



***The very best sex is taken...***

***a 'sex-thriller' by  
Jo-Anne  
Wiley***

***DARK  
ANGELS***

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Dark Angels

*by Jo-Anne Wiley*

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Prologue

*Oh God no. Please no.*

And she turned and ran. Ran faster than she had ever run before.

*I can't. I can't.*

She lost her footing and felt his hand.

*I can't. I'm not strong enough.*

She was going down.

*Please. Oh please, let me be safe...*

## Chapter One

There was the snap of a twig and her insides lurched, but she kept going.

The rustling in the dead leaves could be a harmless gray field-mouse, a wayward squirrel perhaps. Probably nothing. *God!* What was she doing here? Sheldon Park was officially closed for the day; sundown had been hours ago but she was here, in the gloom, amongst the trees, blindly picking her way along the gravel path.

*This is Margret's fault*, she fretted. All of it: The party. The illicit drinking. The shortcut home. Why had she listened? Why did she *ever* listen to Margret?

She glanced at her watch and groaned inside. Her mother was going to nail her hide to the wall. She was nearly three hours late, her head was swimming in vodka and if she'd had a moment, she would have crawled into the bushes and tossed up the contents of her stomach.

All because of Margret and her stupid ideas. *This is how you meet guys?*

She heard the noise again. Louder this time. Closer. She ground to a halt, the blood pounding at her temples and her breath clenched within the bands of her chest.

"Hello...?"

She might have heard a swearword, lightly exhaled. She looked behind, eyes trying to penetrate the shadows but she couldn't be sure. Her mind felt locked in dust; sweat bursting from her pores. She turned and she ran!

But her high-heels slipped; she lost traction in the gravel. She heard the foot-falls, just behind. Pounding persistently. Gaining. She cried out and turned wildly into the darkness but it was no good. She felt the hand twist in her collar; felt her head snap back. And suddenly she was falling, being wrenched down, dropping, her bare knees biting the gravel. She screamed again as he rolled her over; his crushing weight slamming into her, pressing the breath from her

lungs. Her hands came up instinctively to protect her face. But she wasn't strong enough.

"Fuckin' cunt!"

He hit her so hard her head collided with the rocks and rebounded; bouncing up to meet his fists.

"No!" she cried as he took her by the hair; lifted her.

She sensed the hand slicing through the darkness but there was nothing she could do. He swung down and hit her a vicious blow. For a second time she felt the back of her head grind into the sharp edges of stone and when he drew back a third time she did her best to turn away. She wanted to vomit but there was only stomach bile. She wanted to disbelieve but there was only another fist. Blood erupted from her nose.

His breath was in her face. "Bitch! I'm gonna fuck you hard!"

He grabbed her by the neck. He smelled like musty shoe-leather and the glove tightened around her throat.

There was a rush of light behind her eyes and the sound of far-off insects in her ears. He slid down along her tummy, rubbing against her. She could feel the hardness; his arousal. A profound sadness settled over her: She had tried, done her best, but she had come up short. Wasn't strong enough; wasn't invincible. It was done. She knew she was about to lose her life and having been raised a good Catholic girl she wondered why the Lord had forsaken her. She fell back; hands empty at her sides. The humiliation and denigration didn't matter now. She was only concerned with how much it would hurt to die. She didn't worry about what her friends might think when her body was found, naked and twisted. Nor what her mother would say; but her little sister was different: *Don't think badly of me.*

And then his voice broke into her sorrow and oddly, it gave her hope.

"Be still, now. Not a sound or I'll have to cut you. Please. Don't make me cut you. Be still."

*Please let me be safe.* She lay quietly, then. Let him take what he wanted.

Sue held out her hands, willingly, to be cinched up in twisted wire. She let him place her panties into her mouth. She let him roll her over onto her tummy, push her dress up and move her legs apart. Sue felt his hands on her buttocks; lifting, separating. *Oh no!*

He did things to her that she had only ever read about. And she bore the pain through grinding teeth; watched as her knuckles turned ugly-white; watched until she crumbled and squeezed her eyes closed against the nightmare. Sue retreated; rolled her consciousness up into a ball along with the pain and humiliation; squeezed it smaller and smaller and shrouded it in the back of her skull. *Be still.* And she dreamed of angels.

Then, when he had finished with her, left her lying, bleeding and seeping fluids into the gravel path, she thought for a moment that she could hear a high-pitched laughter. A girl's laughter. Margret's laughter. Sue strained to listen; but there were only the night-peepers. *No...* she set it aside, ignored the implication. *Couldn't have been.* But what she couldn't ignore was the heaviness low down in her belly. *Silly...* What did she know about it? But there was a difference, inside. She felt it; knew right then that she was pregnant. There was no logic to it; but all the same, she knew. She thought about having a baby. Sue thought of the Angels.



## Chapter Two

The furious pounding at the front door was all out of proportion to the strength and size of the rakish little girl who was doing the pounding.

