

~ Haunted Past ~

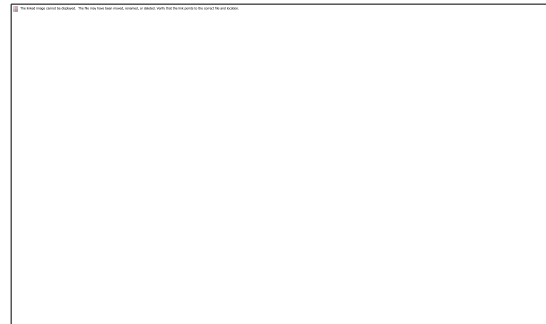
by Larisa

Disclaimer: Yeah yeah yeah, I know and so do you.

Sex/Violence: Of course, there is and not that much and nowhere near like my other ones.

Age thing: Diapers, pacifiers, and or baby bottles, go away!!!

Song by Blake Shelton used without his permission.



Thanks to everyone who helped on this.

Haunted past

By Larisa

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Erin sat at the bar nursing a Coke and continually waving a hand in front of her face to keep the thick cigarette smoke from burning her eyes. It was funny, because not too long ago she would have been drinking Bourbon and chain-smoking Menthol Marlboros. There were two nights in her life, one she would never change and another that if she could turn back the hands of time she would do it in a heartbeat. In a matter of minutes, her world was torn apart and to this day, she still ached deep inside. It was one song that she heard on her way home from a worksite tonight that brought her back to where it all began. The words reached deep inside her and tugged at her shredded soul. The singer's words echoed in her head.

She left without leavin' a number
Said she needed to clear her mind
He figured she'd gone back to Austin
'Cause she talked about it all the time
It was almost a year before she called him up
Three rings and an answering machine is what she got

If you're callin' 'bout the car I sold it
If this is Tuesday night I'm bowling
If you've got somethin' to sell, you're wastin' your time, I'm not
buyin'
If it's anybody else, wait for the tone,
You know what to do
And P.S. if this is Austin, I still love you

Not a day or night went by that she didn't wait for a phone call from the one person who could mend her soul. Pushing her empty glass across the bar, she dropped some bills for her tab and walked from the crowded country bar out in to the crisp night. With the setting sun, the wind had picked up and sent a chill through her body. Shoving her hands deep in the pockets of her worn out Levis, she walked down the deserted road towards home. The lyrics continued in her mind and brought tears to her pale blue eyes.

The telephone fell to the counter
She heard but she couldn't believe
What kind of man would hang on that long
What kind of love that must be
She waited three days, and then she tried again
She didn't know what she'd say,
But she heard three rings and then

If it's Friday night I'm at the ballgame
And first thing Saturday, if it don't rain
I'm headed out to the lake
And I'll be gone, all weekend long
But I'll call you back when I get home
On Sunday afternoon
And P.S. If this is Austin, I still love you

She walked into her empty house and turned the kitchen light on, taking a warm can of Coke from the counter; she went out the back door and sat on the top step of her deck. Tears streamed down her high cheekbones as flashes of the past went through her head.

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The Rising Star was packed as usual for a Friday night; the boys as Erin called her crew had been buying rounds all night in celebration of completing a series of warehouses in Virginia. Erin sat in a chair against the room Bourbon neat, chain smoking and laughing at the antics of her boys. She wouldn't trade them for anything; she had known most of them since middle school. With the death of her father when she was eighteen, she took over his construction company and made it grow to twice its original size with their help. Now years later at the age of 30, she didn't have to work another day in her life but choose to, out of love. If she couldn't do the job, she didn't expect anyone else to be able to do it either. So every morning at four am, she was on her way to the nearest construction site to swing a hammer or carry lumber with the rest of them. Tonight was the end of a yearlong job; she had a good amount of money in her pocket and the next week off. Feeling the effects of the Bourbon flowing through her bloodstream, she went over to the DJ and handed him a list of requests. As the first song began to play, she leaned against the wall, closed her eyes and listened to the lyrics.

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"What are you waiting for Gill?" A small blonde whispered into her friend's ear. "Go over and talk to her, what have ya got to loose?"

Green eyes watched the tall woman leaning against the far wall, completely captivated by the woman's classic features that were crossed with shadows. Gillian wished she would open her eyes and then she thought better of it. Getting caught starrng at another woman in a straight bar filled with rednecks and construction workers was not a smart thing to do. She shook her head and went back to drinking her Bud Light.

"Come on Sandy, do you want to see me at the bottom of a couple dozen drunken idiots?" She ran a hand through her short blondish hair. "Besides she looks like she wants to be alone and she requested all love songs."

"Excuse me but what did you make me listen to the whole way over here?"

Gillian gave her a small smile, peeled the label off her beer bottle and stuck it on Sandy's forehead. "That's because I want what they have and from the looks of her, she has that already."

"Well, I have 20/20 vision and I don't see a ring on her finger or through her nose." She gave Gillian a small shove. "Just go over there, trip and fall into her."

"I think you want me to get killed because you know that my will says you get my car."

Sandy busted up laughing at the thought of getting her friends car. "Get real Gill, you drive a 22 year old Buick rust bucket with the springs sticking out of the seats. And do I have to remind you that they don't hit the right places?" She messed up her friend's hair, slid off her stool and strutted over to where the tall woman was. Looking over her shoulder at Gillian, she winked and leaned on the wall. Tugging on a shirtsleeve, she raised her voice so that she could be heard. "Can I ask you a question?"

Erin opened her eyes and looked down at the small blonde with curly blonde hair and hazel eyes. "Yeah go ahead."

"Are you single?"

Erin let out a short bark of laughter and gripped the woman's shoulder. "Am I single? You mean at the moment or later as well?"

"That depends on my friend; she's the one sitting at the bar with the yellow stripe up her back."

Erin squinted and scanned the bar area. "Yellow strip huh? Would she be hiding behind a beer bottle and ready to crawl under the tile?"

"That would be her; she's been eyeballing you all night."

When Erin saw that they were being watched by the little coward, she leaned closer to the small woman and purred in her ear. "Is she single or will I be trespassing?"

"Ohh she's very single and dying for you to dance with her but she's afraid because we're in a straight bar." Sandy knew that was an all out lie but she would suffer the consequences at work on Monday. "And she loves those sappy love songs." Sandy patted Erin on her hip and headed to the bathroom.

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Gillian watched her friend talking to the woman of her fantasies and felt like she should be shrinking so small that she could walk under the crack in the door. She knew they were talking about her by the quick glances in her direction. She was ready to run for the door when she saw Sandy go into the bathroom. Letting out a long breath, she sighed with relief then felt disappointed because the woman was just standing there with her eyes closed. "You should know that you never had a chance with her you big idiot."

"Did you need something?" The bartender asked from where he was standing close to her.

"Sorry I was thinking out loud." She downed her beer, slid it across the bar and ordered another one. Dropping her head down on top of her clasped hands, she looked up when she felt a cold beer bottle touch her upper arm.

"Thanks." She lifted her head, reached for the beer bottle and noticed that it wasn't the bartender handing her the beer. Her eyes traveled up the thick forearm to a broad shoulder and finally to a pair of pale blue eyes surrounded by coal black lashes. Her breath left her lungs and her heart dropped to her feet when the tall woman gave her a small smile that showed her even white teeth.

Erin placed the beer bottle and her glass on the bar and took the small hand in hers; she pulled Gillian off the stool and took her to the center of the dance floor. Not giving her a chance to run, Erin placed Gillian's arms around her neck, wrapped her own arms around Gillian's lower back and pulled her close against her body. Placing her lips close to a small ear, she spoke in a deep purr.

"I'm Erin and don't worry about it being a straight bar." She pulled back and looked into scared green eyes. "Don't be afraid, I'm not a rapist or anything. I just want to dance with you."

Gillian nodded her head and whispered so low that Erin couldn't hear her; she dipped her head closer and finally heard her. "Relax Gill and listen to the lyrics." Halfway through the song Sandy walked up to them, patted her friend on the shoulder and waved goodbye.

"My friend is leaving I have to go."

"Please stay and dance with me, if she drove I'll call you a cab." The pleading look in the pale blue eyes went straight to Gillian's heart; she nodded her head and then rested it against a strong shoulder. She took a deep breath and relaxed into the strong arms that were holding her.

Well, this time she left her number
But not another word
Then she waited by the phone on Sunday evenin'
And this is what he heard

If you're callin' 'bout my heart
It's still yours
I should've listened to it a little more
Then it wouldn't have taken me so long to know where I belong
And by the way, boy, this is no machine you're talkin' to
Can't you tell, this is Austin, and I still love you

I still love you

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The weather was cooling off in Boston, the leaves were turning and starting to drop to the ground. Gillian kicked the leaves away from the front door of the small house she shared with a co-worker. When she opened the door, the scent of cinnamon wafted across her. Bob always had a large potpourri pot simmering with cinnamon sticks in it. It gave the small house a homey feeling and reminded her of cold nights at her grandma's. Those days were long gone and so were many other things. A small smile came to her face when she heard Bob singing in the kitchen, his favorite songs were from the 60's. The Supremes, Otis Redding, Marvin Gaye and so many others she couldn't remember them all. What he was singing now would put Diana Ross to shame. Bob was a huge black man, close to six-foot four and around 260 pounds. But when he sang, he could make the angels weep. She walked in and caught him hanging on to the last note of the song.

"Go girlfriend!" She walked by him and tried to steal a piece of carrot from the cutting board.

"What else are you making for supper?"

"Beef roast, broccoli with cheese and sweet potato pie, not like I'm giving you any little thief. Did you get us the contract?"

"Yep all signed and we start on Monday." She dropped her brief case on the floor and sat down at the kitchen table. "They gave us the low bid but when I spoke to them afterwards, they upped the settling fee by a thousand dollars." Bob turned, planted both of his large hands on his hips and gave her a raised eyebrow.

"And just what do we have to do for this extra money?"

She waved a hand at him. It's nothing big, just twice a week we have to deliver a bouquet of fresh flowers for the reception desk in front.

"Uhh huh and the flowers are rare aren't they?"

"Just plain old orchids, we order a box at a time. I figure with one box at \$80.00, 24 bundles per box. We pull the bouquet from the reception desk, yank the wilted flowers and replace them. A box should last us two or three months, the rest we sell in the shop."

"So we profit close to \$500.00 because we have to allow for filler." He gave her a big grin. "OK, so you earned your supper today. Go get a shower and I'll call you when it's done." Gillian got up from the table and started to pull her long cut riding jacket off and kicked her low heeled boots off as well."

"You pick those boots up, last time I thought I broke all my toes stepping on one of those tiny little things."

"OK Ma, I'll even throw my underwear in the hamper."

Bob yelled from the kitchen. "Gillian, those pieces of dental floss don't count as underwear."

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After her shower, she dressed in shorts and a sweatshirt and dropped backwards onto her bed. Rolling onto her side, she picked up the remote for her stereo and turned the CD player on. She seldom changed the CD's in the changer and knew it drove Bob nuts. He like a variety, not George Strait, Toby Keith, Pam Tillis and various other country artists she played repeatedly. When the music started, she gazed with watery green eyes at the picture of herself and Erin. It had been taken shortly before she left West Virginia. Bob asked her all the time why she kept the picture. She simply told him that they may not be together anymore but her heart was still with Erin. She found it hard to believe that a year had gone by, days then months flashed by without notice until it came time to write a check with the new year on it.

"Don't you have any other CD's to play? My Gods child, those things are so old that people have forgotten about those songs." Bob reached over and shut the stereo off then sat on the edge of her bed. "Looking at that picture again to, one of these days you'll look over and see a picture of me dressed like my Queen Diana Ross."

"More like Queen Bob in drag." She grinned at him and rolled from her bed. "Supper ready?"

"That's the only reason I would come in here and torture myself by having to listen to country music."

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Gillian rubbed her aching stomach, closed her eyes and took a shallow breath. "I'm gonna

explode."

"It wouldn't surprise me none, you ate half of the pie." He placed a cup of coffee in front of her and returned to his seat at the other end. "So does the boss know you got the contract for the landscaping?"

"Nope, I'll tell her on Monday." She sipped her coffee and sighed. "Have you ever had a scent bring back a memory, like the cinnamon you have in the pot reminds me of my grandma's in the winter time."

"You mean like when I smell Old Spice and I think of that dweeb I used to date?" He rolled his dark eyes and slapped his hand. "I was sooo stupid; all that idiot wanted was to see if the myth about black men was true."

"Is it, I've always wondered about that?"

"Gill it wouldn't matter to you if it was, so I am not telling. I will say this; it's not the size of the package its how it's used." He wiggled his tongue at her and laughed at the blush covering her face.

"Anyway, what I was saying was, today when I was out at the construction site I could smell that scent that the leaves give off when they fall from the trees. It reminded me of West Virginia, one year Erin took me to the county fair." She sipped her coffee and a dreamy look covered her face, her eyes sparkled with the memory of that day.

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Gillian had just come through the doors of the building where she and Sandy were landscaping designers. She came down the first step and froze, at the curb was Erin dressed in new Levis, blue silk shirt and black cowboy boots. She was leaning against the fender of her construction truck, thick arms crossed over her chest and a cocky smile on her face.

"Ohh Gill, looks like your woman has something truly evil on her mind, like ripping your clothes off and having her way with you."

"I wish! Hell she hasn't even kissed me yet let alone anything else."

"What! You've got to be kidding. She looks like she'd be an animal in bed."

"If she is I haven't experienced it yet." She nudged Sandy with her shoulder and ran down the steps to Erin. Sandy stood and watched as Erin opened the door and helped Gill into the tall truck.

"You lucky little wench, you can thank me later for hooking you up." She mumbled to herself and waved to Gill as the truck pulled away.

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"You're kidding right, I mean it sounds like fun but I've never been to the fair before."

"Then this will be a first for both of us." Erin turned her head and smiled at Gill. "Just think of all the junk food we get to eat, furry little critters to pet and tonight Pam Tillis and Billy Dean are singing at the fairgrounds."

Gillian's eyes lit up, she had never been to a concert before. "Really, they're going to sing and not lip-sync or anything." She gripped Erin's thigh and bounced in the seat. "How close can we get to the stage?"

She winked at her excited friend. "I'll mow the crowd down if I have to just to get you up front." She held Gillian's small hand in hers until they pulled into the field used for parking at the fairgrounds. She held onto Gillian's hand as they walked through the barns with no concern over what people thought. They could all kiss her ass if they didn't like it; she had never been one to balk away from public displays of affection. If she had to handle seeing a man and woman playing tonsil hockey, then they could do the same for her and Gillian holding hands. Outside of one of the larger animal barns, Gillian pulled her towards a booth where you had to throw baseballs at a target. Gillian pulled out some bills and handed them to the man.

"How many targets before I win something?"

"Three down and you get your pick." He stuffed the bills in the pouch hanging below his huge gut and handed her three baseballs. He took in the small woman and knew he just made a couple bucks off her.

"Get ready to give me that Marvin the Martian 'cuz I'm gonna break that target clean off." She cracked her knuckles, rubbed a baseball on her pant leg, brought the ball over her shoulder and let it fly. The sound of the ball hitting the target made the man jump. "That's one, two more to go." She grinned up at Erin and winked. With the final baseball thrown, the man sighed and handed her Marvin. Gillian kissed the stuffed animal and handed it to Erin. "Now you have a bigger one to go with your key chain."

Erin leaned down and placed a soft kiss on her lips. "Thank you Gill, what one do you like up there?" Gill looked at all the toys, saw Alvin from the chipmunks and pointed to him. "OK, we may put this guy out of business today. When they were finished playing, the man was close to tears and his target had broke off with the last baseball Erin threw. He knew she had to be throwing at least 90mph.

"I think we need to make a trip to the truck." Erin said as she tried to hold on to all the animals in her arms.

"And hope that guy doesn't hunt us down." Gillian chuckled. "He thought he had easy marks when we showed up, should never underestimate dykes."

With the winnings in the king cab area, they heard the band warming up for the concert. Closing the door on the truck, they took off running towards the fenced in area. Erin placed Gillian in front of her and got them to the front of the stage area, she pulled Gillian back against her and wrapped her arms around her waist and rested her head on Gillian's crown. She closed her eyes when small fingers caressed her forearms and Gillian leaned back into her. Gillian's innocent outlook on life was quickly working on her; she was the first thing Erin thought of in the morning and the last thing she thought of before she fell asleep. The first night they had met would forever be in her memories. They closed the bar wrapped in each others arms as the last note of a slow song died and the lights came on. She drove Gillian home, escorted her to her front door and left with just a soft kiss on the small woman's knuckles. She was surprised the next afternoon when she got a call from her asking if she could cook supper for her. What should have been a very tense meal was comfortable with small talk and shy glances. They sat in the small living room on the couch after supper and watched TV until it grew late in the night. Erin gave her a hug at the front door and walked out into the night.

She was brought from her memories when Gillian placed her hand at the back of her head and pulled her down for a soft kiss on her cheek. "Thank you for bringing me here."

"You're very welcome Gill, when it's over do you want to go for coffee?"

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When they reached Gillian's small house, Erin ran around her truck and opened the door for her. Helping her out, she took her hand and walked her to the front door. She placed a soft kiss on Gillian's knuckles and was ready to leave when she felt fingers grip hers.

"Not so fast." She pulled her back in front of her and blushed. "I don't even know your last name."

"That makes two of us; let me introduce my stupid self. Erin Nolan Dixen."

Gillian stepped closer, wrapped her arms around Erin's neck and pulled her down so that their lips were but a breath apart. "Gillian Jameson Vasnikov, now kiss me." She whispered. Gillian felt her knees growing weak when Erin kissed her, their tongues met and caressed slowly. Soft moans came from them as their bodies pressed closer together and the kiss lengthened. When they came apart, Gillian leaned against Erin and pressed her face against soft breasts.

"I never expected it to be like that." She mumbled against the silk beneath her face, she looked up into dark blue eyes and pulled Erin down to meet her lips. Their second kiss made Gillian braver; she explored, moaned and tangled her fingers in long silky hair until she needed air. Erin took a shuddering breath and wiped the sweat from her forehead.

"I better go before I do something stupid." She placed a soft parting kiss on Gillian's lips and walked back to her truck. She waited until Gillian was inside and the outside light flashed before she left for home. On the way home a wide grin covered her face, she ran her fingertips across her tingling lips and shook her head. "She's getting inside my heart at the speed of a

locomotive."

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Gillian closed the door and leaned against it; she ran a fingertip across her lips and smiled. "What's happened to you Gillian, you were ready to drag her inside and shred her clothes." A plastic surgeon couldn't remove the smile from her face if he tried.

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Sandy took one look at Gillian and pulled her into the bathroom, checking under the stalls for eavesdroppers she crossed her arms over her chest. "You got laid last night!"

Gillian's brows buried themselves in her bangs. "You're crazy! I did not get laid you crude bitch."

"Then what's that huge toothy smile for if you didn't?"

Gillian grinned at her and shrugged her shoulders.

"Ohh don't you dare hold back on me," She pointed a finger at Gillian's chest. "She changed your oil and you know it."

