio said as he got up from his chair and moved it away from his desk.

"What's that?" she said.

He pulled her wheelchair closer to his computer desk and opened the word processor for her with just a few mouse clicks. "Type a paragraph for me, telling me how you feel, what's on your mind."

**I FEEL GREAT BECAUSE A DOCTOR HELPED MY HANDS FUNCTION CORRECTLY AGAIN, AND I CAN TYPE NOW. I CAN WORK AT HOME.**

She typed all this incredibly fast. Her hands were better than they were before she started suffering from cerebral palsy.

"It doesn't have to be a paragraph. What you just typed is fine. I don't want you to get tired."

"Did you time me?" she said as she got out of the computer desk.

"I don't have a timer with me, but I know those words took you less than five seconds to complete."

Smiling, she asked, "Are you serious? Was it really five seconds?"

“It was four point three seconds to be exact.”

Christina hugged Sergio. “Thank you so much,” she said and wheeled herself out of the office.

Sergio followed her. “Wait.”

She turned around to face him. “Yes.”

“Are you Christina Soleil Dawson?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Let me write you a prescription for a power chair. Please come back into my office.”

Christina and Sergio went back in. He helped her get in and then closed the door behind him, sat down on his chair once again, and pulled out a prescription pad from one of the drawers of the computer desk.

Christina asked, “Who is going to pay for the power chair?”

With the phone headset in his ear and the fax machine faxing photos that appeared to be out of nowhere, Sergio answered, “Your insurance is.”

She gasped.

“I am going to tell them a few things, send them a few documents, and by the end of the day, your claim for a new power chair should be processing, and five days from today, you’ll have a brand-new power chair delivered to your home.”

An operator came on the line. “Sunset Insurance Corporation, this is Samuel. How may I help you?”

“I would like to report fraud committed against you and I would like to place a claim for a new power chair for Ms. Christina Dawson.”

While he typed the information given on the computer, Sam asked, “What’s her date of birth?”

“It is July 16, 1983.”

A few seconds later, Sam said, “Her account was closed because...”

Sergio interrupted him. “Her account was closed because you were lied to. You were given false proof that this woman wasn’t handicapped, and I sent you proof just now that she is handicapped.”

Sam looked at the photos. Even a live video of Christina in Sergio’s office appeared in his computer. Sergio got the camera to focus on Christina’s face and Christina said, crying, “I am Christina Dawson, the real one. Please believe me. You can look me up on public records, put in my social-security number, and you’ll see a live photo of me. Please...” Christina let her head down and cried.

The camera focused on Sergio again and Sergio said, “There you go, Sam. What more proof do you need?”

Sam was crying, too, but he was trying to hide it. Sniffling, he said, “I’m sorry. I...”

“It’s ok, Sam,” Sergio replied. “There’s nothing wrong with feeling compassion for someone.”

“I will speak to my supervisors about reopening her account. I will show them all the proof that I have that we were deceived and then I will call you back, and we’ll talk about that power chair, ok?”

“Thank you, Sam.”

“Have a good day, Dr. Snyder. I will call you back. I am going to speak with my supervisors right now.”

“Bye, Sam,” Sergio said and hung up.

Christina was cleaning her face with a tissue. “Will they start covering my medical care again?”

“Sam said he would call me back with the company’s decision, but I know they’ll start covering you again as soon as you get your new insurance card. Call my receptionist, give the number to her, and I will charge them just for the prescription for your power chair.”

“I only came here because I have a cold and I need a prescription to cure it, not just one that will give me relief for a few hours and then the cold will come back.”

“That’s what I hate about over-the-counter-drugs,” said Sergio as he wrote a prescription for a medicine that would kill the cold virus forever that his half-brother, Ruben invented. “They are a temporary solution. I thought humans were much more intelligent than this. They can create virus and bacteria-killing medicines, but it’s like they don’t want to.”

Christina laughed. “That’s what you guys are here for, to improve the quality of everything we create.”

“That’s the only thing we can do, however, improve what you’ve created. We can’t fix your mistakes because if we do, God will make sure that our species becomes extinct,” he explained.

Christina took the prescription from him gently. “Is that right?”

Smiling, Sergio said, “Yes, that’s right.” “Well, I guess I have to go,” Christina said.

“Do you want one of our special buses to take you home?” “That would be nice.”

Minutes later, Christina went home in one of the buses. She got home, got out of the bus, went into the house, picked up the phone and called her mother.

Heidi answered the phone. “Hello, sweetie, how are you?”

“I’m better than ever. I met this doctor that helped me get my health insurance back and made my hands good and functional once again. Now I can work from home.”

“That’s wonderful, my love! Who is this doctor?” “It was Dr. Sergio Snyder.”

“He’s the best doctor in the world! He’s handsome, too!”

“Yes, he’s very handsome, and I can’t deny that he captivated me, but...” Smiling, Heidi said, “So my girl is in love?”

“Mama, you know I fall in love very easily, but I feel more gratitude for him than anything.”

“You can move in with me and take the job I had before. I am a best-selling author now, thank God. You could either do that or allow me to support you financially.”

“The job that you had generates very good money, ten thousand dollars a month and I want to be self-sufficient.”

“You want to make your own money?”

“That’s correct.”

“Christina, I just want you to know that I’m willing to support you while you make your own fortune.”

“Thanks, Mom.”

Heidi got an outstanding idea at the moment. “Hey, how would you like to start your own enterprise?”

“That would be lovely, Mom!”

“You always wanted to be a singer, but due to your disability, that is impossible. Would you like to start a record label?”

“Oh, my God...”

“You know you had it all before you decided to move away from home, Christina. Now, you can have it all again.”

“Will you really help me start my record label?”

“Hey, you know it!”

“Why don’t I come over to your house and discuss the details?” “That is a great idea.”

“We are going to brainstorm what the record label will be like, and then you will call your attorney and ask him to help us.”

“I will do that. I will go pick you up in my van,” Heidi said and hung up.

Minutes later, Heidi arrived at Christina’s house. Christina’s brother, Heath got out of the van and helped Christina get into the van. Then, in a very short amount of time, they left the house.

“I have to move out of that house,” Christina said on her way to Heidi’s house. “It has absolutely no commodities for handicapped people, and you guys have no idea how much I’ve been suffering. I just wanted to be independent, but I couldn’t have imagined in a million years that independence would cost me so much. I moved into that house before the car accident that changed my life forever.”

“How many times did our parents tell you not to move out? If you’re with us, you’ll have everything you need and more,” Heath said.

Everyone hugged.

Robinson and Kay were at work right now. Robinson was the president of the company and Kay was the vice president. Out of the blue, a fifteen-year-old songwriter came into the office and closed the door behind him without even being announced. He was just a songwriter and not an aspiring singer. “Hello,” the kid said, smiling.

Robinson just sat there, staring at him, openmouthed. “My receptionist didn’t announce you.”

“She wasn’t there so I just came in,” he said, still smiling.

“You don’t do that.”

The kid turned serious. “I’m sorry, I...”

“I won’t call security because something tells me that you brought me something good.”

“If you don’t want me here...” the young man said as he turned around to leave.

Robinson got up. “I do want you here. I want what you brought me.” The young man turned around again. “Do you?”

“Yes, I do.”

The young man gave Robinson the sheets with the composed song and an audio CD with a file where he was singing the song.

Robinson took the CD in his hand. Then he opened the case, pulled out the CD and placed it in his CD player. He and the young man listened to the song together. Then, Robinson said, “This is great! Who did you write this song for?”

“That song is for anyone who will accept it.”

“I think this song is good for Sheena Brown. Thank you very much. In order to give you all the credit for this song before even publishing it, we need your personal information, including your tax ID number.”

“Here is my information,” Galen said, handing Robinson a card with his mother’s name and information on it. “My name is Galen Martin. I am fifteen years old.”

Robinson shook Galen’s hand. “It’s very nice to meet you, Galen. I’ll call you when I talk to Sheena. Sheena is our newest artist. All the songs in her debut album, other people wrote them, as it almost always with debut albums, but by the next album, she’s going to write her own songs. She’s a great singer. She’s preparing her autobiographical songs right now as we speak.”

“Is her single out yet?” Galen asked.

“Yes. Her single is named \_Hayley knows’.”

Galen smiled and said, excited, ““Hayley knows’? Oh, my God, that song is great!” “It is number one on the Superstar Charts, Galen, and it is number three on the World Chart. Who knows? Maybe you just gave us our number one hit.”

## Chapter 9

Smiling, Galen said, "I hope so. I want to apologize for barging in here the way I did."  
 "You don't have to apologize. On the contrary, I thank you for bringing us such a wonderful song. I'm going to call your mother and tell her that I've got your song," said Robinson.

Galen walked out of the office and went downstairs to the lobby. There was a vending machine right beside the main door. He pulled his wallet out of the pocket of his pants, opened it up, and pulled out a one-dollar bill. Then, he placed it in the vending machine and selected a pack of peanut-flavored M&M's. He tore open the top of the package with his hands, closed up his wallet and put it back in the pocket of his pants. Then, he placed the bag of M&M's over his mouth and ate a few candies on his way out of the building.

Robinson called Pamela, Galen's mother, at work. Pamela was the president of a cosmetics company, the third most-successful cosmetics company in the world. The phone rang at Pamela's office.

Pamela answered the phone. "This is Pamela Martin, President of Clarity Cosmetics. How may I help you?"

"Are you the mother of Galen Philip Martin?"

Worried that it was a cop wanting to talk to her about something Galen did wrong, Pamela said, "Yes," in a broken tone.

"This is Robinson Bennett from Bennett Records. I wanted to talk to you about a song that Galen just gave me. I'm sorry does he go by the name Galen or Philip?"

"He goes by the name Philip because his father's name is Galen Philip Martin, also, and his grandfather, also, my father in law," Pamela said, relieved and thrilled that a renowned record producer was talking to her about her son's song.

"Philip's son is great. However, I'm going to fax you a document in which you authorize or don't authorize us to use the song," said Robinson while he wrote up the document in the computer.

"Of course I will authorize it!" she said, excited.

Although the document was twenty pages long with all the clauses and regulations, Robinson typed it in less than two minutes. "Ok, I just finished writing it up. I am going to fax it to you." He was loading the document into the fax component of the all-in-one machine. "If you have any questions, please email me before you sign."

Pamela's all in one was receiving Robinson's fax. "Ok," she said. "In the meantime, I'm going to let you go because you're busy." Pamela laughed. "You're busy, too."

"All right, Mrs. Martin, I'll be looking out of your emails and responding to them."

Pamela started reading the document and said, "I'm sure I won't have to email you." "Goodbye, Mrs. Martin," Robinson said and hung up.

Pamela took a few minutes of her time to read the document in its entirety. *This is not only a request for authorization for use of the song it's also a contract for my son to write songs for Bennett Records! Oh, my goodness...!*

"I hid information from her," Robinson said to his right-hand man, Walter. "When she reads the document, she won't sign."

Pamela called her attorney, Esq. Lomas, for him to assess her. Esq. Lomas arrived one hour after she called him and they studied the contract together.

“This is a great contract, unless you want Philip to have the freedom to write songs for the artists of any record company.”

“They are offering awesome royalties. How can I turn that down? I mean we’re talking about my son’s future here. I am going to keep supporting my son with my money and every penny that my son receives from these people I’m going to put it in a bank-account under my name and my son’s name.”

“So you are going to sign this contract.”

“I just wanted to know if it would be good for me to sign it.”

“That’s if you don’t care about the restrictions in the contract.”

“I just asked for your advice to make sure that they’re not taking advantage of my son.”

“The only con that I see in this contract is that your son is obligated to only give his songs to Bennett Records, and if they found out that he’s given his song to an artist that belongs to another record company, he’ll be sued for not complying with this contract,” Esq. Lomas explained.

“It’s all about the royalties, Esq. Lomas. Just to let you know, this is not the first record label that my son has offered his songs to. I have copies of the other contracts that the other record labels have given him, and they would only offer ten percent of the royalties. Bennett Records offers thirty percent of the royalties. I would like fifty percent, but no one offers that, so thirty percent is enough for me.”

“Ok,” said the attorney and walked out of the office, “if you say so.” He left and closed the door behind him.

Meanwhile, Pamela and Philip signed the contract together, and Pamela’s secretary, Hope, signed as the witness. Then, they faxed the document to Robinson directly. Robinson received it, legalized it, and filed it in court. Robinson was happy with his new songwriter. It occurred to Robinson that perhaps in the near future, Philip could be a singer if he wanted to. Robinson realized when Philip was talking to him, that Philip’s voice was perfect for singing. If Philip became interested in a singing career, he would definitely be one of the best male singers in our generation.

### *Three months later*

Philip’s song was number one in the world chart and Sheena Brown’s biggest hit. She was receiving a Golden Bear Award for it. The Golden Bear was music’s biggest award. It awarded artists and songwriters for having the highest sales and just for being great.

Sheena was on stage, behind a podium before an audience of twenty thousand people and thirty million people were watching the Golden Bear Awards on television in the United States alone and three hundred million people were watching them all over the world. “I want to thank God, first and foremost, for the miracle of surviving death so many times and giving me so many chances. I want to thank my mom and my dad for bringing me into this world and raising me with so much love, giving me everything I needed even though they had hardly any money and doing everything in their power to help me realize my dream. I want to thank everyone at Bennett Records for believing in me and making my dream come true. If I left anyone out, sue me.” When she was about to leave, she went back to the microphone and said, “This has never

happened in any other award ceremony before, and I'm sorry, but I came back because I have to thank Philip Martin for a wonderful song. Thank you."

The award show host came out once again and said, "And now, presenting the \_Song of the Year' award, here is Marissa Paoli, start of \_Cross Heart' and Bernard Bermudez, five-time Golden Bear Award Winner. His new album, *Poison Ivy* is in stores now!"

Everyone applauded these stars as they took places in the podium. Without making comments to one another, Bernard and Marissa presented the award. Bernard said, "And the nominees for the \_Song of the Year' award are..."

"\*Lady Brie – *No way Jose*," said Marissa.

"\*Maureen Iverson – *On Thin Ice*," said Bernard.

"\**The Way You Love Me* – Mike Dawns," said Marissa.

"\**My Beloved* – Sheena Brown," said Bernard.

Everyone screamed when the name of Philip's song was announced.

Bernard said, opening the envelope, "And the winner is..." he read the name of the winner, "*My beloved* by Sheena Brown!"

Sheena thought, as she went on stage to receive her award, *first I got the award for best vocal performance, and now I'm going to get the award for song of the year. Today must be my lucky day.* She went to the podium and accepted her award. She said, "I would like to thank every single person that made this possible. You guys are the best," and then walked off the stage as everyone applauded.

They were about to present the award for songwriter of the year. Two gorgeous actors went out on stage to present the award, greeted one another, and with a smile on his face, Peter Harmon said, "Now, we'd like to give the names of the nominees of the songwriter of the year. The nominees are:

"H. H. Boss for *No Way Jose*," said Peter.

"Thelma Bradley for *On Thin Ice*," said Tim.

"Emma Weiss for *the Way You Love Me*," said Peter.

"Philip Martin for *My Beloved*," said Tim.

Everyone screamed once again when they heard the name *My Beloved*.

"And the winner is..." said Peter as he opened the envelope, and then both Peter and Tim screamed, "Philip Martin for *My Beloved*!"

Everyone in the audience screamed like there was no tomorrow. Philip went up on stage to get his award, crying. He got behind the podium beside Peter and Tim and addressed the audience. "I want to thank God because if it wasn't for him, I would never have existed. I want to thank my mom and my dad for giving me a great life and everyone at Bennett Records for being so good to me and being the ones to make my dreams come true. I would also like to thank my brother for being my inspiration for my first song, which I wrote when I was five. Thank you." He left the stage and everyone applauded and screamed.

Philip went home with his parents, his older brother, Gabriel and his award, knowing that there were five million dollars in his bank account. He only wanted fifteen hundred dollars of that money to buy one of the best laptops on the market. The next day, he went to an office

supply store called 4UR Office and bought a cool, brand new, midnight blue laptop with a 250 GB hard drive, 3 GB of RAM, fifteen point four inch screen, Aspire Operating System, the best of the best, a multi-layer DVD burner and the best programs that money could buy to do anything from editing videos to word processing.

Philip went out of the store with his parents. Since he was just a songwriter, paparazzi wouldn't give all their attention to him—or at least that's what he thought. Someone from the store called the paparazzi and as the Martin family was getting into their van, a multitude of paparazzi approached them and asked Philip how it felt to be a Golden Bear award winner, considering the fact that the bear in the award was made of real gold.

"You guys," Philip said, smiling the whole time, "I am tired, but yes, I am really happy to have my own Golden Bear Awards and that's beyond my wildest dreams. Thank you." He got into the car. Minutes later, Pamela pulled the family van out of the parking lot.

A half an hour later, the Martin family got home. Just then, the phone rang. Pamela walked out of the living room, into the hallway that went from the living room to the kitchen, and then she walked into the kitchen and picked up the phone there. "Hello."

"Hello. I wanted to say congratulations. I also want to thank Philip for what he said about us. I'm sure that will attract more hopefuls to our record label. Thank you."

"Hey," Pamela said, smiling. "He's just telling it like it is, Robinson."

"I know he's tired. Tell him that from now on, every Sunday he's got the day off, unless he's got an important event coming up, like a performance in an award ceremony, a tour date, or something like that."

"That sounds good."

"I'm going to let you go."

"You sound sad, Mr. Bennett. Is something wrong?"

"I'm sad because I just found out that Sheena Brown had a heart attack and died last night."

Pamela gasped. "What?" She started shedding tears and trembling as she cried. "How did that happen?"

"She received bad news from a family member and she couldn't take it. We don't know what she was told, though."

"I'm sorry, Robinson."

Robinson started to cry once again. "She was one of my best artists! What am I going to do without her?"

Sheena's twin sister, Sheila, she knew what bad news Sheena had received—her best friend, Tanya, she had taken Sheena's boyfriend away from Sheena and now Tanya was pregnant with Sheena's boyfriend, Stephen's baby. Stephen, Sheena's cheating beau, he didn't know that Sheena was dead because Sheena's best friends had decided not to tell him. They also made sure that the media wouldn't find out. They had no idea of the evil plan on Sheila's now warped mind. She was planning to make Stephen fall in love with her to break his heart and avenge Sheena's death.

Sheila immediately executed her evil plan. She went to Stephen's house that night and rang the bell. Stephen didn't know that Sheena was dead and Sheila was dressed and her hair was done just like Sheena's in the moment. It was a no brainer to fool him. She had sexy lingerie in a shopping bag, an outfit she hadn't used yet because she had no boyfriend and no one to share it with. Sheila never believed in casual relationships, but now it was time to have one, her first one,

just to break Stephen's heart, literally and make him feel the way that Sheena felt. Stephen wasn't expecting anyone, so he was shocked when he opened the door and saw the woman he thought was Sheena standing there. He only started a relationship with Tanya because he didn't think Sheena would give him another chance. Yet, here she was, standing before him, and in one moment all his plans changed.

"Hello, Sheena," he said and made way. "Come on in."

Sheila went in and he closed the door behind her. "How are you, Stephen?"

"I wasn't expecting you, but I did want you to come over. I want to talk to you. Let me explain..."

Sheila sat on his loveseat in his living room and listened to him quietly.

"What I did with Tanya, it was a mistake."

"It wasn't a mistake, Stephen," she said, seductively and crossed her legs. "You've been cheating on me with her all this time."

"I know but I realize I was wrong."

"So you admit it."

He took the liberty to sit beside her. He held her hand. "I've always loved you. I always will. Please give me another chance. I'm a wreck without you."

"What was it that I didn't give you? Can you tell me that?" "You gave me everything you had, I know." "Then why did you cheat with her?"

"It all started one night. We were drunk and..."

"And it just continued to happen," said Sheila.

"I don't know what I was thinking."

"That's just it. You weren't thinking."

"I can't tell you enough how sorry I am."

She got up from the loveseat. "But I've just decided that I'm not going to let Tanya win. You know me. You know that I've never let anyone take what's mine. What are you going to do about Tanya's baby?"

"I'm going to support the baby and give him or her everything he or she needs, but I'm going to break it off with Tanya. She's got to understand that what we had was never real, that it was nothing but a mistake." He gave her a hug.

As she hugged him, she shed tears because she knew that Sheena was also pregnant with his baby. She was one month pregnant and her sister and her niece died because of him and Tanya. Now, they had to pay. "I've got to go get ready because I came to spend the night with you." She picked up the bag from the loveseat. He noticed the bag and covered his mouth so that she wouldn't notice that he was drooling. "Go to your room. You smell great. I'll see you in your room, baby. I promise to give you the night of your life." She walked out of the living room, into the hallway, and he walked to look toward the hallway. When she saw him, she smiled at him naughtily and closed the door to the hallway bathroom.

He went to his bedroom to wait for her. Precisely at that moment, the phone rang. Tanya was calling. Stephen was supposed to come over to her house tonight. It was late and he didn't show up. He would never leave his house after midnight unless he had an emergency and it was fifteen minutes after midnight. She knew that he wasn't coming, but she didn't know why. She was very angry. Stephen saw Tanya's number on the caller ID on the screen of the cordless phone. Sheila smiled. Somehow she knew that Tanya was the one calling. *If you think you're*

*going through a tough time now, you haven't seen anything yet. You haven't a clue what's coming your way, you whore!*

Stephen picked up the phone. "Hello."

He sounded really cold. Something had changed radically. "Why didn't you come over tonight? You left me here waiting!"

"I have something to tell you."

"What's that?"

"We're through."

She gasped and almost fell off her bed. "What? How dare you to do this to me, you asshole?"

"I'm sorry. I made a mistake. You and I should never have been together." "Don't tell me that Sheena took you back." "She did."

"You're dumping me for her."

"It was never meant to be, Tanya."

Sheila was still in the bathroom, almost done putting on her sexy negligee. She had already put on her matching pink push-up bra and her pink panties to match the negligee. She wanted to make the game a little bit more fun. She didn't know what Sheena was like in bed because she would never talk to her twin sister about sex, but she'd heard from his ex girlfriends that he preferred tranquil, submissive women. She'd learned a few tricks in the two past relationships she'd had. She'd done everything.

"How can you tell me such a thing?" Tanya said, crying bitterly. "We are going to have a baby together!"

"I am going to support that baby. I am going to take full responsibility, I promise." "I don't want your money! I want you!" she screamed.

"I'm sorry, Tanya. I am offering you the only thing I can give you. I love my baby and I will always be there. I don't know why you're so hung up on me frankly, because I never told you I loved you." He was starting to become upset now because he couldn't make her understand that what they'd done to Sheena was wrong and he was trying to make it right. "It was just sex. You knew that from the beginning."

"I love you, Stephen."

"Goodbye, Tanya." He hung up.

Tanya couldn't stop crying. She was too obsessed with him to let him go. Tanya had serious mental issues and an extremely obsessive personality. That was one of many reasons why Stephen just dumped her, although he never told her because he didn't want to make her feel worse than she already did. She was possessive and controlling. Her word was law. She was never interested in what she had to say. Basically, she was nothing like Sheena. Sheena was sweet, trusting, she always cared about his feelings, she was always there to listen to him, and their opinions were of equal value. Since Sheena began her career as a singer, they had very little time to spend together, but that wasn't the reason why Stephen cheated. Tanya was incredibly seductive and she'd always been infatuated with him. One night he was vulnerable and saddened because he and Sheena had argued on the phone. It was their first argument since their relationship started three years before. She got him drunk, seduced him and had sex with him. Since then, to him, she was addictive and no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't stop sleeping with her. She was an expert at this, no doubt. She was one of few women that had control of him

in bed. She could do things that no other woman could. Stephen's parents, Stella and Ace were very disappointed in him because of what he was doing, and they kept telling him, every time they talked to him, to leave Tanya alone, that she would hurt him badly. She was a horrible drug for him, but now it was time to break the spell.

Tanya wouldn't let it happen, however. She got the strength she needed when she didn't have it before, took a shower and got dressed in a matter of minutes. Then, she got out of the house, got into her car, and at almost one o'clock in the morning she pulled out of the garage, then out of the driveway and took the road.

Sheila finished getting ready and entered Stephen's room. Stephen was lying down on his bed, completely naked, covering his lower body with the sheets. This time, he drooled like crazy but he had no time to hide it. She looked stunning. Sheena looked sexy many times before. She was a very sensual and desirable woman, but tonight, there was something different. He couldn't explain it, but he liked it. She was more sensual than ever, more provocative. He was fascinated. Stephen couldn't believe his eyes. Sheena had done some pretty amazing things for him, but somehow this was unlike anything he'd ever experienced.

"Do you like it, baby?" she said as she stood there modeling for him. "Oh, yes, I do. I love it. I've never seen this side of you before, Sheena." Surprised, Sheila asked, "What do you mean?" For a moment she thought that he'd noticed that she wasn't who she was pretending to be and her plan had been ruined and he was just playing the game with her.

"You seem much wilder than before. I can't explain it."

She slowly lied down in bed with him. "Then don't," she said as she caressed his face, his neck and his chest. "Just make love to me, please, and forget about everything else. Forget about her."

"I already have," he said and kissed her passionately.

Tanya was too sad and angry to think straight. She didn't know what she was doing and she was going the wrong way. This was not the way to Stephen's house. She was in a place that she didn't know. She just kept on driving and didn't notice that she was totally wrong. She started driving erratically and the driver behind her noticed this. He started blowing the horn. She was so lost that she didn't hear him, but he insisted. He wouldn't give up. He just continued to shine his lights as intense as he could in an effort to blind her, annoy her and get her to pay attention, and he continued to blow the horn with the same purpose.

All of a sudden, Tanya just stopped because she couldn't see where she was going because of the lights and it was dangerous. She cared for Stephen and she didn't want him to be responsible for his baby's death for breaking up with her and driving her to have a car accident. "Oh, my God..."

The concerned driver pulled over right behind her and got out of the car. He came to her window and knocked on it.

She put her window down. "Yes?"

"Don't you know how you're driving, lady? This is crazy. You could get yourself killed!"

"Thank you for trying to warn me."

She was five months pregnant and he noticed it because her belly was enormous. She didn't know it but Stephen had an identical twin named Stanley and she was having twin girls. "Ah, you're pregnant, too!" he said. "Don't you care about the life of your child? I'm sorry. I don't mean to be so judgmental. It's just that I'm really worried."

“It’s ok, you’re absolutely right. I should slow down and think about my baby more than me. It’s just that the man I was having a relationship with, he dumped me. I was sleeping with another woman’s man and he left me to go back to his girlfriend. I just can’t believe he did this to me.”

“You shouldn’t be driving in this condition. Are you trying to go over to his house to confront him?”

“Yes, I am. I know it’s stupid because seeing me won’t change his mind, but yes, that’s precisely what I’m trying to do.” Suddenly, she realized that she didn’t know where she was and this was not the right way to go to Stephen’s house. “Oh, my God, what am I doing? This is not the way to go! Oh, my God, I’m lost! What do I do?”

“You’re lost?” said the man, astonished.

“Yes, I got lost, and I don’t know what to do. I don’t know where to go!”

“You’re not in the condition to confront this son of a bitch who’s planning to abandon you and your baby. My advice is to call a family member or a friend to take you home and just relax. I know it’s not easy to do and I can’t imagine the situation you’re in because I’m a man, but...”