Lee checked the peephole then swung back the door. Her niece, a dove-like creature, stood on the other side of the glass.

Mindy, not yet a woman, but poised on the threshold and ready to take those first tentative steps into a mature relationship; to feel a man softly moving inside her body, was not about to be afforded the luxury. She, instead, had the disheveled look of a girl who'd had sex forced upon her. Mindy stood trembling uncontrollably and the fearful tears that rolled down her cheeks glistened in the porch-light. Her platinum hair that she so proudly wore like a mantle about her shoulders, looked like a rat's nest; rummaged and dirty. Mindy's blouse was torn at the sleeve and buttons were missing, forcing her to clutch at the fabric to keep it closed about her tiny breasts. She looked like a bundle of old rags.

"Mindy? Sweet Mother of Mary, whatever's happened?"

Mindy threw herself straight into the older woman's arms. "Oh Auntie Leanne," she sobbed into Lee's neck, her body racked with convulsions. "It was so awful. Oh Jesus. I can't believe this has happened to me."

Lee, struck with horror, fought to steady her voice. "What dear? What was so awful?"

The question had to be asked but Lee was already sure of the answer, but still, she hoped. Lee held her niece tightly in her arms and stroked the back of the girl's head. Trying as best she could to comfort her.

Mindy took a moment to gather herself. "I've been raped."

"Raped!" Lee felt the outrage rise in her chest. Why couldn't it have been an auto wreck? She pulled back to look into Mindy's eyes. "Raped? What boy did this to you?"

Mindy couldn't meet the weight of Lee's penetrating glare. She let out a strangled wail and turned to the wall; leaning heavily for support with a cheek against the cool plaster. "It wasn't a boy," Mindy seemed to disintegrate and cried bitterly. "And there were three of them. Three men."

"Three." Lee felt her heart pitch and stepped closer, placing a hand between the girl's shoulder blades. "Three men did this to you?" Lee turned her head to look into the street, expecting to see a stranger's car; leering faces at the windows. But there was nothing but the swirl of darkness among the streetlamps; the moisture clinging to the grass.

"I'm not a virgin," Mindy started sliding towards the floor, "not now. Not anymore."

Lee caught her niece under the arms and pressed her into the wall. "Did they hurt you?" Lee's jaw hardened. It was a stupid question and she felt inept. "Do you need the hospital?" she tried.

Mindy groaned painfully. "I need the fucking morgue."

Lee had never heard her niece swear before. It was out of character for the sweet girl and the sharp hatefulness took Lee by surprise. She rallied: "Look Mindy. I need to know. Did they cum inside you? Any one of them?"

Mindy shuddered violently, like the men still had her. "Oh Jesus," she faltered. "Two of them did me in my mouth. I had to..." She was on the verge of collapse. "I had to..." "And the other man?" Lee pushed.

"Oh Lord... He... He... Oh, I can't."

"Mindy. Listen now. This is important. Did he cum in you?"

"No." "So you can't be pregnant."

"Oh Auntie Leanne," Mindy turned back into Lee's arms, sobbing. "I don't know... they all did me. All of them were inside. I couldn't stop them. Don't you understand?"

Lee kissed her niece on the side of the neck. "You did the right thing by coming to me, pumpkin. It's okay now. You're safe."

“I couldn’t go home; mom would call the police. Everyone in town would find out.”

Lee held Mindy closer; nuzzled her neck and was aware of a void opening in her loins. The girl’s breath was sour and Lee closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. Her body jolted and her breasts felt heavy and swollen. Her nipples ached. Her niece had been raped and she should have been horrified. But all Lee felt was this unmistakable heat; and she was burning-up with curiosity.

“Come into the kitchen and I’ll fix us a drink. After, I’ll call your mother; tell her you’re with me and planning to spend the night. We’ll make a nice dinner and talk things through. Figure out what’s best.”

Mindy threw her arms around Lee’s neck. “Thank you Auntie Leanne. I can’t tell you how much I love you.” The sense of relief was evident in the young girl’s voice. Her aunt would make things right again.

“Everything’s going to be okay, pumpkin, you’re with me now.” Lee slipped an arm around the girl’s waist and guided her to the kitchen. “I nice glass of whiskey, Bushmills. You’ll feel better. Trust me.”

It wasn’t until Lee was seated across from Mindy that she realized that her niece had been terribly beaten. In the harsh florescent lights she saw the swelling on the side of Mindy’s jaw and a vicious bite mark on her neck was still oozing. There was a smudge of blood on the girl’s collar.

It was like a knife to her own heart. “Pumpkin.” Lee touched Mindy’s face and found herself moved by an unexpected emotional rush. “What have they done to you? Are you sure you’re okay? I could call my doctor. She’s very discrete.”

“No. Please don’t. I’m fine. Really... It’s just that I fought in the beginning; and I shouldn’t have. I should have just let them have what they wanted. But I couldn’t; not at first. And then they started hitting me...”