"She did not; I kissed her and almost fell to my knees afterwards. If she hadn't left she would have been in great danger."

Sandy laughed and pulled Gillian into a soft hug. "You evil little person you, she has no idea what she's in for. So when's the next date?"

"I hope soon, very soon."

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Erin came out of her house the next morning with a coffee can full of Koi food. Walking across the slate stepping-stones to the small bridge that crossed the Koi pond, she sprinkled the pellets into the water and watched as the multi colored fish swam below her. Tilting her head back, she took a deep breath and let the morning sun warm her face. The sound of the fish feeding and the soft sound of leaves falling to the ground around her brought her eyes open to look around the Japanese garden that she had built in the backyard. She had found the sketches that Gillian had done in a notebook, going behind her back to one of her co-workers, she had him put the garden in after the house was finished. She wanted it to be a special place for them; she had built the cedar benches with the left over lumber from the house and set them under the dwarf weeping willows. Over the last year, she had read every book she could get her hands on so that she could take care of the miniature trees and bushes herself. Even if she was the only one to see it, it was still a part of Gillian.

After almost seventeen years of going to worksites, she gave it up after Gillian left. She turned everything over to her best friend Dave, she still made all the decisions but now all she did was stop by a site every now and again to see how the guys were doing. She just couldn't bring herself to swing a hammer anymore. It brought back too many memories that she wanted to forget.

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It was getting close to quitting time when Erin heard a car horn blowing; she looked off into the distance and saw Gillian's rusty Buick coming down the dusty road. She had found out that Gillian could find her in less time than the sheriff's department could. She couldn't help the grin that came to her lips. It grew bigger when her boys started teasing her about Gillian. Every morning they blew kisses at her and made kissing noises close to her ear. Her best friend David made lashing noises at her.

"Get your collar ready Erin, your master is here."

"How do you know it's not the other way around?"

"Because the second she smiles at you we need a shovel to pick you up."

"You are sooo wrong buddy." She threw a nail at him and laughed when he blew a kiss at her. "Asshole." She jumped down from the plank stretched between the staffing supports and jogged out to meet Gillian.

"Ohh no, you're not caught hook line and sinker, are you Erin?" He laughed and went back to work on the trusses. Erin waited for Gillian to park her car; she wiped the sweat from her brow and grinned when she realized that Dave was right. She did turn into a puddle with one smile from Gillian. "Hey Gilly, what are you doing out here?"

"I got off work early and I wanted to see you." She walked up and pulled Erin down for a lingering kiss, her hands traveled under Erin's T-shirt, she ran her hands up her spine, pressed her hips into Erin and dragged blunt fingernails down her back to stop at her waistband. When they came apart, Erin was gasping for air and on fire. After one kiss from Gillian, she could melt an iceberg and Gillian knew it. The boys hooted and hollered from the framework of the house they were building. Erin flipped them off behind her back and heard them laugh at her. She knew it and so did they that she was a lost cause when it came to Gillian.

"Let me turn the boys loose and we'll get out of here." She took Gillian's hand in hers and whistled to the boys. When they looked up from what they were doing, she waved to them. The kissing noise started up again and brought a deep blush to both women's faces.

"They do that all day long." She whispered close to Gillian's ear. "Just wish it was you doing it and not some sweaty guys."

"That can be arranged, it might take a couple years for you to get a house built though."

Erin felt a fire spread through her body and settle between her thighs, she didn't know how much longer she could go on without taking their relationship further. They had spent a lot of time together over the weeks and had not done anything but kiss. She wanted more but was afraid to go to fast with Gillian. Pulling open the door to the trailer that she hauled to each worksite as her office, she helped Gillian up the steps and waved to her secretary Mrs. Fritz.

"You can go home Fritzy, I sent the boys home for the day."

Mrs. Fritz looked through her thick glasses and smiled at the two women. "Good, me and my old geezer are going to the movies tonight. Now I have more time to convince him to take me out to eat before the movie."

"You should have told me, I would have given you half the day off with pay."

"Listen here Erin Nolan, I worked eight hour days for your Dad and I'll do the same for you. Now go get cleaned up before you make poor Gill pass out from your stench." She picked up her huge purse, slung it over her shoulder and slapped Erin on her ass as she went out the door.

"I don't think you stink." She buried her face between Erin's breasts and wrapped her arms around her waist.

"That's because you sinuses got burned out from the three alarm chili we had the other night." She kissed the top of her head and moved out from her hug. "I'm going to take a shower and then we'll go get something to eat." Grabbing clean clothes from the cabinet near the small fold down bed, she headed for the small bathroom. "I'll be out in ten minutes." She placed a quick kiss on Gillian's lips and went into the bathroom. Gillian folded the bed down, lay down and pulled the pillow to her chest. She took a deep breath and picked up the scent of Erin's cologne and shampoo. She ran her hand down across her breast and moaned when her nipple hardened. "No more." She kicked off her boots, wiggled out of her Levis and G-string and sat up to pull her T-shirt off. She heard the shower turn on and Erin start to sing, slipping off the bed, she opened the bathroom door and slipped in. She stood watching Erin shampoo her hair, ran her hands across her breasts, and then teased her nipples until they began to hurt from their hardness. Tossing caution to the wind, she pulled the curtain back, stepped up behind Erin and ran her hands from her stomach up to cup her full breasts. Erin braced her hands against the shower wall and moaned when small hands caressed her breasts and moved down to run over her tight stomach. Her breath caught in her chest when Gillian's fingers tangled in the short hair at her apex. Her blood caught fire and juices flowed between her folds from the delicate touch of fingers and the sharp nips from teeth to her back and shoulder blades. She gasped when fingers slipped between her folds and spread her wetness.

On their own accord, her hips thrust forward and a deep moan escaped her lips. Taking Gillian's hand, she shut the water off, turned around and captured her lips in a hungry kiss. In one swift move, she swept her up into her arms and carried her out of the bathroom. Never breaking the kiss, she lowered them down onto the small bed and lay part way across Gillian. Their hands caressed damp flesh, memorizing textures and sensitive places until Erin broke the kiss to nuzzle

a warm neck. Nipping and sucking the soft flesh between her lips, she knew by Gillian's reaction that she had found an erotic area. Gillian moved so that she was able to press her aching clit against Erin's strong thigh, she felt her wetness spread across the warm skin and it excited her more.

"Erin make love to me." Erin lifted her head and looked into deep green eyes; she brought their lips together in a tender kiss and then deepened it. When the kiss broke, she loved every inch of her lover's body taking her closer to the edge. Looking up from where she licked the sensitive area behind her lover's knee, she caught tears sliding down her flushed cheeks. Crawling up Gillian's body, she lay down beside her and wiped the tears from her cheeks with a fingertip.

"What's wrong Gilly?" She kissed her cheek and ran her fingers through her wet hair. "I can stop if you want me to, I don't want to rush anything." As hard as it would be, she would do anything for Gillian. She turned her lover's face so that she could look into her eyes. "I'm in love with you Gilly but we don't have to go any further than what we already have."

"I'm crying because I love you so much that my heart hurts. No one has ever touched me like you do." She gently kissed Erin's lips and pulled back to look deeply into her eyes. "I'm in love with you and I've never let anyone go this far." Those words hit Erin in her heart; she had no idea that Erin was a virgin.

"Gilly we can..."

"No we can't, I can't." She brought her lover's hand up to her lips, licked and sucked on her fingers before pressing them against her nether lips. "I want you to be my first and only." She brought their lips together for a searing kiss and thrust her hips against her lover's palm. Erin broke their kiss and licked her way down to cinnamon curls, licking the wetness before her, she heard a deep moan come from her lover and then her hips thrust against her. Slipping her tongue between swollen lips, she slowly licked until Gillian was thrashing on the small bed. "I can feel it!" Her body was on fire, her muscles clenched in her stomach and thighs; she raised her hips and trust against Erin's lips. "Please Erin...I'm close." She moaned when she felt fingers tease her center, slip into her, and then stop. Pulling her lover's head against her, she let out a yell when her clit was taken between wet lips and sucked. Every nerve ending in her body screamed and then she cried out when her climax claimed her.

When Gillian's climax took her, Erin pushed her fingers in all the way and felt the thin barrier tear. Slowly she pumped her fingers and flicked her tongue against the twitching bundle of nerves until her lover reached another climax. Her own body disobeyed her and tossed her onto the tides with her lover; she screamed out against Gillian and rode the tremors with her until they collapsed against each other. After their breathing had calmed, she crawled up to lay beside Gillian and pulled her into her arms. "I love you Gilly." She kissed her softly and rested her forehead against her lover's. "Love you to Ed." She smiled when Erin gave her a funny look. "Your initials spell out Ed."

"Ohh...OHH GODS!" Her head fell back and her hips thrust forward when small fingers entered her. All she could do was gasp when her neck was sucked and nipped, small fingers moved inside

of her and Gillian thrust against her thigh. She arrived quickly at the edge and went over with her lover, their cries echoed in the small trailer and died down when exhaustion dropped them into the arms of morpheous. They slept deeply wrapped in each other's arms.

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Dave gave the small trailer a strange look and then grinned when he heard the moans coming from within. He waved to the guys who were just getting out of their vehicles and pointed to the rocking trailer. The seven men walked all around the trailer and waited.

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A low rumble came to her ears when Erin awoke from sleep to find moist lips suckling at her breast; Gillian had woken with a hunger that would not be denied. She was straddling her lover's thigh and rocking against her, their grunts and moans echoed in the small trailer as they pushed higher towards their goal. Erin nipped and sucked at her lover's earlobe and then slipped her tongue inside. She stroked the sensitive area and felt her lover shudder against her and cry out; feeling Gillian's juices flow down her thigh sent her over the edge with a loud yell. She hung onto her lover when she felt her world tip and shake, when yells of "Oohh Gods Gilly" came to her ears; she cursed and buried her head against Gillian's neck.

"Gilly we're not alone, the guys are out there." She couldn't hold back her laughter when Gillian tried to burrow under her.

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Dave and the others ran towards the framed out structure and pretended that they hadn't heard or done anything. 30 minutes later when Erin stepped from the trailer, she gave them all an evil eye and waited for Gillian to come out behind her. She chuckled when her lover plastered herself against her back and refused to move. "Come on I'll take you out to your car." She pulled Gillian close to her side and wrapped an arm around her shoulder. When Erin pulled open the door to the rusty Buick, Gillian pressed close against her and ran a finger across her breast.

"Will you come over tonight?" She asked with a shy voice.

"I was hoping that you would come over to my house, we can camp out in front of the phony fire place and roast marshmallows over a candle."

"I never knew what a romantic you were." She leaned up and captured Erin's lips with a kiss that sent her lover's mind to wander to a place not fit for a day working with hammers and other dangerous equipment. They came apart when the sounds of pounding hammers and yells reached them. "Have fun with the boys Ed." She kissed her quickly and got into her car. Erin stood there watching the dust kick up from behind her car and trying to calm her rapid breathing.

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Erin sat down and leaned back against the bridges railing, dropping her head down onto her knees, she sobbed for all that she had lost and would never have again. Hundreds of miles away, Gillian sat on a bench in the park and wiped the tears from her cheeks. She hurt inside and the pain became worse with each leaf that dropped to the ground. She regretted everyday for what she had done; there was no going back and changing what had happened and no way of forgiving herself. She got up from the bench, reached down, picked up an orange leaf and spun it through her fingers. A memory rushed back to her and brought more tears to her eyes, soft sobs tore at her as she walked back to her car.

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The two women raked the leaves into a huge pile then stood back and looked at it with huge grins. Erin threw down her rake scooped Gillian up her arms and dropped her into the pile of leaves.

"Hey why'd you do that?" Gillian struggled to get out of the leaves and settled on throwing handfuls of them at her lover.

Erin jumped and ducked away from the fluttering leaves. "You look like a little wood nymph."

"Cute Ed, now help the wood nymph up before she gets lost in here." When Erin reached down, Gillian grabbed her hand and yanked her down into the leaves with her. They wrestled until they had leaves in places they were not supposed to be. They crawled out of the leaves and Erin fell over onto her back and closed her eyes, Gillian had other ideas, she pounced on top of her lover and attacked her lips with a passion that almost set the leaves on fire. When they broke the kiss, Erin looked around them and saw that not a soul was in sight, she rolled them over until they were beneath a tree and lying in thick soft grass.

"I love you Gilly." Was whispered close to moist lips before they were captured in a deep kiss. Hands explored and clothes were removed to drop to the ground, soft moans were muffled against warm flesh as they moved against each other. Their cries of ecstasy rang out into the twilight hour and joined the rustling leaves. They lay in each other's arms until the darkness and the chill of the air sent them inside where they made love by the blazing fire in the fireplace. Erin kissed Gillian, reached into the pocket of her discarded Levis and then kneeled at Gillian's side. Taking her lover's hands in hers, she looked deeply into her eyes.

"I have never been so happy in my life; I love you with all my heart Gillian." She held out the diamond ring and let the firelight send flashes around the room. "Gillian Vasnikov will you marry me?" Tears filled Gillian's eyes; she sat up and took both of Erin's hands in hers.

"I love you Erin, you make me feel things I've never felt before. Yes I'll marry you." Erin slipped the ring on her finger and kissed her with every feeling that coursed through her soul. Hours went by as they sealed their union until they fell exhausted wrapped in each other's arms.

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Gillian pulled a gold chain from inside her shirt, brought the diamond and gold wedding band up to her lips, and placed a kiss to them. She sat for hours in her car crying and gripping the rings in her hand.

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Erin spun the gold wedding band on her finger as she walked into the house; she had not once taken it off her finger. It would stay there to her dying day and some days she felt like she was on death's threshold as she did now. Walking through her empty house, she went into her office and sat down at the cherry wood desk. Hitting her PC on, she waited until it was done rebooting, went into the Microsoft word program and pulled up what she had been working on for the last year. For ten hours straight she typed until the screen started to blur before her eyes and her fingers no longer hit the right keys. Hitting save, she closed the program then went on-line to check her e-mail. It was the same old thing, SPAM in all its glory and numerous advertisements for Viagra and penis enlargers. She hit delete and watched her screen clear with the exception of one e-mail from a friend up north. It was the only communication she had besides Dave and her workers; she looked forward to the nonsense they talked about. Sometimes it was serious when one of them was feeling drowned in emotions, other times it was to bounce weird thoughts off each other. Tonight was one of those nights when her friend Sonny was feeling the turmoil of a lonely life. She read her words and felt tears come to her eyes and her throat constrict.

Hi Mac

It has been one of those days; I sat in the park today and couldn't enjoy the peace and quiet as I usually do. So many memories invaded my mind that I sat and cried my eyes out for hours. I couldn't even drive home because the minute I got in my car I broke down again. Life really sucks at times, I tried to talk to Bob about it but he's so tired of hearing me whine about my life. Enough of my sucky life, I did come away with a beautiful leaf; it's the most brilliant orange I've ever seen. I pressed it between the pages of my diary next to the first rose that I ever received. It's late here in the snobby north, so I'll close for now.

Sonny

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Hey Sonny

I know exactly how you feel, I spent a good deal of time sitting outside today watching the leaves fall to the grass and the Koi swimming in the small pond. It would have been a beautiful sight if the tears in my eyes hadn't blurred everything. But on a higher note, I've gotten further in my novel. It may never be published but it gives me something to do with the hours in the day. Take care Sonny.

Mac

Erin hit the send button and then closed down her ISP, she sat for long moments staring at the

background picture on her monitor and grinned when her screen saver came on. Marvin the Martian ran across the screen firing his pistol at Bugs Bunny and then disappeared in his spaceship to reappear and start all over. Shutting down her PC, she looked up at the clock on the shelf and rubbed her tired eyes. "Another day gone, another day spent in Hell." Flipping the small light off next to her PC, she wandered through the dark house to her bedroom, striped out of her clothes and crawled into bed. Rolling over, she reached to the pillow next to her and pulled Marvin against her chest. Tears filled her eyes and dripped to her pillow, she wondered if she would dehydrate from all of her crying. An un-restful sleep claimed her and tossed her from dream to dream, never giving her peace.

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Gillian sat in front of the drawing board in her small office, she was designing a landscaping plan for a new industrial complex that was being built in Wisconsin. She had a little over five acres in total to figure out what to do with. She had taken soil samples earlier that week and had to choose shrubs, trees and flowers that would grow best in the acidic soil. At one time she would have jumped in with both feet and loved battling it out to come up with a unique design to set the buildings exterior off. Now it was something she did for a way of keeping her mind off the fact that she was lonely. Giving up, she covered her papers up with a white sheet and shut the lights off. It was already six o'clock at night and she was frustrated and tired. Locking the front door to the building behind her, she headed to her car and then drove the fifteen miles home.

She knew the minute she got in the door Bob would be hassling her about going out with him and his friends. He went out every Friday night to a nearby bar to have drinks and dance the night away. She hated going out, the noise gave her a headache, smoke made her eyes water and turn red and her heart hurt from watching the happy couples cuddling on the dance floor. Trying to sneak in was impossible, their living room looked like the La cage follies of Vegas. Men in all forms of undress greeted her, getting embarrassed was no longer an issue. Scared was more the order for what they looked like compared to her. Her small stature was muscular from going to the gym three times a week and walking every night in the park. They looked like they should be walking down a damn runway in designer gowns.

"Are you coming with us tonight Gill?" Bob asked as he did a little spin in the center of the room to show off his off the shoulder green sequined gown.

"No I'm staying home and read some stuff I downloaded off the Internet. You girls have fun and don't start any fights."

"Come on Gill, it's been two months since you've gone out with us."

"Bob I'm tired, I don't really want to go out." She dropped her briefcase next to the door and was surrounded by begging drag queens. "Ohh for Christ sakes girls I'll go just stop with the begging and whining. But I'm driving myself, all that damn hairspray, perfume and other nasty shit you spray all over your bodies kills me."

After changing into a T-shirt and faded Levis, she tied her cross trainers and took a deep breath

before going back into the living room.

Gill shook his head at her. "We're all set, I really don't know what takes you so long to get ready." Bob picked up his matching clutch purse and fake mink stole before ushering out the other five queens. "Come on Gill the night is wasting away." She grabbed her calfskin bomber jacket and followed with mumbles of curses against men who had better legs than her.

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She sat at the back of the table with the wall behind her, not because she was paranoid but because it saved her feet from being stepped on by huge men in stiletto heels. She nursed the beer in front of her until it was beyond luke warm and was closer to being body temperature from her hands holding it tight. She was bored and felt a headache coming on from the loud pounding music and cigarette smoke hovering over the entire room. She watched as Bob and his friends danced and acted like their normal queenie selves. She had yet to figure out where they leaned their mannerisms from, she had spent a lot of time around all kinds of different woman and had yet to see one act the way drag queens do. Pushing her beer to the center of the table, she pulled on her jacket and rose from her chair. She looked around the room and her eyes locked on a tall dark form across the room. She felt her heart pound in her chest and her temperature go into the red zone. Without knowing, she walked towards the woman and stopped far enough away to listen to her talk. Moving to the other side of the woman, she ordered another beer and stood so that she could see the woman's face if she turned. She didn't know what she would do if it was Erin mere feet away from her, she had acted on impulse alone.