“No, no, it’s ok, don’t say that. You’re a man, but you’re trying to help. You’ve just acknowledged that he’s a son of a bitch. You sympathize with me. You’re on my side. That shows you care, so I’m going to take your advice.” She took out her cell phone and dialed her sister’s phone number. Tanya’s sister, Teresa had been telling her all this time to leave Stephen alone and end this ridiculous relationship with him, even before she got pregnant. She didn’t listen and now she was in a huge predicament. Teresa was three years younger than Tanya, twenty-four years old, but she was already married and she had a one-year-old boy named Shelton. Shelton’s father, Newell, was twenty-six years old, same age as Tanya. Tanya was older than Stephen because Stephen was Sheena’s and Sheila’s age, twenty-two years old, but when they were together, that didn’t seem to matter to Tanya. Teresa and Newell were sleeping at that moment, but Teresa always told Tanya that she could call her at anytime and that she and Newell would help her with anything she needed. Newell woke up when the phone rang.

“Hello.”

“Newell, this is Tanya. I need your help.” Her cries were uncontrollable.

“Oh, my God, Tanya, what is going on?” He got out of bed in a flash and in a matter of minutes, he was dressed and ready to go, but he still didn’t have answers from her. “Where are you?”

“To tell you the truth I have no idea where I am.” “Tell me what happened, please!”

“Stephen reconciled with Sheena. He told me that we’re through, and I wanted to go over to his house, but then I got lost and I don’t know what to do. The first thing that occurred to me was to call you.”

“How do I know where you...?”

“Newell, there’s a guy here with me. He found me driving on the road and he...” She didn’t know how to explain her current situation to her brother in law.

“Hand me the phone, please. I’ll tell him how to get here.” Tanya handed the phone to the stranger.

“Hello, this is Lee Tyler. How are you doing?”

“Hello, Lee. This is Newell Lockwood, Tanya’s brother in law. I’m doing ok. So how’s Tanya doing?”

“Tanya’s heartbroken, man. The father of her child dumped her.” Newell was outraged. “Say what?”

“She’ll explain everything to you when she gets here.” Lee told Newell exactly where he and Tanya were and even gave him directions on how to get there because Lee would travel this road regularly to visit his girlfriend and his baby. Right now, they lived slightly far away from him, but he was planning to move to their neighborhood. Lee’s mother had died three years before, leaving him the house as an inheritance, and he planned on selling it to buy another house. Lee was lucky because the house was currently worth five hundred thousand dollars, and the house that he’d already picked cost half of that amount. He just wanted to be close to his woman and his child. They were going to get married soon, but they didn’t want to live together. They conceived their child, although they didn’t want to make love before getting married because Hope’s evil ex-boyfriend was threatening her and Lee’s relationship, and she wanted to show her ex that it was Lee she loved, not him. She thought that this was the only way to do it. Even so, they were successful at abstaining and they didn’t think their child was a mistake. Every time that Lee visited Hope all they would do was eat dinner together and watch movies before going to work the next morning.

Two hours later, Newell and Teresa got to the place that Lee and Tanya were in together. It was very far away from their home. Luckily, Tanya and Teresa lived in the same neighborhood. Newell got out of the car. Teresa stayed in the car because she couldn’t move much. She was only three weeks from giving birth, but she didn’t want to stay home. She wanted to be here for her sister. Newell shook Lee’s hand and thanked him for staying here all this time with Tanya. Lee was on his way back home after visiting Hope, but he didn’t want to leave Tanya alone.

“It’s ok, man,” Lee said, giving Newell a hug. “I did what I had to do. I couldn’t leave her here all by herself.”

“Now what worries me is that you’ll be late for work tomorrow morning for not getting enough sleep tonight. I appreciate what you’re doing for my sister in law, though. Just know that if you get fired, I will compensate you. Just tell me how much money you’ve lost. I’ll even help you find another job.”

Lee laughed. “Don’t think that way. I won’t get fired. My boss loves me like a son and he’ll understand. Don’t pay mind to that. Right now all I care about is that Tanya makes it home safe tonight. I’m going to call a tow so they can make sure that Tanya’s car returns home.”

“That’s right because Tanya’s going home with us,” Newell said. “There’s no way that Tanya’s going home alone tonight after what happened.”

“Also, I want you to make sure that the father of her child steps up and takes care of his baby.”

“Oh, Lee, you can count on that, trust me,” Newell said. “I won’t let that son of a bitch get away with what he’s done. There’s no way.”

Three hours later, Tanya’s car was back in her garage and Tanya was home with Teresa and Newell, a few blocks away from her own home, in the dining room, crying with Teresa and Newell by her side. They had their arms around her, trying to comfort her. Tanya was twenty-seven years old, and Stephen wasn’t her first love, but he was the man that she’d loved the most in her entire life. It was horrible for her to know that he never loved her the way that she loved

him, and that he was just using her to get from her what he couldn't get from Sheena when they were apart because of Sheena's career. "I can't believe I'm sitting here, crying like I never have before, like a teenage girl who's just been dumped by her first love."

"Stephen wasn't your first love, but he was your most intense love. You never loved any other man the way you love him. I know it hurts. I've been there. I thank God I found your sister, married her, and started a family with her, but you know very well that before meeting Teresa, another woman really broke my heart. I'd been depressed for months and I was so close to committing suicide so many times. I didn't think I would ever get out of that hole."

"I thank God that it was my sister the one to save your life," Tanya replied. "You're the best brother in law I could ever have had. No man has ever treated her or loved her the way you do. That's why I'm thrilled that you're the one she married." He gave her a big, big hug. "Now I'm wondering who's going to save me."

"You're going to find the love of your life, and the best of all is that you won't even have to look for him," Teresa said. "I know it in my heart. I can feel it. I know this is easier said than done, darling, but you should get over Stephen, fast. He's not the one for you. He never was. If it weren't for Sheena, if she had never taken him back, and your so-called relationship had survived, he would've made you suffer beyond words. You know I never agreed with that so-called relationship. I always told you, time and time again, \_Tanya, you deserve so much better than this'. It's never good to be the second one out, and I know these words are harsh, but they're true. You deserve a man who's single, commitment-free and ready for love, ready for the real thing, a man who's incapable of playing a woman. You might think it's impossible to find a man like that nowadays, but believe me, there *are* many men like that and you will find one."

"I should've listened to you, Teresa," she said in between sobs. "Now I'm pregnant with his child and every day, this child will be a constant reminder of the man that broke my heart. I would never have an abortion because what Stephen did to me is not the baby's fault and he or she should never have to pay for our mistakes: mine being stupid and loving without being loved in return, and his mistake of using me, but I'm definitely giving the baby up."

"Are you sure about this?" Newell asked.

"Yes, I'm positive. I don't think I will be able to bear seeing Stephen's face in this child every single day."

"If money's the problem, we'll help you. We will support you and the baby until you find a well-paying job. You have your degree in nursing, so it's not like you have to go back to school to get a good job. We will even help you take care of your baby. I've decided to be a stay-at-home mom and I will take care of my baby and your baby while you work. I'm sure that when you have your baby in your arms, you won't want to give him or her up, and then you'll break the hearts of the baby's future adoptive parents. It won't be easy and you'll regret it. You won't even care who the father of that baby is when you have him or her in your arms. I'm a songwriter, and I make great money. Remember that."

"I know you want the best for me, but..."

"Please, would you at least think about it? Please?" Teresa asked.

"I will listen to you for once," Tanya replied and they hugged. Tanya never before thought that she had to heed her sister's advice just because Teresa was younger, and according to Tanya, less experienced. She realized that her foolishness was what got her into this mess in the first place. She realized, also, that she needed nothing and no one else. Her family was there

for her and that was all that mattered. Stephen could go to hell for all she cared. Sheena was just like him and they deserved each other anyway.

That night, Tanya finally went to sleep while Stephen and Sheila had just finished their night of ardent passion. Stephen was in a huge hole now. Sheena had always been hot and hungry for love, but never this wild. Sheila literally wore him out. He was lying down beside her, completely out of breath, and Sheila had a bright but evil smile in her face. He looked at her. He couldn't believe it. It was like he was with a completely different woman from the woman he loved. She had the same face and the same body, but it wasn't her. It wasn't Sheena, and strangely and unfortunately for him, Stephen didn't know Sheena's identical twin sister. Sheila had just come here from England, where she was finishing her college education. When Sheena and Stephen's relationship started, the twin sisters were already apart, and Sheena always thought it would be best not to let him know about her sister. She never showed him pictures of her. She never even told him about her. Sheena thought she wouldn't see Sheila in a long time, and by the time that she and Stephen met, Stephen and Sheena would be happily married and with one or two kids. Stephen was always weak. A woman didn't have to work very hard to seduce him and get him in bed with her. All she needed to do was show him interest in him, or in most situations, respond to his advances.

"It's odd," he said, still out of breath. "I feel like I'm with someone else." Smiling innocently, Sheila asked, "What do you mean?"

"You were literally one million times more passionate than usual. I thought I would die, and no, that's not hyperbole. I'm dead serious."

"I just want to make you forget about Tanya."

"Oh, did you ever."

"I mean I know you can't forget about her completely thus she's the mother of your child, but I want you to stop loving her, to stop wanting her, to stop seeing her as a woman." She French-kissed him once again, sending chills up and down his spine. "I want you to love, want and desire me and only me, with all your body and all your heart, just like you did before you got with her."

"I never stopped wanting you. My desire for you only became more and more intense every day that went by. I just, you know—I'm sorry. I don't mean to justify my actions. I know what I did was inexcusable."

"I know what you're going to say. You are a man and you couldn't help yourself." Their bodies were covered with the red bed sheets. "I never even got the urge to cheat on you. I never looked at a man in a carnal way. You were the only man I ever wanted throughout our long distance relationship. I would toss and turn in my beds in the hotel, wanting you by my side, touching me, enamoring me—making love to me. I've always wondered if women are stronger than men. You are so weak. I think it's because we have only one head and you guys have two, and you think with your head in between your legs rather than your head above your neck."

That was a mean comment but he couldn't help laughing out loud. "No, Sheena, not all men are like that. All of this is my fault. It's not all the other men's fault that I'm a sissy. I'm the weak one. There are millions of men out there who are stronger than I am, who are faithful—who are real men. I know it's very hard for you and many other women to believe, but it's true."

This time, Sheila laughed like crazy.

“I’m still amazed that you took me back, Sheena, when there are so many other men out there who are much better than me. You could’ve gotten with someone on tour, I don’t know, a fellow singer, or a fan...”

“I had many chances to cheat on you, or better yet, leave you for another man, call you on the phone and say, ‘Stephen, I’ve found someone else. We’re through.’ Then I could’ve hung up. You know why I didn’t do that? Because you’re the one I love. You’re the one I want. No man has made me feel the way you do. I forgive you, but you can be certain that I will make sure that you never do it again.”

“Oh, trust me, I knew that hours before you made this declaration,” he said, laughing. “Babe, you ain’t seen anything yet,” she replied and then got out of bed to freshen up and put on some pajamas.

## Chapter 10

Robinson was in his office, attending to a call about one of his artists, who was terribly sick and had to cancel several concerts. He was up to his neck in work because he was working on his record label and film-production companies at the same time, but that didn’t have any negative effects on him or his health. Emadorians were known for working very hard, and sleeping a maximum of only eight hours a day. Many of them didn’t have time for themselves, time for entertainment, and that’s why they wished days were more than twenty four hours long, thirty hours long, at least, so that they could work like they were doing and at the same time have some free time like regular people. Robinson didn’t want to sell the record label he’d worked so hard to maintain, and his younger sister, Rhonda decided to move to another state and leave the record label to him once again. She’d figured that she could do this and she could do anything she wanted to, but this just wasn’t for her. She wanted to pursue a career as a writer, and she’d already started, having two unpublished novels under her belt, novels that she’d finished in less than six months. She could’ve had more stories to publish if she wanted to, but she wanted to provide the best stories for her readers, well-written and executed. Usually, her first drafts were ready for publication. She had just landed an agent and she was lucky because the agent worked for her brother Robert’s book-publishing company, which was now one of the most prestigious, giving their authors amazing advances and royalties—making them bestselling authors in a few months time after their books would go live. She would’ve gone directly to the publisher without an agent and been just as successful because her writing was that awesome, but it was better for her to get some representation. Robinson didn’t have another family member to help him out and take over one of his companies for him...or so he thought. Kay was willing to take on the film-production company. That was precisely the career she was in college for right now, and she’d acquired enough knowledge and experience to excel. Kay came into Robinson’s office to make him a proposal. Incredibly, in a few months time, she had graduated from college in the film-studies field and she herself couldn’t believe it. It was like Robinson had passed onto her his extraordinary intelligence or something because she was bright before meeting him, but before marrying him she had never accomplished so many extraordinary things in so little time. She was enjoying it the superpowers that were apparently being passed on to her, but at the same time,

she didn't trust herself with them. She was afraid she would hurt someone. Kay sat right in front of Robinson, in a pretty chair as he continued to talk on the phone. She knew he would hang up without being done and attend to her, but she didn't want to interrupt him. He was sunk so deep in this new problem he was facing that he still didn't know that she was there with him.

"Ok, that's not a problem. I'm sure that her fans will understand and even pray for her to get better soon instead of being angry with her and with us because these concerts were cancelled."

As soon as Kay figured out what he was talking about, she suggested, "Why don't you help her get better faster so that all these concerts don't have to be cancelled?" Bennett Records was now more successful than ever before, but Kay was afraid that the cancellation of Brie's concerts would generate great losses for Brie and the record label.

Robinson took the phone off his ear and said, "I'm sorry, Kay, I didn't know you were here." The caller waited for them to finish talking and took the time to listen to the conversation to see if this problem could indeed be resolved for the sake of everyone. He was worried about Brie's situation. Brie had bronchitis, and she couldn't sing. Her fans wouldn't be able to hear her beautiful voice, and although they would get every penny of their money back, they would still be sad. "Do you really think I could do that? I mean I'd never done it before. I was underground for a long time and I didn't have a chance. When I came up here no one around me was sick, or at least so I thought, until Sheena died. Oh, bummer..."

"Of course you can't do it. Don't you know that there are very, very few things that you can't do?"

"And how do you know that?"

"You're really asking me?" she said, smiling.

"Well..." he didn't know what to say to this one. He was so worked up about what was happening to Brie that he couldn't concentrate on anything else. "I may have done some things, without knowing, to make you and keep you completely healthy, but curing Brie's bronchitis, which is getting worse and worse every day, and as if that weren't enough, her vocal cords are starting to suffer some damage..."

*Yes, Robinson, you can do it! Felix, Brie's manager thought while he listened to the conversation on the phone. You can do it! You can solve this problem for all of us! Why don't you try?*

"If you're not so sure you can do it, why not let me try?" she said. "I mean you sure can do it, and you know it, but you're afraid. You think you'll be playing God if you cure someone of his or her great ailment, and that God will be mad at you."

"It seems that you've know me for several years."

"Let's just say that I have learned a lot about you. God won't be angry with you if you do something good for someone. On the contrary, I think he'll be happy."

"If I do this, I'll do it in a different way from anybody else."

"Don't you want to help Brianne? Don't you want to not have to cancel these concerts?"

"I do."

"Then why don't you go see Brie and help her out? You'll help all of us, not just her."

"You're right. I am going to do it."

"That's good. Listen, I came to talk to you about taking charge of Bennett Films. I think I'm ready."

"I know you are, but I never thought you wanted this."

“I do. I’m sure I’ll do a good job, although I won’t be as good as you are.”

“Never be negative. You can do anything you put your mind to, no matter how hard it is. I accept your proposal. I think you’ll be great. You don’t know how grateful I am to you for this.”

“So you are going to continue being in charge of the record label?”

“Yes I am, God willing. I realized that this is what I’ve always wanted to do and I should’ve never tried to do two things at the same time, especially things like filmmaking and making records. I had to choose one of them, for my own good, and I have chosen this.”

“I love making films. I have worked very hard and I’ve even practiced.” She got her fourteen-inch laptop out of her purse, opened it up, turned it on, and when the computer was done booting up and starting up, she browsed her files for a thirty-minute film that she had produced with Jose Milian and Carlos Roman, aspiring actors, who were not willing to give up their dream. This one was a horror film, and they’d been working on it for four months while Robinson was working outside the home. It took them this long because they needed tarantulas, and they needed to make it seem like tarantulas could eat people alive piece by piece. Haggai would take a few minutes of his time to make the tarantulas seem bigger and more terrifying than they really were, and make them do things that in the real world they’d never do. Robinson closed up his own laptop, letting it go into standby mode, set it aside, and placed Kay’s laptop right beside it. He started watching the mini film and when he finished thirty minutes later, he was impressed.

“You’ve got talent,” he said. “You know what you’re doing. You’re in charge of Bennett Films from now on. Kay, I thank you for doing this.” He got up from his chair. “I’m going to go take care of Brie. I promise there will be no genetic enhancement.”

“Oh, I know you can do it without enhancing her genes in any way. Believe me, I’ve seen you in action, not precisely helping someone to heal, but do other things... anyway, you know what I’m talking about.”

“Yes,” he said, surprised, “I do. Do you want me to take you back home?”

“Get on with what you have to do. I have to go shopping.” She got up from her chair, walked closer to him and gave him a big hug. Smiling, she said, “I promise not to break the bank.”

“You don’t have to promise. I know you never do. When you go shopping you only get things you really, really need.”

Every time that Kay went shopping, she would buy clothes and shoes or office supplies. She would go shopping once a week and never once throughout her and Robinson’s marriage did she spend more than \$500 in one day, and she wasn’t planning to start spending more than that today. Although he was succeeding in everything he was doing, she didn’t have the heart to waste his money on things that she didn’t need. She would never waste money. She was taught the value of a dollar. It was Robinson who bought her new laptop for her, as a birthday present, and it was a surprise. “Thanks for being so good to me.”

“We’re good to one another. I’m just so sorry that in all this time we haven’t been able to start a family.”

“You don’t know, do you?”

Smiling, he said, “Know what?”

“We’re already in the process of starting a family. I’m pregnant. I found out before coming here. My doctor told me that this baby is going to gestate at the same speed of a human baby, but he doesn’t quite look human. He’s going to be just like you.”

“It was the same for all my babies. The gestation period would be nine months, but they wouldn’t look normal. Their mothers would abort them because they thought they were monsters.”

“Well, I don’t think my baby is a monster. I think my baby’s a blessing.” She gave him a kiss on the lips, said, “See you later,” and walked to the door, opened the door, and walked out of the office.

Hours later, Robinson went to Brie’s house to see if she had gotten better by any chance, but unfortunately, that wasn’t the case. On the contrary, every minute she seemed to get worse. Brianne’s sister, Barbara opened the door for Robinson. Brie had seen Robinson’s car on her driveway from the window of her bedroom in her estate in England. Her brother, Cody was surprised.

“Oh, my God, Brie, how did Robinson Bennett get here so fast? We know he’s coming from the United States.”

“We know that he’s a supernatural creature. He can do anything he wants and be anywhere he wants, when he wants. He probably came to fire me in person and see my tears running down my face, at the notion that I’ve got to start all over. I don’t even want to entertain the thought.”

“Nah, I don’t think he’d fire you. You are one of his best artists. If he does that he’ll be hurting everyone, not just you. You are his highest-selling artist, Brianne.”

“Well, let’s see what he wants, shall we? Barb must be bringing him over to my room.”

Barb knocked on the door to Brie’s room.

Brie said, “Come in.”

Barb and Robinson came into the room. Barb closed the door behind her. Robinson took the liberty of sitting on Brie’s computer-desk chair in her room. “Hello, Brie. I know I don’t have to ask you how you’re doing.”

“How are you doing, Robinson?”

“I’m worried about you. I came all the way from the US to see if we can do anything to avoid the cancellation of your tour. I know I didn’t bring a doctor with me...”

Brie felt that all of her sinuses were clearing up, apparently without anyone doing anything, and she felt her vocal cords working, healing, and getting better, until she got her voice back. Robinson talked and talked things that she wasn’t listening to because her body was working on healing itself, and all she could do was feel it happening. She felt like someone was operating on her or something. She couldn’t move, talk or think. She couldn’t touch her throat and her chest while they were clearing up. Without medicine, she recovered in a matter of minutes. Her bronchitis was gone and the damage to the vocal cords was reversed. “Oh, my God...”

“Something wrong, Brie?” Cody asked, worried.

“I don’t know what happened, but I feel better now. My ailments could be gone. I have to go to the doctor to make sure so I can rehearse for my concert the day after tomorrow.” Brie got up and out of bed, which was something she couldn’t do since she became sick.

“Huh?” Barb couldn’t believe it. “How could this happen?”

Robinson just smiled. He made this happen. Kay was right. He was afraid to do it because he thought he'd be playing God. At least he hadn't enhanced Brie's DNA in any way. He just cured her bronchitis in an unconventional way, using his incredible psychic powers. Now he felt good about himself. He saved Brie's career, her fans and the future of his company.

Minutes later, everyone was in the living room, talking.

"I'm getting hungry," Brie said. "Who wants a snack?" She got up from the sofa.

"I just want a candy bar if you have one," said Robinson.

"Candy bar," Brie said. "I love candy bars, and I have many varieties, like ten different kinds. What's your favorite?"

"I like Hershey's."

"Do you want it with or without almonds?"

"It doesn't really matter."

"What do you guys want?" She was ecstatic and she couldn't stop smiling.

"I just want a small fruit salad," said Barbara. "I'm not crazy about candy bars."

"I want a sandwich," Cody said, "ham and cheese."

"It's all coming right up," Brie said, excited, and walked out of the living room.

"Are you sure all you want is a candy bar, Robinson?" Cody asked, looking him in the eyes. "A candy bar doesn't satisfy."

"It satisfies me when I know I don't want to eat anything else."

"I've always wondered what you do to stay so fit. It seems like you never get fat," said Cody.

"I don't do anything. It happens naturally. I can eat anything I want, as much of it as I want, and I never gain any weight. I solely exercise to maintain my muscles and, you know, stay healthy. I lift weights with my arms and my legs, and I do abdominal exercises to maintain what people call the six-pack."

"I abhor you," Cody replied and everyone burst out laughing. "No, I'm for real I wish I could be like you. I mean you don't even use steroids to get those colossal muscles."

"No steroids."

"Now I abhor you even more. I've tried to get bigger muscles by lifting weights, and it works all the time, but I have to work really hard to maintain them. Do you think that, after what you did for my sister, you could make things easier for me?"

"Cody..." Barbara said.

"It's ok, Barbara. I don't mind him asking me to do this for him. You know something, Cody? Without enhancing your DNA, I can make your body do what you want it to do, even things that seem impossible, like becoming muscular without having to lift weights till you're drained."

"You'd really do that for me, man?"

"Yes, I would, and I will, before I leave here."

"And can you really tell your body, tell your stomach and your brain that a candy bar is all that your stomach's going to get, and you'll be satisfied with just a candy bar, even if it's not Snickers?"

Everyone laughed again.

"Yes, Cody, that's the truth, believe it or not. I have total control of my body. It does what I want it to do. For example, if I'm having an irresistible meal, and I feel full, and I want to

continue eating, I tell my body to stop, that's enough, and next thing I know, I put my plate aside. I don't feel hungry anymore."

"When that happens to us we can't stop eating. Man, how in the world do you do that?"

"I don't know, believe me."

"That sucks, you know that? It sucks for you not to know."

"You don't have to worry about that. You'll be able to do the same things from now on." A

few minutes later, Brie brought everyone's snacks to the living room. Although she was filthy rich, she didn't have maids to serve her, only housekeepers. She would serve herself all the time. She hadn't always been rich and she was trying to stay as humble as possible. She worked very hard not to let fame go over her head and she was very sweet to the fans, the paparazzi and reporters. She never denied anyone autographs. She wasn't aware that she was one of the biggest superstars out there right now, possibly the biggest pop star in the world, at the moment, after Sheena Brown.

Brie placed the big tray with the snacks on the center of the coffee table, and everyone picked up their snack. Robinson tore open the Hershey's candy bar right away. He wasn't hungry at all. He just didn't want to turn down Brie's offer for a snack. They ate their snacks that day and continued to converse about random things. That day, they even invited Robinson for dinner to show him gratitude for what he'd done for Brie. They didn't know what he did, but they sure knew that they owed it all to him. Word never reached the fans that the next several concerts would be cancelled and even the whole tour. Robinson was successful in keeping that from happening. The superstar known as Lady Brie was back on her feet, rehearsing, and ready to continue to blow her fans away with her unbelievable, prodigal voice and dance moves. She was one of few singers who could sing and dance at the same time without becoming fatigued. Brie was just starting out compared to other artists out there. She'd been in the business for less than two years, and she was already looking to experiment with other music genres, like soul. She wrote almost all of her songs and her lyrics were beyond powerful. Very few songs were about love. Most of her songs were about empowerment and had a positive message, encouraging people to never give up. That's why she had millions and millions of fans, and that's why, with only two albums, she had sold over thirty million copies worldwide, despite music piracy. Her fans were willing to buy her music no matter what, and they would never steal it. If they didn't have money to buy it, they would just not buy it or work hard to get the money to buy it. Eventually they would get what they wanted. In reality, very few fans of different artists didn't have money to buy the music of their idols, but they did get to enjoy it by borrowing their records from friends or family, or by watching their performances on TV. The concerts that were about to be cancelled were completed and so far, although the tour wasn't over yet, Brie had made over sixty million dollars. There were only a few more concerts to do before the world tour would be over.

Kay was getting a chocolate-flavored coffee at the shop. Just when she was about to leave, she bumped into a mysterious man that had been watching her for a long time. He wasn't stalking her, though. Friends that he and Kay had in common, even though they didn't know one another, kept him informed of the most important things that Kay did during the day, every day, things that interested him and somehow affected his life. If the cup of coffee didn't have a lid on, it would've been spilled all over Kay and the stranger's clothes, ruining Kay's workday because that meant that she had to go back home, take another shower, and change her clothes. Kay was suspicious of the man because of the way that he looked at her, but she didn't want to make it

obvious and be rude to him. After all, she didn't know him. She was just starting to see through him.

"Hi," she said, smiling, trying to be nice, even though this man was starting to scare her. "How are you doing?"

Their bodies were too close to one another, so she took a few steps back so that he wouldn't get the wrong ideas about her. "I'm...I'm doing very well, thank you. How are you doing?"

"I'm wonderful now that you're here."

She laughed. She couldn't hide her nervousness. She cleared her throat. "I don't mean to be rude, but I've got to go to work. I've got an important meeting in my husband's film-production company."

"I know that you're married. For some reason, that doesn't push me away from you. It draws me closer to you rather."

"Ah, so you have a thing for married women, huh?"

"Don't get me wrong. It's not that I have a thing for married women. When I'm interested in a woman, and I find out she's married, I usually leave her alone and do my best to not even see her again. However, with you, it's different. I am infatuated. I can't get you out of my mind, and I am willing to fight for you."

"If you know who I am, and you know I'm married then you know who my husband is, right?"

"Yes, I know who your husband is."

"I think you should know my husband is not possessive, controlling, or exceedingly jealous. He trusts me with all he has. He never thinks that I'm cheating on him, never contemplates that possibility. Nonetheless, when he notices or hears that a man is enamoring me, you know what he does? He hurts him, very, very badly. Therefore, if you've got a thing for me, you better get over me. I acknowledge that you're handsome, but I am not interested in you. My husband is a one-woman man, and I am a one-man woman. That's why we got married, because we have the same morals, ideals and values. Now, if you excuse me, I have to go back to work." She pushed him out of the way and walked away from him, but as she walked to the door and then opened it to get out, she turned to look at him and said, "Forget about me, seriously. It's never going to happen. You'd have to rape me, and if you put your hands on me, I'll break every single bone in your body. There are billions of women out there for you to choose from, and you can literally have any woman you want—except me. Don't forget that." She walked out of the coffee shop and closed the door behind her as she took her first sip of coffee. The other customers couldn't stop staring at the man. This was the most embarrassing moment in his entire life. Many women have turned him down, but never in this way. No woman had ever threatened to break his bones if he touched her. He was saddened and he wanted to hide his head in the sand, but he wouldn't give up. He walked out of the coffee shop to get those prying eyes away from him. Now they thought the worst of him and perhaps, he would have to move to another city where nobody knew him—but he wouldn't go anywhere without Kay.