Lee poured an ounce of whiskey into a small snifter and slid it across. "Drink that down. All of it. There was three of them?"

Mindy was too young to be much of a drinker but she swallowed the whiskey in two gulps and gagged on the burn. "Yes. Oh Christ... three. Two of them made me. And the other one... Oh Auntie Leanne, it was so disgusting."

Lee poured herself an Irish whiskey and squirmed. "Three of them..." She reached across with the bottle and recharged Mindy's glass. "And you haven't told anyone, besides me, I mean."

Mindy took another mouthful of whiskey. "I couldn't go home," she repeated.

"So what did they do to you?" Lee asked expectantly, and she tried desperately hard to mask her ill-conceived curiosity. "Did it hurt?"

Mindy abruptly buried her face in her hands. "It was just too awful, Auntie Leanne. I can never tell. Not to nobody." She choked on tears. "I'd rather die."

Lee fell back in her chair, disappointed and touched with a sense of shame. "Okay. Take it easy now. Everything will be fine. You're with me. Finish your whiskey and then I'll run you a hot bath, you can soak. I'll call your mother and let her know you're staying over. After, we'll make ourselves dinner."

Mindy quickly tilted her glass. She got to her feet, came around the end of the table and threw arms around Lee's neck: "You're the best, ever. I'm so sorry I brought this down on you but thank you for being here for me."

"Nonsense, child." And Lee lifted her face to kiss Mindy on the cheek. "You're the sweetest niece anyone could ask for; heavens, like my own child. You stay here with me for as long as you need to. Now let's see about getting you into a tub of water."

Lee ran the bath and watched her niece loosen her blouse. There was a second bite mark on the girl's shoulder,

just by her bra strap and when Lee saw the swelling and the purplish bruising, she experienced a lonely gnawing in her chest and couldn't explain the tinge of excitement she felt lower down. "You'd better let me tend to those cuts after you bathe." She left Mindy with fresh towels and her spare robe.

"Mindy stopped by and we're making dinner," Lee explained to her older sister over the phone. "We're planning on watching a Bogie film later. I've got popcorn. It'll be late so I'll put her up in the guest room."

"Are you sure, sis? I don't want her to put you out any."

"Don't be silly, I live alone, remember," she chided her sister. Lee, thirty-four years old, had never married. "I could stand the company," Lee continued. "It will be a sleep-over; like in high school, you know?"

"Sure, I remember... remember drinking gin until I threw up on the grass."

"Well you were always the wild one. Now you and Don have yourselves a nice evening. Go out to dinner, for heaven's sake. Or take in a movie. I'll babysit. Settled?"

"Settled. And thanks. It'll be a nice change for us."

"I'll call you tomorrow."

"Ciao Bella."

Lee hung up the telephone and listened for a moment. There was the happy sound of moving water and the squeak of skin on enamel. Lee imagined her niece leaning back and soaking within the steamy confines of the bathtub; the frothy bubbles about her neck. She imagined the bruised and torn flesh and once again fought down the craving. She had never experienced anything like those kinds of feelings before. Lee felt a pang of guilt but it was quickly overridden by a lusty shudder when she thought of her niece surrounded by three men. Lee needed to know what had happened; wanted all the delectable details.

Lee got up from the kitchen table and checked the fridge. She was well stocked with beer and there was a bottle of

white wine. If she had to, she would get the little bugger drunk.

From the freezer compartment, she removed a casserole.

When Lee made a chicken divan, she always made a double batch; generous chunks of chicken-meat layered with broccoli, cheese, and mushroom soup from the tin. It was one of those silly recipes that shouldn't taste nearly so good, considering the simplicity of the ingredients. Maybe it was the pinch of curry powder she added. And she always sprinkled on the rye breadcrumbs to make a crusty topping. Then Lee would freeze half for a quick dinner on those occasions, like tonight, when someone showed at her door, unannounced.

Lee put the casserole into the microwave to defrost and she pulled egg noodles from the cupboard. She turned up the oven and put water on to boil.

"Something smells *wonderful*." Mindy shuffled through the swinging door and breathed deeply. Lee's floor-length bathrobe dragged on the tiles about the girl's feet and was tightly belted around narrow hips. With her hair in damp ringlets, Mindy looked like a kid; a kid on Christmas morning.

Lee poured icy Chardonnay and passed it across. "I'm glad you approve. The noodles are draining so sit and enjoy your wine." Lee peered through the oven door; the chicken divan was bubbling. She removed it from the rack and placed it on top of the stove, then picked up her tongs.

Lee set down two plates heaped with steaming noodles smothered in creamy chicken sauce. The fragrance of curry hung about the table. Lee got seated across from her niece and watched the girl twirl noodles onto her fork. Mindy was eighteen, just, but with her small physical frame and the damp pageboy bangs hanging in her eyes, she looked so much younger. So innocent. When Mindy lifted the fork to her mouth, Lee noticed the stiffness in the jaw and the girl chewed tentatively.