"Who are you kidding Gill, you blew that relationship all to Hell and back."

She eased closer and heard the woman's voice, it was no where as deep and breathy as Erin's. And the perfume the woman wore made Gillian want to gag, it was heavy and flowery like the stuff her grandma wore when she was alive. Somewhere between deflated and elated, she walked towards the door and was stopped by a hand on her arm.

"And where do you think you're going without saying goodbye?" Bob gave her a haughty gaze and then pulled her towards the ladies room. Pushing the door open, he walked past the other women and took Gillian to the corner. "I know you Gill, you were looking around the bar for Erin."

She dropped her head so he couldn't read her expression. "No I wasn't, I was leaving and decided to have one more beer before I left."

"Gill stop looking for her, she'll never be in this State. Look for someone new, for the past year you haven't even looked at another woman." He lifted her left hand up between them. "Why do you put your wedding and engagement rings on when we come here?"

"I don't know, it's just..." She hastily wiped the tears from her cheeks and leaned against the wall. "Yesterday would have been our sixth anniversary if I hadn't fucked up. It still hurts every single day, when will it stop?" Bob pulled her into his arms and held her.

"When you let her go, that's the only way Gill. Just let her and the past go."

Gill pulled away and shook her head. "I can't Bob, I really can't." She walked out of the bathroom and then out the door to her car. She would never forget Erin, she had already lost so much when she left, if she forgot her then her very soul would be gone. She got into her car and went home, it's the only place that she could feel close to the woman who had meant the world to her.

She went right to her room, changed into her sweatshirt and flannel sleep pants and dropped onto her bed. She looked around her sparse bedroom and saw absolutely nothing that told what kind of person she was. She had very few books or knickknacks on the shelves that spanned one wall. On one shelf all by it's self was a Bonsai tree that Erin had bought her years before. Lying back on her bed, she pulled her Alvin to her chest and hugged him. She had left everything that she owned with Erin except for some clothes, her two precious gifts and the picture of them together.

Gillian snuck up behind Ed and saw that she was all hunched over her desk. "What are you doing Ed?" Gillian asked as she leaned over her wife's shoulder. "You're torturing a baby tree?"

"Nooo you're in the landscaping business so you can't tell me you don't know what a Bonsai is."

"Of course I know what a Bonsai is, I've just never seen one with little bows all over it."

"Well since this place is too small for a Christmas tree, I thought this could be the stand in until we get a bigger place. Only problem I ran into is twinkle lights are almost as big as it is. She swiveled her chair around and pulled Gillian onto her lap. "Well what do ya think?"

"I think you're a very thoughtful person and it's perfect." She kissed her softly then deepened it, they kissed for long moments before Erin picked her up and carried her to their small bedroom. They slowly undressed each other, fingers caressed exposed skin and heightened their arousal. Erin pushed Gillian down onto the bed and had her sit on the very edge, she sunk to her knees between her thighs and nuzzled her face between her breasts. Kissing each breast, she then licked the soft flesh beneath each one before circling hardened nipples. Gillian tangled her fingers in her long hair, arched her back and pulled her closer. Soft whimpers came from her lips when teeth pulled across each one. Erin pulled back and looked into lidded green eyes.

"Tell me what you want me to do." She ran her blunt fingernails from ankle to the insides of Gillian's thighs. She felt the gooseflesh rise beneath her palms and the slight jerk in her lover's body.

"The toy...get the toy." Her hips thrust forward when she felt Erin's tongue slip between her folds before she got up to get the toy she asked for. Erin put the leather harness on and then went to stand in front of Gillian, she handed her the dildo and braced her hands on her shoulders. She moaned when Gillian licked the shorter end of the dildo at the same time her fingers were sliding through her wet folds. She coated the dildo with her lover's juices, licked her fingers and then slipped it into her center with gentleness. Finishing fastening the harness, she leaned back on the

bed and spread her thighs further apart. Her voice was deep and throaty when she spoke. "I want you to watch me Ed." Using one hand, she spread her folds and ran her fingers through her wetness. Her hips rose from the bed with each moan and grew in intensity when Erin gripped the dildo and ran her hand the length of it. Her hips jerked when the end inside of her went in further. "Come closer." Gillian pushed herself up and gripped Erin's hips, she pulled her closer until she was able to lick the end of the dildo and then flick it with her tongue. Erin pumped her hips slowly, sliding the dildo into Gillian's mouth. She stopped and was pulled down to her knees between her lover's thighs. Gillian wrapped her legs around her hips and pulled herself closer to her until the tip was brushing against her folds. She took it in her hand and moved it back and forth in her juices until she could wait any longer. "I want you in me Ed, I need you in me."

Erin slowly pushed the dildo into Gillian's center and waited for her to become accustomed to the feeling. Bending at the waist, she braced her hands on either side of her lover's shoulders and licked her lips with the tip of her tongue until she was granted entrance. Their tongues dueled and caressed each other, Erin moved her hips slowly, pumping deeper inside of her. Soft moans and then gasping when Erin thrust faster, Gillian gripped her shoulders and dug blunt fingernails into her shoulders as she was pushed closer to climaxing. Their kiss broke and Gillian latched her teeth on the soft flesh of Erin's upper breast. She sucked and nipped and felt Erin's body tense against her. She threw her head back and gasped when the first tremors raced through her body, she bucked against Erin and took them over the edge with spiraling colors flashing behind their closed eyes. They cried out when the strongest convulsion made their bodies go rigid and then collapse. For long moments they gasped and rode out the last of the tremors.

"I love you Ed." She mumbled into her lover's chest and wiped the sweat running down between her breasts. "Someone left a huge bite mark on you."

"It was that woman that I'm seeing on the side. I told her not to leave marks on me because you'd get mad." She moved her hips slightly and grinned when Gillian moaned and pushed against her. Wrapping one arm and leg around her, she rolled them over so that Gillian was on top. Running her hands from her shoulders down, she cupped her breasts in the palms of her hands and ran her thumbs across hardened nipples. "Wanna see if we can break another harness?"

"And I'll see if I can out do that other woman."

Erin sat up and kissed and nipped her lover's neck while she was thrusting against her. Gillian grunted softly in her ear and then let out a long moan when Erin sucked harder on her neck. Wrapping her arms around her shoulder's she pulled them closer and thrust harder, seconds later they fell over the edge crying out each other's names. When they caught their breathes, Gillian released the buckles on the harness and eased the dildo out of them. Wrapping around each other, they fell into a deep satisfied sleep.

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Gillian woke with a start and tried to catch her breath, she had never had such an intense dream like that one. What bothered her was she was still aroused and could feel the wetness in the

crotch of her sleep pants. Covering her face with trembling hands, she let out a strangled cry and kicked her feet on her bed. Calming down she looked around her room and found her eyes going right to her shelves. Her little Bonsai looked barren now sitting on the shelf, just like her life, barren and placed on a shelf. She rolled to her side, pulled a blanket from the foot of the bed over her and fell asleep hugging Alvin. She dreamed again of her and Erin but not an erotic one.

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The morning was chilly; a light frost covered the grass and leaves, with the sun rising over the back of the house it melted into droplets. Erin sat outside every morning drinking her coffee and watching the world come alive. Between caring for the small garden, she just sat and watched the vegetation grow. With her fictional novel about the early frontier finished, she had nothing to do but surf the net and do a couple short stories for a web page. But today all she wanted to do was sit and stare off into the distance and get lost in her memories. One memory brought a smile to her face, Gillian had wanted to learn construction and showed up at her idea of bright and early, noon.

"How hard can it be to hammer nails into boards, spit over the edge of the roof and scratch your groin?" She pointed to a couple of Erin's guys who were doing just that. "I can do that and probably more."

"Gilly it's not as easy as it looks..." She held out her hands to her wife and backed up a step. "OK, you can help me lay out tar paper and then the shingles."

A bright smile came to Gillian's face, she grabbed Erin's tool belt of the tailgate of the truck, swung it over her shoulder and walked towards the house Erin had been working on. "What are you waiting for, we got work to do."

With Gillian in front of her, they rolled out tarpaper to prepare the roof for shingling. When she looked down at what she had rolled out, she saw how crooked it was, scratching her head, she looked up and saw her distraction again. Gillian in her skintight faded Levis showing off her tight rear. An evil grin covered her face and then grew bigger when Gillian stopped and looked between her legs at her.

"What color are my underwear?"

"You don't wear any."

"And why don't I wear any underwear?" She slowly stalked towards her wife with a sultry look on her face.

"Because I shredded all of them." Her voice went up an octave when Gillian's hands cupped her breasts.

"With your teeth no less, uuhhmm no bra today." She brushed hardened nipples with her thumbs. "Couldn't find any could you?"

"Come on guys, if you keep that up none of us will get any work done!" Dave threw a nail at them and ran when Erin waved her hammer in the air.

"Guess we better stow our libidos until later or we'll end up bare ass naked on this roof with tar all over us." Erin took a deep breath and then kissed Gillian before grabbing her ass as she went passed her. "Come on Gilly lets get this done so I can shred your clothes later."

They finished the roof and Gillian only had eight fingers smashed from her rotten aim with her hammer. She was exhausted and felt great from the hard day of work. She gained a lot of respect for what Erin and her boys did everyday, it was hard work but satisfying when you stood back and took in the completed picture.

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Gillian couldn't concentrate on her job; she kept zoning out and staring out the window in front of her drawing board. It was useless, this had been going on all week and her deadline for the industrial park was due in a week. She dropped her head down on her folded hands and tried to get her mind back on track. She looked up when she heard her boss calling her, getting up from her stool and headed to her office. Her boss was in her late 50's with dyed red hair and a strong Scottish accent, she was one of those people that could look you in the eye and know what was going on in your head. She wished she had a pair of sunglasses to hide her screwed up mind. Taking a seat in front of the plain wooden desk, she crossed her legs, folded her hands in her lap and stared at the floor.

"Gillian, I don't know what your problem is lately but I need you to take stock of it. You've been here a year and up until a few weeks ago your work was excellent, now all of a sudden it sucks, why?" Her deep brown eyes drilled into emerald green and she saw a mass of confusion and pain. She knew the look all too well; she saw it many times in her daughters and granddaughters. "Gillian go see her and that's an order."

Gillian's green eyes shot up to her boss and widened. "What do you mean...go see who?"

"The woman whose rings you're wearing that's who." She pointed to the rings on Gillian's left hand.

"But how did you...I mean I've never told anyone..."

"Gillian, I have five daughters and six granddaughters. I've seen the same look on their faces over men in their lives. You never had to say anything, now where ever she is you go straighten everything out before you dry up and blow away."

"I don't know if I can," She wiped the tears that flowed down her cheeks. "I left her a year ago and I've not spoken to her since, she may have moved on with her life."

"If she has then you have the closure you need, take two weeks vacation, I'll get Bob to finish up

your drafts."

"Yes ma'am I'll do that and thank you." She left the office with her heart pounding in her chest; she had no idea how she was going to do this and if she should. She would write her e-mail buddy and see what she has to say. Maybe she can give her an idea of what to do.

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Erin was feeling claustrophobic; she needed to go somewhere anywhere before she went insane. She had walked along the path that went out in to the open field behind her house, walked around the garden and was now pacing the floor in the large sunk in living room. Grabbing her keys to her truck, she ran out the door and jumped in. Tearing off down the road, she pulled into the parking lot of the Shooting Star. She had ended up there out of habit and decided she might as well go in for a Coke and to listen to the music. They had a live band that night so it would be a different crowd than she was used to. She paid the door fee and walked towards the bar and an open stool at the end, the bartender automatically slid a Coke to her and gave her a bright smile. Taking a sip, she leaned on the bar with an elbow and scanned the room for anyone she knew. Finding no one, she settled on just relaxing and waiting for the band to start up. 20 minutes later, she heard the band tuning up; she turned on her stool and waited for them to begin playing. Three songs into their set, she saw a familiar woman and felt anger rise to choke her. Pretending that she didn't see Sylvia didn't work when the woman walked right over and stood in front of her.

"Well if it isn't Erin 'the bitch' Vasnikov-Dixen, I see you're still all alone." She ran a finger across Erin's breast and got her hand slapped away. "And still cold as ice, tell me, did your little wife ever tell you what I said to her?"

"Get away from me Sylvia before you get hurt." She turned back around and faced the large mirror behind the bar.

"Ohh is that a threat? You're a loser Erin and every woman around here knows it. I made sure that I spread the word around about you. I told them you're a lousy fuck." She laughed at the angered expression that crossed Erin's face.

"Fuck off Sylvia!" She got off her stool and started to move away from her.

"I think you need this to cool off bitch." Sylvia threw her bourbon in Erin's face and laughed some more. She never seen the fist coming, Erin punched her in her jaw and watched her limp body fall to the floor.

"I think you need some manners." She walked over Sylvia's body and was going towards the door when she felt a hand come down on her shoulder and spin her around. Her head was jarred back from a jab to her jaw and then one to her stomach. Bent over at the waist and gasping, she shook her head and spit blood on the floor.

"No one hits my girlfriend you bitch!" The burly man yelled at her and came down with both

fists on her back. She went down to one knee and groaned from the pain in her back. Catching her breath, she jumped up, slammed a fist into his chest and pummeled him until he hit the floor. She staggered towards the door and was stopped by three men blocking her way.

"Come on guys, just let me go home."

"Don't think so, you're going to pay for what you did."

"Just great, three against one, that's really fair."

It turned into an all out barroom brawl, Erin traded punches with who ever came near her. She had blood running down her face, her left hand was useless from stopping a beer bottle and she was well on her way to dropping from the gash in her back. The sound of sirens and the bartender taking out another man with his baseball bat gave her enough time to get out the door. She was grabbed, thrown to the ground, cuffed and hauled to the nearest police car. Sinking back into the seat, she felt a sharp pain from the glass shards in her back and fell over onto the seat, out cold.

An hour later, she woke up handcuffed to a gurney in the hospital. She yanked on her arm and yelled for the officer that she saw standing outside the room in the hallway.

"Hey why am I handcuffed?"

He came into the room and looked down at her bruised face. "You're being arrested for assault and battery, destruction of private property, malicious intent and assault with a deadly weapon."

"What? This is insane!" She yanked on the cuff and groaned from the pain in her body. "I'm the one who was jumped in that bar and I didn't have any kind of weapon!"

"Tell that to the judge." He unlocked the cuff and motioned for her to get off the gurney. "Now put your hands behind your back." She did as she was told and felt the cuff click tight on her wrist, even though it hurt like hell, she didn't give him the satisfaction of knowing.

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It was nine o'clock in the morning and Gillian was sitting at her small kitchen table, Bob had already gone into work after giving her the evil eye. She had just grinned at him and waved her fingers at him. She picked up the phone and dialed a phone number she hadn't called in a year. She chewed her fingernails as she waited for it to be picked up on the other end.

"Hello?"

"Sandy it's Gill."

"Ohh my Gods how are you? It's been ages since I've heard from you!"

"I'm OK, how's things there with you?"

"Same old thing, me, my dog and the TV, what about you any interesting things where ever you are?"

"No, I go to work come home and watch TV. We really have sucky lives don't we?" She laughed with her friend over their boring lives. She took a deep breath and forged on with her next question. "Sandy have you seen Erin?"

"You mean the cold stoic woman that has become a hermit? I see her at the office maybe once a month when paperwork needs to be signed."

"You work for Erin, when did that happen?"

"I wouldn't say I work for her, after you left she stopped working with the guys. Dave's in charge now of the everyday stuff. Fritzzy retired so she could watch her grandkids, so Dave asked me if I wanted a job. Why the concern for Erin after all this time?"

"Sandy, I need to get on with my life and I left things wide open when I left. I need closure with the past."

Sandy could hear the pain in her friend's voice, she didn't know any of the details behind the two women spitting up because Erin refused to speak of it and Gillian had just disappeared off the face of the earth. *"So you've found someone that you want to spend the rest of your life with?"*

"No, I haven't dated since I left. Sandy, I'm coming down tomorrow, can you pick me up at the airport?"

"Sure I can do that, what time does your plane come in?"

"Noon on United flight 1417, please don't tell anyone that I'm coming. I'll need time to get my head together."

"Don't worry Gill, I won't tell anyone that you're coming. You can stay with me and my dog Max."

"Thanks Sandy I really appreciate it."

"Hold on a minute, Dave just came in here like a bat outta Hell."

Gillian played with the ring left by her coffee cup and waited for Sandy to get back on the phone, she heard voices in the background and then Sandy coming back on the line.

"Gill, Dave just told me that Erin's in jail. She was in a fight last night at the Shooting Star. They have a shit load of charges against her and they're holding her until bail can be obtained."

"Ohh shit! Sandy I'm changing my flight plans, I'll call from the air and let you know what time I arrive." She hung up the phone, ran to her bedroom, grabbed her laptop and started throwing clothes in a duffel bag. "What have you done Ed?" Tears came to her eyes and flowed down her cheeks; she wiped at them with a hasty hand, grabbed her bag and ran from her room to the front door.

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The pain was more than Erin could handle, her back ached, all the cuts and bruises on her body but worst of all was her left hand and wrist. It was swollen twice its normal size, her fingers looked like cigars and the heat coming from it could boil water. She was allowed to make her one phone call and was put in a cell with a handful of other women. With one look, she knew it wasn't going to be a peaceful stay. She had already drop kicked one of them when she tried to get a little too close to her. She still had an hour before she went before the judge to see what else they could drop on her for charges. "*Knew I should have just stayed home and sulked.*" At the sound of her name, she looked up and saw an officer pointing to her.

"You Vasnikov come on the prosecuting attorney wants to see you."

"My names Vasnikov, why does the PA want me?"

"I have no idea just get your ass over here, put your hands through the bars and wait until I have the door open."

She did as she was told even though it made her feel like she was an ax murderer and couldn't be trusted. When he put a pair of cuffs on her, she sunk to her knees and felt her stomach roll.

"Get up what ever your name is unless you want dragged to the office."

"Why do I need to be cuffed?"

"Just shut up and move!" He yanked her to her feet and shoved her in her back so that she stumbled down the hall.

"*I pray for your fucking death!*" She thought to herself as he-man handled her all the way to the prosecuting attorney's office. Once inside, he pushed her into a chair and left her there. The second her hands hit the back of the chair and her body weight added to it, she blacked out and fell to the floor face first.

Dave and the attorney walked into the office and saw Erin lying on the floor, Dave hurried to her side and was about to roll her over when he saw her blood-soaked shirt and her purple left hand. The bartender from the shooting Star joined them, he helped Dave lift her up and sit her back into the chair.

"I was told she was taken to the hospital and treated." Dave glared at the attorney. "If she was then why is she bleeding all over the place?"

"Let me call down and find out what the Hell is going on, here take those cuffs off her." He threw the bartender a pair of keys and then picked up his phone.

"Dave I want you to know that I wasn't the one who called the police or pressed charges against her. The fights weren't her fault, Sylvia started it all."