That day, while Kay worked hard in the company, Constantine still couldn't stop thinking about her. No woman had made him feel this way before. He was starting to become obsessed, and now that she'd turned him down, it was even worse. In the past, when a woman would reject him, he would just let her go and hope that the next woman he would show interest in would give him a chance. Now, he wasn't willing to take no for an answer. Kay was right, he had billions of

women to choose from, but he only wanted her. Nevertheless, a woman from his past hadn't quite let go of him, and she was as obsessed with him as he was with Kay. Constantine just left her one morning without saying goodbye. He had no justifiable reason. He'd just gotten tired of her, even though she was very good to him. She helped him through the toughest times in his life, when he lost his parents in a car accident, when he lost his older brother to cancer, and even when he had a car accident himself, and according to doctors, he had no chance of walking or doing things on his own again. It was she who helped him recover. She was the only one who supported him without asking for anything in return. She stuck by him and even when they couldn't make love due to Constantine's extreme disability, she loved him so, so much, that this didn't matter to her in the least. Was this how he was going to repay her, by setting her aside for a woman that wanted nothing to do with him? Not on her watch. She was ready to take action.

Starr went to Constantine's house that afternoon, shortly after six thirty. Constantine had just finished eating his dinner, and he was dressed in casual clothes, trying to relax after coming home from work. He had a very bad day at work because of all of the horrible things that Kay said to him. A few aspects of Kay's personality had changed after marrying Robinson Bennett, but her morals and values hadn't changed at all, and they never would. That was the one thing she wouldn't give up for anything or anyone. She would never do something that she knew in her heart was wrong. Besides, Robinson was the only man for her. He had everything she needed, and he would always give her what she wanted, when she wanted it, how she wanted it. Their love life was amazing, and she didn't need any other man. Robinson was so in love with her that he would never put his eyes on another woman. Beautiful women would pass him by all the time, and if at that moment, Kay was with him, he would only look at her. If Kay wasn't with him at the moment, he would ignore these women and think about her. He'd never seen eyes like hers. To him, she was the most gorgeous woman in the world. The last person that Constantine expected to visit him was Starr, so when he opened the door and saw her, his eyes widened and he gasped, like he was looking at a monster, or the devil himself. He thought that Starr had gotten over him and found another man. Now he was getting a taste of what it felt like to be harassed.

"Hello, Constantine."

"Starr..."

Smiling, she asked, "Aren't you happy to see me?" "To tell you the truth, no, I'm not."

"If you intended to make me feel bad, it didn't work." She made her way in without his permission, and he slammed the door behind her. She sat on the sofa that she once used to watch TV with him for hours on end after coming home from work. They were happy together, until Constantine felt like he didn't love her anymore.

"What the hell are you doing here?"

"You left me without saying goodbye that horrible morning. I got the message and I moved out of this house, but I intended to come back someday. Well, my dear, that day has arrived."

"I don't want anything to do with you. Get out, and this time, don't come back."

He walked a few steps to the front door and opened it for her.

"I hear you're in love with a *married* woman who feels the exact same way about you."

He shut the door once more, looking at her in disbelief. How dared she?

“Kay Bennett,” she said, smiling. “Wow, you have great taste, I must say. Kay is really one of the most beautiful women in this world. She always has been. Her disability didn’t stop men from drooling over her. I don’t blame you. In fact I am jealous of her. I know I’ll never be like her.”

“That’s right,” he replied. “You never will.”

“However, I also know that she doesn’t love you...”

“Do you have to rub it in my face every minute that goes by, Starr? Do you really?”

He was starting to get angry.

She finished her thought, “But I do. Did you forget everything I’ve done for you? When you didn’t have anyone else you could count on, I was there.”

“Starr, please...” His attitude toward her was changing. He started feeling guilty. “Your family died, your parents, your brother, and your so-called friends turned their backs on you. I was the only shoulder you could cry on. I stopped working just to take care of you and my father had to support us. Not that it bothered him. I mean I am his daughter, and he’d do anything for me. When I can’t work I can always count on his help. Besides, he loved you like a son, until you stabbed me in the back.”

Without knowing what he was doing, he sat on the sofa right beside her, his head down and his hands over his head.

She didn’t dare to touch him and make him turn on her again, after she was finally getting through to him. “I thought you’d be the father of my children, Constantine. I thought I’d be your wife, and we’d be together for life. You swore to me you loved me millions of times.”

He looked up at her and replied, “I did love you.”

“You did? That’s funny because the day you left me, I thought you never did. He’s been lying to me all this time, I thought. He never loved me!”

“Starr, please stop it!”

“If you loved me, why did you leave me, Constantine? Why did you shatter all my dreams? Can you tell me what I did wrong? Can you? Did you even have a reason to dispose of me like toilet paper?”

He got up and yelled, “I said stop it, all right? Don’t make things worse than they already are!”

“I always ask myself, why do we love those that don’t love us? Life is a bitch, Constantine. It’s just not fair. Here I am, I’d do anything for you, and you don’t even want to look me in the eyes. Yet Kay Bennett, a married woman, told you that she’d never cheat on her husband with you, and...”

He interrupted her. “She told me she’d never cheat on Robinson with anybody, not just me.”

“You see? There you go! What more do you want? In how many ways is she going to have to tell you that she’s got the man she loves, the only man she wants, and she doesn’t love you? Huh?”

“You think it doesn’t break my heart? Do you think I want to love her as much as I do, when she doesn’t love me back? Be honest with me, Starr. If I rejected you and you could never get over me, what makes you think I can get over Kay just because I have... because I have you?” He didn’t intend to say those last words. They just came out and when he realized it, it was too late. He still had feelings for her and what they had, it hadn’t really ended, but he felt he couldn’t love Starr as intensely as he did Kay.

She got up and placed her arms around him. "That's right. You have me. You will always have me. Why chase after something you know you can't have and throw away something that you already have?"

"You know you're right. I hate to admit it, but you're right. That's what I hate about you. When I contradict you or fight you in any way, I never win."

"I'm not asking you to get over her overnight. I know it's impossible for you, just as it was impossible for me to get over you. I am just asking you to consider giving me another chance. If you want, for now, we can have a commitment-free relationship, while you decide what to do."

"You would do that for me?"

"Don't you know by now? I'd do anything for you, Constantine. I've never done this for any other man. What do you say?"

"All right, but this isn't just for me. You can be with other guys if you want to, also, and if you find that one guy that will help you forget about me, then in the end it's going to be better for all of us."

She went to the door to walk out.

When she was turning the knob, he said,

"Wait." She turned around. "Yes."

"I know I deserve it, but please, don't you leave me, too. I want you to stay. Stay the night at least, please."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am."

She walked up to him and gave him a big hug.

"Thank you for putting up with my bullshit. You're the only one that does. There's no other woman like you."

"Don't forget that," she replied, and they hugged again.

Kay was at home with Robinson, in the dining room, eating dinner, Fettuccine Alfredo, with a lettuce and tomato salad, no dressing, and pink lemonade to drink. She couldn't keep inside what had happened between her and Constantine. Otherwise, she felt like she was giving leeway for there to be something between her and this crazed man, or for him to rape her, and her to have to kill him because she'd done nothing to keep this from happening. "Rob, I have to talk to you."

"You sound concerned. What happened?" He already knew what happened, but he wanted to hear her out. He wanted to see if she would be honest with him and hear from her own lips how she really felt about this man. He held her hand to show her support.

"I met a man today who's been after me for a long time, and I really don't know what to do. I told him that I'm married, but he doesn't care. He wants to be with me anyway, and I don't want him, I want you. I don't want anyone else. I think he's got mental problems. He doesn't know what he was doing. I saw it in his eyes. He's not acting like a sane person."

"Are you sure you don't want anything with him? He's beyond handsome." "Are you envious of his physique?" she said, shocked.

"No, I'm not envious of any man's physique. I have a high self-esteem, but at the same time I can't deny that the man is very, very good looking. That is something that cannot be ignored, and I don't envy him at all, but many men do. Every man that has seen him envies him. He's very charming to women. That's why you've got to be careful."

“You mean he is mentally ill indeed.”

“Yes, he is. He’s got many unresolved traumas. You don’t know anything about him, just that he’s infatuated with you, and what you don’t know can kill you. Stay away from him.”

“Infatuated? More like obsessed!”

“Yes, I know, honey. He’s sick.”

“What can I do to get him to leave me alone without having to...?”

He placed his index finger on her lips to silence her. “I know this is hard, but don’t even think about that.” Then, he held her hand once again. “I’ve had the same thing happen to me, and I’ve dealt with it. You can, too.”

“What did you do? Can you tell me?” She was crying in earnest now. This situation was driving her crazy. “I don’t want to end up at the mercy of a total psycho.”

“You won’t. I’ll help you. Don’t worry. We’ll see what we can do.”

“Perhaps if you meet him somewhere and help him get over his traumas, the way only you can, maybe when he’s sane again he’ll realize that there can never be anything between us.”

“That’s one of many possible solutions, and the one that will help us all rather than get us in trouble with the law. I’m going to execute our plan tonight. The sooner we get this out of the way, the better, and then we can get on with our lives. Do you know what this man’s name is?”

“No, I don’t.”

“Ok, I know what he looks like, and that helps a lot. I’ll be able to come up with his full name, his address and his phone numbers. Once I have that information, I will take it from there. In the meantime, you’re going to stay home, relax, read a novel, surf the Net, or do anything entertaining to get your mind off this little loon. By the time I get back home, you won’t have to worry about him. I’d like to let you know, I don’t mind other men admiring you. I mean I don’t blame them, and I know that many, many men have gone head over heels for you, but to those men, you’re just their inspiration.”

“None of those men have ever touched me.”

“Right, that’s because they know they can’t have you. It’s like you’re this superstar, and they’re your fans.”

“Yes, I know.”

“But this dude in particular is planning to go all the way with you, and we won’t let that happen.”

Robinson spent the next ninety minutes of his valuable time looking up Constantine’s basic personal information. Many men looked like Constantine when he looked men up on the Internet matching Constantine’s physical characteristics, but Constantine had physical features that none of those men had, features that made him irresistible to many women and at the same time helped tell him apart from others who looked like him. There was no man in this world that looked exactly like him, just like there was no man in this world who looked like Robinson, Haggai and Heber, Sergio or any other Emadorian. It turned out that Constantine was an Emadorian, too, an Emadorian that hadn’t discovered his extraordinary supernatural powers. He didn’t know that only God Almighty was more powerful than he was, a million times more powerful, and Constantine could do anything he wanted in life. He could heal his emotional pain, get over his traumas and live a normal life. There was no problem that Constantine couldn’t solve. He just didn’t know it yet, and this made everything a lot easier for Robinson. All that Robinson had to do to get him off him and Kay’s back was to show Constantine what Constantine was made of. That way, he could be happy with the true love of his life—Starr

Noonan. As soon as Robinson had a printout with Constantine's basic personal information in his hands: full name, physical address, and home and cell phone numbers, he was ready to face him head on. Robinson picked up the phone and dialed the number to Constantine's house. Constantine and Starr were in the living room, conversing, trying to hear each other out and figure out what went wrong in their relationship. The phone rang. "Just a minute, sweetheart," he said and picked up the phone handset. "Hello."

*I missed you calling me that. It's been so long...*

"Is this Constantine Everhart?"

"Yes it is. Who am I talking to?"

"You're talking to Robinson Bennett."

## Chapter 11

Constantine felt chills running up and down his spine. For the first time ever, he was successful in hiding his thoughts from an Emadorian. *Oh, no, this man is going to beat on my bones! If he found my phone number he found my physical address! What am I going to do now?*

Starr saw Constantine's face of utter horror and became terrified for him. "Honey, what's wrong?"

"I want you to meet me at the abandoned hospital three miles from your house tonight at nine o'clock sharp. Don't stand me up. We have to talk. I'm certain you've seen me before, either in person or in pictures because you know a lot about my wife. You'll know who I am. If you don't show, I'll be forced to take drastic measures just to get to you. I'll see you then." Robinson hung up.

Constantine hung up.

"What's wrong, baby? Who was that?" said Starr.

"That was Robinson Bennett, Kay's husband."

"I didn't want you getting into trouble. What are you going to do now?" "What can I do? Facing him is my only choice. I have to get ready for this." The hours quickly passed and at eight o'clock, Constantine was ready to talk to

Robinson. His intentions weren't good, however. Constantine knew who Robinson was, but he really wanted Kay for himself. He was lying to Starr. He didn't want anything to do with her. He was so obsessed with Kay that he didn't realize Starr was the true love of his life. He was making a big mistake. He knew that he couldn't kill Robinson, but perhaps, if he shot him in the head with the gun that he was bringing with him, he could cause great brain damage. Perhaps Kay would get sick of caring for Robinson, in due time, and he would be the first man that she would run to. For the first time in their lives, Robinson and Constantine were wrong in what they were thinking. Robinson thought that he would make Constantine see the error of his ways and Constantine thought that he'd be able to bring Robinson down. Constantine was one evil son of a bitch who could not be reformed, and Robinson was about to figure this out the hard way—until now.

Someone rang Constantine's bell at the moment. Starr was at her mother's house, fixing her computer because Starr was a certified computer technician. She had eight years of experience because she finished high school early, at age fourteen. Starr was a genius and she was obsessed with computers and everything pertaining to them. She loved building them from scratch, taking them apart, and fixing them. Usually, when Starr fixed a computer, she was so good that the computer would not have the problem that Starr took care of once again. If the computer broke down it was because of another problem. Computers that Starr had fixed were still sitting in an office in their owners' homes, while their owners played with new ones instead of spending big bucks upgrading their computers' hardware. *Oh, no, who the hell is that and what does he or she want? I've got a place to go to and someone to kill. I'll see what I can do to get rid of this person as soon as possible.* Constantine gasped when he opened the door. His visitor was none other than Carlos, and Carlos had never looked so angry or so serious. Both to Constantine's luck and disgrace, Constantine and Carlos had known one another for a long time, but they were never the best of friends. "What do you want, Carlos?"

Carlos made his way in and slammed the door behind him, making Constantine jump.

“What the hell’s your problem? Who do you think you are to come into my house like that?”

“I know what you’re planning to do. Your meeting with Robinson Bennett will not take place, tonight or ever.”

“...Tonight or ever,” Constantine repeated and then laughed. “What are you going to do to stop me, Carlos, huh?”

“I already did something to stop you. I called Robinson and told him what you were up to. He no longer wants to see you.”

“And he believed you.”

“He knows it when one’s telling him the truth. You know that better than anyone, and you’re the same way. You just refuse to see it. You are so messed up in the head that you refuse to see what’s right in front of you.”

“What the hell are you talking about?”

“You’ll see.” Carlos walked closer to Constantine. “I’m not done with my mission just yet.”

“You aren’t? What are you going to do, kill me?”

“No, man, forget about that. I’m not like you. I’m going to do something a lot better. In fact, some really nice people could pull up in your driveway any minute now.”

“What the...? ...Really nice people? What are you up to, man?”

“Tonight you’re going to the place where you belong. You’re going to hell, literally.”

All of a sudden, several demons showed up at his door. They looked like normal people, but they were too angry. They took Constantine out of the house. Constantine was literally torn into pieces. No one ever saw him again.

Constantine woke up from his horrible dream. He fell asleep in his car for a few minutes on his way to the abandoned hospital. He was frightened. It was nine o’clock and he still didn’t make it to his destination. Carlos and Robinson were waiting for him at the abandoned hospital. It was hard for him to breathe. This was his most frightening dream yet.

In the hospital, Carlos told Robinson, “Don’t worry. He’s coming.”

“Why is he taking so long?” said Robinson, anxious. “I was very clear with him. I told him not to stand me up!”

“He’s not going to. Just wait a few more minutes, ok? He has no idea what’s coming to him. We’ve got to stop this man. He’s out of his mind. If we don’t do this, he’s going to hurt Kay. He’s going to do damage so severe that she might never recover. We’ve got to protect her, and this is the only way, because the man is so whacked in the head that he’s not going to change.”

“Are you sure he’s one of us, Carlos?”

“I’m sure. I knew from the moment I met him several years ago, when we were just little kids. We both lived up here all this time. I know who we’re dealing with. You don’t.”

“How can we stop him without committing a crime?” “Just do what I say, and we’ll be fine.”

Fifteen minutes later, Constantine arrived. He expected Robinson to be alone. When he saw Carlos and Robinson together, he started shaking and even shedding tears. He thought his nightmare would come true because it happened to him many times before. Every time he had a premonition, it would come true. Carlos and Robinson didn’t have anything to worry about. They were violating the laws of nature and morals, but they weren’t committing a crime. They

wouldn't go to jail for this. They needed a hospital with proper equipment to do what they were about to do. Unknowingly, Robinson chose the perfect place for him and Constantine to get together, and talk, or so Robinson thought. The last thing Constantine wanted to do was talk.

"I see you brought someone with you."

"He wanted to come alone, but I insisted in accompanying him," said Carlos.

"And since you're just like him, you convinced him, right?"

"This is not about us, Constantine, so don't try it," Carlos warned. "This is about you. You are insane. You need help."

"Don't you get it, Carlos? It's too late to help me. I only want one thing in this life and it's the one thing I can't have. How do you think I feel? You know what? I think I wasted my time coming here because nothing you say is going to make me change my mind."

Carlos and Robinson just stood there, not knowing what to say, just waiting to see what Constantine was going to do next. On his way here, he realized that even if he made Robinson disabled for the rest of his life, Kay wouldn't leave him. For once, Constantine was not in the dark. He saw things the way they really were. Kay would support him and take care of him for the rest of her life if she had to because when Kay made a promise, she would keep it, no matter what would get in her way. She would not break the vows that she made to her husband. Kay had lived without sex for twenty-six years even when she was human, and now that she had superhuman abilities, she could control her body, and she could live without sex for the rest of his life if she had to. He would never have Kay. Kay hated him for terrorizing her and not letting her live her life. Constantine made a decision, but Carlos and Robinson never found out. He had the ability of keeping it from them, and he used it.

"I'm leaving," he said.

"You're not going anywhere until we work this out," Carlos said, arms crossed across his chest.

"I have got nothing to do here. I'm going home." Constantine had a lot to learn. He wasn't dealing with two normal men who needed weapons to subdue or threaten him. The next thing he knew, everything was black. He could see nothing. He was knocked out. Several hours later, Constantine woke up in a psychiatric hospital. Without touching him, Robinson and Carlos worked together to make Constantine lose consciousness. Robinson and Carlos were working. Robinson was in his office, in his record label, trying to make a decision about one of his newest artists, whether to sign him or not, and Carlos was working on one of the last scenes of his new film, something he'd done for months, and the film was only thirty days from being released. Constantine only saw walls around him and a closed door, from which he couldn't see anything. It was like prison for him and he had no idea why he was here. What had these sons of bitches done to him? How did they prove to the police and the doctors working here that he was not in his right mind? Constantine couldn't get up from his bed. He was tied down. In the early morning, he became so aggressive that he injured nurses and they knew that he couldn't be running around. He was dangerous. He broke a male nurse's hand, disfigured another nurse's face in a permanent manner, and pushed another nurse, causing him to hit his head so hard that he became unconscious, and now he was in another hospital. The brain injury was so substantial that doctors didn't know if he would live. No matter how hard he tried, knowing that he had extraordinary strength, he couldn't move. Doctors and nurses made sure that he wouldn't be able to break free because they knew who he was and what he was. These restraints were made for people like Constantine. Every time he tried to move, it would cause him great pain. Even his

head was tied down, and if he tried to lift it up, it felt like his brain was being crushed, and the pain was so insupportable that he started crying. Constantine didn't remember all the harm he caused hours before.

Starr was in Dr. Costas' office waiting to get permission from him to see Constantine. They weren't married, but Dr. Costas knew that Starr was the only person that was standing by him right now. His brothers and sisters wanted nothing to do with him because they held him responsible for his parents' deaths. Dr. Costas had his doubts about allowing Starr to see Constantine. He was afraid that Constantine would hurt her. The few friends that Constantine had, they had no idea that he was here. Otherwise, they would've helped him escape by now.

"Miss Noonan, Constantine is very dangerous. He hurt all of our nurses this morning. He is strong. They couldn't calm him down. They had to sedate him. One of our nurses is in the hospital, and doctors are not sure if he's going to make it. Constantine may have destroyed his brain. He's in the ICU."

"Oh, my God, I didn't know. I'm so sorry."

"I advise you to stay away from him. I don't want you to end up dead. I have details on your past together, your relationship. I understand he's never been abusive to you in any way, but ma'am, he changed. He's not the man you fell in love with. Every day that goes by, he gets worse, and we're going to have to inject his medications in him because he's not going to take them in pill form."

"Oh, God..." Starr couldn't believe his ears.

"I really don't want to let you see him. I fear for your life. Right now he's tied down, even his head is, but we don't know what he's going to do when he sees you. You have to be careful."

"I guess I better leave then," she said getting up from the chair.

"Yes, I think that's the best thing you can do."

"I'm sorry that Constantine hurt several of your nurses."

"Don't be. It's not your fault. You didn't know who you were dealing with. If people can do a 180 from one minute to the next, imagine how much someone can change in the time you haven't seen Constantine, especially people like him. There's no offense intended because I know how much you love him."

"If you don't mind me asking, and you're probably not allowed to give me this information, but I'm going to ask anyway... the people that called the police on him, what did they tell you about him? What reason did they give you to bring him here, to such a terrible place? What did he do? Did he hurt anyone before coming here, before the lamentable incident with the nurses?"

"I know you really have to know and if I don't tell you, you are not going to be able to sleep tonight, so I'm going to tell you. The police were told that Constantine was in love with Robinson Bennett's wife, and that his intention was to hurt Robinson so he could have her. He thought that Mrs. Bennett would divorce her husband and start a relationship with him if Robinson Bennett became permanently disabled. We all know by now that... people like Robinson Bennett can't be killed. God will take them from this earth when He wants to."

"Yes, that's right, and I was told that Constantine was one of those people."

"That's right, he is, and no one told us. We found out the hard way. I know you love Constantine, but until things get better, until he starts getting treatment or an operation is performed on him to try to reverse the damage to his brain, you have to stay away from him."

“Oh, my goodness, he’s brain-damaged? Is that why he’s mentally ill?” she said openmouthed.

“Yes. We ran some tests, and those tests confirmed it, but of course we had to give him some medication to keep him calm, you know, put him in a state where he couldn’t even talk.”

“It was that bad, huh?”

“Oh, you have no idea.”

“I wouldn’t worry about your nurses if I were you. I know that there’s someone out there who will help them.”

“Oh if you’re talking about whom I think you’re talking about, I don’t think they know what happened just yet.”

“They know. Trust me. As a matter of fact, I think those people are doing something about this situation as we speak.”

“Let’s hope so.”

The comment that Starr made about Carlos and Robinson, to her, this was just wishful thinking, but she couldn’t be more right. Carlos was just getting out of the room of the brain-damaged nurse after doing some major secret work to make his brain regenerate, and Robinson had a female nurse in the hospital give the other nurses some medication to calm their pain and reverse the injuries they had, medicines that Sergio had created in a matter of days. These medicines however, they were not for sale. They didn’t have labels just yet. In due time, the world would know about them, and those who were suffering because of their poor health would have a chance to get on their feet once again, live for several more years, and die solely of old age.

Dr. Irvine, the doctor who was in charge of the case of Nurse Horton, came back into the ICU to check on his condition and know if Nurse Horton would die tonight or not. It took him by surprise that Nurse Horton no longer needed to be hooked to these machines to stay alive. He was disconnected from them immediately, and now he could breathe on his own, and his five senses were beyond great. He could walk, talk, and do everything on his own, like Constantine had never hurt him. Dr. Irvine was thrilled to have good news for the Horton family. They were all in the waiting room, crying together, praying for Nurse Horton to get better. As a nurse walked Nurse Horton out of the ICU, Nurse Horton said, “How come I’ve been asleep for so long and I still feel drained?”

The nurse had no answer for that, so she just smiled and kept walking with him.

“I guess you don’t know.”

She didn’t respond.

“Ok. Do you know when I’ll get back to work?”

“You’ll have to stay here for a few more days to make sure that your recovery is complete and then you’ll get back to work.”

“Oh, no, what if I don’t get paid?”

Everyone just laughed. They didn’t know what to say to that one.

A few days later, Nurse Horton was back to work, but he made sure to stay away from Constantine. In the several hours that Constantine had here, he’d figured out how to fool everyone into thinking that he was in perfect mental health and that he was ready to go home. In the meantime, he was planning something that would change the lives of everyone he knew, forever. He was still very ill and very angry, after all that these disgraced nurses put him through. He wanted to get revenge on Robinson and Carlos. Hadn’t it been for them, he would’ve never

gotten into this hellhole. Everything seemed to be in Constantine's favor because Dr. Costas made the mistake of not running tests in his brain. He assumed nothing had changed when it came to the way his brain looked, but he asked him a few questions to see how Constantine's mind was functioning, and Constantine pretended to be sane all throughout, telling Dr. Costas what he and every psychiatrist wanted to hear. He seemed to be in touch with reality, so the doctors agreed to let him go. Constantine didn't have to go through the hassle of planning and executing an escape and risk having to come back here, perhaps to a maximum-security wing, as this was medium security.

When Constantine arrived home, for the first time ever, Starr wasn't there waiting for him. He found this rather strange. Dr. Costas must've told her all sorts of things about him to push her away from him. He thought about it for a few minutes and realized that it was better for Starr not to be here right now because that way, he could contact his buddies and plan his revenge without Starr ever hearing anything about it, so that he could continue to manipulate her. He planned to kill her once that she, according to him, had no use for him. He was so out of it he had no idea what a colossal mistake he was making. There would be no other woman to love him just the way he was, like Starr did. Scarlet, Starr's mother was glad to finally have her daughter in her arms, and she thought that Starr had broken free from Constantine's grip and after all the things that Dr. Costas told her about him, she'd finally come to her senses and understood that he wasn't the man for her, that she needed to move on. Scarlet couldn't be more wrong. Now that Constantine was discovering things that he didn't know about himself before, every hour that passed by, it would be a lot easier for him to keep her eating in the palm of his hand. Constantine called his buddy, Dustin. All of Constantine's friends knew too well about his obsession with Kay because he wouldn't stop talking about her. They understood that Constantine had serious issues, so they didn't mind listening to him, consoling him. After all, if they shut Constantine out, who else in this world could Constantine talk to, about anything? Almost no one that he knew wanted anything to do with him. Very few people were aware that what was happening to Constantine wasn't his fault. He wasn't this way just because. He'd been abused as a child, and hence the brain damage and the mental illness that he suffered. He was the first of 200 Emadorians that dwelled this earth whose wounds had never healed, precisely because he didn't know that he could make his body heal itself from any ailment, all on his own, without any genetic enhancement.

"I called you several times last night and today, man," Dustin said. "Where the hell were you?"

"I was at a psychiatric hospital."