Lee sipped wine. "That's a nasty looking bite mark on your neck. There are others?"

Mindy humped her shoulders. "A few," she confessed. "On my breasts. And lower. I'll be okay."

"I've got antiseptic cream. I think it would be a good idea if later I..."

Mindy flinched and quickly cut off Lee's suggestion: "This is delicious, Auntie Leanne. I must get your recipe."

"It's on the back of the soup tin."

The women fell into an uneasy truce; Lee watching carefully. She saw Mindy shudder once or twice and knew the girl was reliving the shattering experience of having her virginity torn away. Lee couldn't help but wonder what that would be like: To be surrounded by three men who only had one thing on their minds. And were prepared to take it if it wasn't offered up.

Lee finally broke the silence. "So where'd it happen?"

Mindy kept her eyes low. "At the University."

"But it's Saturday."

"Yes. There was a game. Football."

Mindy's lower lip trembled and Lee thought the girl was about to burst into tears again. She re-thought her strategy. "Here. Have some more wine, dear." Lee reached across with the bottle. "I called your mother and arranged for you to stay the night. But by the looks of those marks on your neck you might want to plan on a day or two, if you're determined to hide the truth."

Mindy picked up her wine and took a long swallow. "Thanks Auntie Leanne."

"And that's another thing," Lee tapped the table top, "if we're going to be roomies, you better drop the *Auntie* routine. You're making me feel old."

Mindy's chin finally came up, a flash of surprise. "But you're *not* old. You're beautiful, smart, tall and you are terribly successful. What I don't understand is... is why you

don't like men?" Mindy caught herself. "I'm sorry. That's none of my business."

Though Lee had never married, there had been a few relationships but nothing ever moved the ground beneath her feet and each time, she had backed off. Something had always been lacking, usually between the bed-covers.

Lee couldn't restrain a giggle. "I like men just fine, pumpkin, but who has the time to find a good one. Putting in sixty hours a week doesn't leave much left for playing the field. And the few gentlemen I have met have either been leftovers or retreads."

"Retreads?"

"Divorcees, pumpkin."

"Oh..."

Mindy looked crushed.

"What is it?" Lee asked.

"I guess I feel like a retread; after today, I mean."

Lee's stomach did a flip-flop and inside, she bled a little. "Look Mindy, what happened to you was shitty. You didn't ask for it... didn't deserve it. What happened was the worst possible introduction to an adult relationship. Sex should be about mutual understanding and trust. Instead, you got brutally beaten and abused. No one is going to tell you that you got what you deserved, except maybe the three thugs who fucked you."

Mindy's head came up; a look of horror flashing through her eyes.

"Yes," Lee pressed. "You heard me and I'm sorry, but that's what happened."

Lee felt desperate, like she was about to bust open, her breasts were throbbing and she squeezed her thighs together. "But it doesn't spell the end for you. Understand? It will take some time but you will get past this."

They sat in silence again, each pondering the assault but, like looking through the opposite ends of a telescope, they didn't share the same perspective: Mindy saw her life



narrowing-in and losing focus, while Lee's sexual horizons were expanding faster than she could comprehend. And she was at a loss to explain the new flood of emotions or know how to handle them. She found herself aching for details. She needed to know what the hell had happened to her niece; the down and dirty of it.

Lee lifted the bottle. "Have some more wine, my dear."

After they had stacked the dishwasher, Lee suggested they take the rest of the wine and park themselves in front of the television but Mindy's body was reacting to the punishment she had received at the hands of the men: Her muscles were sore and she felt slightly nauseated. And her head felt thick; the result of mixing wine with whiskey.

"Can we watch television some other night?" Mindy implored her aunt. "I feel, I don't know... desperate somehow. And I need to lie down or I think I might pass out."

"Sure pumpkin," Lee said, feeling a touch of disappointment. "But I need to tend to those cuts and bites first. I'll get the antiseptic cream."

Mindy looked up, a pained expression creeping into her eyes. "Please Auntie Leanne, I can do it. I don't want you to see me like this."

But Lee wasn't about to be thwarted. Men had ravaged her niece's body and Lee was determined to see the results of their work. "This is not a topic for discussion," she told her niece. "Those men today? They attacked you. Caused you injury. You expect me to sleep tonight without knowing the extent of the damage they've caused?"

"But..."

Lee lifted a hand. "Not another word," she warned. "I know how stubborn you can be. But give it up." Lee pulled rank. "My house. My rules. Now get yourself to bed and I'll be right along."

With a drawn-out sigh of defeat, Mindy got to her feet and took a halting step toward the kitchen door. "Just so you

know, I'm not going to the hospital. No matter what you find."

Lee experienced another delicious quiver of expectation.