"It's OK, I have an idea what happened. One of Sylvia's entourage called the cops and then she convinced the other assholes to press charges."

The attorney slammed his phone down and cussed. "Go ahead and take her back over to the hospital, they've been looking for her since last night. The arresting officer dragged her out of there as soon as she came to."

"Who was this asshole cop?" Dave asked with fire burning in his eyes.

"I just took care of him, he's suspended and IAD is looking at him very closely."

"Thanks, what about all the charges against her?"

"Don't worry about them, it's amazing what a guy will say when his warrants are waved in front of his face. The others involved in the fight said that Sylvia Granger paid them to press the charges against Erin. So she's all clear, now get her over to the ER."

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Sandy waited by her phone for the call from Gillian, she had to admit to herself that she was still a bit shocked over hearing from her long lost friend. Even more so, since she changed her flight planes as soon as she heard that Erin was in jail. She smiled at the thought of Gillian so predictable, if Erin got a splinter at work, Gillian went off the deep end. She jerked from her musings when the phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Sandy it's Dave, I have Erin over at the hospital. The asshole cop didn't even let her get treated last night! She's in the getting x-rays on her left hand and then they're going to suture her up. Someone smacked her a few times with a beer bottle; she still had glass shards in her when I went to get her at the jail."

Sandy winced at Dave's angry voice, it took a lot for the easygoing man to lose his cool and this was one of the things that did it the quickest. Erin was his childhood friend and if anyone even said a bad word about her, they were soon picking up their teeth.

"Do you need me to do anything?" She asked knowing that he would feel uncomfortable doing things for Erin.

"Can you meet me at her house and baby sit, I need to get home, Belinda works tonight so I need to watch the kids."

"Sure I'll be there soon." She hung up the phone and prayed that Gillian called soon; she just got out of her chair when the phone rang. It was a short conversation, Gillian gave her the time her trip hit the ground and told her she would meet her out front of the main terminal. Looking at her watch, she figured, if she left right now she would make it to Dulles just as Gillian's plane was landing.

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Gillian had chewed her nails down to the quick, her knees bounced from nerves and she was about to scream at the top of her lungs for the pilot to fly faster. As soon as she heard the sound of the landing gear coming down, she had her small duffle bag out from under the seat in front of her and between her feet. Her hands were at the ready on her seatbelt for when the plane stopped and the seatbelt light went off. She counted the turns on the runway, looked out the window and saw the Jetway coming closer. The sound and bounce of the Jetway, then the noise of the other passengers as they readied to de-board the plane. Her seatbelt was off and she was running for the open door and down the Jetway. She felt like she was racing against time, she busted through the front doors of the terminal and had no idea what Sandy would be driving. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw very long curly blonde hair and then heard her name being called. She turned and ran to her waiting friend, dropping her bag; she pulled Sandy in to a tight hug and kissed her cheek.

"I've really missed you, you know that?"

"No more than I missed having you around to terrorize." Sandy gave her another hug and pointed to the no parking zone she was in. "Come on lets get out of here, I have to baby sit tonight."

"Baby sit, I can't picture you doing that." Gillian hung on for dear life when Sandy practically took the car up on two wheels when she went around the sharp turn.

"I don't, so this will be a new experience for me." She cast a sideways glance at her friend and grinned. "That's where we're going now, I hope you don't mind."

She felt her heart slam in her chest and her hands start to sweat. "What about Erin."

"That's who I have to baby sit, Dave's with her at the hospital now and by the time we get to her place he should be there."

She clenched her jaw and growled. "Hospital, you didn't say anything about the hospital!"

"Take it easy Gill, I didn't know until Dave called me before you did. Relax, it can't be that bad." She knew all too well how Gillian was feeling, she had seen it plenty of times in the past.

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Huffing and puffing Dave carried his friend into her house and to her bedroom; he just made it to her huge bed when his arms and legs gave out.

"Damn Erin you weigh a ton!" He arranged her legs so that they were not hanging off the edge of the bed. He looked down at his sleeping friend and shook his head. "I hope you don't give Sandy any trouble." He brushed the long dark hair from her face, placed a kiss on her forehead and blushed. He knew damn well that if she knew what he had just done, she would kick his ass. His head came up when the sound of tires crunched on gravel, going back through the house, he stopped at the front door and watched Sandy and the person he hated most in the world get out and come towards him at a jog.

"Sandy what the Hell is she doing here!" He pointed at Gillian and stepped in front of her to block the door. "You're not welcome here so go back to where ever you've been for the last year!"

Gillian stepped right up to Dave and jabbed him in the chest hard enough to make him wince. "For your information David, I'm still married to Erin and I'm damn well going to see here whether you like it or not! Now get out of my way or I'll knock you on your ass!"

Dave looked over to a smirking Sandy who was standing with her arms crossed over her chest. "I'd move if I was you, I've never seen her this pissed before." He gasped from the pain in his foot and moved out of her way.

"Why didn't you tell me she was coming?" He whispered hoarsely.

"Would it have mattered one bit? How's Erin anyway?"

"Sleeping." He ran shaking hands through his short hair and sighed. "Her left hand had so many breaks in it that the doctors don't know if she'll ever regain full use of it. She may have to have surgery later on."

"Son of a bitch! How the hell did it get so bad?"

"Easy, Tom the bartender said that she blocked a full bottle of beer with her fist and then the cop who arrested her didn't let her get treated for her injuries." He shrugged his shoulders. "We better go check on those two and I still don't like the idea of Gill being here."

"Too bad Dave, they're both grown women." She followed him to Erin's bedroom, they stopped in the doorway and watched Gillian brush her fingertips across Erin's bruised cheek and then take her uninjured hand in hers and place a soft kiss to the bruised knuckles.

"What were you thinking Ed?" She wiped the tears from her eyes and looked to the doorway. "What did the doctor say about her injuries?"

"What...owww!" He gave Sandy a nasty look.

"Be nice Dave; remember I've known you before you were married." She gave him a wide grin when his eyes grew huge.

He repeated what he had told Sandy and watched more tears flow down Gillian's cheeks, he was getting the feeling that she still cared about Erin.

"I have to get going; Belinda has to leave for work soon." He gave Sandy a lingering stare then left the house. Sandy stepped into the room and stopped beside the bed, she looked down at Gillian's small hands wrapped around Erin's larger one.

"She'll be OK, you know her nothing can stop her from doing anything, including proving the doctor wrong." Tear-filled green eyes looked up at her; she sucked in a breath when she saw the pain and undying love in her friend's eyes. "My God you still love her."

"I never stopped; my days have been haunted by the past. Every single day I feel the pain in my heart and I know it's all my fault and I don't know how to fix it." She sobbed softly and looked back to Erin's bruised and battered face. "I can't forgive myself and I know that she can't either."

"Come on Gill; let's go make some coffee, that's one thing I know she has here." Gillian leaned over, placed a kiss to part lips and whispered close to her ear. "I'm here Ed." then got up to follow Sandy to the large kitchen.

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She heard voices in the distance and then felt her hand being kissed but for the life of her, she couldn't open her eyes. Then the soft press of lips to hers and the voice from her dreams. She surrendered to a deep healing sleep and dreamed of Gillian. Sandy pulled the coffee can from the refrigerator and pointed to the Bun coffee pot.

"Put some water in that while I get the filter and grounds ready, she keeps everything in strange places." She reached above her head and pulled down a round plastic dish with the filters in it, prepared the grounds and hit the on button. She noticed the look of awe on Gillian's face and smiled, she wondered how long it would take her to start drooling over the kitchen.

"This place is beautiful." She ran her hand across the center island with it's rose colored marble. "I remember the plans for a kitchen like this, she worked on them when she had free time." She took in the oak cabinets with their brass fixtures, the small sink in the middle of the island, the recessed double door refrigerator and all the other appliances to make cooking easier. What caught her attention was the breakfast nook with the stained glass bordering the window. Each small pane was a humming bird feeding from a flower. "When did she build this house Sandy?" She turned to her friend with an intense but painful stare.

"A year ago I think, I'm not real sure how long it took her." She waved a hand at Gillian. "Come look at this, I know you'll approve."

"Sandy should we really be snooping around while Ed's sleeping?"

"She won't mind, come on." She took her into the sunken living room and pointed to the large fireplace. The mantel that ran the full length of the fieldstone hearth was made from a solid piece of curly maple. The sheen that came from the highly polished piece of wood glowed in the sunlight. Gillian looked up to the cathedral ceiling and saw the large skylight that was directly over the center of the living room. The soft tan leather couch was placed so that when you laid down you could look up at the stars. She stepped in front of the couch and looked down at the coffee table that matched the mantel. Across the top was a piece of thick glass that protected the wood carvings. It was a scene out of a dream, two female warriors stood in a grassy plain with their steeds at their sides. The detail was unbelievable, she felt like she could feel the textures of their clothes and the warmth of their skin.

"This is beautiful, where did she get it?"

"She didn't, she carved that herself, along with the end tables." Sandy pointed to the end tables with their carvings of the same women but the were in different scenes than the coffee table. "It took her about a month on each one, I learned to never come busting in here when she was working." She grasped at her chest and swooned into the leather chair. "She can holler loud enough to make your blood freeze. And the look she gave me one day just about turned me to stone."

Gillian felt her heart drop to her feet, she never thought that Sandy would take a shot at Erin. She sunk down onto the soft couch and let her fingers rub across the warm soft leather. "Are you two dating?" She looked up with hurt showing in her misty green eyes.

Sandy busted out laughing and had to cover her mouth so she wouldn't wake up Erin. "Come on Gill, I never dated Erin, I was helping her with some interior decorating. She may be good with wood work but if I hadn't leant her a hand, you'd be looking at drapes with little ducks and deer's all over them, or worse yet, none at all!"

"Sorry, it's just the way you said...never mind." She smiled a little and then looked around the living room. "She doesn't have a TV or anything?"

"Not in this room, she said this was her room to relax in." She got up and went down a hallway to another cozy room with comfortable furniture, glass top coffee and end tables, brass table laps, thick light blue carpeting and one wall filled with electronics surrounding a large flat screen TV. "This is her TV room, and behind that panel against the other wall is where all her movies and CD's are. She has the entire house wired with speakers so that when she plays the CD player..."

"She can hear music throughout the house." She ran her hand across the soft flannel of the couch and sighed. "This was our dream home, I see a lot of the things we talked about here." Gillian wiped the tears from her eyes and looked to Sandy.

"Let's see if the coffee's done, I know where she keeps her cookie stash to." She wrapped an arm around Gillian and led them back to the kitchen. They sat and drank coffee and talked for hours

catching up on what they had been doing for the last year.

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Erin rolled over and felt the throbbing in her hand get worse, she forced open her eyes in the dim afternoon light and saw the cast on her left forearm and hand. Raising it up onto her elbow, she moaned when a sharp pain radiated through her hand. Her entire body hurt so bad that she couldn't lay in bed anymore, she had to get up and move around to get her muscles stretched. After making a trip to the bathroom, she went out the French doors off the bedroom and into the garden outside. She walked slowly to the bench and sat down beneath the weeping willows and groaned when her back touched the bench. She had no idea how she had gotten home nor how she had ended up with the cast on her hand. Running a hand through her dirty tangled hair, she had vague memories of hearing Dave's voice near her ear and Gillian's. She put Gillian's voice down to her over active imagination and the drugs they must have given her at the hospital. She just sat and took in the sounds of the gurgling of the water in the Koi pond and the tinkling of the small bells in the Japanese water fall. She closed her eyes and tried to relax each aching muscle in her body one at a time until she felt no pain.

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"Maybe we should check on Ed, it's been hours and I haven't heard any noise." Gillian got up from the kitchen chair and walked down the hall towards the master bedroom with Sandy following. Seeing the empty bed, she checked the bathroom then looked to Sandy. "Where is she?" Sandy pointed to the open French doors.

"She's in the garden, most likely sitting on her bench. She spends most of the day out there, even in the winter she sits on that damn bench of hers."

"The garden, she has a garden to, my Gods, I remember her being able to kill astro turf just by looking at it."

"Well, times change Gill. I'll wait here while you go out and check on her. Some things are better done from a safe distance."

Gillian grinned at her. "So you're sending me into the lion pit all alone, gee thanks buddy, love you to."

She stepped through the door and stopped on the gray slate patio, narrowing her eyes, she scanned the back yard and felt tears come to her eyes. She knew right away that the back yard came from one of her sketches. One day when she was waiting for Erin to finish up some paperwork, she had pulled out her notebook and started drawing a Japanese dream garden. Never had she thought about making it a reality, but Erin had done just that. She finally spotted her in the far corner sitting on a wooden bench beneath weeping willows. Walking on the stepping stones, she quietly made her way over to her. She stood back a short distance away and watched Erin, she looked thinner than before and exhausted. Then again a year can change someone drastically. The sun slanted and set off the auburn highlights in her dark hair and set the white at

her temples to blinding. She hadn't noticed the white in her hair when they were inside, but there was no denying it now. She took small steps until she was a footstep away, she reached out and brushed the side of her cheek and let her fingertips trail down the high cheekbone. Softly cupping her face, she whispered Erin's name and waited. When nothing happened, she took a seat beside her and brushed the hair back from her face. She almost shot upward when a large warm hand covered hers and placed a kiss in her palm. Erin mumbled, leaned sideways on the bench and laid down so that her head was in Gillian's lap. She wrapped a long arm around her thighs and let her fingers make small circles there as she drifted deeper into sleep.

Sandy stood in the doorway wiping tears from her cheeks, she walked to where her two friends were sitting and mouthed that she was heading home. Gillian gave her a tearful smile and nodded her head and mouthed the words 'Thank you.'

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When the evening became cooler, Erin shivered and opened her eyes to confusion. She felt the warmth beneath her face and where something was laying across her stomach. Moving her head so that she was looking up, she saw what had to be a vivid dream. Gillian's head was leaning back against the bench, her lips parted and a soft snore rasping in her throat. Erin sat up and stared with unblinking eyes to make sure that if Gillian was just a vision, she would have longer to look at her and burn her sleep softened features into her mind. With a hesitant hand, she reached out and traced the moist bottom lip with a fingertip and felt the warm breath caress her hand.

"You're real." She mumbled from a dry throat. She took Gillian's right hand in hers and ran her fingertips over the diamond ring and wedding band. Tears filled her eyes when she recognized them as the same ones she had given her years before. Caressing the small fingers, she felt them twitch and then wrap around her index finger. She glanced up and watched as Gillian's lids fluttered and then opened to show light green eyes. They stared at each other for long moments not knowing what to do or say. Gillian was the first to move, she brought up a hand and ran her fingertips across a large ugly bruise that ran from Erin's strong chin to the curve of her jaw. Tears filled her eyes when she saw just how swollen and sore Erin's face was.

A myriad of emotions ran through Erin's mind, she studied Gillian with stormy eyes and didn't know if she would rather have her disappear into thin air like in her dreams or stick around so that she could hurt her emotionally like Gillian had done a year before. She took a deep breath and swallowed the tension in her throat.

"What are you doing here Gillian?" She pulled out of Gillian's reach and got up stiffly from the bench. Turning her back on the smaller woman, she closed her eyes and then turned back around to see her still sitting there. "Why after all this time?"

Gillian wiped her eyes and held a hand over her trembling lips, she knew that she wouldn't receive the heroes welcome but the coldness that came from Erin's eyes was enough to rip what little bit of soul she had into tiny shards. "I had to see you..."

"Why to gloat over my shell of a life and my battered body, does it make you feel good to see me all busted up and in physical pain as well as emotional?" She stepped closer and lowered her voice to a deep growl. "Did you come to help that bitch Sylvia put me in the ground, the Gods know that's where I've wanted to be for the past year. Six foot under so that everyone could come by and piss on my grave!" She leaned in further and braced one hand on the side of a frightened Gillian's head. "I've walked through Hell and back and nothing compares to the pain in my heart more than to wake up and find you here. I don't care what you have to say, go back to where ever you've been and leave me to drowned in misery." She walked stiffly towards her house with out a backwards glance, her ears picked up the heavy sobbing coming from the garden and felt her own tears overflow her eyes and trail down her hollowed cheeks. So many times she wanted to see Gillian, now that she was there, all she could think of was how she had hurt her. Walking into her bedroom, she went through the house and to the kitchen to get the cordless phone. Only one person would know of Gillian being here and that was Sandy. She dialed her number and waited for her to pick up.

"Hello?"

"You're a dead woman!" Erin growled into the phone. "Why did you bring her here?"

"For Gods sake Erin calm down, she came to see you. Even though you are the most hateful woman in the world, she came to see you!"

"I don't want to see her, so you come and get her!"

"Ohh nooo I'm NOT! You two need to sit down and talk, I don't know what happened a year ago but Gill came back to talk to you."

"Why after all this time, she didn't even give me a chance the last time so why should I do it this time?"

"Will you listen to yourself, you sound like a spoiled two year old. She called me and said that she was flying down here on a flight tomorrow, as soon as she heard you were in jail, she changed flight plans to get here today."

"So she could see me all busted up and lower than a damn snail!"

"She had no idea and neither did I that you had gotten the shit beat out of you. Grow the fuck up and let her talk or I'll come over there and beat the shit out of both of you!"

"Why should I?"

"You know what Erin, for someone who's supposed to be so damn smart you are really ignorant sometimes. You know what it took for Gill to fly down here and face you, she had to swallow a lot of pride. Do her and yourself a favor and do the same thing. She needs closure and so do you, just hear her out!"

"And what if I don't like what she has to say?"

"Then you've lost nothing more and you can put everything behind you. Give her a chance, I know what she feels but that's something that you have to see for yourself."

"Where is she going to stay, she's..."

"You have four bedrooms Erin, pick one." Sandy hung up the phone, dropped onto her couch and screamed out her frustration. "God damn it Erin but your heads made of concrete, how have you survived the last year alone?" She pulled a pillow over her face and screamed some more out of pure glee. She tossed it to the floor and kicked her feet on the couch. "If they fight it out maybe they can get to the bottom of their problem." She scratched her head and drew her brows down over her nose. "I wish to Hell I knew what happened between the two of them."

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Erin dropped her head down on crossed arms at the kitchen counter and grumbled to her self, she had no idea of what to do. Should she give Gillian a chance to talk to her or just throw her out in the road. She was an emotional mess and was still in shock from waking up with her head resting in Gillian's lap. At the sound of running feet, she looked up to see Gillian run past her and then the slamming of the front door.

"Gods what am I supposed to do?" She wiped the tears from her eyes and ran towards the kitchen door, yanking it open, she went outside and stopped. Listening for sounds, she picked up the noise of gravel shifting under running feet and sprinted to the front of the house. When she came around the corner she looked for Gillian but couldn't see anything in the darkness. Jogging the half mile to the road, she looked both ways and still saw no sight of her. "My truck, I'll...fuck me hard! I don't have it here."