"What?" Dustin never imagined that someone had the guts to at least try to get Constantine the help he needed. "What the hell were you doing at a loony bin? You ain't crazy!" He was just telling Constantine what he wanted to hear because Constantine was in denial about his condition.

"Yes, I know."

"Who called the police on you and have you Baker-Acted, and most importantly why?"

"All I remember was that I was talking to Robinson and Carlos." "You mean Robinson Bennett, your woman's husband?"

"I loved you calling her my woman. Yes, it was Robinson Bennett, and my eternal nemesis, Carlos. I was talking to them, like I just said, at this abandoned hospital about three miles from here, and the next thing I knew, I blacked out. I don't remember anything that

happened afterwards. Obviously I have no idea when they called the police, when they talked to the police, what they said...”

“They probably said that you were a psycho and you attacked them or something.”

“They’re not like me, Dustin. They’d never lie, not even to save their asses. I never touched them, but I do believe that they told the police that I was a psycho, like you said, and that I was dangerous. Of course, all the police really need is their word. When Emadorians say something, humans believe them because somehow, humans know that they’re telling the truth and those of us who lie, they believe us, too, but I had no chance to defend myself.”

“Carlos has always been onto you.”

“Yes, man, and that’s why I’m calling. I want to get back at Carlos.”

“You only want to take revenge against Carlos.” Dustin couldn’t believe this.

“Yes. Do you know why? Because the only thing I resent Robinson Bennett for is having the woman I want. Robinson’s never done anything to me. We just met, and before last night, he didn’t know that I existed, until his wife told him about me and the conversation we had, if you could call it that.”

“Ok, so let me get this straight. All you want is to get Robinson out of the way, somehow.”

“Yes, and making him disabled is not going to work because Kay is going to stand by him and even forget that she’s a woman when he can’t comply with his duties as a husband. You see, that’s one of many things I love about Kay. She’s a woman of her word, and when she says in good times and in bad, she means it. What I need to do to tear them apart is to make her stop loving him.”

“How are you going to do that?”

“I need to have her for myself for a while, you know, to see if she can fall in love with me, stop loving him, and leave him. That’s where I’m going to need your help. I want you guys to kidnap her for me and bring her to me. Perhaps I can get her to forget about him.”

“Ok, that’s a crime, but you know we’d do anything for you. Besides, it’s not going to be the first crime we’ve ever committed, without getting caught.”

“You just said the key words, Dustin, *without getting caught*. If I can’t get her to love me, at least I will cause her a big enough trauma to never be able to live a normal life again, with her husband or any other man.”

“What do you want to do to Carlos?”

Constantine just smiled and then after a few minutes of silence, he told her what he wanted to do to Carlos, laid down every detail. That made the conversation even longer, but Dustin listened to every last word, as always.

Constantine wasn’t in a hurry to possess what didn’t belong to him. He abhorred Carlos so much that he wanted to take care of him first, get back at him for all that Carlos put him through, all the plans that Carlos had ruined, all the dreams that he’d destroyed. That night, at midnight, Carlos was sleeping soundly in his bed. He was alone. He hadn’t had a girlfriend in two years, and he felt that if the true love of his life hadn’t appeared before him yet, he really didn’t need a woman. It was either the love of his life, or no one. He was tired of playing the game of love, although he’d only had three women in his whole life, women with which he had long casual relationships. Carlos thought that he could continue to live alone, with no roommate to have his back. Boy was he wrong. Constantine’s best friends: Dustin, Leo, Opal, Roland and Chance entered Carlos’ bedroom through his window. Carlos was so deeply asleep that he

couldn't hear them, and when they attacked him, taking him out of his bed by force and gagging him, he couldn't do anything to defend himself. Opal had used the power of his mind to render Carlos helpless. Now, Carlos was asleep on his way to his next destination because they used a potent somniferous to subdue him. Several hours later, at four o'clock in the morning, the guys arrived at an abandoned cabin. They needed all the strength that they had to pull Carlos out of the car. Carlos was six feet, seven inches tall, and weighed 280 pounds in pure muscle. He didn't seem to be this heavy precisely because of his height, and Carlos hadn't stopped growing. Within the next few months, he would become a few inches taller and then stop growing. They opened the door to the cabin and threw him on the floor. What they were planning to do was simple, but very harmful. They doused him and the whole cabin with gasoline they'd bought at a gas station only a few hours before, and then Dustin lit the match. They ran away from the scene seconds before the flames engulfed the entire cabin and sped away in Dustin's van.

Carlos woke up, but not completely. He knew he was somewhat awake because he felt the fire eating at his skin. Still unable to do anything to help himself, he started to scream for help, but for the next few minutes, it felt like he was so far away from civilization and inhabited areas that no one could hear his cries. The somniferous was so powerful that it would take Carlos hours to be fully alert and start moving, so he was like a caged animal at the moment. Just when it seemed that there was no hope for him and he'd be permanently incapacitated, the flames stopped. He didn't know how because there were no fire trucks, no firemen, no water, no rain. He knew that someone came in to help him, someone like him, but his eyes were so severely marred by the fire that he couldn't see his savior. He was Dr. Sergio Snyder. Sergio did not only hear a fellow Emadorian screaming for help, but he also came here literally in the blink of an eye to stop the fire before it did poor Carlos any more damage. Carlos had third-degree burns in over ninety percent of his body, and no doctor besides Sergio would be able to help Carlos get back to the condition he was before. Sergio and his team could perform several procedures, including slight genetic enhancement to make Carlos' body heal a little faster than it would on its own, but they needed to hurry up. The quicker they took care of this, the faster Carlos would be completely healthy again.

The next thing that Carlos knew, he was in the General hospital, minutes from being operated on. He opened his eyes and noticed that he could see and that they were the only part of his body that no longer hurt. He got the chance to say a few words before being anesthetized. "Hey, I can see!" he said, with what remained of his voice. "I can see! Someone gave me my eyes back!"

"Yes," said Lindsay, the nurse, "that's right, your eyes are once again as beautiful and healthy as they were before you were kidnapped and set on fire, Carlos, but I need you to calm down and do something for me, ok?"

Carlos remained quiet.

"That's good. Good boy. That's it. Now, what I need you to do for me is," she said as she applied the anesthesia, "to count backwards from one to ten for me. Don't worry about being loud enough. You can whisper it and I'll hear you, understand? You don't have to do any more damage to your voice."

Just ten seconds later, as soon as he made it to the number one, Carlos blacked out.

Minutes later, the operations started. The doctors worked on repairing the internal organs first, and that's where the genetic enhancement came in. Several hours later, it was as if Carlos' body hadn't been set on fire at all, at least when it came to his insides. Twenty percent of his skin

had healed, including parts of his face, but he still had a long way to go. He could function just like a healthy person. The only thing he really couldn't do, for the sake of his sanity was look in any mirrors.

Two days after the operations started, Carlos was in a hospital room, picking up a celebrity-gossip magazine to read. He was shocked to see his story on the cover.

**ACTOR CARLOS ROMAN WAS SET ON FIRE! POLICE ARE GOING CRAZY LOOKING FOR HIS ATTACKERS BEFORE THEY TARGET ANOTHER SUPERSTAR!**

Below those lines there were a few more details of Carlos' story and then the story continued on page forty-two of the magazine. To Carlos' dismay, everyone thought that his success as an actor was the reason why he was attacked, that some jealous celebrity was behind the whole thing. Carlos knew the truth. He knew Constantine was responsible, but before another superstar's career was ruined because of these rumors, he called a reporter at a celebrity-gossip TV show and made it clear that he knew who had done this to him, and it wasn't any of his colleagues.

"Spotlight, the Show, this is Winifred Hurst. How may I help you?"

"This is Carlos Roman." Now he could speak clearly. "Oh, my God, Carlos Roman, how are you doing?"

Raymond, one of her fellow reporters, was sitting right beside her, and he couldn't believe his ears when he heard Carlos Roman's name. "What?" and then whispered, "Put the phone on speaker! I want to listen to this!"

Winifred did as told.

Carlos knew he was on speakerphone, but he didn't mind. Quite the opposite, he wanted everyone to hear what he had to say. "I just want to clarify that I know who did this to me. I can't accuse the person yet because I have no proof against him or her, but it wasn't anyone in Hollywood!"

"You're saying none of your fellow actors is responsible for this."

"That's exactly what I'm saying. I just don't want anyone's reputation to be tarnished just because no one knows who did this to me except for me and the person who did it."

"It's very nice of you to call us and straightening this out for us because we were worried. I mean everyone that knows you in Hollywood acknowledge that you became one of the biggest superstars overnight, but we didn't even want to think that any of your colleagues did this!"

"I just wanted to clear that up. Just know that one of these days, very soon, the truth will come out. Also I wanted to let my fans know that I will be ok, and I will be back, although I don't know when."

"Ok, thank you, Carlos. We hope that we will indeed see you soon. Take care, ok?" "I will. Thank you." Carlos hung up.

Robinson arrived at Carlos' room at that very moment. "Oh, my God...!" Carlos didn't know he was there, so he jumped at the sound of his voice and then turned his face to look at him. Robinson took Carlos' face in his hand and said, "Tell me your eyes are natural and you can see me."

"Yes, they are natural, and yes, I can see you. The first thing that was restored even before all these grueling operations began was my eyes. I just can't believe that Constantine went this far."

Sergio was eavesdropping on them behind the door. He was anxious to know who did this to Carlos, and Constantine and Opal were working very hard to keep him from finding out, until now. Once that Carlos mentioned Constantine's name, Constantine and his minions couldn't stop the truth from coming out. Sergio was here to check on his patient and his progress. Of course, Sergio didn't want the guys to know that he heard everything, so he came in as if he had arrived at that moment and heard nothing. "Hello, Mr. Roman, how are you doing?" He started writing in the papers of his clipboard, describing how Carlos looked so far, as Carlos and Robinson looked at him. "Tell me how intense your pain is on a scale of one to ten."

"Thanks to you, my insides couldn't be better, but my skin is screaming that the pain level is definitely ten."

"Oh, God..." said Robinson, worried.

"You will be given some medication to calm the pain so you can sleep," Sergio said, still writing on his clipboard.

"I have a feeling that this medication will do much more than calm the pain," Robinson commented.

Sergio cleared his throat and said, almost in a whisper, "Please be careful not to say things like that out loud. What we're doing here is top secret. We're going to extremes to help the patients that no other doctor can do anything for."

"I know that, but I also know nobody heard me," said Robinson, smiling like a mischievous five-year-old.

Sergio took another look at him and smiled. Then he took a deep look at what was beneath Carlos' bandages. "Over twenty percent of the skin has healed. I guess your body's not used to suffering damage, Mr. Roman. Otherwise you would've recovered by now."

"The damage they caused me was severe, Dr. Snyder."

"Tell me something. Do you know the people who did this to you?"

"I know the mastermind, but the people that did the job, I'd never seen them in my life. All I know is that one of them is like you and me."

"Are you serious?" said Robinson.

"Yes, Robinson, believe it or not, there are people like us who are evil out there."

"Our Emadorian friend really is evil or he's got a twisted sense of loyalty, you know, the kind of person who would do anything for someone they love, no matter how treacherous," said Sergio.

"It's the latter, Dr. Snyder. The love of this person for Constantine Everhart has no limits," said Carlos.

"Yes, but that boundless love is going to cost him," Sergio said. "I hope these people don't think that they'll get away with what they did because it's not going to happen. You're a wonderful person, Carlos. You have never hurt anyone. You don't deserve this."

"Are you sure about that, doctor? I mean I know what others have done when I've spent a few hours with that person and I see through him or her to know who he or she really is and what he or she is capable of, but doctor, I don't know about me. I could've seriously hurt someone and..."

"Trust me. You have never hurt anyone in any way. I know. I saw right through you, too, and believe me, I loved what I saw. You are a great person, Carlos. The people that did this to you, they're going to pay, big time. Now if you know who the mastermind was, you better start talking. You want me to call Detective Sheldon? He's in charge of this case, you know, and he's

waiting for me to call him and tell him that you're ready to talk? He doesn't know just how much your condition has improved."

"I don't want to say anything yet."

"Carlos!" Robinson said, outraged. "You want to protect this idiot?" "No, it's not that I want to protect him." "So it was a man."

"I just can't talk yet because I've got no proof."

"Oh, don't worry about that," Sergio said. "I'm going to help the police with their investigation. I was at the crime scene, remember? I'm the one that helped put out the flames."

"Yes, I remember. How could I forget? Question is do you know what happened before then? Did you see these people? Have you met them in person?"

"No, I have never had the misfortune to meet them in person, but I know who they are. Don't tell anyone though."

"Oh, no, how could I? It'll ruin everything."

"The truth is I know what happened. I saw it all, from start to finish. The reason why I didn't keep it from happening despite your pain is because I wanted these idiots to finally get what they deserved. You see, Carlos, this is not the first crime they've committed. We're talking about attempted murder here, but the other times they've tried to kill someone, they've succeeded."

"Oh, God, these people are dangerous!" Carlos said, alarmed.

"Yes, they are, Carlos, and if you don't put a stop to their reign of terror, no one will. You have no clue of all the things they've gotten away with. I can't stay here and tell you because I've got other patients to take care of, and they need me right now."

"I understand. You've got lives to save, so go on, Dr. Snyder, and do your job!"

Sergio walked to the door, turned the knob and got out of the room. "I am. In the meantime, you do your job." He closed the door behind him.

"He's right. You have to put these people behind bars before they hurt someone else." "I know Kay is next, and I've got to protect her. I know what they do to people like us who do things like what these idiots did to me. They don't put them in jail because they know they'll escape and never be seen again, no. They do something much, much worse, and that is exactly what my victimizers deserve. I don't feel sorry for them, and I'm not going to protect them. I am going to protect their next victims. You know you guys are right. I've got to put a stop to all of this, and I'm going to do it right now."

Ten minutes later, Detective Sheldon was in Carlos' room. Robinson knew he was on his way over, so he stayed by Carlos' side. Carlos and Robinson took this chance to explain to Detective Sheldon how Constantine Everhart and his minions were terrorizing them and their loved ones. Just a few minutes before, they went to Mrs. Bennett's house and beat her up for no reason. She didn't defend herself because she wasn't violent and because she didn't want to kill anyone. Robinson and Carlos explained to Detective Sheldon everything that happened last night. The horrifying scenes started playing in Det. Sheldon's head like a movie. Det. Sheldon shed tears when he saw Carlos' incredible pain, and how he thought no one would get here in time to save him. If Carlos hadn't been rescued last night, the flames would've caused irreversible damage, and Carlos would've been disabled for the rest of his life because Owen took from Carlos' body the ability to regenerate and recover on its own, and Carlos would only get that back if someone else gave it back to him. Every minute that went by, Carlos got better

and better, and he didn't know it, but by tomorrow morning, he would be as if nothing had ever happened to him. Det. Sheldon had Dr. Snyder take all of Carlos' bandages off just for a few seconds, so that Det. Sheldon could take pictures of Carlos burnt and blistering skin with his digital camera. Carlos even lost some of his teeth, and now, they were starting to grow back. Sergio covered Carlos' body with fresh bandages and later on, he gave Det. Sheldon pictures of what Carlos looked like before Sergio restored his eyes. Carlos had no eyeballs and no eyelids, just his eye sockets, and they too were deformed. The investigation would take some time, and prosecutors would need time to get all the proof they needed, but it would be irrefutable, so much so that no defense attorney would want to take Constantine's case.

The next morning, Sergio returned to Carlos' room and saw him beneath his bandages like an X-ray. "Is your body hurting right now?" he asked Carlos.

"No."

"Do you feel any discomfort?"

"No, I don't."

"You know what this means, right? It means that your bandages are ready to come off. Your body has healed completely.

"What?"

## Chapter 12

“It’s a miracle. We did it. You’re healed, Carlos. You can start living your life once again,” Sergio said, smiling.

“No. I can’t start living my life until justice is made for me. I am going to help the police solve the crime that was committed against me. I went through the worst moments of my life because of those bastards, and I didn’t do anything wrong to them or to Constantine. All I did was to try to stop him from hurting people. If he’s angry with me for that it’s his problem.”

Carlos packed up his stuff that day to go home. His parents, Lorena and Ignacio Roman came into his room. After what happened to him, they felt that he couldn’t be home alone anymore. He had to go live with them for a while, until his tormentors were captured and couldn’t hurt him or anyone else.

“Carlos, we decided that you’re moving back in with us,” Ignacio said.

“Dad, I have my...”

“I know, I know, you have your own house and recently, you paid it off and you have to make no more mortgage payments. It’s yours and no one can take it from you now. All you have to pay is the taxes and the insurance once a year. You’re a grown man and you’re independent, we get that. We know how that feels. We were the same way when we were your age, until we met a year later and married two years after that. But son, you have to understand. We don’t want you to get hurt again. You’re not safe living alone. We and your younger brothers will protect you.”

“I don’t...” he took a moment to choose his words carefully to not offend his loving parents. “I don’t think I need anyone to protect me. I’m going to be fine. I got caught off guard and I couldn’t defend myself because I was dealing with someone like me, but it’s not going to happen again. I’ll be more careful from now on.”

“You’re right, it’s not going to happen again because you’re coming with us, and you’re not going back home until your aggressors are behind bars, for the rest of their lives. Now, let’s go,” Lorena said.

Ignacio carried Carlos’ belongings to the car. Carlos was walking with his mother, and she had his arm around him. She wanted to grab him and never let him go because she was so close to losing him. In a matter of minutes, they got to the parking lot, placed Carlos’ belongings in the trunk, and Ignacio got in the driver’s seat and Lorena in the passenger’s seat. Carlos sat in the backseat. They had him sit in the back just in case he still was a little tired and wanted to lie down. Then, after a long moment of silence, Carlos commented, “You’re right they’re going to be in jail for the rest of their lives. They’ve done horrible things, Mom. No one has any idea.”

“I do. I’ve heard things about them. I’ve been investigating them since I found out what they did to you. They’re monsters. It makes my skin crawl just thinking about the things they’re capable of after they did this to you.”

Forty-five minutes later, Carlos, Lorena and Ignacio arrived home. Carlos’ younger brothers, David and Elmer were waiting for him outside to help him get to bed to get his rest. Robinson’s car pulled up in the driveway as well.

“Well,” Carlos said, surprised, “I feel like I went to Europe, lived there several years, and I had just come back.”

Ignacio laughed. “Oh, son, we love you and we’d do anything for you. Your brothers were thrilled when we told them you were moving back in with us.”

“It’s weird,” Carlos said as they got out of the car. “You told them before you told me.”

Everyone went inside. Robinson and Carlos were received with big hugs. Ever since Robinson and Carlos became friends, the Roman family adopted him as one of their own. It was great for Carlos to have a friend like Robinson Bennett. Now, Carlos had someone to defend him from his enemies when he couldn’t defend himself, just like it happened when Carlos was kidnapped. They sat down in the living room, but Elmer took his hand and walked him to what was his bedroom when he was younger and still living with his parents.

“Wow, my former bedroom is intact,” said Carlos, surprised, walking around the room.

“No former bedroom. This will always be your bedroom, and you can come here whenever you want and spend as much time with us as you want. This will always be your home. David and I are nineteen and in our third year of college, but Mom and Dad wanted us to stay here a little longer, while we get our careers and make enough money to get houses of our own.”

“Yeah, I know what you mean,” said Carlos, sitting on his old computer-desk chair. His desktop computer hadn’t been turned on ever since he moved out. “Mom and Dad never really wanted me to move out, either. Who would’ve thought I’d be back here, under such lamentable circumstances. I wonder if this computer still works.”

“It worked the last time you turned it on, five years ago.”

Carlos turned his face to look at Elmer, laughing. “You’re kidding, right? You mean you haven’t used this since the last time I did.”

“It hasn’t been turned on since. We’ve got our own computers, laptops, and six months old, each. We bought them at the store, with money that we’d been saving ever since we were juniors in high school.”

“I’d like to see your computers. I have a laptop at home, but mine is one year old. It works great, though.”

“I don’t doubt that for a second. This computer right in front of you is twelve years old. You take very good care of your belongings, Carlos, and they last you a long, long time.”

“I want to...”

Elmer helped Carlos get up from the chair and lie down in bed. As he took his shoes and socks off, he said, “Yeah, forget about everything you want to do right now. I know you want to do a lot of things, but we all want you to lie down and rest for a while. You need it. You’ve been through a lot.”

“Elmer, I’m fine,” said Carlos, laughing as Elmer covered him. “I feel like you’re the older brothers and I’m the younger brother. What the heck is going on? You and our parents are so protective of me.”

“We thought that we would lose you. What do you want us to do? You have any idea how hard we cried when we found out what happened? You didn’t come over very often before this, and we missed you. Mom, Dad, Dave and I, we always felt that you were slipping away from us, but since you got kidnapped, we thought that we’d never see you again. We are not taking chances with you, older brother.”

“Oh, come on...”

“No, I mean it. We’re not letting you go this time. We’ll keep an eye on you. Jose knows you’re here, and he and Pablo are coming over to see you tonight. They couldn’t visit you at the hospital because Pablo was in a car accident, and Jose had to take time off the filming of his new movie to take care of him.”

Carlos sat up. “Oh, my God, is Pablo all right?” Elmer pushed him back down and covered him again.

“Yes, he’s fine. It wasn’t a big deal. He just hurt his foot. He can’t walk on it just yet, but he doesn’t mind being in a wheelchair. Now, I want you to get your mind off everything just for a few hours and...”

“Whoa, did you say hours?”

“Yes, I did. Relax and take a good nap. I’ll come wake you on dinnertime, around six thirty. Don’t worry about not being able to sleep tonight. Remember, you can get your body to do what you want it to do. Use that ability for once. Dave is going to come in to check on you later.” Elmer walked out of the room and closed the door behind him while Carlos closed his eyes and went to sleep. The windows were closed, making the room dark, so his sleep wouldn’t be disturbed.

Robinson and David were in the living room, while Ignacio and Lorena were making coffee and preparing snacks in the kitchen for Carlos and their beloved guest. “I know about Pablo’s foot. I’m glad he’s coming over later because I intend to take care of that little problem for him.”

“Yes, I know. First it was Carlos and then Pablo. Gosh, what the hell is going on, man? It seems like the people we love the most are slipping away from us. What do you think about this, Robinson? It confuses me, and it makes me angry. It’s like a curse has been cast on my family and friends or something.”

“There’s no curse. Our enemies are angrier than ever and they’re trying to destroy us. They won’t stop until they achieve their mission.”

“I don’t get it. What have we done to them?”

“For starters, Constantine Everhart is a nutcase. He’s the mastermind behind Carlos’ kidnapping and attempted murder.”

“...And once the police have the proof they need, they’re going to charge these bozos with attempted murder, even though everyone knows that people like Carlos cannot be killed.”

“You’re one of us, too, you know? You and Elmer are in our crew, so to speak.”

“We are?”

“Yes, you are. It just hasn’t manifested yet because you’ve lived like humans all your lives. It’s something that is hidden. You haven’t let it out.”

“I don’t think that’s a good thing. What if I hurt somebody?” “Tell me this. Has Carlos ever hurt anyone?”

“No, he hasn’t, at least not that I know of.”

“So if he hasn’t hurt anyone in all his life, what makes you think you will?”

“My brothers and I have different personalities, you know? We don’t react the same way to certain situations. Some people say I have an anger management problem.”

“Oh.”

“It’s like Carlos never gets angry. Nothing bothers him. On the other hand, someone looks at me the wrong way and within the next second I’m in his or her face, asking him or what his or her problem is. Next thing I know, I have punched the person out. I’ve gotten reported for assault many times, and just when I think I’m going to spend a few months or years in jail, the charges are dropped. Nevertheless, I know someday the charges won’t be dropped and I am going to stay in jail, if I really hurt somebody.”

“You know why that is? People that have dealt with you know that you have a problem and you need help. However, there’s going to be no counseling for you or anything like that. You’re not going to undergo treatment and spend several months somewhere away from home hoping that your anger will subside and you’ll be a,” he made the quote marks with his fingers, “normal person. David, things are going to change, and they’re going to change today. I’m not going to tell you what’s going to happen. You’ll see it for yourself. I will tell you one thing, though, Carlos *does* get angry when someone does him wrong, just like you and I do. The difference is that he doesn’t show it in a violent way. He does not resort to violence to solve the problem. That’s why he’s never hurt anyone.”

“Can you or Carlos tell me the secret to that?”

“We won’t just tell you. We’ll show you. You’ll have to wait though until Pablo and Jose get here.”

“I got it. I just can’t wait. I need to do something to turn my life around *now*.”

“You will, and we will help you, just not yet. It’s not the time. The Milian brothers are going to get here, and when they do, we will kill three birds with one bullet.”

Smiling, David said, “That’s a saying we have in Spanish, —killing two birds with one bullet’. I like that.”

Lorena brought the snacks to the living room and placed them on the coffee table. Each person would get one fruit in a bowl as a snack, peeled, cut into pieces and ready to enjoy, along with a glass of one-percent low fat milk. “I know what the favorite fruit is for each of us, so you guys take your fruit and enjoy.” Lorena sat on the sofa right next to David, picked up her bowl of fruit, poked one piece with the fork and started eating it.

“So this is inherited, right?” David asked Robinson.

Robinson knew what he meant, but Lorena didn’t because she wasn’t paying attention. “Yes, this is inherited, from both of your parents.”

Lorena turned to look at Robinson. “I hope it’s a good thing you’re talking about that our sons inherited from us.”

“Yes, Mrs. Roman, it’s a good thing. It’s a very good thing.”

Lorena figured out what they meant and nodded, focusing once again on her fruit.

“Did you put Carlos’ pineapple in the fridge for him, Mom?” David asked.

Lorena nodded.

“I still can’t believe that Carlos would eat a whole pineapple by himself, but he does it every chance he gets. He likes all fruits and vegetables, but pineapple is his favorite.”

“I have eaten a whole watermelon by myself many times. I just remove the pits and eat until only the peel is left on the table,” Robinson said, eating a huge serving of watermelon, almost a whole one.

David laughed. “You’re kidding, right?”

“No.”

“We’re among few kids who like vegetables, a lot,” Elmer said, joining in the conversation. I have to have my servings of fruits and vegetables every single day, and there is no vegetable in this world that I don’t like. I remember when I was in grade school, all the kids, especially in elementary school would tell me, —Ewww, how can you eat that? It’s disgusting!“

Robinson laughed.

“My friends would tell me the same thing.”

Kay was on her way to Carlos' parents' house. She wanted to know how Carlos and his family were doing. A car blocked her when she was just two miles away from the house. She became scared and she stopped. She was astonished to see Constantine getting out of his car. She'd never seen his car before. Had she known this was Constantine, she would've done everything in her power to keep this encounter from happening. She'd had enough. First thing tomorrow morning, she would get a restraining order against him. He was terrorizing her. She told him she didn't want anything to do with him and he clearly didn't get the message. He walked to her door and she put the window down. She knew he wouldn't leave her alone until she talked to him. "What do you want?"

He placed both arms on the lining of the window and said, "Why do you treat me like that?"

She hated it when she realized that they were answering each other's questions with even more questions. "How do you expect me to treat you after what you did to Carlos Roman, huh?"

"No one has any proof against me."

"So you admit it."

"Not necessarily. I'm just saying no one can accuse me of such a horrendous crime because no one has any proof against me. Besides, you don't know a damn thing about me. You have no idea what Carlos has put me through."

"I repeat, so you admit it."