Lee was absolutely throbbing. She went into the bathroom to retrieve the antiseptic cream from the medicine cabinet. When she closed the mirrored door, she took a moment to study the image that looked back: A middle-aged, pleasant-looking woman with heightened senses. Her eyes were glistening with anticipation. She thought her nostrils looked slightly flared and she dabbed at the beads of perspiration that had gathered along her upper lip. Lee noticed that her fingers were trembling." *Crap. What's gotten into me?"*

In the bedroom, Lee found Mindy, still in her robe, tightly wrapped like a cocoon and stretched out along the bed. She was staring at the ceiling with eyes brimming.

Mindy was full of dread, thinking of what was about to happen: For the second time today her body would be placed on display. She turned her face away and felt the tears creep from the corners of her eyes. Despite what her aunt had said about retreads, Lee had never taken an interest in men, as far as Mindy knew, and she had always secretly wondered: *Was Auntie Leanne a lesbian?* And now Mindy found she was questioning her rational: Why had she come to her lesbian aunt for moral support? What an insane choice.

Lee slipped onto the side of the bed. The mattress depressed but her niece didn't acknowledge her presence; didn't move a muscle, in fact; except to close her eyes. And there was the steady rise and fall of her chest with each shallow breath. Mindy whimpered when Lee reached for the knot that held the bathrobe.

"Not a sound, child," Lee cautioned. "This will take but a moment."

Lee separated Mindy's robe and lay the terrycloth back. Her breath caught. It wasn't the fact that Mindy was a pretty

girl. Even being small, Mindy was perfectly proportioned. She had long legs, a tiny waist and her wholesome mounds were peaked with cheeky-looking cherries. The girl was a doll. Her body was exquisite and Lee had guessed it would be. Young Mindy was in possession of a physical beauty, and a presence of being, that clothes could disguise but not hide.

It was the ring of bruising around the girl's left nipple that caused Lee's breath to stagger. The skin was lacerated and the teeth marks were deep. The opposite nipple was torn and weeping. And lower down Lee saw yellowish bruising either side of the pubis that matched a man's narrow hips; a testament to the sexual pounding her niece had endured during intercourse. And lower still, between her thighs, more teeth marks left by an animal who only wanted to inflict hurt and misery.

Lee sat back and slicked her lips. Her buttocks clenched and she pressed her legs together. A spasm arched her lower back and her spine seemed to crack like the roll of a whip. In a moment of clarity, a brilliance she couldn't explain, Lee realized she envied the girl. Wanted to share in the pain and humiliation.

Lee shuddered; fought to control her emotions. "What kind of savage would do this to a young girl?" Lee asked. The only answer was Mindy's staggered breath.

A poignant moan escaped Mindy's lips as Lee lifted the left breast and applied cream, delicately swirling with slippery fingertips. Lee thrilled to the puckered flesh; the feel of the swollen tissue cupped in her hands.

Mindy seethed when Lee pushed the mangled, misaligned nipple back into place. "This will need a butterfly bandage for a day or two; until the skin knits." Lee applied the cool cream.

The teeth marks between Mindy's legs were superficial but the vagina itself gaped and was terribly inflamed. The vaginal lips had been shredded by sharp teeth. *Three men*

*have used her here*, Lee tempted herself, prodding at the swelling with a fingertip. Mindy wept quietly as Lee gently separated the delicate petals with her thumbs and placed a finger at the opening, looking for the telltale sign of blood.

Lee sighed deeply. "You're scoured raw, raw as burger-meat... but there isn't any bleeding. Hold still now. I'm going to apply some cream."

Mindy protested with a low groan but let Lee re-position her knees. Lee slid two fingers through the goo at the bottom of the jar and, gently holding back the vaginal creases with one hand, she slid her fingers along the protracted muscle tissue. She worked the cream in as far as she dared and fought the desire to slip all the way in. Instead, she gingerly massaged the inflamed lips and clitoris. Mindy squirmed in shock and disbelief.

Lee ignored her. "Did they do you in your bum?"

Mindy's eyes circled wide and for the first time she looked up and caught her aunt's eyes. "God. They do that?"

"Sometimes. Just to be mean. I guess it hurts a lot. And it's degrading, of course. Men like to treat women like barnyard animals. It gives them a sense of superiority, to hear a woman scream. Did you scream, pumpkin?"

Mindy's chin came up. "Yes I screamed. Until they started hitting me. And then I just cried a lot."

"And your bum?"

"One of them shoved his fingers in."

Lee exhaled and cupped the girl's hip. "You had better roll over. Let me have a look."

She was being violated all over again and Mindy wanted to refuse. But then what would be the point? It would be over soon if she didn't make a fuss. And it was easier to surrender to her aunt's wishes, like she should have done with the men. Resisting had been futile; the outcome inevitable. And if she had let them have what they wanted in the first place, maybe they would have gone easier on her. She rolled up on an elbow and flopped onto her tummy.