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Gillian ran for all her worth down the back road towards where it came out to the main one, she hoped that she could hitch hike to Sandy's and then have her take her to the airport in the morning. She had tried but Erin hadn't even given her a chance to say a word. She felt worse now than the first time she had left Erin. Tears blurred her vision and a side stitch slowed her sprint to a fast walk, she angrily wiped the tears from her face and began to call Erin every nasty name she could think of. She continued to walk ignoring her surroundings and the sound coming behind her.

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Erin took a guess and started running down the road towards where the main road was, she hoped that was the direction that Gillian took. If not then she would have wasted precious time. She hurt and her ribs were screaming at her but she ran on despite it. A hundred yards in front of her, she caught site of Gillian's form walking quickly on the edge of the road. She picked up her pace and was closing the gap, the loud whine of an engine caught her attention. Up ahead of

Gillian was an extremely sharp turn that driver's forgot about and ended up taking too fast. Adrenaline rushed through her body and put more speed in her steps, blinding headlights came around the corner and lit up Gillian's form.

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All she heard was the sound of the speeding truck and then the headlights pinning her where she stood. Using one hand to block the bright lights, she tried to see where she was walking. Screeching tires and then the sound of the loud horn made her jump. Pain shot through her body as she was thrown through the air and slammed into the hard ground. She tried to breathe but her lungs refused to function, thrashing on the ground, she tried to suck in a breath and began to panic more when she couldn't. She felt hands cup her face and legs straddle her hips.

"Gillian calm down and breath, you're alright I'm here. Just breath for me." Erin started to panic when all Gillian could do was make horrible sounds. Leaning over, she pinched Gillian's nose closed and placed her lips over hers and breathed into her lungs. When she felt her chest rise, she pulled back and watched her. When the air wasn't pushed back out, she applied pressure to the area below her breast bone and pushed gently down on her diaphragm. Breathing into her mouth again, she felt her chest rise and then air come back out of her mouth. She cupped her damp face and looked into terrified eyes. "Can you breathe now?" She wiped the tears from a pale face when Gillian nodded. "I didn't mean to tackle you so hard...that truck...it..." Her chin trembled and then sobs tore through her body, she almost lost Gillian and it was more than she could handle. She buried her face against a warm sweaty neck and cried.

Gillian wrapped her arms around Erin's shoulder's and held her tightly, her own tears slipped down her cheeks to run into dark tangled hair. They lay there in each other's arms for a long time before Erin rolled off her and got to her feet; she reached down and pulled Gillian up. Keeping her small hand clutched in hers, she led her back towards her house. Neither one spoke the entire way back, they walked side by side often bumping into each other as they navigated the uneven ground. Erin took them to the front door and held it open for Gillian to precede her inside, Gillian stood with her head down not knowing what else to do. A shiver went through her body when Erin's hand came to rest on her lower back and take her towards the master bedroom. She looked around the bright bathroom and the large Jacuzzi that took up one wall; she had never seen a bathroom so large before and knew her bedroom in Boston could easily fit inside it.

"Sit down Gillian." Erin led her to the soft bench near the Jacuzzi and then grabbed a wash clothe, wet it in warm water and came back over to her. She tenderly wiped the dirt from her face and the trickle of dried blood from the corner of her mouth. After wiping her small hands off, Erin cupped her face with her good hand. She looked deeply in to the bloodshot eyes and saw tears welling in them. "I'm sorry if I hurt you, that truck would have hit you if I didn't...I'm sorry." She dropped her head and looked at the dirt and grass stained faded Levis that Gillian wore. "I shouldn't have tore into you earlier, Sandy told me you came here to talk.

Gillian took Erin's hand in hers and ran her fingers across the longer one's, she stopped when she got to Erin's pinky, grabbed it and forced it backwards. Blue eyes shot wide with shock and pain, she let out a howl and let Gillian force her backwards on to the floor. When she was spread out

on the thick carpet, Gillian let go of her finger and straddled her hips.

"Don't you ever!" She grabbed a nipple between her fingers and pinched hard enough to make Erin gasp. "Yell at me again!" She did the same to her other nipple. "Got me?"

Erin let out a strangled yes and sighed with relief when her nipples were set free only to have a finger jabbed in her chest.

"I don't take no guff off anyone, not even you." She jabbed her once more then got up off the floor, she reached out a hand and pulled Erin to her feet. "Have any food in this place, I'm hungry?"

Erin dropped her head and scuffed a toe across the floor. "Are spaghetti O's ok?"

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Gillian watched as Erin tried to open the can of Spaghetti O's, her hands were shaking so bad that she was lucky that they didn't get caught in the can opener. She got up from her chair, placed a steady hand over Erin's and nudged her with her hip.

"I'll do this, why don't you get the pot out?"

"Pot, why do we need a pot?" Her blue eyes grew wide when Gillian turned and gave her a raised eyebrow.

"Ed please tell me that you don't eat every single meal out of the can."

"Not all of them, some are nasty cold, so I nuke them." She tried to form a grin but with the look she was receiving, she knew it wasn't a good idea. She sat down at the table and watched as Gillian moved around the kitchen as if she had always been there. "Gillian can I ask you something?"

"Maybe, depends on if it's serious or not, I prefer to have those conversations on a full stomach."

"I guess it can wait until later." She said softly then got up to get a pitcher of iced tea from the refrigerator. "Hell with it, what did you think of the garden?" She turned from what she was doing and saw Gillian stop stirring their supper. A smile came to her face when she saw how scared Erin was.

"I think it's beautiful, I didn't see the whole thing but I know where your idea came from."

"Sorry, I didn't think you would mind if I used your sketch." She poured the iced tea in to two glasses and placed them on the table.

"No I don't mind, I drew that thinking of..." She stopped what she was going to say and closed her eyes.

Erin walked over to her and placed her hands on her shoulders. "We'll talk about this later OK?"

"OK. You have no idea how hard this is." She turned off the burner and just stood there looking into the pot.

"I think I have an idea." She squeezed one shoulder and moved away.

They ate and kept sneaking glances at each other, more than once, Erin caught Gillian blushing. Chuckling at her, she almost choked when Gillian kicked her under the table.

"Hey that's not nice."

Green eyes narrowed. "Never said I played well with others."

"Not anymore you grew sharp claws."

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With the kitchen cleaned up, they went to the living room and sat across from each other, Erin sat on the couch while Gillian took the matching chair. Neither one of them knew what to say nor who should start first. Gillian took a deep breath and squeaked out her question. "Ed I want to know what happened, everything, I need this."

"You mean from before you walked into the trailer at the job site, or further back?"

"Yeah, I want to know everything and don't leave anything out. I'm a big girl I can take it." Deep inside she hoped that she didn't make a liar out of herself.

"Well, it all started when I got a lead on this piece of prime property. It wasn't near any of the more populated areas and still had the farm like quaintness to it. I knew what it was worth so I called the realtor that had it listed and bought it over the phone. If you haven't guessed yet, it's this property right here. After the normal stuff that needed to be done with the building permits, surveying...you know all that stuff." She got up from the couch and wandered into the kitchen; she came out with two cans of Coke and offered one to Gillian.

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"Hey Erin the guys just called, they got all the drywall up, all we have to do is finish it and start painting or what ever."

"Did they get all the windows to seal; I don't want any whistling noises in the middle of winter."

"Come on Erin, these are your boys you're talking about." He grinned at her. "I threatened them with your temper." He dropped down on the tailgate next to her and glanced sideways. "Does Gill know anything about the house?"

"Nope, I've been keeping it a secret for our anniversary. I hope it will be done by then."

"What about Sylvia, has she showed you any swatches or anything?"

"All done, as soon as we get the walls prepped and primed I'll pick up the paint. She's working on the floor tiles for me. I want something special for the kitchen, like a swirling pattern of polished fieldstone. The living room will be hardwood and the rest is going to be carpeting." She lay back in the truck, laced her arms behind her head and stared up at the clouds. "The garden is all done and so is the rest of the yard in sod."

"So it's a race against time and we have what a week and a half?"

"Yep, I just hope that Gilly doesn't get suspicious as to why we're working so late. She knows what jobs we're working on."

"Would it matter if she knew we were working on ya'lls new house?"

"Ohh believe me, the minute she saw the garden she would know."

Three days went by with Erin going to the new house after working on the contracted ones; each time she showed up Sylvia the interior designer she had hired was there to help organize the work. In addition, to flirt with Erin, she would leave pissed each day when she didn't get a rise out of the tall construction worker. After the first day, Erin did her best to never be alone with the woman, she always made sure that one of her guys was with her as sort of protection. When she got home late at night, she showered and dropped into bed next to Gillian exhausted. Gillian never asked her why she was working so hard or where she had been, it was evident that she had been at a site. She came home covered in plaster, paint, wood stain and sweat drenched clothes. Gillian became suspicious when Sylvia started calling the house for Erin while she was at work.

"I'm sorry but she's at work, can I take a message?"

"Who is this?" Sylvia asked in a haughty voice.

"Gill Vasnikov, who's this?"

"Sylvia Patters, I'm doing some design work for Erin. I'll see her tonight so you don't need to worry about a message."

Gillian looked at the receiver and growled. "Bitch! I'll see her tonight." She mimicked the woman's voice and felt anger build up in her chest. "How come you never mentioned this bitch to me Ed?"

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Erin jumped when she had her ass grabbed; she spun around and glared at Sylvia. "Keep your

hands off of me, I told you I'm married."

"So what, I know plenty of men and women who are and it doesn't keep them from sleeping with me." She leaned in close to Erin and brushed her breasts against a thick upper arm.

"I'm not like your sleazy ass conquests so lay off!" She walked to another part of the house and started working with Dave. "I'm gonna kill that slag, she just grabbed my ass."

"Just stay close to me; if she comes over here I'll bitch slap her."

"If you don't I will, I don't need this shit and neither does Gilly."

That night when she got home, Gillian was sound asleep. She showered and eased down into the bed next to her, moving up against her back, she wrapped her arms around her and fell asleep instantly.

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Sandy was working on a flower arrangement when Gillian came into the shop, she looked up and cringed at the pissed off look on her friends face. "Hey Gill what's wrong?"

"You name it! I haven't spent a total of three minutes with Ed since she's started this other project. Now this bitch Sylvia keeps calling at all hours for her and then makes sure she tells me that she will see her later and not to worry about it."

"Do you think she's cheating, I mean it's not uncommon."

"I've called her cell phone at strange hours and I always hear the guys in the background along with the other sounds of hammering, saws and stuff. I trust her, it's this woman..." She dropped down into a chair and wiped at her misty eyes. "What am I going to do if she is though?"

"Gill, Erin's never struck me as the type to do that. Her morals are so high I'm surprised she even swears in front of you." She raised an eyebrow at her friend. "How about if you drop in on her at the site today and look around her trailer. She'll have the plans there for this new place right?"

"Yeah, she keeps everything there and then takes that big carrier thing to the other sites. I'll go at lunch time."

"Oohh no you won't, you'll go right now when she's not expecting it."

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Erin was planning down the edge of one of the kitchen cabinets she had just finished when Gillian pulled in next to her truck. She looked up and gave her wife a bright smile. "Hey Gilly what brings you out here so early?" She pulled her in for a hug and kissed her deeply, when the

kiss ended, Gillian had to hang onto Erin or fall to the ground.

"Maybe I'll come here this time more often." She leaned her head against a broad chest and sighed. "Whatcha working on?"

"Ohh some cabinets for that house we're working on, wanna see?" Erin ran her calloused fingers across the oak cabinet and grinned up at Gillian. "Whatcha think ya like it?"

Gillian ran her fingers across the smooth wood and smiled. "It's beautiful; I didn't know you could build cabinets."

"I didn't know either; this is the first time I've ever tried. This is the last one, tonight the guys will help me hang it and then we're all done." She pulled Gillian into her arms and buried her face against her neck. "I've missed you." She placed a kiss on her warm neck and inhaled her musky cologne. "Maybe we'll celebrate tomorrow afternoon when I finish here. We can go out to supper and then go home and spend the rest of the night in bed."

With the evidence right in front of her, Gillian had no reason to doubt her wife. She just wondered why she was building the cabinets when any other time she just had them brought in. Unless she was going to start doing the cabinetry herself to cut out the other guy, it would mean more money for them but longer working hours for Erin.

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Erin gave all her guys firm handshakes for a job well done; she and Dave hung the red ribbon across the front of the solid wood front door and left for their homes. She was one happy woman when she walked into her and Gillian's small house that night. She was four hours earlier getting home that night than she had been in months. Going right to the bathroom, she showered and then went to their bedroom to find Gillian sound asleep with a design magazine on her chest. Lying down beside her, she moved the magazine and kissed the top of her breast. Running her fingertips across the tops of her breasts, she waited for a sign that Gillian was waking up. It took Erin suckling on a nipple for green eyes to flutter open. Her fingers tangled in wet hair; pulling her wife's head down closer to her body, she moaned when teeth grated across a hardened nipple. "Ohh Gods Ed...what are you doing?"

"Making love to you." Erin growled and lavished attention on Gillian's other nipple. With slow tender touches, she brought Gillian to an explosive orgasm and then joined her with her own just from hearing the long deep groan rumble in her wife's throat. They rode out the last of the tremors and then kissed slowly. "I love you Gilly." She rolled them over so that Gillian was lying across her chest. "I love you Ed and I'm glad you're home early." She brushed the dark bangs back from sleepy blue eyes. "I missed this." She kissed the warm skin in front of her, wrapped an arm and a leg over and around Erin and snuggled her face in her shoulder. "I missed this to, no more long working hours." She wrapped her arms around Gillian tighter and joined her in sleep.

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Erin looked at her watch and ran past Dave on her way to her trailer, she yelled over her shoulder. "Let me know when Gilly gets here, I'm going to take a shower." He waved to her and snickered, it would be a huge day for Erin and Gillian. Erin had everything set, she had ordered a catered meal that would be delivered to the new house an hour after they got there and then the rest of the night they would try out the new bed she had just put in the master bedroom that morning. He was glad that she was so happy no one deserved it more.

She striped out of her clothes ad dropped them to the floor outside of the small bathroom, without waiting for the water to heat up, she jumped in the shower and started to wash her hair of sweat and dirt. She was trying her damndest not to dance around the small shower in a nervous jitter; she had no idea what Gillian would think of their new house.

Sylvia peeked around the end of the trailer and saw Erin sprinting towards it, she waited a few minutes until she heard the shower turn on and then made sure no one saw her. Jogging around to the door, she opened it and went into the trailer. Seeing Erin's clothes all over the floor, she picked up her T-shirt and brought it to her nose. A wide grin covered her face; she dropped the shirt and started to unbutton the silk blouse she wore. She was down to the pleated skirt when she heard the shower shut off and then the door to the trailer was opened. She stood in the middle of the floor looking into furious green eyes.

"Do you mind? We're kind of busy here."

Gillian stepped into the trailer; and stopped within two feet of Sylvia. "Who the fuck are you and what are you doing in here?"

"I'm Erin's lover, who are you?" She felt satisfaction when Gillian gasped. She turned her head when Erin came out of the bathroom with only a short cotton robe on.

She shoved the bleach blonde away from her and stood between her and Gillian. "What the Hell are you doing here Sylvia?"

"We do this every afternoon at this time; I don't know what your problem is and who's that?" She pointed to Gillian.

"That's my wife, now get the fuck out of here and don't you ever come back!" She grabbed her by her arm, propelled her out the trailer door and turned to a now hysterical Gillian.

"Gilly, she's lying. I have never cheated on you." Her head was jarred back from the powerful slap, she tasted the blood in her mouth and when she turned her head, she was all alone. Tying the robe closed, she ran out of the trailer and screamed for Gillian. She took off running after her but she was already in her car and tearing down the road. Tears flowed down her cheeks as she watched Gillian's car become a small dot on the horizon. She turned and jogged back to her trailer to find Sylvia waiting for her. "Get the fuck away from me you sleazy bitch!"

"Looks like your wife is gone but I'm still here. Come on I'll show you a better time than that little scrawny bitch ever did."

"You fucking bitch!" Erin hauled off punched her in the face and watched as she crumpled to the ground. Blood poured from her broken nose and ran down the sides of her face. "Dave get this trash out of here before I kill her!"

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[Continued In Part 2](#)

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~ Haunted past ~

by Larisa

Disclaimer: Yeah yeah yeah, I know and so do you.

Sex/Violence: Of course, there is and not that much and nowhere near like my other ones.

Age thing: Diapers, pacifiers, and or baby bottles, go away!!!

Song by Blake Shelton used without his permission.

Thanks to everyone who helped on this.

Haunted past

By Larisa

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"By the time I got home you were already gone. I swear to you that I never even touched her except to punch her out." She pleaded with her eyes for Gillian to believe her.

"You broke her nose and left her lying there in the dirt?" She started to chuckle until it was all out laughter that sent her to the floor in hysterics. Tears flowed down her face and into the hair at her temples. She looked to see the strange look on Erin's face and laughed some more. She knew it wasn't funny what Erin had done but it was in a way in her eyes. She crawled across the floor and leaned against Erin's knees. "Sorry that wasn't nice." She wiped her face and started to chuckle again. "So who did you hit last night that caused a brawl?"

"Sylvia, then her boyfriend hit me." She shrugged her shoulders and then sighed when Gillian busted up laughing again. "Come on Gilly stop before you bust a gut." She reached down and hauled her up on the couch with her. She waited until she sobered before she looked into her eyes. "I tried to find you; I searched for months but came up empty, where did you go?"

"Boston, did you hire an investigator?"

"Yeah and he said he couldn't find any trace of you anywhere."

"What last name was he checking for?"

Erin lowered her eyes and played with Gillian's fingers. "Gillian Vasnikov."

"That's why he couldn't find me, if he even tried, which I think he didn't and just ripped you off; I never changed my name, it's still Vasnikov-Dixen." She ran her fingers through the hair at Erin's temples and couldn't believe how much white hair was there.

"Don't say it, I know all about the white hair there, I'm getting old Gilly."

"I like it." She ran her fingers through the long strands and tried to untangle the knots. "This is the house you and the boys worked so hard on that you were going to surprise me with?"

"Yeah, stupid huh?"

"No, I was the one who was stupid. I am sorry for everything, for doubting your faithfulness and not trusting you. If I hadn't gone off the deep end and given you the chance to explain..."

"That's in the past; it's over and done with." She looked into Gillian's eyes. "You can stay here tonight if you want, I have three other bedrooms."

Gillian looked at her watch and saw that it was two o'clock in the morning. "Guess it's a little too late to call Sandy, she has all my clothes with her."

Erin got up from the couch, took Gillian's hand and led her to the master bedroom; she opened a dresser and pointed to all the clothes.

"You kept my clothes?" She felt tears fill her eyes. "I can't believe you kept them all this time."

"I couldn't throw them out...I always hoped that you would come back one day." She felt her ears burn and knew that her face was about the same color. "Just pick a room; they all have bathrooms in them. I'm going to take a much-needed shower."