"You know the only time I hate you? It's when you do this to me. I reiterate, I am not admitting to anything. Yes, Carlos and I are enemies, and yes, that's my choice because he doesn't give a damn about me, and he doesn't acknowledge my existence unless I do something to remind him that I do exist, and he doesn't feel anything for me, but I'm not here to talk about Carlos."

"That was so before you had him kidnapped and set on fire. Now, Carlos corresponds to your hate. You're even, and Carlos is not going to rest until he destroys you and the idiots that executed your evil plot against him. He's put his life on hold and he's going to aid the police in their investigation of his own attempted murder. You better watch out. Carlos was never your enemy although you declared him your enemy, but you don't want Carlos Roman as your enemy."

"I know I don't, but I..." He was about to incriminate himself. "Never mind..."

"What?"

"I came to talk about us."

"There is no \_us'. There will never be. How many times do I have to tell you that? I was contemplating the possibility of us being friends, but after what you did to Carlos, there is no way. I hate you and I want you to stay away from me."

"Look, Kay..."

"Look, Constantine. At first I felt nothing but you, but now I hate you, just like Carlos." He interrupted her. "Sounds like you and Carlos have a lot in common, same feelings about the same people. Do you have any feelings for Carlos?"

"You know, when I said I would never cheat on my husband, I didn't mean just with you, I meant I would cheat on him with no one... absolutely no one. Carlos is my friend. We've known one another for over ten years, and he says I'm the sister he's never had. Now it's not that this is any of your business, but I have to make it clear for you. Robinson Bennett is the man I love, the only man I want to be with."

“You think you know him, Kay, but you don’t.”

“Oh, and I suppose you do.”

“Have you ever wondered who he really is? Have you ever wondered if he’s been as faithful to you as you have been to him? Have you ever wondered if he really loves you?”

“I know Robinson, and I love him. Now, if you excuse me, I have to go somewhere, and I am not going to continue to waste my time with you.”

When she was about to put the window up, he held it in place with his hand and said, “Please give me a chance. I can be a better husband for you. I can give you everything.”

“Robinson gives me everything I want and need. I don’t need to have another man on the side.”

“You don’t get it. I want you to be mine and only mine.” “I want to take over the world. So?” “Kay, I love you.”

“No, you don’t.” She put the window up, hit reverse, turned the car around and went toward Carlos’ house on a different route, knowing it would take her longer to get there, but Constantine blocked her car, and she didn’t want to cause damage to it just to get through because she didn’t want to have to pay up.

Constantine dialed Opal’s cell phone number. Opal was on his way back home from the supermarket. He answered the call with his hands-free device, seeing his number on the integrated caller ID. “What’s up, Constantine?”

“I tried to get her to listen, but she wouldn’t. We have to do what we originally planned. You guys have to kidnap her and bring her to me.”

“Do you only want her for one night, for a few days, or forever?”

“I can’t have her forever. In due time, she’s going to escape. She’s a very intelligent woman with supernatural powers, just like we are, but I have to make her mine somehow. I can’t die without possessing her, even if it’s just for one time. She’s driving me crazy, and I can’t take any more of her rejection.”

“When do you want us to do it?”

“I want you to do it tonight. Render her unconscious so she doesn’t know where she’s going and she can’t escape. She has to be in my house, in my bed, at my mercy, when she wakes up, unable to do anything to defend herself.”

This was starting to scare Opal. He realized his best friend had gone too far. He didn’t know Kay. He didn’t have any reasons to put her in harm’s way with all intention. Opal was never willing to commit any crimes for Constantine, and he was sorry for what he did to Carlos because all the while that Carlos was in flames, Opal saw his pain and even felt it, as if he were the one in flames. His conscience was eating him. He pretended to go along with this, but his plan was to go to the police and tell them everything he knew in exchange for immunity. He concealed his plan from Constantine, aware that Constantine still hadn’t discovered all his powers. What Constantine wanted to do to Kay sounded terrible. Constantine wanted to enslave her, and that wasn’t fair. Kay didn’t deserve something like that, and it was clear that Constantine didn’t really love Kay. Her rejection transformed his love into an obsession to the point that he was eager to destroy her, just for saying no and treating him like dirt. Constantine wanted to make Kay pay for that. “All right, man, we’ll be at the Bennett mansion tonight, and Robinson won’t know what hit him.” Opal hung up, changed his route and went straight to the police station.

No one knew about Kim, Kay's twin sister. Kay had stayed with her mother until she died, and her mother gave Kim up for adoption. Raising one handicapped daughter was enough of a burden. Leanne couldn't raise two handicapped daughters. Two years before the twins were born, Leanne was diagnosed with breast cancer, and she knew that she would die at an early age. Sadly, she didn't die until her daughter Kay became an adult, and it wasn't the cancer that killed her, it was the car accident that she had one fateful night, in which her husband also died. Carey never knew that he had twin daughters. He thought that Kay was their only child. Kay suffered cerebral palsy because of the lack of prenatal care. Every month, since she found out that she was having twin girls, Leanne would tell Carey that she was going to get a checkup at the doctor's office, and she didn't. She didn't take her vitamins either. She jeopardized her babies' lives just to hide the fact that there were two of them, not just one. If Carey had known that he had two daughters, he would've opposed to giving one up for adoption. Now, Kim was searching for her only sister because her adoptive parents died on another car accident three days before, and her adoptive siblings didn't want her anywhere around them. They only put up with her all these years for the sake of her parents.

Kim wasn't handicapped now. A mysterious doctor, another Emadorian, made her go through an invasive medical treatment, reanimating the parts of her brain that were dead or not working right. Now, Kim could walk and do everything on her own. She was ready to really live her life, but she needed her twin by her side. Her siblings told her about her twin even though their parents didn't want them to, just to get rid of her. They didn't know that they would regret their decision and the way they were treating Kim in due time. Kim still loved them very much. There were no hard feelings. She understood that they didn't want to share their fortune with her. That was ok with her. She could make a fortune of her own. She was an aspiring actress and at age twenty-seven, she had everything going for her. She studied drama in college. Her brothers and sisters would always tell her that she was wasting her time, that she would never get anywhere. Little did they know that she would become a superstar with the help of her sister, Kay Bennett, who was now in charge of Bennett films, and that Kim would be the one that these cruel people would turn to when they were in financial need? Kim arrived in Florida on this day. Now, she was in a cab on her way to Kay and Robinson's house. Her brothers and sisters gave her Kay's name, phone number, physical and postal address, and even her work number. Twin sisters would be reuniting tonight, and also, tonight everyone's lives would change forever, including the twisted life of Constantine Everhart. The moment that he saw Kim, his world would be turned upside down.

That afternoon, around six thirty, Pablo and Jose Milian arrived at Carlos' house. Pablo was in a wheelchair. Pablo thought that he'd be able to walk again soon, but since he was wearing a splint, he didn't see that his foot was in much worse condition than he thought. Robinson gave him and Jose a hug and said to Jose, "Good work on our latest film. I love what you're doing. It's going to be a hit." Then he turned to Pablo and said, "Let me see that foot, man," and took off everything that was covering it up. It hurt like hell, but Pablo didn't want to worry anyone. "Oh my God," Robinson said. "This foot is in very bad shape."

Pablo looked down at his foot and said, horrified, "It's going to have to be amputated!"

"Not a chance," Robinson said. Robinson took control of Pablo's brain and disabled his sense of touch so he couldn't feel a thing. Then, Robinson's hands became soaked with a mysterious substance, and he coated Pablo's foot with it, massaging it with great care, like a

podiatrist would. “Don’t wash this off, ok? Your skin will absorb it within the next two hours and it’ll be like you had nothing on your leg. It won’t even smell. It will leave no traces.”

“Two hours? Is it going to take effect that quickly?” Jose asked, astounded.

“Yes, so don’t worry about a thing. Just hang out with us for a while and have a good time. The Roman family has been waiting for you guys. Carlos is still resting. He’ll wake up within a few minutes.”

“I can’t wait to see Carlos,” Pablo said. “Does he really look and feel as if nothing had happened?”

“Yes, he does, but his life won’t be like nothing happened. He’s going to live with this tragedy for the rest of his life. It won’t traumatize him or drive him crazy, but it will always be on the back of his mind. He’s not going to rest until his aggressors are brought to justice.”

Meanwhile, Opal was at the police station, talking to Det. Sheldon. “Constantine is out of his mind. He wants us to kidnap Kay Bennett so he can turn her into his sex slave, and yes, we were responsible for Carlos Roman’s kidnapping and attempted murder. I’m giving in, and I’m not covering for anyone. What will be, will be. I don’t care what happens from this point on. I should never have done this. Real friends don’t help friends commit crimes.”

“I’m glad you finally realized that. You do know, though, that the only way you’re going to escape jail time is if Carlos Roman decides to forgive you and drops the charges.”

“Right now I’m praying to God for him to do that, but I know that’s not going to happen.”

“No, you don’t. If you really want it, you’ll get it, you know that? That’s true, believe it or not, especially if you pray to God for it.”

“I don’t think God listens to us,” Opal replied, smiling, but looking down. “He only listens to you.” He was referring to humans. “And not all of you, either, just some of you.”

“You’re wrong, Opal.” Det. Sheldon was walking around the room, making Opal look around at him, perhaps in an effort to make him dizzy and get him to talk about possible crimes he and his buddies have committed in the past. “If you’re here, it’s for a reason. You didn’t come out of nowhere. Someone created you. Someone created all creatures on this earth, in heaven, and in the universe. You know who that someone is? It’s God. God loves all his children, not just us humans.”

“Do you think we’re God’s children?”

“Yes, Opal, I do. We all belong to God, no matter what species we are. He created all of us.”

“That’s nice,” Opal said.

Opal was locked up a few minutes later, and the police knew that there was a possibility that Carlos would show up to drop the charges because Opal was continually asking for it, so they decided to just wait and see what would happen.

Sure enough, Carlos woke up that afternoon around six thirty, crying. He had a dream minutes before. In that dream, it was he who had committed these crimes against other people, all the crimes that Constantine and his clique had committed: murder, rape, attempted murder, terrorism, and arson. He saw himself being tortured by angry humans in a place where the most evil criminals were executed. They beat him non-stop, rendering helpless, just the way they did to ruthless people of this species, they gave him gasoline to drink, destroying his internal organs and making him throw them up minutes later. They beat him in the head senseless, destroying his brain. To Carlos’ disgrace, and the misfortune of the few Emadorians that had to go through this,

in the past and in the present, even after all this pain, Carlos stayed alive. He became mentally ill and had to go to a mental institution, and he also became physically disabled. He spent the rest of his life tied down to a bed in a psychiatric hospital, with no one to help him because every human and Emadorian on this earth hated him that much for being such a heartless son of a bitch and hurting innocent humans. When Carlos woke up, he realized that this was what would happen to Constantine's minions if he didn't drop the charges against them. He still wanted Constantine to be punished and destroyed just to keep him away from Kay, so he hadn't made up his mind about dropping the charges against him, but he decided to drop the charges against Leo, Opal, Dustin, Roland and Chance. Elmer knew that Carlos needed him and he went from the dining room, where everyone was gathering, to Carlos' room, as fast as he could.

Elmer went into the room. "Are you ready to eat dinner?"

"I want to go to the police station and drop the charges against Constantine's friends." "Are you sure? You want to do that after everything they did to you?"

"Yes. I know they're really sorry about what they did. They feel that they shouldn't have gone along with Constantine's plans against me. They went too far. Besides, I know what awaits them. I am ready to forgive and forget and move on with my life, and let them do the same."

Elmer sat on the bed beside Carlos. "How do you know how they feel?"

"I feel the same way," Carlos said, crying. "I feel like it's happening to me, like I'm the one that's about to..."

"You should know that I couldn't disagree with this more, but if it will make you feel better, I'm going to help you. I am going to take you to the police station."

"Don't let Mom and Dad find out. Don't lie to them, either. Let's just slip away from them. Then we will come back like we never went anywhere, ok?"

"All right, Carlos, you know I'd do anything for you and that's why you put me in this position."

Forty-five minutes later, Carlos and Elmer were at the police station. Ignacio, Lorena and David didn't notice their absence, just like they wanted, because they did everything possible to hide this from them. Carlos waited for a few minutes for Det. Sheldon to see him, and then he went into Det. Sheldon's office.

"How can I help you, Mr. Roman?"

"I'd like to drop the charges against Dustin Novak, Opal Hess, Leo Pereira, Chance Winston, and Roland Carter."

"So you know that Opal Hess came to talk to me and admitted to everything."

"Yes, and I know in the few hours you've been working on this, you gathered enough proof against them, but you don't yet have proof that Constantine Everhart was the mastermind."

"You did your homework, Mr. Roman. Yes, that's right. We don't have proof that Constantine Everhart was behind all this, but we soon will."

"I would like to just drop everything."

"Are you sure?"

"My brother asked me the same question and I said yes. I know that what's coming to them is much worse than what you guys could do to punish them. Life will take care of them and divine justice will be done."

"Well, if that's what you want then we're going to talk to the district attorney."

Carlos got up from his chair. "I'm going to go because you have other things to take care of."

“You don’t worry that these monsters will hurt other innocent people if we don’t do something to stop them?”

“Constantine’s former buddies won’t hurt anyone ever again, but I know Constantine would continue to hurt innocent people, but by tomorrow morning, he will have met his demise, so he will be stopped. He’s going to get what’s coming to him.”

“This scares me.”

“It doesn’t scare me. I will see you around, Det. Sheldon, and I thank you for everything you’ve done.” Carlos walked out of Det. Sheldon’s office and closed the door behind him.

Det. Sheldon couldn’t believe what just happened. What came over Carlos? Why the change of heart? What happened to him in these few hours after these guys destroyed his life? This was strange to Det. Sheldon because Det. Sheldon didn’t really believe in divine justice. He was one of millions of humans who didn’t believe in God because too many horrible things happened to him in his life and he thought that God didn’t care about him, so he chose to live his life as if there was no God. He didn’t believe in forgiveness because different people in his life had left deep scars in his heart. He’d never forgive anyone, and he thought he never would. Det. Sheldon thought that Carlos’ terrifying experience drove him mad and he wasn’t thinking clearly anymore, that he was making all the wrong decisions, knowing that they were wrong, after he got kidnapped and engulfed in flames. It was all right. He understood that. Something like that could forever warp anyone’s mind, especially if the person was weak and he or she didn’t have the ability to assimilate situations like these. That’s what Det. Sheldon thought was going on with Carlos. Tonight, many people’s lives would change forever, including Det. Sheldon’s.

Carlos and Elmer returned home around eight o’clock at night, and Carlos still hadn’t eaten dinner. Ignacio, Lorena, Robinson, Kay and David knew that they were out, but they didn’t know where they’d been all this time. Lorena and Ignacio trusted that their sons weren’t out there doing something stupid or committing a crime. They raised their boys well. That’s why the Roman brothers were as conservative and old-fashioned as they were. They did their best not to hurt people or offend them in any way. Ignacio and Lorena Roman taught their children to believe in the power of divine justice, and how it was much more severe than earthly justice, and to never take justice in their own hands; thus God Almighty would punish whoever it was that did them wrong *and* punish their boys for the act of reprisal they took against that person. The Roman brothers feared God with all their hearts and just like Kay, they’d never do something they knew in their hearts was wrong. Carlos sat in the dining room table beside Pablo to eat dinner. Pablo and Jose were still over. They were having too much fun to leave, just eating and conversing with their longtime friends, the Roman family, and it was still early for them to leave. They would go to sleep at ten every night from Monday through Friday to go to work, and Jose and Pablo’s houses were just ten minutes away from the Roman home. Elmer also sat down for some more food because he was hungry, and a little more food wouldn’t hurt, much less food as healthy as Lorena’s.

“Where did you go?” Robinson asked. “Did you have fun?”

Just by looking him in the eyes, Carlos let Robinson know what he did at the police station because he knew that Robinson wouldn’t tell anyone else. Then he looked back at his food, a chicken salad made of lettuce, tomato, and big chunks of fat-free white meat, no dressing, and started eating. For some unknown reason, Ignacio, Lorena, Carlos, Elmer and David would eat their food so slow that it would take them over an hour and a half to finish a meal. It was a

custom of theirs, some sort of ritual that even those who knew them well didn't understand. It would take most people less than ten minutes to finish each one of their meals.

Pablo looked down at his leg. Robinson wasn't fooling. His foot was healing at a rapid pace, and the substance that Robinson smeared all over his foot and the lower part of his leg was almost gone. His foot no longer hurt, but moments before, he thought it didn't hurt because it had fallen asleep. His cell phone rang. Maria, his girlfriend wanted to know how he was doing. They lived together, and they were so happy that within a few months they would get married. It was like they knew, from the moment they met in person and looked in each other's eyes, that they were made for each other. Maria was always worried about Pablo. She had to know every move he would make, and now that Pablo had been in a car accident, her overprotection became a lot more extreme. She would call him every ten minutes, not to know what he was doing or who he was with, because she wasn't jealous and possessive, but to know *how* he was doing. Pablo excused himself and wheeled himself all the way to David's bedroom, the bedroom that was farthest from the dining room, just to have a little privacy, and the Emadorian family chose to ignore his conversation with Maria. He got to David's bedroom, turned on the light, and started talking.

"Hey, sweetie, how are you?"

"That's what I was going to ask you?"

"Well, you're not going to believe this, but...I have good news. Robinson covered my foot and the lower part of my leg with...something, some ointment...but I didn't see a tube of cream or anything, or even a container. It was this really strange ointment that had no smell."

"Nothing that comes from Robinson Bennett should surprise you, Pablo."

"I know. The thing is that within hours, my foot felt better. It stopped hurting and it even looks much better. It almost looks like my healthy foot, and my skin is absorbing the strange ointment, just like Robinson said."

"That's great, honey. Why aren't you home?"

Ignacio and Lorena told me to stay awhile when they noticed how fast my foot was improving. They said that they wanted me to walk out of this house, leave the wheelchair behind, and walk into my home."

"This is surreal," Maria said, smiling. "I always knew the Roman family cared about you, but I had no idea they loved you that much."

"Honestly I didn't either. It was today that I found out just how much they love me. They love me and Jose like we're their children, too, and David, Elmer and Carlos love us like we're their brothers, too. That means I'm going to have to stay here just a little while longer."

"I can't wait for you to get home. I want you here. You know I worry about you." "Maria, I'm going to be fine. It's not going to happen again. I'm going to take better care of myself."

"Do you promise me that, Pablo Milian?"

"I promise."

"I heard you always keep your promises, no matter how hard they are to keep."

"That's what people say, but I think it is hyperbole. If it is true, I hope to be someone my loved ones can count on for the rest of my life."

## Chapter 13

Constantine's friends refused to help him with his evil plot, so he had to do it all by himself. He understood that they didn't want to be involved in torturing somebody else. If he were in his shoes he'd do the same thing, but that didn't ruin his plans. He had the guts to go to the Bennett Castle to get what he thought was meant to be his. He didn't count on the fact that Kay had received her twin sister, whose existence she'd always known about, even though no one had ever told her about Kim, and now, the two sisters were protective of each other. It was one o'clock in the morning, and everyone was home, some people sleeping, like Robinson and Kay, some people watching TV, like the Brady twins, and some people surfing the Internet, like Pablo. Pablo was shopping for things he needed online that would be too expensive at local stores, but he was about to go to sleep, too. Kim knew that a maniac was after her sister, and she had a plan to get him off her back so Kay could continue to live her life.

Contrary to Kay, Kim wasn't Christian. She believed in God and she knew what was right and what was wrong, but she didn't always do the right thing. Kay and Kim were identical, but when it came to their personalities, their ideals and their beliefs, they were night and day. Kim was more open-minded and she didn't beat herself up every time she made a mistake. Of course, Kim would never hurt anyone on purpose, either with her words or her actions, and of course, she had never committed a crime, but while Kay rarely spoke her mind about things, careful not to offend people, Kim was very outspoken, and when she had something in her mind, she would let people know. Kim was very intelligent. She knew how to tell people how she felt with all honesty, but without hurting their feelings. Kim was still up, watching a block of music videos on TV made for insomniacs. For some reason, she couldn't sleep tonight. Kay had to help her unpack and organize her clothes and her shoes in her closet. Kay and Robinson gave Kim one of their most beautiful and luxurious guest bedrooms. It was complete with a brand-new laptop computer on a beautiful cherry-colored wooden computer desk, and a TV with a digital video recorder, along with a beautiful queen-sized bed and a huge walk-in closet. It had a bathroom inside of it, too. It was painted Kim's favorite color, like this room was made just for her. The room had a vanity, a nightstand and a chest, but there was still plenty of space to walk around without bumping or having to squeeze through anything. Constantine rang the bell. He was planning to take Kay with him by invalidating her with a powerful somniferous like his buddies had done to Carlos.

Kim walked out of the closest living room to the entrance of the house and continued to walk until she got to the front door of the house. She unlocked and opened the door. Kay was still asleep, but Robinson knew that someone was here, and since he was awake ever since Constantine's car parked in front of the gate and he distracted the guards to be able to get in, he got out of bed and then out of his room to know what was going on. Robinson would always sleep in his pajamas, and he was ready to get out of bed at any moment if he had to. He would only get dressed if he had to go out at night, something that seldom happened. Constantine was stunned when he saw Kim. Kim was dressed in pajamas, her body completely covered up except for her neck, and her upper chest because her top had long sleeves. Back at home, she would usually go to sleep in a negligee, but from now on, she would go to sleep dressed like this out of respect for her brother-in-law, which was like a brother to her. Constantine didn't know what to say. He knew that this wasn't Kay, but her twin, and he liked what he saw. She couldn't be more different from Kay. Perhaps the sensual and captivating Kim would give him a chance.

Robinson watched what was happening from a corner far away from where Constantine and Kim stood. This castle was beyond colossal. The Everlasting Love castles were among the largest estates in the world.

“You’re Constantine Everhart, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I am. Kay told you about me, didn’t she?”

“Yes, she did. We started conversing the minute I got here, and she couldn’t help talking about you. Nothing she had to say about you was good, though, so don’t get the wrong idea.”

The way Constantine felt about this situation changed from the moment he first looked Kim in the eyes. He saw the error of his ways, finally. He wanted a woman this beautiful, but in order to get her, he would have to change. He realized that Kim was better for him than Kay was. They had a lot in common and were just as open-minded. They could do many things together, maybe even get married and have children. Constantine was meant to be with Starr, but he blew that by insisting on harassing Kay, and now another man was enamoring Starr. This man was normal, and he’d been single for over a year. The moment Starr saw this man she fell out of love with Constantine. She noticed how different Constantine and Andrew were. Andrew would never hurt her in anyway, not even without intention, and he would never cheat on her. Andrew was human, but he was monogamous. He never cheated on any of his four ex girlfriends. It was too soon for Andrew and Starr to start living together, but for now, they were going out and getting to know each other, and so far, they liked what they discovered. “I’m sorry for everything I did to Kay.”

“You’re sorry.”

“Yes, I am. I terrorized her. She didn’t deserve that. I realize that instead of pursuing another man’s wife, girlfriend, or lover, I should just find a woman of my own.”

“Ahhh...”

“I don’t know what I was thinking.”

“That’s just it, Constantine. You weren’t thinking. You have unresolved issues. You have a very obsessive personality. That is something you have to work on. It’s going to be better if you get help.”

“I can’t come in because this is Robinson Bennett’s castle and I...”

“Then we’ll go outside.” Kim walked out of the house and closed the door behind her.

Robinson walked until he got to the main living room and sat on the sofa, pretending nothing was happening.

Kim and Constantine went all the way to Constantine’s car. They got in, Constantine in the driver’s seat and Kim in the passenger’s seat. “I’m sorry; I just can’t be on Robinson’s grounds. I feel so ashamed. I’d rather be in my car.”

“It’s fine. I’m listening.”

“You’re right. I do have issues, serious ones. I am going to tell you everything because I need someone to hear me out and you’re the only one that’s willing to listen.”

She stayed silent.

“I was planning to kidnap your sister. As a matter of fact, that’s why I came here.” “You were going to kidnap my sister tonight, right now, but then I appeared seemingly out of nowhere and ruined everything.”

“Yes, and I thank you for that.”

“What?”

“I was going to do a terrible thing... what’s your name?”

“It’s Kim.”

“Look, Kim...” all of a sudden he started to cry. “I need help and I don’t know who to turn to.” She put her arm around him. “I can’t fix my own brain. Only Robinson, Carlos, or Opal can help me, but they don’t want anything to do with me. I hurt them all a great deal. I am trying right now, but I can’t. I just can’t.”

“I know someone who can and will help you. Kay told me about the Brady twins. Perhaps they will make arrangements for you to have neurosurgery because it’s the only way to solve the problem.” Kim’s voice was lower and more intense than Kay’s, and with every word she said, jolts of electricity ran through his veins. He’d never felt this way before. Now, it seemed that he had really found the one.

“What if Robinson told them everything I did, and they hate me, too, even though they don’t know me? The Brady twins and Robinson are like brothers and their children...this is hard.”

“Haggai Brady lives in the castle to the right of this one and Heber lives in the castle to the left side. We can go over to Heber’s right now. Perhaps Heber is still awake.”

“I can see what he’s doing right now. He’s definitely awake, in the dining room, having a snack of crackers and cheese. He’s beyond handsome. I am starting to envy him, and I have never envied another guy or man before.”

“Don’t be silly. Yes, Heber and Haggai are gorgeous, but you’ve got nothing to envy them for, and if you made that comment to them, they would say the same thing. You’ve got your stuff, and I bet everywhere you go, the ladies can’t stop staring, just like it happens to them and to my brother in law of course. No one has ever seen eyes like Robinson’s.”

“Yeah, I know what you mean. So you think we could walk to Heber’s right now?”

“Sure. Come on.” They got out of the car, both at the same time, and they walked together until they got to Heber’s castle, right beside Robinson’s. They pressed the button to cause a buzz at the gate.

Norman, one of the guards, walked to the gate and spoke to them via the intercom before letting them in. “How can I help you?”

“Hello. How are you doing?” Kim said. “We want to speak to Mr. Heber Brady.”

Norman knew right away that this was Kay’s only sister. Their voices were similar except Kim’s was lower and deeper, and she spoke in a somewhat different tone.

“I am Kim Hinds. I am here with my brand-new friend, Constantine Everhart. Mr. Everhart needs Mr. Brady’s help. Constantine and I just met, but we’ve become great friends.”

“I see.”

“I know Constantine and Mr. Brady don’t know one another, but no one else will help my friend, and...”

“It’s okay; I am going to ask Mr. Brady if he will receive Mr. Everhart. Don’t go anywhere.” Norman walked away from the gate, spoke to Heber, telling him everything that Kim told him, and a few minutes later, Norman was back on the intercom at the gate. “Mr. Brady says you guys can come in,” he said and opened the gate.

Fifteen minutes later, Kim and Constantine were inside the castle, sitting in the primary living room with Heber. They listened in silent as Heber spoke. “Until tonight, I didn’t know Constantine in person, but I’ve heard a lot about him in the past couple days.”

“None of the things you’ve heard about me are good, I know,” Constantine commented.

“It’s not a big deal. From the moment that Kay and Robinson told me everything you’ve put them through in a matter of hours, I knew something was seriously wrong with you.”

“I don’t intend for you to justify my actions.”

“I know, but I feel that I have to because when humans have problems like you do, they act this way, and when we have problems, and we do this, our obsessions are a lot more intense. We get to the point where we’re not even thinking, we just do crazy things, and we go to extremes. Sometimes we do things a lot worse than a human would in a moment of utter desperation, and before you ask, I know, because I’ve been there.”

“I’m so sorry.”