Lee gazed down on Mindy's perfect little behind. The round buttocks were firm with youth. And held tauntingly high, like an upturned nose. Lee separated the halves and touched the pink cone with a greasy finger.

"You've a nasty looking cut here; from his fingernails. Be still now. This will only take a second."

It took a surprising amount of pressure to breach the tightly wound muscle but as soon as Lee had slithered a fingertip in, Mindy opened like a greasy slipknot. Lee swiped the inside of the girl's anus with antiseptic cream, withdrew her finger and was relieved to see that there wasn't any blood. The girl needed rest and kind understanding, but physically, she would recover in a day or two.

Lee wiped her hands on a towel. "Okay. You can close your robe now but I'll have to reapply the cream tomorrow."

Mindy rolled over and tugged at the fleece. She was a little surprised. "You're finished? I mean; you didn't... I thought..." She realized she was nattering and clamped her lips together before she started to sound foolish.

Lee cupped the girl's face. "You thought what?" she questioned.

Mindy studied her aunt for a moment, eyes searching. "It's nothing," she finally said. "I guess I was just expecting something; well something more." Mindy felt the tears welling up again and, pushing herself forward, she put her arms around Lee's shoulders and kissed her on the side of the neck. "You were so gentle, Auntie Leanne. Thank you. And just so you know, I liked it; having you touch me, I mean." Mindy kissed her aunt a second time. "I'm sorry for misjudging you."

Lee unwound Mindy's arms from about her neck and lowered the girl back to the pillow. "You get some rest, now pumpkin. We'll talk more in the morning." Lee stood up from the side of the bed, turned off the lamp and quietly closed the bedroom door. Alone in the hallway, Lee reached for the

wall. Without it, she feared her knees might collapse. And she needed a *real* drink.

### Chapter Three

Lee rummaged her bottle of Old Bushmills Irish Whiskey out from under the sink. She blew out a whiskey glass, splashed in an inch of liquor and fortified herself. Then taking the bottle by the neck, she made her way back down the hallway.

In her darkened home office she slumped back in her La-Z-Boy recliner and watched the street. It was barely past nine but already the neighborhood was quiet. The headlights from the occasional car swept the house across the way, but for the most part, only the quiet light from the streetlamp illuminated her lawn and the damp pavement out front. She took another sip of whiskey but the smell of the antiseptic cream on her fingers, mingling with the heady scent from the secretions she had stirred up in her niece, was distracting. And not in an unpleasant way.

She rested her head back and breathed deeply; trying to sort through her emotions.

Despite Mindy's apprehensions, Lee was not a lesbian. She suppressed a healthy heterosexual bent only because, thus far, she had failed to meet a right and suitable partner. But she couldn't deny the overpowering lusty feelings that accompanied the understanding that her niece's battered body was the result of a vicious rape. Lee thrilled to the thought of Mindy, the little slut, being held against her will, striped of her clothing and forced to the floor.

*Why couldn't it have been me?* The voice in her head stilled her breath.

The thought had materialized from nowhere, was unexpected, and just a wee bit creepy; she took another hit of the whiskey to still the trembling within the walls of her heart. *Why couldn't it have been me? Christ... what the hell?* Mindy had suffered a horrific experience, one that would follow her throughout her lifetime and she deserved sympathy and understanding. But it was all Lee could do to suppress the rudeness in her loins. It was sick. Depraved.

Lee felt she had taken a wrong turn down “Sanity Street” and like Alice, had stepped through the looking glass. She lifted the whiskey tumbler to her lips and found it was empty.

The Bushmills had gone down smooth and easy. Lee had known it would and she topped off her glass once again. What the hell. Tomorrow was Sunday and though usually just another workday for Lee, her surprise house guest would change that. She would give the office a skip for once.

The *office* was located on the upper floor of the Hardware Supermarket, one of the four Hardware Supermarkets she presently owned. The first two had come to her when her father had passed away fourteen years ago. They were so named because he took out a lease on a defunct IGA supermarket when he first decided to go into the hardware business. It did well eventually and he leased a second supermarket in a neighboring town.

When he died, each of his daughters got a store but Lee’s sister, who had married well, wasn’t interested in the hardware business and she happily sold her interests to Lee. What Lee knew about hardware wouldn’t fill a thimble, even today, but she was a natural when it came to *Retail*. It could have been used cars or medical supplies, it didn’t matter an iota. Lee had a knack with wholesalers, pricing, store layout, location, advertising, and she knew how to motivate a sales staff.

One-stop shopping was just catching on and Lee had the parking spaces and the room for inventory. She expanded into housewares, sporting goods and automotive. The money started coming in. She acquired the stores she had been leasing and bought two more. She paid cash for a nice house in a good neighborhood. She drove a Porsche.

And all it had cost her was her happiness.