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Gillian picked the bedroom close to Erin's; she went into the bathroom and flipped on the light. She never expected to see such a large bathroom for one of the other bedrooms. The walls were a soft white with slate blue border across the top of the walls. The shower doors were a frosted white with swans etched in each door. Opening the door to a small closet, she pulled out fluffy blue towels and found a terry cloth robe still in its original bag. "You've thought of everything haven't you Ed." Turning the shower on, she smiled when she noticed the two shower heads one below the other. "Just for short people huh Ed." She striped out of her clothes, put them on the floor, and then stepped under the hot beating water. A low moan escaped her lips when the water started to relax her sore muscles. Long minutes went by with her just letting the water work out her aches and pains, a smile came to her face when she thought of where she was. After she was

done, she wrapped the soft robe around her body and went in to the bedroom to turn down the bed. Lying under the covers, she picked up the soft scent of lavender, it was calming and within minutes she was sound asleep.

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Cussing under her breath, Erin tried to take a shower and keep her left arm outside of the shower door. She washed her hair with one hand but knew that she didn't get all of the dirt and grime from her hair. A thought came to mind and then a smile to her face; she had Gillian there to help her. "I'll ask her in the morning if she'll wash my hair for me." Rinsing the soap from her body, she then dried off and wandered to her bed. Pulling back the covers, she slipped under them, pulled Marvin to her chest and closed her eyes. She couldn't help the giddy feeling in her stomach or the smile on her face as she slipped into her dreams of Gillian.

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Sneaking down the hallway to Erin's room, Gillian peeked through the door and held back a snicker. Erin laid on her side with her arms wrapped around Marvin the Martian. Drool dripping onto her pillow from her parted lips. A rasping noise came from her throat and then a deep moan as she rolled onto her back taking the blankets with her. Gillian covered her mouth to keep back the moan at seeing Erin's breasts rise and fall with each breath. Feelings long forgotten rose and floated around in her belly. "Gods your beautiful Ed." She whispered and then leaned against the door to watch Erin sleep.

Erin felt like she was being watched, her heart sped up and every nerve ending in her body went on alert. Peeking towards her bedroom door, she caught the aroused look in Gillian's green eyes. Instantly she went from intruder alert to curious, she took a deep breath that made her chest rise and heard Gillian's breathe hitch in her throat. Stretching her arms up over her head, she turned on her side, propped her head on a bent elbow and gave Gillian a crooked grin.

"Morning Gilly, what time is it?"

Gillian ran a trembling hand across her face and stuttered. "Uuhhmm...about that...time."

"If you're hungry, we'll have to walk to my truck and then either go to the store or out to eat."

"Let me get a shower and then we'll go out to eat." *Because if I don't move right now I'm going to do something completely asinine.* Gillian turned and ran right into the door jam with her forehead. "Good shot Gill knock yourself senseless. Don't you laugh Ed, it's not funny!" She rubbed her forehead and walked towards the bedroom she had used. The entire time she was trying to get the picture of a seductive Erin out of her mind and not trip over her own feet. After taking a cold shower, she wandered back in to Erin's room to get clean clothes. The hair on the back of her neck stood up and sent shivers down her spine; she turned and came face to breast with Erin.

"Sorry Gilly I didn't see you." Erin removed the towel she had been drying her hair with and

smirked at the slack-jawed little blonde.

"You did that on purpose Ed."

"What?"

"Played with my weakness that's what, rat bastard." She kept on mumbling that all the way back to her room while Erin snickered at her flushed face.

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They walked along the edge of the road towards the Shooting Star bar, bumping shoulders, hips, pushing each other and other childish actions. Erin draped an arm over Gillian's shoulder and pulled her against her side. She had missed having a friend around and that's what Gill had been to her in the past, her friend, lover and entire life. She hoped that Gill being there now was permanent and not just to put an end to their haunted past. She would have to ask her what her intentions were and deal with the future like an adult. Her truck was where she had left it; the only problem was it looked like a group of graffiti artists had attacked it. The words bitch, dyke, slut and other names were spray painted across the entire body.

"Didn't like the color of it anyway." She grabbed a rag and a can of paint thinner from the back and cleaned of the windshield and windows.

"It had to be Sylvia's little friends." Gillian said from the other side. "They spelled muffin diver wrong, you're now a mufin diver."

Erin grinned from where she was in the bed of the truck. "Cool, I hope it has good benefits and is as enjoyable as being a muffin diver."

"When did you become so crude?"

"When I started talking to the voices in my head and right now they're screaming that they're hungry." She crawled over the quarter panel and slid to the ground with a groan, opening the passenger door for Gillian; she helped her in and then went around to the driver's side. That's when she found out how sore she really was, it made sweat break out on her forehead and upper lip just trying to get in. "Maybe I should have just laid down in the back and had you drive."

"We can just go through MacDonald's drive thru if you want."

"Nope, it's been months since I've gone anywhere for breakfast, a meal period. How's Billy's sound to you?"

"Better than MacDonald's, I've missed their western omelets and hash browns."

Erin pulled out onto the road and headed in the direction of Billy's, she cast a quick glance to Gillian and felt her heart hitch in her chest. Gillian was the same woman who she had spent years

with but different as well. She had small lines at the corners of her eyes and mouth and a sharper jaw line, it was if she had matured more in the past year. She was also emotionally harder in some ways to, more sure of herself.

"What are you looking at?" She turned her head and gave Erin a raised eyebrow.

"You, is that a problem?"

"Only if you have evil intentions."

"You mean like pointing out the gray hairs at your temples?"

"Don't talk about them, they'll call all their friends and then I'll look like you."

"So that's what happened, I thought it was from looking in the mirror every morning and scaring myself gray."

"Haa, even on your worst day you couldn't scare any one with your looks." A light blush came to Gillian's face with her next words. "You're still the most beautiful women I've ever seen." She turned and looked out her window not believing what had just come out of her mouth.

"Only in your eyes Gilly, ya know I've never seen you blush so much." She snorted when Gillian smacked her in the thigh. "Oohh lookey no ones here." She pulled into a parking space, moaned, and groaned when she got out of her truck. She tried to beat Gillian to the passenger side door but her body wasn't letting her. "I would have opened it for you."

"I know you would have, I was thinking that maybe I should have helped you out." She took Erin's forearm and steadied her. "Are you all right, you look a little pale."

"I just moved to fast that's all."

"When we get home you're not moving for the rest of the day." Gillian was shocked at what she had said; her home was in Boston or was it? "And I need to call my room mate; he's probably going nuts by now wondering where I am."

Erin smiled down into Gillian's face and knew she had realized what she had said; she could only hope that's what she considered the house. "You have a male room mate?"

"Yep, come on I'm starving and you look like you could fall down."

After ordering their breakfast, they sat in a comfortable silence before Erin brought up Bob. "So what's Bob like?"

"Ohh he's one of a kind, you know the bouncer from that movie Striptease? That's what Bob looks like on a normal workday. Friday night it's an evening gown and a very big drag queen who thinks he's Diana Ross. He's a good guy, does all the cooking and cleaning and thinks he's

my mother."

"Bet that goes over real big?" She sipped her coffee and noticed the slight grin on Gillian's face. "What's the grin for?"

"Oohh I was just thinking of him and all the Queens running around the apartment trying to get dressed for the bar scene, very scary when they start using duct tape."

Erin crossed her legs and groaned she just couldn't see doing that, tight pants bothered her, tucking and taping would kill her. "Must be the reason they talk so funny, gonads being strangled." She moved her coffee cup so that the waitress could put her plate down and nodded her head at her. "Real honest to God food, I'm used to the breakfast things ya throw in the nuker."

"Cardboard's cheaper and has more nutrients than that stuff, why don't you cook?" Gillian poured enough maple syrup on her pancakes that they looked like they may drown.

"It's hard cooking for just me, I hate having to eat the same stuff for a week."

"Doesn't anyone ever come to see you?" She knew she was fishing for information on if Erin had dated anyone or not.

"Nope, yesterday was the first time anyone's been there in about nine or ten months. I'm pretty much a hermit; I play around in the garden and on the internet."

Gillian smacked her forehead and groaned. "I need to check my e-mail; I'm expecting to hear from one of my clients about a contract."

"What do you do in Boston if you don't mind my asking?"

"Same thing I did here, it's a sister branch so I had no problem getting a job. Bob works with me so that's how I found a place to live so quickly. It took some getting used to; the place is so damn feminine!"

"Uuhmm Gilly, you're not exactly a bull dyke."

"Ed, I stop at pinks, mauves, frilly things on the toilet and faux furs. Bob shudders at leather jackets and work boots. It took me weeks to convince him that my bomber jacket would not attack his girlie coats in the closet."

With their meal finished, they fought over the check until Gillian decided that biting Erin's hand worked better. She took the check up to the register and snickered at Erin who was rubbing the tooth marks on the side of her hand. She gave her a wicked smirk and pulled her up from her chair. "Come on old woman, I hear a couch calling your name."

"No, more like the Jacuzzi and a bottle of aspirin, maybe after a week in there I'll feel almost

human." She lost again when Gillian took the truck keys from her hand and helped her into the truck.

Wicked arousing thoughts went through Gillian's mind of her and Erin in the Jacuzzi, the things she would love to do to the tall dark woman.

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The hot water bubbled up around Erin's breasts, a deep moan rumbled at the back of her throat to sound like a purr. Turning the jets on, she sunk lower in the water and let the flow massage the stiffness from her aching body. She rested her left arm across the thick padding and closed her eyes. Hearing the Jacuzzi's motor change pitch, Gillian stepped into the master bath and watched Erin. Her green eyes traced the sharp angles of her face down to a muscular shoulder, fingers twitched with want, she had always loved the feel of the thick muscles flexing under soft skin. Walking closer to her, she sat down on the bench behind Erin and let her fingers trail over the damp skin. Goose flesh rose under her fingertips and a soft sigh came to her ears, moving her hands to the thick shoulders; she dug her fingers into them and worked the stiffness free. Erin's head fell forward with a deep groan. It had been a long time since her shoulders had been massaged; she knew she would give up anything to have her whole body massaged.

"That feels so good Gilly, I've missed this." She covered a small hand with her own and squeezed gently.

"What do you want for lunch and don't you dare say nuker food."

"What did you get at the store; remember I was just the cart pusher?"

"That's so you couldn't fill the cart up with junk and nuker food, we have hamburger, lunchmeat, soup and breaded fish fillets."

"How about fish sandwiches with cheese on them?"

Gillian pushed the damp hair back from Erin's face and smiled. "OK, I'll call you when it's done." She ran her fingers through her hair one last time before leaving the bathroom. *You would have kissed her wouldn't you? Of course you would have, you've thought of nothing else all day long!* She ran her finger across her lips and thought about what it would have felt like to kiss Erin. *You're a pig Gill; it's been a year since you've seen her, what makes you think she would want you to kiss her.*

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"Ohh little Gilly are you ever in for a big surprise, you had me right here and you ran away. Guess I'll have to make it more obvious for ya." She chuckled and sunk back into the hot water thinking of wicked things to do to let Gillian know that her feelings never changed. Hearing Gillian yell that lunch was ready, she crawled out of the Jacuzzi, pulled a threadbare midriff tank top on and a pair of blue silk boxer. In her bare feet, she wandered out to the kitchen and stopped

when she saw what Gillian was doing. She wore a headset with microphone and was speaking a couple hundred words a minute and gastrulating with each one. Tracking the thin cord, she saw that it was plugged into a laptop. Easing up behind her, she goosed her and jumped back when Gillian let out a howl.

She spun around and pointed a finger at Erin. "Why'd you do that?"

"I wanted to see what it would look like in words." She scanned the screen and snorted. "Here it is it's a lot of A's. Whatcha writing...voice typing what ever ya call it?"

"Answering my e-mails, thank God Sandy brought my stuff by. I still need to call Bob." She placed two plates on the table and pointed at Erin. "Sit down and eat before the fish turns to rubber."

"I'm used to rubber food, ya should try the lasagna, and the noodles can patch tires." She took a huge bite of her sandwich and moaned. Licking her lips, she saw flames erupt in Gillian's eyes. Running her tongue over her fingers to get the tartar sauce off, she held back a snort when Gillian sunk lower in her chair and cleared her throat. "These are good Gilly." With each bit she took, she felt the temperature in the kitchen getting hotter. When she was finished, she pulled a quart of strawberry ice cream from the freezer. "Want some I'll share?"

"You just ate three sandwiches and now you're going to eat ice cream?"

"Yep." She dipped the spoon in to the container and licked at it while watching Gillian. Holding the spoon out, she fed Gillian and then smeared it on her chin. Leaning forward she licked the ice cream from her chin and lips and found arms wrapped around her neck and the ice cream smashed between them.

"You know you've been teasing the Hell out of me all day, what do you want Ed?"

"Everything and more." Slowly, she leaned in closer to Gillian and stopped a breath away from her lips. "What do you want Gilly?"

"Today, tomorrow and every day after that." She brought their lips together in the softest of kisses, mere touches of their lips until Gillian couldn't stand it anymore. She bit down on Erin's bottom lip hard enough to make her groan and then sucked it until she gave her entrance. Their kiss was deep and sultry, igniting desires long forgotten. Soft moans were swallowed and hands roamed under clothes and across warm flesh. Without breaking their kiss, Gillian walked Erin backwards until she came up against the counter. She ran her hands up the front of her shirt and cupped firm breasts in the palms of her hands. Erin broke their kiss and gasped when Gillian lightly brushed her thumbs across her nipples. Moisture built up between her thighs and tingles ran down her spine. Tangling her fingers in Gillian's hair, she brought their lips together for a heated kiss that left them weak in the knees.

"For Christ sakes you two, go to the bedroom." Sandy smacked Gillian on her ass and dropped down at the kitchen table. "Ya know it's not nice to do that in front of someone who hasn't had

sex in years."

"Who's fault is that Sandy 'She's not my Type' Barnes?" Erin sat down and pulled Gillian down onto her lap. "Stop being so picky."

"I'm not picky, I just want someone who has all her own teeth and doesn't chew Beechnut." She leaned closer to the couple. "You have to have female relatives somewhere, even if they're in a foreign country!"

Erin grinned at her and wiggled her eyebrows. "I have a cousin in Ohio; she chews Skoal, is that better."

Gillian patted her friend's shoulder and gave Erin a roll of her eyes. "Sandy try going to a gay bar for once instead of the straight ones."

"Been there done that, got scared and came home with gray hairs." She dropped her head down onto the table and mumbled.

"So what brought you over here?" Gillian asked and leaned back into Erin's chest.

"I was bored and I wanted to make sure that you two hadn't killed each other, and to pass on a message from my royal pain in the ass neighbor. Dave says that they're having a problem with one of the houses, something about the cedar shingles keep splitting or something."

"I'll go out tomorrow and see what the problem is, let's get some iced tea and go out in the garden." She looked down at her and Gillian's ice cream soaked shirts. "Better yet, Sandy you get the iced tea while we go change."

The three of them sat outside, Gillian told Sandy what had happened between her and Erin a year ago and how it was all her fault that they had split up. Sandy sat with her mouth hanging open and shook her head at Gillian.

"You ignorant little shit; why the Hell did you think that? I could have told you nothing was going on, all you had to do was ask me."

"I was pissed, confused and the only thing I could think of was to run away." She shrugged her shoulders and leaned into Erin's side. "When I walked into that trailer and found Sylvia half naked, I went insane."

"And drove Erin in the same direction, ya know what we to do is go to the bar and try and find me a woman."

"Ed are you getting the hint that Sandy's a horn dog?"

"She's worse than that, she looks like she's about to hump poor Buddha by the water fall."

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With plans made for the three of them to go out the following night, Sandy left for home and a night in front of the TV. Erin and Gillian went back in the house to make supper, at least Gillian was going to cook, and she gave Erin explicit orders to stay away from the stove.

"Just sit there and cut up the potatoes and don't cut your fingers off."

"What else we having besides potatoes?"

"I was thinking baked chicken in wine and steamed baby carrots." She pulled the chicken from the refrigerator along with the bag of carrots.

She looked over her shoulder and raised her eyebrows. "Gilly I don't have any wine, I don't keep any alcohol in the house."

"All taken care of Ed, I got this at the store." She held up a twelve-ounce plastic bottle of blackberry Merlot. "And I noticed the box of Twinkies you snuck into the cart."

"That wasn't me that was a little troll that ran past the cart, he..."

"Uhh huh," She gave Erin a raised eyebrow over twinkling green eyes. "Did he throw the Hershey bars in there to?"

A huge innocent grin came over her features. "We got them to?"

"You are a slick one Ed." She put the chicken in the oven bag, added the wine and other spices and herbs she pulled down from the cabinet and placed it inside a roasting pan and then put it in the oven. "While you're killing the potatoes, I'm gonna call Bob and let him know I'm still kicking." Erin watched as Gillian left the kitchen, her eyes followed the sway of trim hips and the flexing of a tight ass. A low moan rumbled in the back of her throat when tingles rolled around in her stomach and fell south. She dreamed of where they would be if Sandy hadn't showed up and thrown cold water on them. The potatoes forgotten, she sat with her eyes half lidded and a crooked grin on her face.

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Gillian waited for Bob to pick up; she knew he was going to get his panty hose in a bundle over where she was and what she had done. She winced at the high voice he used to answer the phone and the sound of his fingers snapping.

"The Queen is in, how can I help you?"

"Hey Bob I just wanted to let you know I'm alive."

"Girlfriend you are sooo lucky! I was going to call out the boy scouts to search for you and then

I thought what the Hell, I'll just let them come over and have a weenie roast in the back yard." His voice dropped to a menacing tone. "Where are you?"

"Sit down Bob, because when I tell you, you'll fall down and snag your control tops."

"I'm not wearing any; I'm wearing one of your sports bras, G-string and my stiletto heels."

"EEWWW! Gods I didn't need that visual! I'm at Erin's house."

"WHAT! I can't believe you Gill, after all that belly aching you've done over the last year you end up in the snake pit."

"It's not like that Bob; I was the one who screwed up." She told him about what happened and felt like she had been repeating the story all day.

"I can't believe you are that weak Gill, one kiss and you're renting the U-Haul!"

"I don't need a U-Haul; she kept all my clothes and stuff."

"Girlfriend those clothes are out of style! You'll be a fashion flop!"

"Bob, all I wear are Levis and T-shirts so I don't think I'll have anything to worry about. Besides, I'm in West Virginia and they wouldn't know a designer suit from a Jaclyn Smith from K-mart."

"So what are you going to do?"

"I'm going to spend my vacation here and see how it goes..."

"You're staying Gill just face it. You're still in love with her, so it's meant to be. If you need anything you just give a yell OK?"

"Thanks Bob and I promise not to take this too fast." She hung up the phone and sunk back in the soft leather of the couch, placing a hand over her heart, she felt it speed up with the thought of staying with Erin for the rest of her life.

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Erin was still off in her own little world when Gill came back into the room, she waved a hand in front of unblinking eyes and resorted to snapping her fingers and pulling the hair on Erin's arm.

"What huh, I didn't do anything."

"Yeah I've noticed are you going to do anything with the potatoes before they turn brown?"

Erin gave her an innocent look and a crooked smile. "Sorry, went off somewhere. She scoped the wedges up in her hands and dropped them into the pot. "All done, what about the bird, when will

it be done?" Gill looked at the wall clock and counted in her head.