“It’s a long story, but I will explain it to you later on, while we get to know each other better. Norman didn’t tell me about the problem you’re having because Kim didn’t explain it to him, but like I said, I’ve known what’s going on since the moment Kay first told me about you, and I will help you.”

“You will? You don’t hate me for trying to take your best friend’s wife?”

“No, I don’t hate you. I told you. The whole world doesn’t hate you, you know? You’ve got to get that through your head.”

“If you don’t hate me then you’re a wonderful person.”

“Ok, let’s get to what we came here for, shall we? Constantine, I hope you don’t mind spending the night at the castle.”

“Spending the night?”

“We’re going to take care of this problem right away. The sooner we do it, the better the results will be.”

“You mean I don’t have to have brain surgery?”

“No. Besides, brain surgery could make things worse. I have a much more effective and natural method. You’re going to walk out of here a new man tomorrow morning.”

“How much do you want?”

Heber laughed at the question. “I’m not a doctor. I will just be using the powers nature gave me. It wouldn’t be fair for me to charge you for this. We do this all the time. We help humans that have no hope of survival, and we help each other. You and I have the same body type and the same height, so my clothes and my underwear will fit you to the tee, and of course, you don’t have to give them back. You’re going to take a shower and put on some pajamas and I will take care of the rest. You won’t know what’s happening because you’ll be asleep the whole time.”

Minutes later, when Kim went back to Robinson’s residence, Constantine took a quick shower and put on some of Heber’s pajamas. Heber was right. These pajamas fit him like they were his. They were brand-new, too. Heber and Haggai bought so many clothes in one month, every month that their closets were full of brand-new clothes. Of course, their used clothes would be washed until they came undone. Heber didn’t mind letting Constantine borrow his clothes. When Constantine was ready, Heber walked him to one of his many guestrooms while Anna Maria and their children slept, and when Constantine fell asleep, Heber made him go into a much deeper sleep. It was some sort of natural anesthetic. Only then, Heber started performing a secret procedure that repaired Constantine’s brain, and he spent the whole night doing it. He used a special solution that made Constantine’s brain regenerate and normalize. Then, he closed up Constantine’s scalp and made his hair grow back.

Constantine woke up. He was feeling better than ever before, and his first thought was Kim. Kim's smile had him captivated. Then, he thought about Starr and all the pain that he put her through, and at that moment, his smile faded. Constantine took another shower around nine o'clock in the morning. Just when Constantine was getting dressed, Haggai arrived. He hadn't gone to work yet. Haggai had a job offer for Constantine. The Brady twins knew that Constantine had been fired from his job three weeks before for fighting with another employee. Constantine's boss didn't want scandals in his company. Before considering giving Constantine employment, they looked through Constantine's background. Amazingly, everything was clean. Constantine never had problems with the law. Haggai and Heber felt that Constantine deserved another chance for employment in what was now their company. Now, Heber was just as much an owner as was Haggai. Constantine walked out to the dining room, where Heber and Haggai sat. Today, they wouldn't go to work until ten thirty in the morning.

"I need to talk to you, Mr. Brady."

"...Which one of us?" Heber said, innocently. "We're both Mr. Brady. I'm just kidding, I know it's me. So sit down." Constantine's breakfast was prepared on the table, his favorite, a plate of oatmeal with cinnamon, and a serving of sausage, bacon, and scrambled eggs on the side, and coffee and orange juice to drink. The twins were having corn flakes with milk, toast, orange juice, milk and coffee for breakfast. To be satisfied, their serving of cereal had to be more generous than that of the average person, but they would never gain any weight except in pure muscle. They only had the fat their bodies needed, no more, and it wasn't even noticeable. They had muscular, healthy bodies, just like all Emadorians. "There's your breakfast. Enjoy."

Constantine started eating his oatmeal. When his mouth was empty, right before his next spoonful of oatmeal, he commented, "I can't believe you made breakfast for me..."

"...Heber."

"Thanks, Heber. You are amazing."

"Of course I made you breakfast. You're my guest. You spent the night here. Listen, my brother is here because he has something to talk to you about."

"First hear me out, all right?"

"Ok."

"I want to thank you for everything you've done for me. I've never felt this good. I'm not depressed, I'm not preoccupied about anything except my mortgage and my bills and stuff like that, but there are no more obsessions. Thanks to you I am a new man now."

"We can take care of that, you know? Your bills and your mortgage...we know you don't have a job, and that's why my brother Haggai wants to talk to you. You already thanked me, and that was very sweet, but I want to make it clear to you right now that the only thing that I expect from you in return is your eternal friendship."

"You ask for nothing else?" asked Constantine, astonished.

"I want nothing else. What else could I ask for?"

"Ok, you're going to let me talk now?" Haggai said.

"I'm sorry...Haggai. I'm listening."

"I want to offer you a job at my company, and I will pay big bucks. In addition to that, I am offering you money for you to pay your mortgage and your bills, and for food, too." Haggai pulled out his wallet and then pulled out his checkbook. Haggai gave the checkbook and the pen to Constantine for him to fill it out, write in it the amount he needed, and then Haggai would sign.

“Wait a minute. You want me to fill this out?”

“Write the amount of money you need, no matter how many zeros.” “You can’t be serious.”

“I am. Remember that my brother and I are the third wealthiest men in the whole world. I think I’m the third and Heber’s the fourth because he’s right there with me. Everybody knows who we are. Everyone loves our products. If you write a million dollars in that check, that’ll be nothing. Even that is chump change for me. I’m going to tell you because I trust you. My personal fortune exceeds seven hundred million dollars, and it grows more and more every day.”

“I don’t need a million dollars,” Constantine said as he filled out the check. “I know that one day I will make that amount of money on my own.” He showed Haggai the check. Haggai was surprised. Constantine only wrote in ten thousand dollars. “That should be enough for food, bills and mortgage this month. Oh, and clothing and products of personal hygiene...”

“Are you sure this is going to be enough for all of that?” Heber looked at the check and then looked back at Constantine. Then, he pulled out his own wallet and his own checkbook.

“Ten thousand dollars...? Of course it’s going to be enough. Oh, no, wait, Heber, not you, too?”

“Why not?” said Heber doing what Haggai did with his checkbook moments before.

“...Because I said ten grand is enough.”

“Write the check.”

“But...”

“It’s my checkbook. It’s my money. I do what I want with it. When I offer something to someone, I never take no for an answer.”

“I can see that,” said Constantine.

“Ok, then, write the check for the amount that you need.”

In a few minutes, Constantine wrote Heber’s check for ten thousand dollars more and then gave it to Heber to sign. “Ok, guys, I hope that’s enough for you because that’s all I want, and I only wrote the other check because Heber wouldn’t take no for an answer, like he said.”

Both checks were signed and Constantine put them in his wallet in a matter of minutes. “Ok, now, how long do I have to pay you back, and what will be the monthly amounts?” Haggai and Heber looked at one another and burst out laughing so hard that for a moment there, they sounded like hyenas.

Smiling and flabbergasted, Constantine said, “Come on, guys, this isn’t funny. Write up the document for me that states how long I have to pay and what the monthly amounts are.”

“This isn’t a loan,” Haggai said and Heber burst out laughing again.

“What did you say?” Constantine heard him but he couldn’t believe it.

“I said this is not a loan.”

“...But it has to be. I am not accepting twenty thousand dollars just like that. To me, that’s a huge amount of money, and it would break anybody’s bank. Guys, I’m serious, please do what I asked.”

“All right,” Heber said and went to get his laptop. “You want us to write up that document? Ok, we will. I’m going to go get my computer right now. You won’t accept the money unless we loan it to you rather than giving it to you? That’s fine.” He walked out of the dining room. “I’ll be right back.”

Constantine and Haggai started conversing again, just the two of them, while they ate their breakfast. Twenty minutes later, Heber came back with the document in his hand that

Constantine demanded that he write up. Constantine was astonished when he read it. It simply said, among a few other things, that Constantine had *ten years* to pay back the twenty thousand dollars, and it didn't specify monthly amounts. Heber and Haggai figured that ten years would be enough to pay off a twenty-thousand-dollar-loan, no matter how big or small the monthly amount would be. Constantine would calculate in his head the exact amount of money he needed every month to repay the money in ten years time. However, the document had a very important clause that Constantine missed the first time that he read it. It said, in a very small font, that should Constantine be unemployed or should other circumstances keep him from repaying the loan, even for one month, the loan would no longer be a loan and Constantine could keep the rest of the money, even if it was nineteen thousand dollars or even \$19,500, but Heber played a game of persuasion of his own because he knew Constantine would object to that clause. Heber said, "And if you don't accept every single clause in this agreement, every single little clause in there, this won't be a loan, and that's my brother and I's last word."

"That's right," Haggai confirmed and then gave him the same pen that he wrote the check with. "So sign. We are going to take this document to court and have it validated by law. That way, if you fail to comply with any of the terms, we will sue you, demanding that you keep every cent of the amount that would be left at the time, no matter how big or small."

Constantine laughed, incredulous. "You're kidding."

"No, we're not. You made my brother write up this agreement for you to sign. Now, you know what will happen if you don't comply with the agreement. We've only had to take people to court twice in our entire lives, but both times, we won, so you really don't want us to take you to court, Everhart."

"Ok, I'm going to comply with this agreement to the letter, and I'm going to do all I can to make a payment every month until the money's paid off, and I already know the amount I need to pay every month to pay off this account in less than ten years." He thought, hiding it from them, *but I'm not going to pay you back with my salary. I'm going to pay you back with the money I'm going to earn on the side. I'm going to publish my first novel and pay you back with that, and when I do that, it'll be the whole amount that I just borrowed.* "Thank you guys, for everything you've done for me and will do for me in the future, if I earn it."

"We are sure you will."

"Ok, so when am I going to start working, and what will my job be?"

That afternoon, Constantine was at home, looking in the newspaper for another little job that he could do on the side to set aside the amount of money he would make to pay off his twenty thousand dollars every month. He'd already deposited the money on his bank account and made all the payments he needed to with his debit card. He paid his mortgage, which was \$2,000 a month, his power, which was only \$150 a month, only because of the air conditioning, his water was only eighty dollars a month or less, but it was eighty dollars this month, his satellite-TV service was thirty nine dollars and ninety nine cents a month, his home phone service was an average of forty-five dollars a month, and his cell phone service was sixty dollars for this month, for unlimited talk, unlimited text and unlimited internet access on the go. His home phone bundled included internet service with a speed of one megabyte. To him, that was all he needed because he didn't download anything from the internet. He would only use the Net to surf his favorite websites and pay his bills, and watch videos online. Even after making all those payments and getting five hundred dollars in groceries today, Constantine had fifteen thousand of the twenty thousand dollars that the Brady twins loaned him, but he felt he couldn't give them

back because he knew he would need them, eventually. Constantine found an announcement on the newspaper from a handicapped man who needed help bathing, getting dressed, and getting his hair done every morning.

FORTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD HANDICAPPED MAN NEEDS ASSISTANCE BATHING,  
DRESSING, AND GETTING HIS HAIR DONE EVERY MORNING. WILLING TO PAY UP  
TO \$600 A MONTH. THE ASSISTANT MUST BE HERE AT SIX O'CLOCK SHARP  
EVERY MORNING. CALL (341) 555 – 0154.

Certainly, the ad also had the man's address on it. Constantine became excited. "This is perfect! Six hundred dollars a month is exactly the amount I need to pay off my loan without having to use my salary for that purpose!" However, there was only one problem. Constantine would need to start working and finish working later at Brady Foods. At that moment, he called Haggai. To Constantine's luck, Haggai had just gotten home. Constantine didn't want to call him at his cell phone because he didn't want to distract him while he was driving back home or to any other place. Constantine knew a lot of things about his new friends by now. However, he had no idea that these people could talk on the phone with their hands-free set in their cars and drive at the same time, obeying traffic regulations, without being distracted.

Haggai saw Constantine's home phone number on his caller ID, displayed on the handset of his cordless phone. "How are you doing, Everhart?" he said. "Are you ready to start working for us tomorrow?"

"Not quite. I need to have my schedule changed. You see, I found a separate job to do in the morning. I am about to call this man. It's a handicapped man who needs help getting ready for his day, and he's willing to pay six hundred dollars every month."

"Ah..."

"It's just a little something on the side to have the monthly amount I need for my loan, you know, trying to make that money on my own so I don't have to pay you back with the money you're paying me for working for you, you know what I mean?"

"You're very smart, Constantine. I never thought you'd come up with something like this."

"We can all come up with solutions to our little problems, and our solutions are very original, don't you think?"

"I like the way you think, Everhart. Good job. What time do you need to be at the house of your other employer?"

"I have to be there at six o'clock in the morning."

"Let's see. You get there at six o'clock and it will take you approximately a half an hour to give this man a good bath and about twenty more minutes to help him get dressed, ten more minutes to do his hair because he has short hair, shaving him will be a breeze, and although he didn't ask his future assistance to make him breakfast on the ad, I know you will do that, too, so you would leave his house at ten o'clock in the morning. Then it will take you like fifteen minutes to get to our headquarters depending on traffic conditions...so your scheduled will be changed to start at eleven thirty in the morning and your workday will end at seven thirty at night. How does that sound?"

"Eleven thirty to seven thirty is perfect. Thank you, Mr. Brady. You do know I have to call you Mr. Brady, both you and Heber, because you are going to be my bosses."

“Only call both of us Mr. Brady at work. Outside of work, you are to call us by our first names, got it? We are going to be very good friends from now on, like brothers.”

“Oh, you can be sure of that, after all you did for me, of course. So you gave me a picture of what my day will be like from now on because you know for sure that I am going to get this first job.”

“That’s right.”

Constantine was ecstatic. “Thank you, Haggai!” He cried tears of joy. “You and your brother have changed my life forever. Thank you so much. You guys are the best. I wish that Robinson, Kay and Carlos would forgive me because they would be excellent friends, too.”

“Call that poor man. By the time you hang up, I guarantee you that you’re going to have that job.” Haggai hung up and went to his room to see how Rebecca was doing.

Constantine called Mr. Smiley at his home. Mr. Smiley was Marlon’s uncle. His brother, Roy, Marlon’s father, was an Emadorian, but Mr. Smiley was human. Mr. Smiley wanted his fate to change so he could be independent, but now, that wasn’t possible, until Constantine’s path got crossed with his. Mr. Smiley didn’t have Roy write his name on the ad, but from the moment that he answered the phone, Constantine knew who he was, and he was more than eager to assist him. Constantine had something in mind that Mr. Smiley would never have imagined.

“Hello.”

“Is this the man who needs help getting ready in the morning?”

“That’s right. I have a work-at-home job, but I can’t bathe or dress on my own.”

“I see. This is Constantine Everhart. I just read your ad and I want to be the one to help you.”

“Constantine Everhart, a strong Emadorian, just like my brother and nephew, Marlon. I like that. Thank you for calling.”

“I would like to know what I need to qualify for this job.”

“A man like you needs nothing to qualify. You already have everything I’m looking for, the strength to help me transfer into the bathtub, the skills...you’re the perfect man for this.”

“So when do I start?”

“Can you start tomorrow morning?”

“Of course I can.”

“You don’t mind getting up earlier than you usually do from now on?”

“I’ve only been sleeping in for three weeks, so it’s not that big of a deal. I’ve been working since I was a teenager, and even unemployed, I get up around seven o’clock in the morning because I’m so used to getting up early, so it’s not a big difference for me.”

“So you’ve only been unemployed for three weeks?”

“Yes, sir, I have. I’ll tell you more about me as we get to know each other better.” “That sounds good. I’ll see you tomorrow morning, Constantine.”

“Thank you so much, Mr. Smiley. I’ll see you tomorrow.” Constantine hung up, and then screamed, “Yes! Today is the best day of my life! I will never forget this day!”

There were more surprises in store for Constantine today, and it was only seven o’clock at night. Robinson, Kay and Kim arrived at his house at this moment. Constantine was taking another shower to change into his own clothes. Even so, he would keep Heber’s clothes for the rest of his life, as a reminder of everything that Heber and Haggai had done for him in less than twenty-four hours. Robinson knew that Constantine couldn’t come to the door right now, so he stopped ringing the bell and waited for Constantine to get ready.

“He’s taking a shower,” he told the girls.

“Please don’t tell me about it, Robinson. Thinking about him in the shower makes me crazy.”

Robinson and Kay laughed when Kim said this. “Oh, is that right?” Robinson said. “You got here less than twenty-four hours ago and you’re already in love. That’s great! I am so happy for you, sister.”

Kim was amazed when Robinson called her his sister and not his sister in law. That’s what she was to him, his sister. “Didn’t you fall in love with my sister at first sight, too, Robinson?”

“Yes, I did, but...well, no, I have to ask Kay. Kay, did you fall in love with me at first sight, too?”

Laughing hysterically, Kay said, “Robinson Bennett, what kind of question is that? You know we both fell in love at first sight. It was mutual, hello!”

They couldn’t stop laughing.

“Yes, I know that. I just refuse to accept it and I don’t even talk about it because it’s hard for me to believe it,” said Robinson.

“Oh, please, brother,” said Kim, “you know the ladies can’t take their eyes off you everywhere you go!”

“Thank you for telling me that. It’s just hard for me to believe that such a selective, but wonderful woman like your sister laid her eyes on me and even married me. She’s pregnant with my child, the first of all the children I’ve conceived that will be born. What more could I ask for? I am the happiest man in the world.”

“Did you just say my nephew is the only child you’ve conceived so far that will be born?”

“Yes, Kim, that’s what I said.”

“But Robinson, how can that...?”

Kay interrupted her. “Kim, the three of us will talk more about this when we get home. Now, let’s spend some time with Constantine and make peace with him. You know that of the three of us you’re the only one that he’s gotten along with.”

Constantine was finished getting dressed, and he walked out of his room and walked the hallway to his main living room, the one closest to the front door of the two-living room, three-bedroom, two-dining room house. Constantine got a house this big because he was planning on marrying Starr and living here with her. That couldn’t be, so he lived alone in this house, but he wouldn’t live alone here for long. He was happy, and amazed at the same time because he didn’t know he had the power of getting something he wanted just by wishing it. He finally got to the main living room and then walked another hallway to the front door of the house, and opened it.

“I knew it was you when I heard the bell, but I couldn’t believe it.” He gave each one of his new friends a hug. “What are you doing here?”

“Didn’t you want to work things out and try to have a better relationship with us?” asked Kay.

“Yes, I did, and I do, but I didn’t think it was possible. Come on in and make yourselves at home.” They walked together to the main living room. When they got there, Robinson and Kay sat on one sofa and Constantine and Kim sat on the other one. The sofa and the loveseat looked luxurious, but in reality they didn’t cost that much. They were just beautiful and of great quality. “Oh, I almost forgot!” said Constantine and got up. While walking out of the living

room, he said, "I have to give you guys something to drink, and I know what you want to drink, so wait for me just a few more minutes. I'll be right back." He left.

"He seems so different," commented Kay.

"He is a different man, and he'll never again be who he used to be," Kim said.

"Heber really took care of his biggest problems and renewed him."

"Haggai did, too," commented Robinson. "The Brady twins took care of all of his financial problems. They really liked him when they met him."

"Constantine was always a nice man. It's just that he was making all the wrong decisions and hurting people for no real reason, and that was because he needed help. He was hurt in the past, physically and verbally abused, every day, starting at a very early age. When you go through all of that at such a tender age, it never stops, and you don't get help or try to escape, that can really warp your mind. I know humans who have gone through that and grown up to be criminals. Imagine what that would do to someone like Constantine. Whatever negative effects it has, it's a thousand times worse for someone like that," said Kim.

"Unfortunately, you couldn't be more right," said Robinson. "I thank God that none of that happened to me. I grew up with a loving family, underground, and despite what we had to endure, hiding from everyone up here for the fear of hurting them and the fear that they'd never accept us, we always stayed together and pulled through. We supported each other."

"You don't know how many families in this world wish they could be like the Bennett family," said Kim.

A few minutes later, Constantine came back to the living room with the drinks. He got lemonade for him, Sprite for Robinson, hot chocolate for Kay, and Coke for Kim. Kim didn't know it, but despite having caffeine, the glass of Coke wouldn't make her lose any sleep tonight because Constantine had altered it a little bit just to keep that from happening. The caffeine would have no effect on Kim or Kay. It would just be there, like something that gave these drinks their colors. Each one of them took their drinks. With his glass of lemonade, Constantine sat beside Kim once again.

"Constantine, we're not going to be here very long because we know that you have to get up very early tomorrow morning, and every morning, seven days a week, from this moment on," said Robinson.

"As a matter of fact, if you want to wake up rested tomorrow morning, you should be in bed by now," Kim said.

"Don't worry about me. I'm going to be fine. Besides, I could never dismiss you. I've been waiting to talk to you guys. I have a few things on my mind, and you have to know before today ends."

"Make it quick because you have to rest. We're just going to drink what we've got in our hands and leave," said Kay.

"Well, don't leave without knowing that..." he sighed. "...that I'm really sorry for all the things I did to you. I wish Carlos were here so I could apologize to him as well." The bell rang and they were all astounded.

"Be careful what you wish for," Kim commented, grinding her teeth, somewhat scared. "Don't ever wish anything bad upon anybody, Constantine."

Constantine got up from the sofa once again. "I won't. I promise." He walked out of the living room and walked that hallway until he got to the front door. He opened it and gasped. It was Carlos.



## Chapter 14

Smiling, Constantine said, "Hello, Carlos. How are you doing? Come on in."

Carlos never imagined Constantine treating him this way. They were always enemies, ever since they were children and they met in kindergarten. He came in and Constantine closed the door behind him. "I'm doing very well, thank you," he said. "I came here because I thought you wanted to talk to me."

"Yes..."

"You called upon me somehow."

"Yes, I did."

They walked all the way to the primary living room, where Robinson, Kay and Kim sat. They were done with their drinks and they were getting ready to leave. "How are you doing, Carlos?" Robinson said and gave Carlos a big hug. Kay also gave Carlos a hug.

"Hi," Carlos said to Kim, smiling.

"Carlos," said Kay, "this is my twin sister, Kim."

Carlos and Kim shook hands. "It's nice to meet you. I'm Carlos Roman." "It's very nice to meet you, too."

Seeing that they were leaving, Carlos didn't sit down. He didn't want to keep Constantine out of bed any longer because Constantine really needed to sleep.

"I'm glad that you guys are all here. I just wanted to apologize for making your lives a living hell."

"Not me," said Kim. "You changed my life in a good way."

"If that is all you wanted to say," Carlos said, "then I'm leaving. I have to go to work tomorrow, and you do, too." He headed to the door, along with Robinson Kay and Kim.

Just when Carlos was about to walk out the door, Constantine held him by the arm and said, "Wait."

Carlos turned around. "Yes."

"I hope you know I meant every word I said."

"I know that. You've changed. Thank you for opening the doors of your home to me."

"Call me or come over anytime, Carlos. I'd like us to be friends."

"You got it," said Carlos and gave Constantine a big hug, the first in years. Everyone said goodbye and went home. That night, Constantine turned on his laptop, opened his internet browser, checked his email, and then he took his clothes off except for his boxers and put on some comfortable pajamas. He went to sleep that night. He slept from ten o'clock in the morning to four o'clock in the morning because he had a lot of email to read, one thousand new email messages. He read very fast, though, and luckily, his email inbox had unlimited storage for his messages and he never deleted them because he was protected against junk mail. Email was from family and friends that had turned his back on him in the past. Now, they were offering him their support.

The morning after, Constantine got up at four o'clock sharp and went to the bathroom to take a shower. Mr. Smiley's house was only two miles from Constantine's house, so Constantine would have enough time to get ready and he wouldn't be late. Constantine's phone rang. Despite the noise of the water, he knew someone was calling him but he ignored it just for a moment because it was dangerous to get out of the shower wet. He could slip and fall, and although he would recover in no time, the fall would hurt like hell. Opal waited for the voicemail to come on

to leave Constantine a message because Constantine was taking a shower right now, and this phone call wasn't an emergency. Opal left his message. "Constantine, buddy, I hope you're not mad at me for going to the police and confessing to everything moments before Carlos Roman dropped the charges against us. I know I betrayed you, but my conscience was tormenting me. I know we should never have hurt that man, and you know that, too. I hope there are no hard feelings and we can continue to be friends because I love you very much and my life just wouldn't be the same without you. The gang feels the same way, but they were afraid to call you. Anyway, I'll see you later, man. I know you are coming back home around eight, and maybe we can talk. Love you. I'll see you tonight." Opal hung up and then, he too got ready to go to work. His workday started at seven o'clock in the morning from Monday through Friday, but he needed enough time to make some breakfast at home, so he wouldn't have to buy it on the go. Opal worked as a salesman at a car dealership. He was only twenty-three years old and he was going to the university to become a doctor, and since he made great money at the dealership, he was able to pay for his tuition.

One hour later, Constantine was on his way to Mr. Smiley's house. It occurred to him to stop at the grocery store about a mile from his house to buy a few groceries for Mr. Smiley, with the money that the Brady twins had given him, but had to loan to him at his request because he wouldn't accept such a colossal amount of money as a gift. He wanted to make Mr. Smiley a nice breakfast and get him several more groceries so that he would have enough food to eat for the remainder of this month. Mr. Smiley was running out of groceries, and Marlon wouldn't be able to go to the store and buy him more groceries, with Mr. Smiley's money, until the day after tomorrow because Marlon was in charge of that, but he was very busy, working all day, and Friday was his only day off. That job allowed the worker to choose his day off, and instead of choosing Saturday or Sunday, Marlon chose Friday. Friday was a very special weekday to him. Marlon was a computer technician just like Starr, except Marlon would work ten hours every day instead of eight. Of course, if someone's computer broke down outside Starr's working hours, Starr would race to that person's house and she would either fix their computer or she would get him or a new one, if her client preferred a new computer. Marlon was a specialized computer technician for a computer company, and he fixed the computers of the company and also the computers of some businessmen. He was a computer programmer, too, and he would even build two computers from scratch for the company every day. Constantine only spent one hour in the grocery store, but in that hour, he got Mr. Smiley seven hundred dollars in groceries, the most money he'd ever spent on groceries in one month. He hadn't done that for himself. He adored Mr. Smiley just for giving him that extra job he needed, and boy did it show. One of the workers of the grocery store helped him accommodate all the groceries in his trunk and on the backseat of Constantine's van just so that Constantine could leave the store a lot quicker and get to work in time.

A half an hour later, at six o'clock sharp, Constantine was ringing Mr. Smiley's bell. Mr. Smiley was already up, in the living room, watching a random TV show, just to wait for his assistant and be able to open the door right away. He drove his power chair up to the front door and opened the door for Constantine. "You are punctual, too. I like that."

"I would've arrived a little earlier, except I took an hour of my time to get you some groceries. I'll be right back. I'm going to go get them and accommodate them in the pantry and in the refrigerator."

Mr. Smiley left the door open for Constantine just so he could use both hands to bring in the bags of groceries. Within the next few minutes, Mr. Smiley noticed that Constantine was bringing bags, and bags, and bags of groceries, and the bags never seemed to end. "Is all that for me?" he asked, astonished.

"Yes, all of this is for you." Contrary to what Constantine thought, it only took him a few minutes of his time to bring in the groceries and putting them where they belonged, nice and neat and organized. Everything was perfect so far.

"Exactly how much money did you spend on all of this?" asked Mr. Smiley, still incredulous.

"I'm not telling you, and I threw away the receipts because I don't want you to pay me back. This is a gift to you from me. Now, let's go to the bathroom and give you a good bath, huh?"