She thought again about the ring of teeth marks that encircled Mindy’s nipple; conjured up the image before her



eyes. What kind of man would do that; hurt the girl, intentionally? Surely by the time things had progressed that far, by the time they had stripped off her bra, gotten her pants down and forced her to the floor, it would have been obvious that Mindy had surrendered herself. That she was theirs for the taking. But still the humiliation wasn't enough for them; they had brutalized her, ripped at her flesh. Made her bleed.

What sort of man would do that? A *real* man, maybe? Lee felt icy fingers along her spine.

Certainly none of the men she had dated would have the balls for it. Her men, and there weren't many, had all been overly nice. Sickeningly so. One of them was only after her money and when she realized the truth, she had run him off like a stray dog that had been caught pissing on her rose bushes. One other also had visions of an early retirement but been more interested in getting between her legs; and the third? Well he was just a plain old, garden variety, sick-oh. He had cared little for her bank account, which was a relief in the beginning and she had wondered if he had been God-sent. But no; he had other fixations: While playing with himself, he demanded she do things. And he had only ever wanted to cum on her face.

She had indulged him, giving him the benefit of the doubt, and stupidly thinking it might be adventurous. But when he asked her to bend over and place a carrot in a spot she could only find with the help of a mirror, he got the same treatment as the others. And damned quickly, too.

So where were all the good men? The ones with backbone and a sense of pride. The ones she had read about: Strong, hard, courageous. She was looking for someone who, like herself, was seeking a life-partner as well as a lover. Someone who wanted to take care of her; protect her. To have and to hold... yah-da, yah-da, yah-da! Some women were lucky in love; others could make money. And when it came to making money, Lee had two green thumbs.

So she had resolved herself, a long time ago; was content to do what she did best. Forget about the men.

She thought of the teeth-marks again. *Hell, she squirmed, I want someone to take me! Right now!*

In her bedroom, Lee dug the appliance out from the drawer in her bureau. She held the smooth, pink plastic in her hand. It didn't seem like much: \$15.99 on-line and delivered by an unsuspecting UPS driver, but it was all the love-life Lee had. And the effing battery was dead. She fumbled with the switch and instead of humming seductively, it lay lifeless in the palm of her hand. "Can't get it up?" she demanded. Damn. She would have to provide her own stimulation; something she wasn't very good at. But then she couldn't tickle herself neither.

Lee placed the appliance on the bedside table and began her nightly ritual: She stripped off her clothes, placed them in the hamper and pulled on her robe. In her bathroom she washed her face and did her teeth. Lee sat at the vanity and applied moisturizer. She brushed her hair and studied the crinkles in the corners of her eyes; the ones that gave her face *character* according to her beautician. What does a twenty-two year old beautician know about character?

With a sigh, she doffed her robe, slid between crisp sheets and reaching across, she turned off the switch at her bedside lamp. The darkness filled in and she snuggled down into her pillows and closed her eyes. The image of Mindy drifted up again and Lee's imagination took over: The naked girl being held down while a man straddled her writhing thighs. *Why couldn't it have happened to me?* She felt about until her fingers closed on the dormant vibrator. *It will help me sleep,* she thought.

Lee was applying vaseline to the tip when she heard a movement. She turned her head and listened intently. The wind had come up and she thought briefly about the loose eaves-trough. She earmarked it for a telephone call to the roofer the next morning and replaced the lid on the vaseline

tube. Lee cocked her knees under the sheet and, feeling out the soft-spot between her legs with a gooey finger, she inserted the tip of the vibrator. Lee rolled her hips forward and, with a smooth steady stroke, she absorbed the length of the inanimate erection.

Lee's head came up off the pillow. "Oh, holy c-crap," she moaned, clamping down on the obstruction between her legs. She eased the pressure slightly, pulled back and, reversing the stroke, she drove the device back into place, hard against her cervix. "Augh!"

It hurt. But what delirious pain.

Lee reached down with her other hand and poised a slick fingertip over the tender morsel. She was just beginning the circular motions when she heard it again: The damned eaves-trough. Lee paused in her carnal pursuits to listen to the sound of the crinkling metal working against itself in the wind. She held her breath, and then with a gasp, she jerked the vibrator from between her legs. Lee threw back the bed covers and swung her legs out. It *wasn't* the sound of metal that had disturbed her lustful concentrations; but the sound of glass.

Her over-hyper mind had immediately jumped to a conclusion: Some thug had broken out a window pane and even now, as she sat paralyzed in fear, he was creeping along the hallway in search of two helpless women; his jutting penis hanging from his zipper. Lee forced herself to listen harder and then she heard it again.

Lee winced. "Oh shit! That little bugger is into my liquor!" Lee had heard the rake of the lip of a bottle across the rim of a glass. And then she could just make out the happy glug-glug sound of booze escaping. Lee blew out a rush of air, stood and pulled on her bathrobe.

"Mind if I have a shot of that?"