"In about two hours or when the legs fall off."

"OK, I'm going out in the garden to weed." She placed a soft kiss on Gill's lips and went out the kitchen door.

Gill spoke to herself as she watched Erin run out the door. "She's like a little kid going out to play in the yard." She cleaned up the small mess they had made in the kitchen and then went out to see what Erin was doing. She found her pulling weeds around the small bridge and talking to herself. "She's been alone too long, she talks to the weeds." Walking up onto the bridge, Gill's eyes grew large at the sight of all the fancy Koi swimming in the pond. "They're beautiful Ed; I don't remember this in my sketch."

"I added it; I like Koi and thought the pond would look nice. I moved your water fountain to higher ground so that it looks like it's flowing into an underground stream that feeds the pond." She stood up and led Gill over to the trickling fountain with the Buddha sitting beneath a large Bonsai. Tears came to Gill's eyes at the sight of the tree; hers was still in Boston in her bedroom.

Erin noticed the unshed tears and pulled Gill into a gentle hug, resting her chin on top of a blonde head she whispered. "What's wrong Gilly?"

"The Bonsai, it reminds me of our first Christmas." She wiped tears from her cheeks and leaned back into Erin's warmth. "I still have it ya know, it's in my bedroom in Boston."

Erin pulled her tighter against her and kissed her temple. "I do all the Bonsai's for the landscaping jobs, so I can make you another one."

"You've developed quite a green thumb haven't you?"

"It gives me something to do and it's calming."

They pulled weeds together and replanted some flowers that had died off or gone out of bloom. Gillian was amazed at all the different types of miniature trees and shrubs that filled the garden. Her favorite spot was Erin's bench beneath the weeping willows and cherry trees. While sitting there resting, she could hear the soft tinkle of the bells in the fountain and it reminded her of a Temple in a far away place. After an hour or so, she went in to check on their supper and started preparing the other courses. She had just pulled the chicken out when Erin came in drenched in sweat and filthy with dirt.

"Suppers ready so go get cleaned up and I'll get our plates ready. Do you wanna eat out on the deck?"

"There's a couple of bug torches out there we can light and the awning switch is near the door."

Gillian lit the torches and flipped the switch on the wall; she hadn't even noticed the awning

snuggled up against the roof. It rolled down, stopped a few feet over the patio, and then bug screens dropped down to enclose the entire area. Grabbing a few candles from the kitchen, she placed them in the center of the table and then brought their supper out. Erin stepped behind her and kissed her cheek.

"It smells good; it's been a long time since I've eaten like this." She held the chair out for Gillian and took the one next to her. They drove each other nuts with the seductive ways they were eating and feeding each other. Temperatures rose as well as their pulses before they had finished eating, Erin pulled Gillian over to her and kissed her passionately. Breathless, they pulled apart and gazed into each other's eyes.

"Would you consider dating me?" Erin asked in a deep sultry voice.

"Date you? Ed we're still married, what do you mean date?"

"We've been apart for a year and I thought it would be a way of getting reacquainted. You know maybe go out to supper before we go out tomorrow night with Sandy. Gillian ran a fingertip across Erin's bottom lip and smiled.

"OK, we can do that. Let's finish eating and then clean up so we can watch a movie or something."

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They lay on the couch together in the TV room watching one of the videos that Erin had in her collection. It had been years since Gillian had seen the movie *Romancing the Stone* with *Michael Douglas* and *Kathleen Turner*. She loved the smoky voice of the actor and chalked it up there with Erin's deep voice. When Erin whispered in her ear it always sent chills through her body, right now the warm breath on the back of her neck was doing that and then she heard a soft snore. Turning the volume down, she pulled Erin's arm around her tighter and closed her eyes. They slept to the early morning hours, when Erin opened her eyes; she caught sight of Gillian's tousled blonde head resting on her chest. Running her hand from hip to shoulder, she felt her snuggle closer and mumble in her sleep. She had missed this most of all, waking up and having Gillian lying across her. Easing out from under her, she went into the kitchen and put on a pot of coffee before going to take a shower. When she was finished, she came back out in her robe, got them both cups of coffee and sat down on the couch next to Gillian. Giving her a soft kiss, she waited for green eyes to open.

"Morning Gilly, I brought you some coffee." She waited until Gillian had pulled her self up before handing her the cup.

"I can't believe we slept on the couch all night."

"I do it all the time, I can't remember the last time I stayed awake to see a whole movie." She sipped the rich brew and then looked down at her bare feet. "Gilly do you want to go with me to the site today, I have to check on those cedar shingles."

"Let me get a shower first and then we'll stop and get something to eat before we go there."

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Gillian gazed at the huge cedar house that Erin's crew was building; it looked similar to theirs but had an extra wing to the one side that was a four-car garage. She took Erin's hand as they walked up closer to where all the banging of hammers and cussing was coming from. Tilting her head back, she tried to see who was on the roof but the sun blinded her.

"Who's up there Ed, I can't see?"

"That's my boys up there with the exception of a new guy, her names Billy."

"Excuse me," Her one brow rose in confusion. "Is Billy a he or a she?"

"It's most definitely a she by the tits, now if you look at her build in general, she makes the guys look like Pee Wee Herman's. Come on let's see what the problem is."

When they came upon the pile of cedar roof shingles, Erin picked one up, pulled a micrometer from her pocket and measured the thickness. Tossing it back on the pile, she picked up another one and repeated the process.

"No wonder why they keep splitting, look at this." She showed Gillian the difference in width of a good shingle and a split one. "Not only are they too thin but the damn things are cut wrong. See how the grain of the wood is going diagonally across the shingle. Water will never flow right off this; it'll cross over and get under the other shingle."

"So are you going to send them back or just trash them?"

"We'll keep them for kindling or what ever and the dumbasses that brought these are going to replace them for free." She pulled her cell phone and dialed Sandy's number. "Hey sandy can you get a hold of Simpson's and tell them I said to bring another load of shingles." She listened for a few seconds and then replied. "Nope, we're not paying for them, if he says why not, tell him that I have diagonally cut shingles and the wrong thickness." She hung up the phone and snickered. "Ohh are they gonna be running for the hills."

"Ohh you mean Sandy's temper is going to blow the trailers roof off because of their incompetence?"

Erin turned when she heard a car pull up and Sandy get out. "Ohh ohh she must have forwarded her calls, she's never been out to this site before."

"Hey guys, where's these shingles so I can throw them at that dipshit, because of him, we're gonna be behind schedule on this contract by about a week. That's money out of our pockets!" Erin put a hand on her shoulder to calm the small woman down.

"Take it easy Sandy before you keel over, I'll come out and we'll get it done on schedule." Sandy did fall over with that said, she leaned into Erin's side and fanned her face with the papers she held in her hand.

"You're going to actually do something besides play with little trees?"

"Yep, can't have you going off and killing people because of a over dead line contract fine. I might even get Gilly here to help."

Gillian was paying any attention to them, she was listening to the yelling coming from the roof.

"Don't you dare throw that at me, I'll bust your ass in a heartbeat Douggie!"

"Come on Billy Bob, flex them pecs for us!"

"Flex this you little twit!" She grabbed her crotch and gave him a lewd gesture.

Shingles came flying off the roof in the direction of where Erin and the other two women were standing. Shaking her head and grumbling, Sandy stepped closer to the house, tilted her head back and yelled.

"KNOCK THE SHIT OFF YOU MORONS! THE BIG BOSS IS HERE!" Her eyes went wide when she saw the can on the edge of the roof tilt over and a brown liquid fall towards her. It was like a slow motion movie, she closed her eyes and threw her hands over her head. The liquid splashed down and covered her from head to toe.

"OOHH SHIT! Sandy don't move and keep your eyes closed." Erin ran to her side and kept her head down so that she was looking at the ground. "Gilly there's some towels in the truck..."

"MOTHER FUCK!" Billy yelled and then launched off the roof to drop to the ground beside Erin and Sandy. "I told him not to throw stuff, Doug knocked over that can of wood stain." She pulled her shirt off and used it to wipe the stain from Sandy's hair. "Look up a little so I can clean you up a bit." Billy's pale blue eyes narrowed as she tried to keep the stain from running further into Sandy's eyes. "I'll kick his ass later, you need to get to a shower quick."

Gillian ran up with old bath towels in her hand, stopped beside Erin and knew her jaw was laying on her chest. Billy was a miniature version of Erin, she was the same height as Sandy but with a bulkier body than Erin had. The muscles flexed in her arms and upper chest when she moved and if Sandy would have had her eyes open, she would be drooling.

"Gilly close your mouth before Doug whips a shingle in it." Erin leaned down and whispered into Gillian's ear. "She's my freakin twin huh? I think I'll call her mini me."

"Ohh yes she is," Gillian whispered back. "Does Sandy know?"

"Does Sandy know what and why are you two whispering anyway and about me?"

Erin handed the towels to Billy and grinned into her pale blue eyes. "Hey Billy can she open her eyes yet?"

"Yeah, I think it's safe now. Damn stain is at least water soluble."

Erin placed a hand on Sandy's shoulder and turned her to face Billy. "OK Sandy open your eyes, but don't fall down or anything."

She opened her eyes and gasped out. "Ohh my God!" She reached out and fell forwards into Billy's arms. Billy looked towards her boss and Gillian.

"What did I do?" she looked down into the peaceful face of an unconscious Sandy.

"Nothing yet." Gillian chuckled at her shocked expression. "Take her home so she can get cleaned up." She looked up at Erin and rose an eyebrow. "That's OK isn't it?"

"Yep, go ahead and take her to your place it's closer and when she wakes up have her give me a call."

They watched Billy scoop Sandy up in her arms and carry her towards a burgundy Chevy truck. Gillian wrapped an arm around Erin and leaned into her side.

"You knew about Billy didn't you and you never said anything to Sandy?"

"I let the fates handle it, worked kinda differently than I expected though."

Chuckling at the look that had been on Sandy's face, Gillian replied. "You know how kids ask their parents how they met? Can you see Sandy telling the kids 'I got wood stain dumped on my head, and that's how I met your Ma.'"

"Gilly, you've already got them married with kids and they haven't even shared one word yet."

"So what, one look into those baby blues and Sandy was gone. That is if Billy's interested."

"Ohh she's been interested for a while but she's so damn backward about things. Wanna help me scare the shit outta Doug?"

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They climbed up the ladder to the roof and looked at the busy workers, they knew damn well that they had all been looking over the roof after the Sandy incident. Erin walked over and tapped a dark haired man on his shoulder and wiggled a finger at him. "Come over here Doug." Gillian hid a grin behind a hand and watched the young man look around for support from his friends. "You see this woman right here," she watched his pale blue eyes look to Gillian and back. "That

stain almost hit her and if it had, you'd be planted in my garden right now." He dropped his head and mumbled an apology to both women. "I'm gonna let you off easy, I'm gonna let your sister take care of you." She busted up laughing when his eyes shot wide and he started to stutter.

"But Billy will kill me!" He looked to the other men who were snickering.

"Should have thought about that before you threw things at her." Gillian stepped forward and squeezed his shoulder.

"Just tell her you're sorry and offer to wash and wax her truck." She gave him a bright smile. "She'll need that truck for tonight so you had better do it as soon as you're done here."

"Thank you Ma'am, I'll do that." He looked down at his boots then back up at her. "What's your name if you don't mind my asking."

She held out her hand to him. "Gillian Vasnikov-Dixen, nice to met you Doug." His eyes went wide when she said her name, he looked to Erin and then back to Gillian. "OK, boys time to get back to work. She looked around and spotted Billy's tool belt. "Come on Ed we got shingles to lay."

Erin slapped Doug on the back and shook her head. "You thought I was the boss huh?" She chuckled when he nodded his head, nodding her head in Gillian's direction she remarked. "See what happens when you get married."

"I heard that ED!" Gillian yelled from across the roof.

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Erin laid out the shingles and Gillian came behind her and nailed them in place, she asked why they didn't use the nail gun like other contractors and was answered with a grunt and was told that the other contractors were lazy wimp asses. With the two of them working side by side, the had one whole side finished while the other guys came behind them and put up the trim work, stained the shingles and hung the gutters. By them being there, they cut a day and a half off the work schedule. Erin knew that Sandy would be jumping for joy when she found out. All that was left to do was shingling the garage and spraying the house with wood stain and a wood preserver on the wrap around deck. Two more days at the most and they would be ahead if not right on schedule, that was if the new load of shingles got there the next day. Erin got on her cell phone and called the guy who supplied them, when he heard her voice, he agreed with a stutter to send a guy out that day with a load at no charge. With the work done, Erin and Gillian headed home to shower and change for their date that night. Erin called Sandy's house and asked what plans she now had after meeting Billy. With Sandy's first words, she had to pull the receiver away from her ear because the woman was screaming her excitement. They arranged to meet at the Anvil restaurant in Harpers Ferry at seven o'clock and then go to a bar in Hagerstown Maryland afterward.

Erin waited in the living room for Gillian to finish getting ready, she smoothed down her black

pleated Dockers and royal blue button down silk shirt that she had rolled the cuffs up to the middle of her forearms. She felt butterflies fluttering around in her stomach and knew that her hands would tremble if she held them out. Getting up from the couch, she paced back and forth with her hands stuffed deeply in her pockets.

"You look like a caged animal Ed."

Erin spun around and put out a hand to the back of the couch to steady herself, Gillian wore black Dockers like hers with a cream colored silk shirt. Her hair was parted on the left side and neatly brushed back over her ears. Erin scanned her body over and noticed the gold herring bone chain at her throat.

"I'm going to jail tonight." Erin mumbled lowly and closed the distance between them.

"Why are you going to jail?" Gillian asked with a raised brow and her head tilted sideways.

Placing a soft kiss to Gillian's pink lips, Erin pulled back and looked into light green eyes. "Because the first person who eyeballs you, gets punched out." She ran a finger across the gold chain and let her finger trail downward to where the button stopped her advance. Gillian wrapped her arms around Erin's neck and pulled her downward, in a deep sultry voice she said close to waiting lips. That makes two of us, maybe we can share a jail cell?" She brought their lips together for a deep sensual kiss and heard Erin moan when she pulled away.

"We better go before we don't make to the restaurant at all." Wiping the sweat from her brow, Erin took Gillian's hand in hers and led her from the house. They rounded the house and went to the garage where the door was closed, Erin hit the door button and waited for the door to open. Inside was her car with a tarp over it, she grinned down at Gillian's surprised expression and then went into uncover her baby.

"I didn't know you had a car?"

"This is not just a car, this is my pride and joy." Erin said as she pulled the tarp back to reveal a 1972 Silver Stingray in show room condition. "So whatcha think?"

"It's beautiful Ed, are you sure you want to take it out to the bar?"

"I'll pay the doorman to keep an eye on it, for the right price, he'll guard it with his life." She opened the passenger side door and helped Gillian in to the low slung Corvette and then went around to her side and got in. The purr of the massive engine brought a grin to the women's faces, Erin eased it out of the garage and tore down the road at 85 mph. What made it even more special was that the T-tops were open allowing the night air to drift across them. Gillian laid her hand on Erin's thigh and gave it a soft squeeze, she let her hand remain there in a possessive way until they pulled up in front of the Anvil. Sandy was waiting near the door with Billy at her side holding her hand. Gillian shot Erin an amused look and chuckled.

"I give them a month and they'll be married."

"Maybe sooner than that if Billy has anything to do about it, she's been pinning away for the last seven months." Erin got out and ran around to help Gillian out of the Corvette.

Billy ran her pale eyes over the sleek car and whistled. "Nice wheels there Boss."

Sandy pointed a finger at Erin and shook it. "You and I are going to have a little chat later, you were holding out on me!" She slapped Erin's shoulder when she came up beside her.

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Inside the restaurant, the two couples got funny looks until two sets of pale blue eyes drilled holes into the gawkers. Sandy and Gillian could only snort to each other and follow along to their table. They knew that some of the men in the restaurant could take lessons from their partners. Erin and Billy held out their chairs for them to be seated and then ordered two expensive bottles of wine. With their orders taken and the waiter away from their table, Sandy kicked Erin under the table.

"Why didn't you tell me I had an admirer?"

"Because I didn't want you to say I was playing matchmaker, besides the great backward one there was too chicken shit to talk to you." She shot Billy a raised eyebrow. "Right Billy Bob?" All Billy could do was grunt and turn red.

Gillian gave her friend the once over. "So Sandy how many showers did it take to get the wood stain off?"

"Enough to make me feel like a raisin, I'm just glad we...I got it out of my hair." She looked to Billy and blushed.

Erin and Gillian gave them knowing looks. "Uhh huh, all ready took a shower together." Gillian said and then jumped when Sandy kicked her.

"It was all innocent what we did." She choked out while trying not to look at Gillian. "Ohh look our foods here!"

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After the four women pissed off every man in the restaurant by them getting kicked under the tables by their wives for not treating them in the romantic way that Billy and Erin treated the other two women in their lives, the four of them headed for the bar. The bass could be heard through the closed doors and windows of the bar. Erin fought not to cover her ears or run in the opposite direction. She was no fan of the hip-hop or rock music but she would suffer this night to make Gillian happy. Taking Gillian's hand, she paid the door fee and pulled her close to her side as they walked further into the bar with Billy and Sandy following. Heading for a table in a corner, she held out Gillian's chair and then leaned down to ask her what she wanted to drink.

Waiting for Billy, Erin draped an arm over her shoulder as they walked towards the bar.

Gillian leaned close to Sandy and had to yell in her ear to be heard. "I think Erin's giving her some tips that means you're in trouble tonight!"

"I hope it's the bedroom tips she's sharing with her!"

"Come on Sandy, you two took a shower together."

"She had her clothes on and it was just to help me, I told you it was all innocent but you and your gutter mind! Plus she still lives at home and there was no way I could take her to my place with my pest Dave living next door." She nudged Gillian's shoulder. "What about you and Erin, have ya gotten her into bed yet?"

Gillian blushed and lowered her head. "No, we're dating and you know how long it took the first time around."

"Dating, you have got to be kidding! You're married for Gods sakes, what's...she doing?" Sandy pointed to Erin who was leaning over someone at a nearby table.

"I have no idea and knowing Ed, it could be anything."

They watched as them as they came back to the table with stoic looks on their faces, Gillian shook her head and grinned at Sandy. "Ed calls Billy, Mini Me and now I know she's right." Erin held out a pure white rose to Gillian and Billy did the same to Sandy. Both woman looked to each other and then pulled their romantic dates down for heart stopping kisses. All Erin and Billy could do was melt into their chairs afterwards. After drinking a few drinks, Sandy took Billy's hand and dragged her up onto the dance floor. Sandy found out real quick that Billy may be a little shy but was nowhere near that on the dance floor. She had their bodies pressed together tightly and from the look on Sandy's face, she was hitting all the right buttons. Giving in to the jealous look on Gillian's face, Erin took her hand and pulled her to an open space on the dance floor. She wrapped her arms around her waist and pulled her tightly up against her body; she slipped one leg between Gillian's and pressed against her. She felt the low rumbling moan in her wives chest and moved her hips with the beat of the pounding bass. Gillian felt her body turn to jello when Erin started to move against her in a sensuous way, they had never danced this way in the past and she was shocked that Erin knew how. Tingles ran through her body when large hands made their way down her body to caress her rear and back up to massage her back. She let out a gasp when Erin's thigh pressed against her groin and warm lips nipped at her neck. She tangled her fingers into long dark hair and pulled Erin away from her neck so that she could attack her lips. The kiss started out deep and passionate and then turned hungry, when they came up for air, Erin's eyes were a deep blue and full of need. She leaned forward and placed her lips next to her wife's ear. "Let's go home."