As Constantine followed Mr. Smiley to his bedroom, and then into his bathroom, in Mr. Smiley said, "Oh, so you wouldn't accept a gift from the Brady twins when they gave you money to pay your mortgage and your bills, and you got them to turn that gift into a loan," now Constantine was helping Mr. Smiley take his clothes off to transfer him to the bathtub. The bathroom had everything that a handicapped person needed, including bars on the wall of the bathtub for Mr. Smiley to hang on to while transferring. The sink was low and the toilet was high enough for his power chair, for him to transfer a lot easier to the toilet and do what he had to do, "but you expect me to accept all those groceries as a gift, without knowing how much they were."

"Marlon told you about the money I borrowed from the Brady twins, huh?"

"Yes, he told me everything. I had to get to know you better before opening the doors of my home to you. Marlon told me all the things I didn't know about you, and I loved what I heard, so that made me even more eager to hire you."

"Don't worry, Mr. Smiley. I know what you mean, and I agree with you. It's true what you say." Constantine was helping Mr. Smiley transfer into the bathtub. "I don't accept money as a gift from other people, but I expect them to accept it from me. I know it's kind of, well, off, but that's just the way I am. Besides, I'd do anything for you. I love you." By now, Mr. Smiley was sitting in the bathtub, ready for his bath.

While Marlon poured some of the liquid soap on a brand-new washcloth that he'd just bought for Mr. Smiley, and started washing Mr. Smiley from the neck down, Mr. Smiley said, "Well, I didn't expect this from you, son. I mean my nephew Marlon was going to get me groceries the day after tomorrow, with my money. He wants to buy me things with his money, but I don't let him."

"Well, now Marlon doesn't have to do that, does he? I got you everything, from milk, cheese, ice cream and yogurt to a variety of fruits, vegetables, soups, every single grocery I could think of, and you liked, and lots of it. I hope you don't have to get any more groceries, at least until next month."

"This food will last me at least for a month and a half, son. Thank you so much, but next time you get me groceries, please get them with my money."

"I promise. I just wanted to do something nice for you." Now Constantine was washing Mr. Smiley's abdomen, private parts, thighs and legs. He was bathing him very fast, but at the same time, Mr. Smiley would be cleaner and feel better than ever before.

“What, and win me over? You don’t have to. You already did that when you first talked to me last night.”

“That’s sweet, Mr. Smiley.”

“No, son, sweet is what you’re doing for me.”

Just a few minutes later, Constantine finished bathing Mr. Smiley. Mr. Smiley was clean, rinsed, and fresh. Constantine dried Mr. Smiley with a big towel and then carried him out of the bathtub and put him back in the wheelchair.

“Thank God my assistant wasn’t human. A human man would’ve broken his back after doing this just ten times, or even less. I am one heavy dude.”

“Mr. Smiley, you’re not heavy to me. In fact, you’re a feather to me, and no, I’m not exaggerating.”

Mr. Smiley wheeled himself out of the bathroom and followed Constantine to his bedroom. “That’s what I’m saying, thank God. You know how much I weigh, son? I weigh 175 pounds.”

“I could carry someone or something that weighs one thousand tons, and it wouldn’t be a problem for me, easy.”

“1000 *tons*, you said?”

“Yes, and even more. God has blessed me and others like me with unlimited physical strength.” Constantine went to Mr. Smiley’s walk-in closet. “What do you want to wear today?”

“I would wear any long-sleeved shirt with buttons and long pants. Just pick out what you think looks best on me. You know that better than I do.”

Constantine picked out a red long-sleeved shirt and a red pair of long pants. It looked like an outfit. Then, he placed everything on the bed, and withdrew some boxers from the bedroom chest. In less than fifteen minutes, Constantine helped Mr. Smiley get dressed, garment by garment. By now, it was half past seven. “By the way,” Constantine said as they got out of the room, “I love it when you call me your son. My parents passed away.”

“Marlon told me, and you know what? I never had children. I couldn’t.”

“Then I’d love to be your son.” The two men shared a big hug and continued their way on to the dining room. Mr. Smiley accommodated his chair in a place of the dining room where there was no dining room chair. “What would you like for breakfast today?”

“I would like lots of scrambled eggs with lots of bacon and lots of sausage, and toast, orange juice, and coffee on the side, please. I didn’t think you would make me breakfast, though.”

“Of course I will,” said Constantine and walked to the living room. “You can have all the scrambled eggs or omelets you want all throughout this month because I bought you hundreds of eggs.”

“...Hundreds?”

“Yep,” said Constantine. By this time, he was already preparing all the eggs he needed for Mr. Smiley’s breakfast this morning, a whole pack of twelve eggs. Constantine had gotten Mr. Smiley over three hundred eggs, and fortunately, Mr. Smiley’s refrigerator had enough room for all of them, and many other things. Mr. Smiley had the biggest and most modern refrigerator available on the market. It was beautiful, too. Constantine started scrambling the eggs. “You like them with or without salt?”

“...Without.”

“Ok.”

That morning, Geri showed up at Mr. Smiley's house to bring him some office supplies he had asked for. Marlon had gotten them with his own money. Mr. Smiley needed printer paper, printer ink blank CD's to back up his computer files on, notebook paper, and pens. The pens were red, black, and blue. Geri rang Mr. Smiley's bell. Now, Geri and Marlon lived together and were planning a big wedding, and Geri knew who Marlon really was. All the problems that Marlon had when he took Nathaniel Rivers' identity were solved and when it came to that, he had nothing to worry about. Now, all he had to worry about was being a good caregiver to his uncle. He was the one who would take him to the bank, once a month, on a Friday, to deposit money on his bank account, make all the phone calls for him and basically take care of all the needs of his uncle. He was his uncle's tutor, but he did allow him to decide how to manage his finances because Mr. Smiley was very good with money. Growing up, his parents taught him and his siblings the value of a dollar. While the eggs, bacon and sausage were cooking on the stove, and the coffee was almost ready in the coffeemaker, Constantine walked all the way to the front door and opened it.

"Good morning, Ms. Costas. How are you doing?" he said with a bright smile on his face.

"You must be Constantine," she said, smiling back and shook his hand. She went in and Constantine closed the door behind her. "It's great to meet you! I've heard so much about you!"

"So have I. Ever since I arrived, Mr. Smiley has been telling me how wonderful you are and how much he'd love for you to marry his nephew. He's been telling me in his mind, though."

"Oh." She went to his room and put all of Mr. Smiley's office supplies in the right place, in free compartments of his computer desk and she placed his brand-new pens in an old coffee cup that he no longer drank coffee on. Constantine saw the receipt of the office supplies in her hand. "Don't show these to my uncle. Marlon doesn't want him to pay him back because he's his tutor and this is what Marlon is supposed to do, ok?"

"I got it, Ms. Costas."

"You can call me Geraldine or Geri."

"Geraldine will be good, for now. It's not a problem. I got him seven hundred dollars in groceries and threw out the receipts before I got here so he couldn't see them and pay me back. He doesn't even know how much money I spent on all the groceries I got him this morning. Tell Marlon I said not to tell him either. Let's keep this a secret between us, ok?"

Geri laughed. "Ok, Marlon and I won't tell him. Listen, thank you for doing this for our uncle. I'm going to marry Marlon at the end of this year, so he will be my uncle, too. I love him like a father."

"Why not marry Marlon earlier? Why not marry him next week?"

They went all the way back to the kitchen and Constantine served Mr. Smiley's breakfast. Then, he brought everything to the dining room table and put it in front of Mr. Smiley, in a platter. Mr. Smiley rubbed his hands together as Constantine placed a napkin inside the neck of his shirt to keep him from getting dirty and then he picked up the fork and started eating. Then, Geraldine put the finishing touch, adding Mr. Smiley's favorite coffee creamer to his coffee: chocolate. "There you are, Uncle Elvis. We hope you enjoy it."

"Did you bring me the office supplies I asked Marlon to get me? Where's the receipt." "I'm not giving you the receipt, Uncle Elvis." "Oh, so you're doing this to me, too?"

Constantine and Geraldine laughed together as Mr. Smiley took the first sip of his coffee, which was more delicious than ever. Love was Constantine's most important ingredient, in every part of the breakfast, the main dish, the toast and the coffee, and that was more than evident.

"Constantine did this just because he wanted to do something nice for you, because although he's only known you for a few hours, he already loves you dearly, like a father," explained Geraldine and then looked back at Constantine, smiling. She and Constantine stood on each side of Mr. Smiley. "Marlon did it because he's your tutor, your guardian; he's in charge of you, get it? That's what he's supposed to do. Being someone's tutor or caregiver is not just making important decisions for that person. The tutor is responsible for everything pertaining to the person he or she is taking care of. You ought to know that. You were the tutor of Uncle Ross, may he rest in peace."

"Yes, but..."

"...But nothing! You're not paying Marlon back, and that's final. He doesn't want you to. He does this because it's his responsibility, because it's what a good caregiver does, and because he loves you." She gave him a kiss on the cheek. "While I'm here, Constantine, can I get some breakfast, too?"

"Sure. What do you want me to make you, Geraldine?"

"I just want cereal," she said as she walked to the pantry and got her favorite cereal. Constantine got one of the ten gallons of milk from the refrigerator and Geraldine got a cereal bowl from the kitchen sink. In a matter of minutes, Geraldine's cereal was served.

"Would you like some toast and orange juice with that?" Constantine asked, smiling.

"Now, isn't he sweet, Geri?" commented Mr. Smiley, taking a bite of his toast.

"Yes, Uncle Elvis, he is. Thank you so much, Constantine."

In a matter of minutes, Constantine served Geri's toast, orange juice and milk for her and made some oatmeal for himself. Then, they all sat down for breakfast and continued talking.

"I never answered your question, Constantine," Geri said.

Mr. Smiley stopped eating for a few minutes, wondering what they were talking about.

"That's correct, you never did," he said, smiling.

"I can't wait to be Mrs. Marlon Smiley, but I don't think he wants to get married right now."

"That's why I asked you this question because I know that's what he wants." "Are you for real?"

"Yes. You can get married and then a few months from now, you can have your big wedding."

Geri was stunned. She just smiled. She didn't know what to say.

"I'll be the happiest man in the world if you marry my nephew because you're the woman he loves, and I love you, too. There's no better woman for Marlon."

Two hours later, Constantine and Geri were gone, and Mr. Smiley was getting ready to start working on his computer. He received disability checks that added up to three thousand dollars, and in addition to that, he had a half-time job as a customer-support representative for the computer company that Marlon worked for, and that generated him an additional three thousand dollars every month. With that kind of money, Mr. Smiley could afford to get everything he wanted. He had satellite-TV service, home phone service, internet access of course, a nice and modern desktop computer that met all his needs, and money to buy all the food and clothes he wanted. Marlon would take him shopping for clothes every second Friday of

the month. All that Mr. Smiley would buy was clothes, food, and office supplies, and he would also use his money to pay his bills. He never wasted a penny.

Constantine was on his first day of work at Brady Foods. He was in charge of the other workers, the ones that packed up the foods. Constantine didn't know this, but if he did a good job, within a few weeks, he would get a promotion, although this job earned him \$7,000 every month. People loved working for the Brady twins because they paid very good money, and their employees would do everything in their power to keep their jobs. Even the workers that Constantine was in charge of earned a decent amount of money, \$3,500 a month, but they would soon get a raise. Constantine was walking around these premises, but he didn't need to be physically everywhere at the same time because in his mind, he could see what every single worker was doing. Three hours after he started working, when it was supposed to be lunchtime for Constantine, he didn't have to reprimand anyone for anything. Everyone was doing a great job, and Constantine didn't have to do anything out of this world to make that happen. These were great people. Their former supervisor got fired because he was treating them in an unfair manner, yelling at them for no reason, rushing them to do what they had to do, and calling them names. Just one week after firing him, Heber decided not to leave him without work because he knew it would be difficult for him to get a job elsewhere right now, so he called him and asked him to be one of the packers. Shalim didn't feel humiliated. On the contrary, he felt grateful that after all that he had done, the Brady twins were willing to give him another chance, although rather than giving him his job back, they descended him.

Shalim had changed. He was no longer a ruthless son of a bitch. This experience made him realize that he had to treat people with respect, and that he wasn't the last bottle of water in the desert. Shalim took a few minutes of his time to go up to the new supervisor. He had something to tell him, though they hadn't been introduced yet. "Sir, Mr. Everhart, do you have a few minutes for me? I need to tell you something."

"Yes, Mr. DiMera."

Shalim was amazed to realize that Constantine never called his workers by their first names. "I'm just glad to see you here, doing what I used to do. I know you'll be a much better supervisor than I was."

Constantine smiled. "So you're the former supervisor." "Yes, I am."

"Well, thank you for the compliment. I'm going to do a damn good job, so good that I'm going to get promoted, and you're going to get this job back."

Shalim gasped.

"I just had a vision of it, and my visions and premonitions always come true. Now, go back to work."

Shalim couldn't believe his ears. As he went back to what he was doing, he tried to take in what he was just told. Was it possible? Could this Emadorian do everything in his power to be the best supervisor and get promoted just so that Shalim could get his old job back? Emadorians were selfless beings. They always put others before themselves. Why wouldn't they? They had all the power. They could get anything they wanted just by snapping their fingers. We couldn't. We had to fight for what we wanted, fight hard until the death, and most of the time, we lost and then died. Shalim always thought that Emadorians were the worst thing to ever happen to us. He'd just realized that he was wrong. He had to see what Constantine told him with his own eyes, so he kept working, and waited for the day in which he would get his old job back and

would continue to give his wife and his children a better life. Right now, he could support them with the \$3,500 he was making because his wife worked, too, but with the money he used to make, he could once again give them the life that they deserved.

Stephen got home from work after being fired. A jealous coworker accused him of doing something he hadn't done, talk crap about his boss on the internet, on a social network, and his boss fired him. To perpetuate the lie, the envious man went through the hassle of hacking Stephen's account and making nasty and untrue wall posts against his boss. Stephen was crying in earnest now. He couldn't believe he'd just lost \$6,500 a month, all for a lie.

When Sheila saw him crying like this, her feelings about him changed. He wasn't the heartless man she thought he was. She still blamed him for the death of her sister, Sheena, but now she was seeing a side of him that she'd never seen in all the time that she was living with him. She couldn't fall in love with him because he was her sister's ex boyfriend. She was only sleeping with him to assume Sheena's identity and get her revenge on him, not because she really had feelings for him, other than hate and disgust, but today, she felt compassion for him. "What's wrong?" She took him by the hand and sat on the sofa with him.

"I got fired."

"What? Why?"

"Go get your net book and read my page on Facebook."

She got up and did what she was told. She placed her brand-new net book on the coffee table, opened it up, turned it on, and when it was done starting up, she opened her internet explorer, logged into her Facebook account and in her friends section, she clicked on Stephen's photo to see Stephen's page. It took her a half an hour to read all the garbage this idiot posted about his and Stephen's boss, pretending to be Stephen. He imitated Stephen so well that for a minute Sheila thought Stephen had really done this. "Oh, my God, Stephen..."

"It wasn't me, I swear."

"But..."

"Somebody hacked me. I don't know who it was, but I was hacked. I would never do that, Sheena! I have nothing bad to say about my boss, not even that he's ugly, who he really isn't, I'm just giving you an example."

"Yes, I know, I know. Stephen, we've got to find a way that you can prove to Mr. Hill that you didn't do this."

"Please tell me you know someone that can help me."

"I do. I do. Look, just sit tight and I'm going to go make a few phone calls, ok? If you need to use the computer, go ahead and use mine right now." She got up from the sofa and walked out of the living room. "Just close that page, please."

"No, Sheena!" Stephen screamed. "I don't want anything to do with computers!" He walked out of the living room, too, and walked all the way to the kitchen. "A computer ruined my life! I hate computers! I'm about to throw mine out the window!"

"Calm down and don't do anything stupid," she said from their bedroom. "I'm going to take care of this, I promise." She was dialing someone's number. "Just give me a few hours."

Dr. Snyder was in his office. Sheila was calling him at the perfect time because he was five minutes from seeing his next patient, and in those five minutes, he could devise a plan to help Stephen with his gigantic and life-shattering predicament. Everything was on the line. Stephen was about to lose his house and get all his services shut off if he didn't get his job back

or get another job *now*. Sergio answered the phone, amazed that Sheila was calling him directly. Something horrible was happening. “This is Dr. Sergio Snyder. How may I help you?”

“Oh, Sergio, thank you for answering my call.” She was out of breath, and crying.

“What’s wrong, Sheila? Did Stephen find out the truth from someone else?”

“At a time like this, I just can’t keep lying to him. I’m going to tell him the truth today, I promise. I just need you to help him, please. Some bitter coworker of his hacked his Facebook account and posted nasty messages about Mr. Hill on his wall. There are like one hundred messages, and they’re all degrading. I don’t blame Mr. Hill for being offended, I would be appalled too, if someone posted these things about me, especially one of my employees, which is why I thank God I am nobody’s boss. But Sergio, Stephen didn’t do this.”

Sergio took a few minutes of his time to log on to Facebook and look and enter Stephen’s page. In a matter of seconds, he read all the messages. “Oh, wow...”

“I know, right? This is terrible! Stephen adores Mr. Hill. He idolizes him. He’d never say these things about him! I need you to prove to Mr. Hill that Stephen didn’t do this, and more importantly, who did.”

“I’ve got two more patients to see, but when I get home,” Sergio said, closing the computer screen, “I’m going to take care of this for you, ok? I promise you that by tomorrow morning, Stephen will get his job back, and possibly even a promotion.” Sergio hung up.

Sheila went to the kitchen to try to calm Stephen down. Stephen was in the kitchen, drinking some hot chocolate with marshmallows on the inside to try to relieve the tension. He rarely felt depressed, but when he did, chocolate was his best friend. Rather than making him hyperactive and sleepless, it would make him feel better, and he was smart enough to walk for ninety minutes every day just to burn those calories. That’s why he stayed in shape. “Stephen, I have something to tell you.”

“I’m listening,” he said, looking in her eyes.

“I can’t take this anymore. I’ve been lying to you.”

“What?”

“I am not who you think I am.”

“What are you talking about?”

“I am not Sheena.”

“What do you mean you’re not Sheena? Do you have MPD or something?”

“No, I don’t have MPD. I am Sheena’s twin, Sheila.” “What the hell?”

Sheena never told me about a twin sister.”

“I can’t believe you haven’t noticed the one physical feature that helps tell us apart.” “Which is?”

“My toes are shorter than Sheena’s. She always thought my feet were prettier than hers were.”

“Shorter toes you said?” He got up from his chair and went back to the living room in a matter of minutes, and went back to Sheila’s net book. His hacked Facebook page was still open, and he closed it in a flash. Stephen hadn’t seen Sheena’s Facebook page because she made it only days before she died, and they were physically apart at the time. He searched for the name Sheena Brown in Facebook and found over seven thousand matches, worldwide, but it wasn’t hard for Stephen to find the Sheena Brown he was looking for, thus no other women looked like the Brown twins even though they were human. There were two pages under Sheena Brown’s name with two identical women who had the same name, and very similar main profile pictures.

One page was the one that Sheila was using right now pretending to be Sheena, and the other one was the Facebook page of the real Sheena Brown.

Stephen went to the pictures section of the page. Sheena wanted all of her fans to see the content in her page, so she didn't have any restrictions on it. Everyone could see everything. While Sheila still sat in a stool, in front of the bar, in the kitchen, stunned, Stephen browsed the photos on her sister's page. The page had over 5,000 pictures and 600 of them she had taken with her sister Sheila. When Stephen saw the Brown twins together in only a few of those pictures, he figured everything out and took another look at Sheila. Sheila walked out of the kitchen and back to the living room. She stood there, far away from him. She didn't dare to sit beside him once again.

"It never occurred to us to take pictures of our bare feet," she said.

"You're right. I don't know what happened to me. Why didn't I notice it before?" He started crying again. "Her toes *are* a little longer than yours, but longer enough for me to tell. Where is she? Where the hell is Sheena? Why is she doing this to me? Does she hate me so much that she had her sister take her place and deceive me? Did she want to get rid of me that desperately?"

"Don't blame Sheena for this. For starters, her toes *were* longer than mine. They are no more. Listen to me. I didn't say *used to be*. I said *were*. There's a difference. What I'm trying to say that Sheena's...gone." She couldn't help breaking down.

"What do you mean she's...? Oh, my God..." he said, terrified.

"That's right, Stephen. Sheena passed away."

He got up from the sofa once again. He caused the coffee table to tilt and the net book almost got shattered into a million little pieces. He wasn't thinking about anything else right now. "When did this happen?" he screamed. "Why didn't anyone tell me? Why are you taking your sister's place? What the hell is going on? How did she die? Why?"

Trembling, Sheila said, "She died of a heart attack when she found out you cheated on her with Tanya."

"What? Oh, man! Now you blame me for this and you want to get back at me for it." "Stephen..."

"What am I going to do? First I lose my job and then I find out that I was deceived for all this time?"

"That's why I am telling you the truth, because you're going through a tough time right now, and you don't deserve this."

Carrie, their next door neighbor, walked to Stephen and Sheila's house when she noticed the commotion. She was the first woman to be born an Emadorian. For the first time in her life, she would intervene in the problems of a couple, but she felt she had no choice because she had five little children at home who were scared after they heard Stephen screaming.

"If I didn't deserve it then why did you do it, huh?" Carrie rang the bell.

Sheila took this chance to take her computer and run to the guest room because she didn't want to be in Stephen's room right now.

Stephen looked at the door and then walked to it to open it.

Carrie was desperate, so she looked through the window of the house to see if anyone would open the door for her, and know if anyone had gotten hurt. Right now, the only pain she sensed was emotional.

Stephen opened the door. "Hello, Carrie."

Carrie went in and Stephen closed the door behind her. "I would've called the police because you're scaring my children. They're terrified and they can't stop crying. Nevertheless I decided to come here instead."

"Oh, I'm sorry, Carrie, I..."

"Where's Sheila?"

"You're talking like you just found out about this. Didn't you know before today?"

"Honestly I didn't. I don't know how Sheila did it because she's human and she doesn't have that kind of power, at least that I know of, but she made a fool of me, too."

"Oh, man..."

"Don't worry about your problem with your boss. Dr. Snyder is taking care of it right now, ok?"

"Sheila ran away because she's a coward. She's not going to face us after lying to us, after lying to my family. I was going to marry her, and she was usurping her sister's identity! God..."

Carrie took Stephen to the sofa and had him sit down once again. "I understand what you're going through. Sheila did this because she blamed you for the death of her twin sister, and still does, but now that you've lost your job, and you're suffering, she..."

"She feels sorry for me."

"I wouldn't say it that way because feeling sorry for someone is not a good thing."

"You mean she doesn't hate me anymore. What good does that do? She's already broken my heart, and there's nothing she can do to change that." Stephen had never cried like this in his life. Today was the worst day in his whole life. "Not only did I lose the love of my life and I didn't even have a chance to say goodbye, but I also got bitten by this viper! You don't understand, Carrie. My heart is in a thousand pieces right now. The only thing I want to do is to die."

"Believe it, I've felt this way before, but I can't kill myself and I can't be killed, so I had to swallow it and move on."

"You're happy. You're immensely happy with your husband and your children, and I am very happy for you, really because I love you, I love you like...like a sister, like family. On the other hand I am alone. I made a mistake that cost Sheena her life. I will never forgive myself for that."

"...And you can't blame the person that told her because if you hadn't cheated, no one would've told her anything."

"You're right, but now what do I do with Sheila? I've been sleeping with a total stranger."

"Right now, Sheila wants to get the hell out of this house, but she's afraid to come out right now because she thinks you're going to hurt her."

"Hey, Carrie, I may be a cheater, but I would never lay my hands on a woman!" he said, slightly alarmed.

"I know that, but Sheila doesn't. I came here to talk to you guys, but I know she's not going to come out. I think you should talk to her and, you know, kick her out or whatever you want, but you can't hurt her in any way and don't blame her for anything because, I mean I love you very much, I do, but the truth is if you hadn't cheated on Sheena, none of this would've happened."

“I know.”

“Sheila is a very rancorous person. When you hurt her or someone she loves, you better run.”

“Yes, I know. I just learned that the hard way.”

“Sheila loved her sister more than anything. I bet you a million dollars that if the tables turned, you would do the same thing.”

“You know what the worst thing of all this is, Carrie? I think I‘m in love with Sheila. I noticed that the woman I love had changed and I fell madly in love with this new side of her.”

“Well, if you are falling for her, then work this out. She‘s really sorry for what she did. She can see the pain that she caused. She may be feisty, daring, and seductive, but she‘s never broken anyone‘s heart before. Now, she knows how it feels.”

## Chapter 15

Sheila surprised Carrie once again and made her predictions an epic fail by coming out of the room. She walked toward Carrie and Stephen, but she didn't know what to say. Her eyes were red, almost bloodshot. She was still shaking. She looked like she was on the verge of having a nervous breakdown. She didn't hear what Stephen said about starting to fall in love with her. "Stephen," she said, her voice broken, "I'm getting out of this house."

Stephen and Carrie got up from the sofa. Carrie was surprised. Carrie thought that Sheila wouldn't face Stephen once again and that to leave the house, she would wait until he left and then not be there when he came back and not come back ever again. "I was starting to fall in love with you, but I think that's the best thing you can do, Sheila. I was falling in love with what I thought was the new side of Sheena."

"I'm sorry for what I did to you, Stephen. I should've known that you would eventually pay for what you did to my sister. You literally broke her heart, you know that?" She went back to the room that she used to share with Stephen and in less than half an hour, while Carrie and Stephen finished their conversation, she packed up all her stuff. She placed her net-book in her carrying case. Without taking a shower and changing her clothes before going out, although she'd taken a shower today, she got out. She didn't shake Stephen's hand for one last time or give him a hug. She felt she didn't deserve it. He didn't deserve that from her either, after what he did to her only sister. She walked out of the house.

He went after her. "Let me help you with your stuff."

"You shouldn't help me. Just leave me alone, please."

Carrie went outside. "I'll help her." She picked up Sheila's biggest suitcases and put them in Sheila's car. An idea occurred to her, but she had to ask a key question first. "Hey, Sheila, do you have a place to stay?"

"When Sheena went away, she took my parents with her. They couldn't stand losing her and neither could I, but unfortunately, I survived. They didn't."

"Yes, I know. Don't say you shouldn't have survived, though. That's not true. I think each one of us is here for a reason. We have a purpose, a mission in life, and you didn't die because you haven't complied with yours. You won't leave this earth until you do, and perhaps you will go to a better place."

"Sheena was my only sister, and my parents' siblings also passed away, so in reality, I have no one to turn to. I agree with you. I haven't complied with my mission in life, and it will take me a long time to do so because I don't even know what it is." It was strange, but Sheila laughed.

"None of us knows what our mission is until the time comes and we start working on it. Some people die too soon, but you should know that none of those people really rest in peace. Why don't you stay at my house for a few days, just until you reunite enough money to rent a house?"

"That's really nice Carrie, but I can't do that. You have a husband, children..."

"There's no offense intended, but if I knew for sure you would be a threat to my marriage, I wouldn't invite you to live with me. You've only taken another woman's man once, and that was for revenge. It was your sister's man, and you only got together with him to avenge her death. You never had feelings for him, other than hate, and you will never take another woman's man again."

“So in other words you know who you can trust and who you can’t.”

“That’s correct.” The women took the suitcases out of Sheila’s car and walked with them to Carrie’s house.

“That’s amazing, Carrie. I wish I could do the same thing.”