A startled Mindy looked up from the kitchen table where she was helping herself to Lee's vodka. "Oh! Auntie Leanne... you frightened me!" She took a moment to catch

herself. "Damn. I'm sorry. I couldn't sleep and thought... Gee..." Mindy looked into her glass. "Here I am helping myself to your liquor. I'm sorry... it's just that..."

Lee stepped closer, a shrug. "Oh don't apologize. You're welcome to the damned stuff and anything else you can find in my cupboards. And if you want the Irish Whiskey, it's in my bedroom. I guess we're both suffering from the same affliction tonight. And indulging in the same cure."

"Affliction?" Mindy looked puzzled.

"Mmm. Neither one of us can sleep."

"I know why I can't sleep," Mindy said, "but what's keeping you awake?"

Lee brushed hair from the girl's cheek. "Same thing, I guess. I keep seeing you with those men."

"It was horrible."

"I know baby," Lee sympathized.

"Can I try the Irish Whiskey?"

Lee smiled. "Sure. Get yourself a clean glass. And while you're at it, there's cold beer in the fridge. Grab us a couple of bottles."

Mindy's expression went blank. "Beer too?"

Lee's smile widened. "Oh child. Welcome to my world. You haven't lived until you've washed good Irish Whiskey down with cold beer. We'll have ourselves a *real* slumber party. How about popcorn?"

Mindy giggled. "That sounds like fun." She got up from the table and placed her arms around Lee's neck. "You're not a lesbian, are you, Auntie Leanne. Never were."

"Afraid not. But don't ruin it for me by telling. I'm kinda enjoying the notoriety."

"You're a bad auntie," Mindy scolded playfully. "I'll get the beer."

Lee watched her niece, still dressed in the bathrobe that swam about her feet, lean into the fridge where a line of green Heineken bottles stood sentry-duty on the lower shelf. At the counter, Mindy twisted off the caps and poured the

amber-colored brew into tumblers. Lee took a sip before tossing a packet of Orville Redenbacher into the microwave. The smell of freshly popped corn filled the kitchen and placing the fluffy kernels in a large bowl, Lee added extra butter.

Lee carried the glasses of beer, and Mindy, with the popcorn and a whiskey glass, trailed down the hallway to the master bedroom. The bed was huge.

Mindy watched her aunt place a glass of Old Bushmills on each bedside table; left and right of the upholstered headboard. Lee put a match to six candles that were positioned around the room and turned down the lights. Soft flickering flames illuminated the walls.

"I'm getting in." Lee turned to her niece and tugged open the knot that held her bathrobe closed. Mindy's breath pinched. She watched the weight her aunt's full shadowy breasts sway from within the folds of the robe. The sturdy nipples were encircled by large dark halos. And lower, hanging below a tight tummy, was a swath of dark curls. Lee shrugged off her robe and tossed it onto a chair before climbing under the covers.

"Your turn," Lee said from the safety of the bed where she sat comfortably with the sheet tucked high about her breasts.

If Mindy had any twinge of uncertainty about crawling naked into her aunt's bed, the vodka had nullified her doubts. With a burst of bright laughter, she peeled off her own robe, tossed it onto the chair, and scampered madly to hide her nudity under the bed covers.

Lee laughed. "With such a cute little body you shouldn't be in such a rush."

Mindy surfaced from under the sheet and grinned. "This is wild. I've never done anything like this before. I can't believe I'm in bed with you; *and* whiskey *and* beer. Could you pass the popcorn?"

The women, one barely eighteen, one thirty-four, snuggled up with the bowl of popcorn between them. Lee had hit the remote and soft, guitar-jazz drifted in from the hidden speakers. Mindy sipped whiskey and cooled her throat with icy Heineken.

"This *is* good," Mindy commented after another sip of beer. "But I'm feeling a little light."

"You take after your mother. Soon you'll be mixing the whiskey and beer together. It's called a Boiler Maker."

"I'll try that next time." Mindy nodded. "And how's your hardware business doing? You thinking about opening more stores?"

Lee was surprised. The question had come outta the blue but she was gratified that Mindy held an interest. "Hardware is doing great, but Automotive is starting to really pay off."

That caught Mindy's attention. "My boyfriend loves cars. He's always buying that stuff to add to his oil. STP?"

Lee abruptly sat up. "I didn't know you were seeing someone. That's wonderful."

Mindy shrugged and sipped beer. "Don't start looking for a bridal gift just yet. I'm not sure how I feel about getting married."

Lee nodded. "You're young. What about him?"

"Oh he's totally serious. He's older, twenty-three, and already he's talking about kids. But I got plans of my own; to go to college, for sure. And I want to work awhile before getting all serious and everything. I want a career, even if it's only a short one."

"College. That's so cool," Lee shifted on the pillows and Mindy's eyes darted down as the sheet slipped, exposing one of her aunt's healthy-looking breasts. A dark nipple peered out. Lee didn't seem to notice the indiscretion. "What are you planning to take?"

Mindy fought to steady her voice. "Well I saw how well you are doing and the College has a two-year Retail