Gillian tapped Sandy on her shoulder and wiggled her brows at her, then pointed to the door. Sandy pulled away from Billy, took her hand and followed her friends. When they got outside, Gillian leaned up and whispered into Erin's ear.

"That's fine with me if it's OK with them." Erin said in a hoarse whisper.

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Erin opened the kitchen door and jumped out of Sandy's way as she dragged Billy behind her towards the spare bedrooms.

Gillian came through the door and chuckled. "Would you say that Sandy is about to be de-horn dogged?" She pulled a breath between her teeth after taking one look at the sultry look on her wife's face. "Uuhhm... aahhh!" Erin took her hand and sped them towards the master bedroom. Closing the door behind them, Erin dipped her head down and kissed Gillian with everything that was in her body and soul. She scooped her up in her arms, carried her towards the bed, and lowered her gently down in the center without breaking their kiss. Coming up for air, Erin ran her fingertip across Gillian's kissed bruised lips. "I love you Gilly, always have always will."

Gillian cupped Erin's face between her hands and spoke in a deep voice. "Then show me Ed." They slowly undressed each other, caressing skin that had only lived in their memories. Soft moans and heartfelt words were whispered in the moonlit bedroom. Erin moved to cover Gillian's body with her own and brought their lips together in a soft gentle kiss that deepened. Kissing her way down to a soft neck, she lightly nipped the flesh beneath Gillian's ear. A low moan and small fingers threading through Erin's hair pulled her closer. She licked and sucked until Gillian wrapped her legs around her waist and thrust against her. From the soft moans and motion of her wife's body, Erin felt her center twitch and juices flow. Inhaling the soft scent of musk perfume, shampoo and their combined arousal set her heart to beat rapidly against her chest. Her hips thrust down on their own accord trying to make contact with Gillian, she knew that neither one of them would last long if she didn't slow them down now. She moved down Gillian's sweat dampened body to lavish her firm breasts with kisses but never touching her hardened nipples.

"Ed... stop teasing... me!" She pulled Erin's face right over her nipple and let out a gasp when her nipple was sucked greedily between wet lips. Erin groaned and growled against the warm flesh and released Gillian's nipple to nurse greedily on its twin. Moving lower, she nipped and licked the sensitive area below a right breast and continued to move until she stopped at tight abs and Gillian's naval. She looked up and connected with smoldering green eyes, circling her naval with the tip of her tongue, she dipped it in quickly and felt the tight abs flex beneath her chin. Gillian spoke with a hoarse voice loud enough to just be heard. "I love you Erin." Her head fell back against the bed when Erin ran her tongue through her cinnamon curls. A low whimpering noise came from her when a warm tongue slipped between her folds. Erin moaned with her first taste and hummed her pleasure against an engorged clit. She lifted her eyes, saw the flushed skin of her lover's heaving chest, and knew how close she was. Moving her hands under Gillian's rear, she lifted her up and buried her face against her nether lips. The noises she was making was pushing Gillian closer to the edge, she felt the muscles in her stomach and thighs start to quiver and let out a shuddering breath when she felt her lover's tongue enter her center. She wrapped one leg over Erin's back and thrust her hips to the same rhythm as the thumb brushing her clit.

Erin moved her lips to her lover's clit and alternated between sucking and flicking the very end with her tongue. Gillian arched her back and yelled out Erin's name as she went over the edge with a powerful climax. Shuddering with the after effects, she felt another climax over take her when Erin entered her with two fingers and brush her sensitive spot just inside of her. She gasped and clutched at Erin's shoulders with her fingers as ripples tore through her body. With one last kiss to her nether lips, Erin laid her cheek on her lover's belly and felt the last tremors fade away.

"Ed...come up...here." She forced out through her heavy breathes. When Erin made her way up and lay down on her side next to her, Gillian wrapped her arms around her and buried her face against her damp neck. She shuddered against her and moaned when Erin ran her hands down her back and pulled her closer. "Love you little Gilly." Erin pulled back, placed gentle kisses on her lips until Gillian moaned at the taste of her self on her lover's lips and tongue and deepened the kiss. She rolled them over and took total control. Pulling the soft flesh of Erin's upper breast between her lips, she sucked until Erin whimpered. She slipped one hand down between their bodies and sighed when her fingers were covered in silky wetness. "Gods you're so wet." She mumbled against a firm breast. Her words caused Erin's center to clench and more juices to flow over her fingers. She felt her own body to become aroused again and her center twitch. Moving downward while keeping eye contact, she moved to lie between her lover's legs and reach out with her tongue to lap up her juices. "Come for me baby." She growled against Erin and watched as her body arched and shuddered as her climax tore threw her. With her strangled cry from her release and the flow of juices, she sent Gillian over the edge with another climax. When her deep gasp vibrated against swollen nether lips, Gillian took Erin with her again. They lay gasping for air and riding out the last of the tremors, Erin reached down and pulled Gillian up her body. She wrapped her arms around her and buried her face against her neck. Moments later, she snorted when a loud cry came from down the hallway and then busted out laughing when Gillian tried to cover their ears.

"Gods who ever that was is loud."

"Just think Gilly, they had to listen to us to."

"I never thought of that," She raised her head and looked into sleepy blue eyes. "I'm not leaving the bedroom in the morning, I'll die from embarrassment."

"No ya won't, you'll tease the Hell outta Sandy and Billy will die of embarrassment."

"Ohh OK, that sounds better." She yawned and snuggled against her lover and fell asleep listening to their heartbeats. Erin ran her fingers through wet blonde hair, yawned and joined her lover in sleep.

Down the hall in a brightly lit bedroom, Sandy was lying on the floor gasping for air after what Billy had just done to her. Never had she ever had someone be able to give her multiples continuously. She felt Billy crawl up her body, lay part way across her and rest her head on her left breast. She ran her fingers through the long tangled dark hair and wrapped her arm around the muscular back. Looking down into her face, she smiled at Billy and spoke in a deep husky voice. "I'm in love with you Billy Bob." Billy rose up onto an elbow, looked into hazel eyes, and

said one word. "Ditto." Sandy ran a fingertip across a dark eyebrow and noticed that Billy's eyes were no longer blue. "Your eyes, they're..."

"I wear colored contacts and my middle names Jo not Bob."

Sandy's smile grew wider the more she looked into the strange colored eyes. "They're a golden color; I like them better than blue." She rolled them over and kissed Billy until she was putty in her arms.

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Erin rolled half way over with a low gluttal groan, her body was sore but in a pleasant way, the only thing that really hurt was where the cast was digging into the top of her hand. She opened her eyes, found Gillian trapped between her thighs, moving one leg, she slipped out from under her lover's body, and headed for the bathroom. Running the water in the sink so that it would get hot, she relieved herself and then stuck her cast-covered arm under the water. Taking the edge with her other fingers, she worked the softening material back and forth until it started to fall apart. Fifteen minutes later, she was free of the cast and looking down at her hairy arm.

"That's cute, looks like an ape arm." She rubbed her arm down with moisturizer and went back into the bedroom. What lay sprawled out on the bed sent fire to her center, Gillian lay against the headboard with her feet planted flat and her knees spread wide. In her hand was a purple dildo that Erin knew she had found in a drawer under the bed. She turned the lower part and grinned when it started to vibrate.

"I stole the batteries out of your flashlight." She waved it in front of Erin and patted the area in front of her with a foot. "Come here Ed, I want to show you something." Erin moved with feet that felt as if they were set in cement, her mouth was dry and moisture was building fast between her legs. She crawled onto the bed and sat down on her calves so that her legs were spread. Keeping her eyes on Gillian's hand, she gulped when she brushed her fingers through cinnamon curls, parted her folds for a brief second and then sat up to pull her down for a deep steaming kiss. When they parted, Gillian ran her finger back through her folds, collected the silky offering on one finger and painted her lover's bottom lip. "See what one kiss from you does to me." Her deep raspy voice sent shivers down Erin's spine to zap her center and make it clench. She licked her lip and moaned deep in her chest, she had never seen Gillian act like this before and it was causing her body to do all kinds of things. She gazed into smoldering eyes and felt her breath hitch in her throat. Following a small hand down to where it brushed through cinnamon curls again and then the other hand spread swollen folds apart to show fluid flowing from a twitching center. She felt her own clench and wetness flow from her and run down onto her calf.

"Gilly." She whimpered and tried to touch her lover but had her hand pushed away.

Gillian looked into aroused blue eyes and asked. "Touch yourself for me...please." Erin scooted closer so that Gillian's legs were resting on top of her thighs. With a slight hesitation, Erin ran her fingers down through short-cropped hair and sucked in a breath when she touched her throbbing clit. Her eyes went to half lids, her breathing picked up and a soft hissing noise came

from between her teeth when Gillian used two of her fingers to slide downward on either side of her own clit. They mimicked each other's movements until Erin had to touch her lover, she pleaded with aroused eyes and a whimper. "Giiiiilly." Gillian took her large hand, pressed it close to her center, and moved it up and down until she was thrusting relentlessly against it.

"It's not...working...right...Ed." She slipped two fingers into her lover's center and felt Erin do the same to her. They leaned forward and rested their foreheads together as they thrust against each other and stroked their own clits. Gasping and moans were swallowed when their lips came together in a hungry kiss. Erin broke the kiss and threw her head back when she felt her climax over take her and pull Gillian's fingers deeper inside of her. Gillian answered her cry of release when she followed her lover. Staying connected; Erin laid them down and rode out the last of the ripples of their combined orgasms. When they caught their breathes, Gillian started to chuckle and then busted out laughing.

"What's so funny Gilly?"

"I didn't even use the dildo."

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Sandy stumbled out to the kitchen rubbing her eyes; she had no idea what time it was only that she smelled coffee and breakfast cooking. Gillian looked over her shoulder and shuddered. "Sleeping...EWWW...scary!"

"Well, you're no queen of Sheba either in the morning. I would look a Hell of a lot better if I could have slept without the sound effects."

"Sound effects...Ohhh those sound effects, well, it was no different from what we heard." She wiggled her brows at Sandy. "So where's Billy, she's still alive isn't she?"

"Snoring up a storm right now, how about Erin?"

"I think I put her under for the count." She chuckled and leaned in close to Sandy to whisper. "She's lying on the floor in the bathroom, after our shower that's where she dropped."

Filling up four cups with coffee, they took a cup into their lovers and dragged them out into the kitchen to eat. Erin and Billy both looked at each other across the table and grinned.

"All right you two, eat so you have some strength for work." Gillian said and then put more toast in front of Erin. "Obviously you never used your toys baby." Erin's face turned a beet red and she choked on her eggs.

"Gilly that's way too much information for everyone."

"Here's some more for ya just for giggles, my vibrator is electric and I named it Ed." She kissed a red cheek and went back to getting her plate. She gave everyone a grin after seeing dropped jaws

and waved a hand at them. "You three can't tell me that you've never ever gotten yourselves off before." When no one answered, she grumbled to her self. "Prudes."

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Erin smashed a couple fingers while shingling the garage because all she could think of was Gillian and her vibrator Ed. Her soaking wet boxers were testament as to what she thought of the whole thing and if the guys weren't around them, she would be throwing Gillian's clothes off the roof and making sure she couldn't walk for a couple of hours. Looking over her shoulder at her wife, she let out a deep breath and tried to re-adjust her Levis that kept hitting her in a sensitive spot.

Gillian smiled at her and replied. "Having problems Ed or should I say one big problem that you can't do a damn thing about because of where we are?"

"Yeah and it's your entire fault, I'm dying here and I may just fall off the roof to put myself out of discomfort."

"We could always go for some un-necessary supplies." She ran her hands down her breasts to her stomach and stopped with her hands between her legs. Erin groaned and fell over on the roof and laid spread eagle. "Come on Ed; let's go for a little ride." She pulled Erin to her feet and tried not to laugh at the way her wife was walking.

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Erin lay on her back in the king cab area of the truck with her Levis hanging off one foot, her other foot was braced against the cab area and Gillian was between her thighs making all kinds of noises as she licked all that Erin offered her. Erin grabbed a hold of the seatbelt from the front seat and pulled against it when her orgasm crashed in on her, then her yell reverberated in the small area. Gillian rode her lover's shin and followed seconds later with her own climax. Huffing and puffing while trying to catch their breaths, Erin heard the sound of another vehicle approaching them where they were sitting out in the middle of a field. She pulled her self up and cussed.

"Son of a bitch, it's a cop!" They scrambled in the small cramp area trying to get their pants back on before the cop got to the truck.

"What are you two doing out here, you know this is private property." He said as he looked inside the truck for anything illegal.

"Yes sir its private property, but we're the contractors that will be building on it." Gillian pointed to the plans spread out across Erin's lap. "We were just going over the building plans and trying to figure out where to start." He looked down at the large rolled out blue prints and then to the name on the side of the truck.

"Sorry about that but we get all kinds out here parking for other reasons. Have a good day

ladies." He gave them a small salute and walked back to his cruiser. Erin threw her head back and let out the breath she had been holding.

"That was fun Ed; can we try in an elevator now?"

"Gods give me strength." She pushed the old blue prints to the floor and tried to get her pants back on.

"Not so fast Ed, I never said we were done." She dropped down between her lover's legs and had her yelling minutes later.

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Later that night, Erin was in her office checking her e-mail while Gillian was on their bed with her laptop checking hers. She smiled when she saw an e-mail from her friend Mac.

Hey Sonny

The most amazing thing happened this week, I haven't been this happy in a long time. I won't go into details but I'm not alone!

Later

Mac

Erin grinned and started her reply. The entire time she was typing, her grin got wider until it was a full smile.

Hi ya Mac

That makes two of us then, I'm back with my wife after being away for an entire year. I was so stupid and should never have left, I caused a lot of pain for Erin and I and I don't know if I'll ever be able to make up for it. I'm so glad that I've had you to talk to during my trying times and I will continue to write to you. I know this is a short note but I have supper to get ready and then desert if Erin's up for it.

She hit send, logged off of her ISP and shut her laptop down, leaning back on the pillows; she continued to smile as she thought about the last couple of days. Erin was still on line when the 'You've got mail' voice alerted her; she opened the e-mail from Sonny and almost fell out of her chair. "I am sooo stupid!" She smacked her forehead, got up from her chair and went into the bedroom. She stopped in the doorway when she saw the smile on her lover's face.

"Hi ya Sonny." She smirked when Gillian's head swiveled and gave her the funniest look.

"Why did you call me Sonny?" Erin repeated the e-mail that she had just gotten from Gillian back to her.

"All these months we've been writing back and forth to each other and never knew." She crawled across the bed and rested her head on her shocked wife's stomach. "I'm Mac, your e-mail buddy."

"Ohh my Gods I can't believe this, I've told you all kinds of stuff that I never would have." She covered her face and felt warm lips on her stomach.

"Gilly, I've done the same, I understand more things about you now than all the years we spent together. I think we should continue to e-mail each other as a way of getting our intimate thoughts out that we can't say face to face." Gillian reached down and pulled Erin up to her.

"You're right, I'm so lucky to be married to such a smart woman. I love you Ed."

"Love you to Gilly, why didn't you ever mention your buddy the electric Ed in your e-mails?"

"I wasn't about to tell Mac everything, why torture her with my phony sex life?"

"Good point Gilly, now what's for supper?"

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Everyone was at the worksite the next morning to clean up the area and prepare for the landscaping crew to come in and start laying the sod and plant all the vegetation that Gillian had ordered. With the radio blasting from where it sat on the tailgate of Erin's truck, they tossed the rubble into the huge dumpster while listening to the guys sing with exaggerated twangs in their off key voices. Gillian looked up at the dark clouds that were floating over and shivered at the thought of the rain that was coming their way. A drop of rain dropped and hit her square between the eyes and made her curse the coming weather.

"Ed It's starting to rain."

"That's OK we're almost done here and the landscapers can start tomorrow if it stops." She went to walk away when she heard a familiar song come on the radio; it was the one that kept her hopes up. Blake Shelton's voice poured from the speakers and went straight to her heart, she looked over her shoulder and a lopsided smile came to her lips. She dropped the rake she had in her hand and pulled Gillian into her arms. "Dance with me Gilly."

"Ed we're in the middle of a worksite with rain falling on our heads and you want to dance?"

"Yep," She smiled down into green eyes and felt her heart pick up speed. "Listen to the words of this song, this gave me hope when I had no where else to look." She pulled Gillian closer to her and buried her face in her neck as they swayed to the music.

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Dave looked over from where he and the other guys were putting the equipment in the back of the trucks and smiled. He had thought at first that Gillian had come back to cause more problems

but what he had seen over the last two days was like looking back in time. The only difference was that both women were matured emotionally and the love that they shared in the past was stronger now after all they had gone through apart from each other. He wiped an errant tear from his eye and went back to work.

Doug stood with his hands laced across the top of the shovel watching his boss and her small partner dance in the rain. "She's different now that Gilly's back, almost fun to be around." Dave stepped up beside the younger man and placed a hand on his shoulder.

"That's the Erin I grew up with, without Gillian; she's a shell of a person."

"Even my sisters different, she's all goofy and even wiped the mud off her boots before she got in her truck." He looked up at a grinning Dave. "They took the two best looking women around here, what's left for me?"

"Ohh she'll find you don't worry."

"She'll find me; I thought I was supposed to look for her?"

"Nope, we're at the bottom of the food chain and are never in charge of anything so why should we be in charge of finding our mate?"

"Ohh great, I'll be 90 before I go out on a date." His shoulders dropped into a slouch as he dragged the shovel behind him.

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Gillian's tears flowed from her eyes and soak the front of Erin's T-shirt where her face was buried against her breasts as she listened to the words for the first time. She wished that she had paid more attention to the song in the past. Wrapping an arm around Erin's shoulders, she buried her fingers into the thick hair at the back of her neck and pulled her head down for a long passionate kiss that had their hearts racing. She pulled away and looked into tear filled blue eyes. "I'm sorry Ed, if I had only known."

"It's over and done with," She took a deep breath and felt fear grip her heart with the hardest question she would ever ask. "Will you move back home?"

Gillian ran her fingers down Erin's cheeks and wiped away the collection of tears and raindrops. A small smile came to her trembling lips as she nodded her head. "I came home the first time I looked in your eyes." Her lips were taken once again and she felt all their fears and pain from the past vanish.

"Let's go home." Erin said, wrapped an arm around Gillian's shoulders and pulled her close to her body.

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The Athenaeum's Scroll Archive