They stopped on their way to what would be Sheila’s room from now on. “Do you really?” Carrie asked.

A few hours later, Sheila was set up in Carrie’s guest room. The room had a nice bedroom set, just like all the rooms, an entertainment center with a TV, a digital video recorder, and a DVD player, as well as several popular DVD’s of the hottest movies and complete seasons of TV shows. Every bedroom had an entertainment center complete with all that equipment, and the living room and family room, too. Carrie was a registered nurse at the general hospital and her husband was a doctor, a neurosurgeon. Of course, they were making great money right now and living a life of luxury. Carrie could’ve prepared for another career, one that would earn her a six-figure income, but she chose to be a nurse because she loved working closely with patients, taking care of them. Carrie was everyone’s favorite nurse at the hospital. Every day, she would take care of at least six different patients, and when they called for her, she would never get mad, tired or even annoyed. Of course, she had the strength to carry up to one hundred elephants and once, and more, if she had to, because she had unlimited physical strength, like all people of her species, but she would only carry her children and her patients for now. Sheila was on her computer, looking to get a new MP3 player at a lower price on an auction website. She got notification of a new email. It was from Sergio. It said, in just a few lines, that he had just faxed Mr. Hill all the proof that he needed that Stephen never talked trash about him.

Stephen was alone in the house right now. The phone rang. Stephen answered the call from his extension in the kitchen. “Hello.”

“Stephen, this is Mr. Hill. How are you doing?”

“I...listen, Mr. Hill, I just want you to know that I...I care about you and I have nothing bad to say about you. If you don’t want to, don’t give me my job back, but know that you are one of the most important people in my life, and I will never, ever forget you.”

“It’s ok. I know the truth. I know you were hacked. Delete all those messages and comments, please. If you can, delete your account and get a new one. I don’t want anyone to see those messages ever again. It’s hurting my company. That’s why I fired you, not because what you said about me bothered me. You could’ve said those things in the privacy of your home, and I would’ve heard them from someone else, and I wouldn’t have cared, but for those things to be posted on the Internet...”

“Mr. Hill...”

“...But now I know that you didn’t do it, and I also know who did it. Don’t worry about anything. I expect you back here at seven o’clock sharp.”

“...But I always start at eight.”

“I need you here one hour earlier because we have something important to talk about in person, just you and me, ok? Please be here.”

“Thank you so much, Mr. Hill. I will be there. So I’m going to start working for you again.”

“Yes, you are, tomorrow.”

“Thanks, Mr. Hill. You are an angel.”

Mr. Hill chuckled. He knew Stephen wasn't sucking up or exaggerating. He admired Stephen for being true to himself and anyone else and always speaking his mind. "You're a great employee, Stephen, one of my best, and I would've hated to lose you, but this company's reputation and good name is very important."

"Don't worry, Mr. Hill. I am going to delete my Facebook page right now, and create a new one, and I'm going to be more careful, too."

"The person that faxed to me all the proof in your favor promised to make sure that no one can hack any of your internet accounts again, or any other account that you might have."

"I know who it is. Thank you, again. I'll see you tomorrow, Mr. Hill." Stephen hung up and dialed Sergio's home number. At the same time, he was in his laptop, accessing his Facebook page, laptop on the coffee table. He clicked on the link to delete the account. A few minutes later, it was as if the page had never existed. It couldn't be found anywhere. Then, Stephen followed the directions to create a brand new page.

Christina was visiting Sergio at this moment, and she would leave in a couple more hours. She and Sergio were engaged to be married, but they were living separately. Christina was still living with her parents and Sergio was living in his own home, the home that he would share with Christina very soon. The phone rang at Sergio's house. Christina answered it in the living room. The phone was in Sergio's bedroom, but since it was cordless, Sergio had the handset in the living room, and he was busy in the kitchen, almost done preparing dinner. "Residence of Dr. Sergio Snyder, this is Christina Dawson."

"Hello, Ms. Dawson. How are you doing? This is Stephen Parker. I would like to speak to Dr. Snyder."

"I'm doing great, Mr. Parker." Christina got out of the living room in her power chair and kept going till she arrived at the kitchen. "Dr. Snyder is right here." Christina handed Sergio the phone and went to the dining room to wait for dinner to be served.

"This is Dr. Snyder."

"Hello, Dr. Snyder. This is Stephen Parker. I just want to thank you for what you did for me. I also want to thank Sheila, but she doesn't want anything to do with me."

"She doesn't even want to be friends?"

"...Not after all that's happened between us."

"She'll come around. After all, you became one of the most important men in her life. In fact, she's going to have to come back to you."

"Why?"

"I'm going to let you see for yourself. Now, you have nothing to thank me for. I just hate injustice, and it appalled me to hear that because of some loser you lost your job, because of something you didn't do. Don't sweat it. He's going to get what's coming to him."

"Oh, I don't want him to be punished by life in any way. I just want my job back, and I already got it, so I'm happy."

"Well, it's not up to you. When someone does something as horrible as what this man did to you, he or she has to pay. He'll be hit where it hurts him the most and he'll know better not to hurt people for no reason again."

Sure enough, Cameron, the man that caused Stephen to be fired by hacking his Facebook account and talking nonsense about their boss, he got home after a long day of work. His wife was waiting for him in the living room. She'd just found out that Cameron was having an affair with her cousin. Cameron ended the illicit relationship three days before, but the damage was

already done. Michelle's cousin, Vieira, called Michelle on the phone, crying, and told her everything that happened between her and Cameron. Vieira and Cameron had been together for one year, and Cameron and Michelle were married for six years. This wasn't Cameron's first affair. He'd cheated on Michelle before, but that woman was not related to Michelle, so although it hurt Michelle to the core, it didn't hurt as much as it did this time. Vieira was honest with Michelle. Michelle chose her family over her husband. After all, family was forever, and there were millions and millions of single or divorced men out there. Family could never be replaced. A man could. Michelle had never cheated on Cameron or on any of the two men that she'd been with before him. She knew the true meaning of commitment. Her first relationship failed because the man's mother hated Michelle and she didn't stop meddling until she finally tore them apart. The second relationship failed because the man was physically and verbally abusive. He would treat her like a worthless piece of crap. Now, the man's woman after Michelle was unknowingly giving him a taste of his own medicine, every day, because that was the way that she was. She was abusive, evil when she wanted to be, and manipulative. She had every flaw that a person could be looked down upon for.

"Hello," Cameron said and sat on the sofa. He looked her in the eyes. She was crying moments before. He knew she'd received bad news, but he had no clue what the news were about. "What's wrong?"

"You are wrong. This marriage is wrong."

"What are you talking about?"

She screamed, "You had an affair with Vieira, you son of a bitch, for one whole year, 365 days!"

He got up, walked closer to her and tried to hold her. "Michelle..."

She broke free of his hold and slapped him. "Don't dare to put your filthy, disgusting hands on me ever again! I want a divorce!" She walked out of the living room and walked the hallway to their bedroom.

Cameron followed her. "Michelle, sweetheart, that's not true!"

She refused to listen to him as she packed up her stuff in a matter of minutes, ramming her clothes into the biggest suitcase she could find. She was planning to move into her sister's house. Michelle's sister, Jocelyn told her that she could move in with her while the divorce was settled and she got the house. Jocelyn even prepared Michelle's room, the house guestroom. The room was complete with a bedroom set and a computer desk for her fifteen-inch laptop. Jocelyn lived with her three children at home. Her husband of seven years died in a car accident, and Jocelyn wasn't even considering getting married again, or even having a relationship, not yet. She had no idea what kind of father he would be. She was afraid her new boyfriend or husband wouldn't love her children, and that he would mistreat them. In that case, she would have to give him the boot because loyalty was a huge thing in Michelle's family. Without it, they couldn't stay together. Blood was thicker than water. After fifteen minutes of silence, Michelle said, "Oh, it's not true! So Vieira's lying, right?"

"Vieira told you?" Cameron trusted that Vieira loved him enough to keep their affair a secret from everyone, especially from Michelle. Michelle gave him the first and last chance to change. He blew it.

"Yes. She told me." Michelle picked up her suitcase and the laptop inside its bag and when she was about to walk out of the bedroom, never to come back, Cameron blocked her. "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

“You’re not going anywhere.”

“Says who? What are you going to do to stop me, kill me? That’s the only way you can stop me, just so you know.”

“Michelle, don’t be like this, please. Let’s work this out.”

“I am tired of working things out, Cameron. It’s not just the cheating, it’s the verbal abuse, it’s making me look like a piece of shit in front of your friends...it’s everything! I forgive you, but I can’t stay with you. I just can’t. This is too much. You cheated on me with my cousin, really? We’re like sisters, and you’re not tearing us apart. You were way out of line when you tried to keep it all in the family.”

“Michelle, she seduced me!”

“It doesn’t matter who seduced whom. Get out of my way, Cameron! If that is true and you were a real man, you would’ve said no. Vieira can take no for an answer when she’s denied something or rejected more than twice. Trust me; I’ve known her all my life. I’ve denied her things and after being told no once, she no longer asks for it, or begs for it.”

“Michelle, I repeat, you’re not going anywhere. You are not leaving me.”

“Watch me.” She pushed him as hard as he could until he bumped his head against the edge of the doorway of the bedroom that was right in front of their bedroom, the bedroom Vieira stayed in countless times...before her relationship with Cameron started. After that, she picked up her suitcases and her laptop bag, carried everything with two hands, walked over him, and left. He didn’t have the strength to go after her. She placed on the floor the things that occupied her right hand just to open the door. Then, she picked up those suitcases and walked out the door without closing the door behind her. She went to her minivan and placed her suitcases on the back. The minivan was hers. She bought it six months before marrying Cameron, with her own money, paying it off all at once, no monthly payments, so in the event of a divorce, Cameron had no right to this minivan. However, if she divorced him for adultery and could prove the adultery, leaving no doubt, she would get the whole house and half of everything he owned. That was stipulated in the prenuptial agreement, and the ironic thing was that Cameron had written up that prenuptial agreement six years before with the help of his attorney. Of course, the victim of the adultery would get full custody of the children, too, and the children were at school right now, but they were ready to be picked up because the school day was over.

Now that she was physically separated from Cameron, two hours later, at Jocelyn’s house, she and her children made themselves comfortable. Jocelyn’s children’s rooms were huge, big enough to accommodate their cousins. Jocelyn was lucky that she had extra beds in a storage unit a half an hour from her home, and she’d already gotten help from her brother, Marlon Smiley, getting the extra beds out of the storage and placing them in her children’s three rooms. Michelle and Cameron also had three children. Each one of the beds was full size, and still, they fit in the rooms, along with the TVs and the video games, no problem at all. Jocelyn’s house was huge. Michelle couldn’t explain to her children, Cameron, Jr., nicknamed Cam, age six, Marlene, age four, and Cliff, age three why she and their daddy couldn’t be together. She just told them that they were having problems and that they were hoping to work them out soon, but only a miracle could reunite them because she was very angry with him. She told them not to ask what happened or to ask for more explanations because they were way too young to understand what was going on, but promised to tell them one day so that they wouldn’t think that she left him for no reason.

Cam and his cousin Justin were playing video games together. Michelle and Cameron's children weren't sad that their parents were apart because they'd heard all the screams, fights and degrading insults that Cameron gave their mother when she did something that he didn't agree with, or when she didn't do something that he wanted her to. Cameron and Michelle were immensely happy for the first five years of her marriage. Ever since his affair with Vieira started, he started treating Michelle like trash. Every day he would tell her how fat she was, when she was only ten pounds overweight. According to him, she never looked good. She never did anything right. She annoyed him. He didn't give her any affection, just sex, and the sex was emotionless, like he was having sex with a total stranger or a hooker. Fortunately, he never raped her. When she would say no, he would get uncontrollably angry, but he would leave her alone and then leave the house. Then, he would go to Vieira's house and get from her what he wanted. Justin didn't dare to talk to Cam about what happened because he didn't want to upset him. A few minutes later, they turned off the video games and started doing their homework. They didn't have much homework to do and it was a piece of cake for them, but they wanted to get it out of the way.

Cameron was talking to his mother, Kiara on the phone. "You should've seen her. It was like she had supernatural strength. She pushed me against the wall right across my room and I hit my head with the edge of the doorframe. I thought she broke my skull. It hurts."

Kiara didn't side with Cameron on this one. She was his mother, but she'd also taught him how to treat his woman since he was just a little child. Cameron's father, Carl, put Kiara through hell during the last few years of their marriage, also. She was disappointed in her son. When he told her about his relationship with Vieira, it brought back horrible memories for her. "What did you want her to do? She wanted to leave and you got in her way."

"I can't believe you're telling me this, Mother!"

"If I were she I would've left you, too! Don't you remember everything your father put me through?"

"Yes, but..."

"This is unbelievable. History repeats itself. Infidelity, abuse, degradation..."

"I didn't degrade her, Mother!"

"Yes, you did, by talking shit about her to your friends, right in front of her just to piss her off!"

"So you're taking her side."

"Yes, Cameron, I am. Do you know why? It's because we're both victims. I was a victim of your father and now she's your victim."

"I think you're exaggerating, Mother. Every man cheats, and nowadays, every woman cheats, too!"

"You're wrong, Cameron. Not everyone cheats, especially with their mates' family members!"

"I know what I did was wrong, Mom, but I want her to give me another chance. Someone once told me that marriage is forever, and what about the vows I made? In good times and in bad, for richer or poorer..."

"I don't know, son. I guess it all depends on her. It's her choice because you're the one that cheated. I know you love her, I really do, but you know her as much as you love her, and if you mess with her family, you better run. If it had been with someone she didn't know or

someone she wasn't related to, she would forgive you and she wouldn't even have left the house, but son..."

"I know. You're right. You're absolutely right. If my lover hadn't been related to her, but Mom, I..." he started crying.

Kiara wanted to go to his house and comfort him so bad. The bell rang and Cameron had to say goodbye to his mother to answer the door.

Stephen clearly said that he didn't want Cameron to have to pay for what he did, as long as he got his job back and Cameron learned his lesson and didn't mess with him ever again, and he said it in front of an Emadorian. Cameron had learned his lesson, and with every tear he cried, he couldn't stop thinking of Stephen. As he walked to the door, he thought, *this mess with Vieira started the moment that I felt envious of Stephen's promotion and came up with a plan to get him fired, one year ago. I'm paying for everything I've done, for my envy for Stephen...everything. I deserve this. I deserve to suffer. I deserve to lose the love of my life.* He was shocked to open the door and see Carlos standing there. "Hello, Carlos." He smiled but it was more than obvious that he was crying.

"You're wrong, Cameron," said Carlos, coming in.

Cameron closed the door behind him. "What are you talking about?"

"You learned your lesson and you're very sorry about what you did, but you don't deserve to lose Michelle. Stephen got his job back. Mr. Hill told him to go to work tomorrow morning."

"Ok..."

"Stephen doesn't want you to suffer. Getting back his job and paying his bills, and having food on the table, that's all he cares about. He's not thinking about you right now, at least not with rancor in his heart. We've been friends for a long time, and I don't want to see you suffer."

"Are you going to talk to her and convince her to give me another chance?"

"I don't have to try very hard to convince someone to do something. You know that, don't you?"

"Yes, I know."

"However, I'm going to do something much better than that. I have never done this before. I have never altered reality, but I think it's the best thing I can do for all of us. Since this is the first time, there's only one tragic event that I dare to erase, to undo, to make as if it never had happened, and that's your affair with Vieira. From this moment on, your life will be as if you'd never even touched her. It never happened. Your family's here with you, just like it's supposed to be." Carlos sat in the sofa and made him comfortable.

Suddenly, Cameron heard his children playing together in the family room, far away from the entrance and looked back. He walked the whole house until he got to the family room. Michelle was watching her children play. "Guys, you only have a few more minutes, and then you have to brush your teeth and go to bed. It's nine o'clock, half an hour past your bedtime."

Cameron looked at Michelle in a strange way, like he couldn't believe what was happening, but soon enough, his new reality and the reality of those that were affected by his grave sin, began to dawn on him and make sense. It was normal to him now and he could live with it without asking any questions or having to understand what had just happened.

Cameron went to the living room. He saw Carlos sitting on the sofa, watching the rerun of a daytime soap opera on TV because it was what Cameron had on. However, this was the only soap opera that Cameron liked. He also liked movies, although not enough to order any on pay-

per-view, sporting events of all kinds, medical shows, and the news, among other shows that the men his age liked. “Oh, my God, Carlos, I haven’t offered you anything to drink?” He walked up to Carlos and gave him a hug.

Incredibly, Carlos was living this new reality, too, and even though he made it possible, he didn’t remember what he had done. It really was as if nothing had ever happened, and Cameron and Michelle had their problems, but it wasn’t anything that they couldn’t work out. They had disagreements, just like everyone else, but they never screamed, never insulted each other, and when they argued, it sounded like they were just talking, not arguing. The only thing that made it an argument was that each one continued to defend their point of view, until they got tired of talking about it, and then kissed and made up. “It’s ok, man. I just came to see if I could borrow...Nah, never mind.”

Smiling, Cameron said, “Borrow what?”

“I need to borrow your car for a few days. Mine just broke down, and I don’t have the money for repairs or for another one, at least not right now. I could make monthly payments on one, but...man, it’s just for a few days, while I get ready to buy a new car.”

“Exactly how many days do you need it?”

“...Like three days.”

“Three days? That’s not a problem at all. Let me see if Michelle will let me borrow her car and then have her sister pick her up, take her to work, and then bring her back home for the next three days.” Cameron wasn’t really planning to do this, and he had the ability to hide his true intentions from Carlos. In reality, he planned to give Carlos up to thirty thousand dollars for a new car, royalties that he’d gotten for his first published nonfiction book. Cameron loved writing nonfiction about telling people how to do things or take a certain approach to life to make life easier for themselves. He’d never written fiction before, and he wanted to try it, but he didn’t think he was good at telling stories. He was planning to start his first novel this weekend and then ask Carlos for his valuable feedback. Besides his work, which earned him eight thousand dollars a month, minimum, as a professional computer programmer for a reputable computer company, every six months, Cameron would get a royalty check for each of his published books, and he had a fortune which estimated ten million dollars, and that was just in the five years he’d been writing. Thirty thousand dollars was chump change to him, and that’s why he was planning to *give* this money to Carlos. He left the living room and then went to his and Michelle’s room. The kids were already putting their pajamas on to go to bed. He said hi to Michelle and then a few minutes later, he walked back out of the room. He didn’t tell her about having to lend his car to Carlos and asking her sister to take her to work and bring her back home from now on.

“So what did she say?” said Carlos, believing that Cameron told him the truth. Cameron was using his newfound ability to take Emadorians and humans alike for fools. He found that technique on the internet a few days before and he was putting it to good use. He didn’t dare to share this with anyone else because he knew how catastrophic the results would be.

“Carlos, it’s not happening.”

“What?” said Carlos, astonished and saddened. “You can’t let me borrow your car? She said no? My car broke down five blocks from my house, at the parking lot of a supermarket, and I had to go back home, change my clothes, and walk all the way here. That’s ten miles, Cameron, and it really sucks, but I’m not going to get mad at you. It’s just too bad. I guess I’m going to

have to miss work for the next few weeks, and I have got dates scheduled with my customers. I have to fix twenty computers, man, and I do it at people's homes."

"I didn't say anything about this to Michelle, Carlos."

"What are you talking about?"

"... Surprise! I am not letting you borrow my car. I'm going to buy you a car, and no, you don't have to pay me back."

"I could make great monthly payments, up to two thousand dollars and pay it off in no time. I just want a good car, no more than fifteen thousand dollars. I don't need a luxury car to take me places. I just don't have the money to pay the car in its entirety, and I don't want to have to lease it because something could happen, I could run out of money, and then they could take the car away from me. I don't want to take that risk."

"Forget about the two grand every month. I am giving you the money. Understand? It's a gift. My fortune is estimated at over ten million dollars, *amigo*. I don't need the money back, especially not from you. You know I'd do anything for you."

"Thank you so much, man," said Carlos. They hugged again. Carlos couldn't believe just how far Cameron would go for him.

"You said no more than fifteen thousand dollars, right?" "... Right."

"Well, I'm willing to spend a maximum of thirty thousand dollars on a car for you." Stunned, Carlos asked, "Thirty thousand dollars?"

"Yes, you heard right. You are not going to have to miss work for the next two weeks, but rather for only one day, because when I come home from work, we're going to go straight to the dealership and get you the car that you want. Oh, wait a minute; you're not going to have to miss any days of work at all. My brother Chad doesn't start work till noon tomorrow. He can take you to the house of your first customer. How many customers do you visit every day? Give me an approximate amount."

"Like six. I work all day long."

"That's good. I'm going to call Chad and see if he can take you to the house of your first customer tomorrow."

"Great."

"Wait right here. I'm going to call him now. I know you could literally walk up to fifty thousand miles and nothing would happen. You wouldn't get tired at all or suffer any health problems as a result. Still, I am going to drive you home." Cameron went back to his bedroom to call Chad.

Michelle went out to the living room. "Would you like anything to eat or drink? We have snacks."

"No, Shelly, that's all right," Carlos said, smiling.

"Oh, come on, don't be like that. Don't you want coffee, juice, milk, water, or a little sandwich?"

"Ok, if you insist, I'd like some juice, please, any flavor."

"We only buy one-hundred-percent natural juices, so it's going to be good for you."

"I prefer all-natural juices, too. My favorite is orange juice."

"What do you know? We happen to have some orange juice. I'll be right back." She went to the kitchen.

That night, Carlos had his glass of juice and Cameron took him back home. The next day, Carlos took care of all the appointments he had with his customers, and from then on, their computers were perfect, like new, and they wouldn't have problems ever again. If their owners bought new computers, it would only be because they wanted a new computer or needed an upgrade. Then, that afternoon, when Cameron returned home from work around four o'clock, he took another shower, changed his clothes, and went to Carlos' house to pick him up. Minutes later, Carlos and Cameron arrived at a dealership. Carlos looked at all five thousand cars that this dealership had, and decided on a car that he could count on for the next twenty years, at least, a car of one of the top ten brands in the world, of the color sapphire-blue, with the coolest features a car could offer, all for twenty-eight thousand dollars. Carlos would've went for a more economical car, about thirteen to fifteen thousand dollars less than this one, but Cameron assured him it was ok, that he could get the car he wanted, even if it was more than thirty thousand dollars, but Carlos thought of thirty grand as the limit, and he would not exceed that for anything in this world. He had never taken advantage of anyone, and he would never do that with one of his best friends. Carlos was still living at his parents' house. Although he was no longer in danger, and his only enemies in the whole world became his friends, days before, Carlos' parents and brothers did not want to let him go, which meant that in order to live in his own house, Carlos would have to sell his house and buy another house in the same neighborhood as his parents. Carlos' house wasn't new. In fact it was twenty years old, and since the moment he bought it, it needed improvements, which although few, were noticeable, home improvements that Carlos didn't have the money to make. Carlos used to live alone, so his house had only two rooms, one bathroom, a dining room, a living room, a kitchen, a small laundry room and a one-car garage. He bought it three years before, and of course, the house owed a lot of money. It cost him \$110,000 at the time he bought it. If Carlos were to sell the house, he would be left with very little money, not enough to buy another house, only fifty thousand dollars, because the house was worth \$160,000 right now. Carlos knew it was best to stay with his parents for now, while he got enough money to make a down payment on a nicer, more comfortable house. However, Robinson and Cameron had big plans for Carlos. They were two friends of Carlos' that didn't know one another in person, yet, but that loved him just as much. Carlos had only been working as a computer technician for a year and a half because a year and a half ago, he graduated from the university. In a year and a half, he hadn't reunited enough money to buy another house, not even to unite it with the money he would get if he were to sell his house. All that money went to bills, food, clothes, and his mortgage payment. Carlos only had one credit card, but he wouldn't use it for everything, only to buy very expensive things, like airline tickets or furniture for his house, and every month, he would make those payments to the tee and on time. Carlos had a credit score of 721. He and Starr were in the same college, and they knew each other pretty well, and were very good friends.

At this moment, Robinson designated one hundred thousand dollars to *give* to Carlos to buy a house. He was worried about what would happen next, but he loved Carlos so much that he had to help him out somehow. He knew that there was another dear friend, Cameron, who was willing to give Carlos enough money to buy a more comfortable house, and when those sums of money got together, it wouldn't be enough for a luxurious house, but the new house would suit all of his needs and it would be big, nice-looking, and it would have all the space he needed. Every room would be huge. Robinson had no idea that at this moment, Bennett Records and Bennett Films, the latter of which Robinson still owned fifteen percent of the shares because

although Kay was the new president, she wanted it that way, were so successful that the two companies were generating him and Kay over thirty million dollars a year, and they were just getting started. Weeks later, Robinson and Cameron coincided at Carlos' house with the purpose of giving him the money he needed to buy a house. Since they didn't know one another yet, they hadn't agreed to be there. Fate brought them together, and of course, they became the best of friends. Carlos was so moved that he cried tears of joy. He had no idea what he had done to deserve this from his friends. He knew that they loved him, and all of his friends loved him, and even people who had just met him, and other acquaintances, but until today, he didn't know how much these guys loved him. Again, he tried to make an agreement with them to pay them back, but they declined, saying it was a gift, and there would be no changing that. He'd earned all these things from them and a lot more.

Over the next few months, Kay and Robinson's first baby, Riley Ray Bennett was born. He was adorable. He looked just like his father, but he inherited the vibrant green eyes of his mother, a color green that no one had ever seen before in anyone's eyes. That is why Kay's mother fell in love with her and didn't want to give up both of her daughters for adoption, just one of them, because she felt, for an unknown reason that she couldn't raise both of them. Kim's eyes had Constantine hypnotized. He had never seen eyes this beautiful before. Kim was overjoyed when she held her baby nephew for the very first time, and desired to have a baby of her own, but she didn't want to be a single mother. She and Cameron had their first conversation about marriage, and he immediately agreed to marry her. They lived separately. They hadn't made love yet. Kim was a liberal woman, but she didn't believe in commitment-free sex. In order to give her love to someone, she'd have to be head over heels in love, and that man had to love her back. She was no one's booty call. She was worth too much for that. For that reason, and since Cameron knew everything he had to know about her, even her thoughts, fears and ambitions, they got married two days after Riley was born. She had more than enough time to get to know him as well as he knew her, but what she knew about him, she loved.

Geri was pregnant with Marlon's child. She was three months along, and she had only found out days before. Marlon and Geri were overcome with bliss at this news. Marlon and Geri also got married, and everyone of their friends and family members were invited. Even Baby Riley went to the wedding. He was a quiet baby. He wouldn't cry unless he needed his diaper changed, unless he was hungry, he was hurting, or he felt lonely at the moment. All it took to relieve the pain in the few instances that he felt was the caresses of his parents and within a few minutes, the baby would be all right. It was strange because this baby boy was more sensitive than most Emadorians. Nobody knew that when these beings were babies, they were more sensitive and self-aware. Riley stayed quiet during the whole ceremony, and he was in every wedding picture. They felt that Riley adorned their pictures. Soon enough, Kim and Constantine would have a baby of their own, within the next eight months and twenty-eight days. Carlos hadn't found the love of his life, yet, but he was alone, rather than lonely, and he didn't mind. He didn't want to try again and fail. The women that he'd shared his life with had only used him because of his supernatural great looks, because, like every other Emadorian, he looked like nobody else, and only the Emadorians' descendants would look like them. Everyone was happy with their family and their friends. They were living a great life for now, but only time would tell what would happen next.

**THE END**