

**"Word of a Liar" continued from page 6**

His weight acted as a wedge, forcing air from her lungs. The edge of the rocker panel dug into the back of her bare legs. The car handle jammed into her lower spine. She hit the back of her head on the window. Powerless, she stopped struggling. Tears mingled with perspiration. She tasted salt at the corners of her mouth. Having lost her only weapon, she had no choice but to trust him.

Breathing from his mouth, teeth bared and clenched, his long hair lying flat against his cheeks, his sniper's stare pinged an unfamiliar sensuality, incapacitating logic. The heat of his breath rippled across her neck. The smell of spice fused with his sweat. His body was hard, strong, and dangerous. What would it feel like to have his mouth on hers? How would it taste? She imagined his tongue rolling down her neck, rolling over her nipples, rolling down her belly. She studied him. His grip loosened, but not enough. Soft eyes traced her body, affirming his desire. Kiss me!

Logic recovered. What the hell was wrong with her? Had she gone mad wanting this man to kiss her? Ellen turned her head to hide her shame. "I have to call JD at nine o'clock." Barely audible, her fragile voice begged for mercy. "He's going to be so upset if I don't call him." Fugitive tears rolled down her face.

"Let her go, Rambo!" Mad Dog startled them. He looked confused as his dark eyes darted from Mason to Ellen. "What the fuck are you doing?"

Mason let her go, then stepped back. "Whoever this JD dude is, he can't be much if he let you come out here all alone." Mason breathed heavily.

"JD is my ten year old son, you stupid Neanderthal! And he has autism. If I don't call, he's going to be frantic."

Mason looked stunned. "You have a son?"

"Yes."

"Shit!" His brows moved together. He combed a hand through his hair. Turning away, he walked a few yards down the side of the road then stopped. Hands on hips, he shook his head, rocked on his heels and mumbled something.

She glanced at Mad Dog. He looked as confused as Ellen by Mason's bewildering response. Her suspicions heightened.

He walked back, rubbing his forehead. "You come with us," his voice gentle now, "and tomorrow we'll go ask Old Man Mullen if you can use his phone to call your kid?"

Mad Dog placed his hand on her shoulder. "You have my word as a father of three, tomorrow you can call your son, and I'll get a truck out here for your car. What do

you say?" He smiled. "Don't make Rambo and me get ugly. For a couple of Neanderthals, we really don't like to have to drag our women by the hair kicking and screaming."

Ellen smiled involuntarily. She wanted to trust them. After all, Mad Dog had a pistol in his pocket. He hadn't threatened her with it and he did try to fix her car. So why did apprehension still continue to nag at her about returning to that farm? She decided to play along and return with them, but the first chance she got, she'd head to the house and use the phone. "Okay, I'll go back." She dried her tears with the back of her hand.

Mason untied his bandana, handing it to her. Was he trying to apologize? She blew her nose, balled up the handkerchief and tossed it over her shoulder. Without a word, she walked toward the bikes.

Mason gingerly picked up the sullied bandana by a corner, holding it out as if it were a dirty diaper. Mad Dog laughed. "Let's go party, Rambo." He slapped him on the back.

Mason smirked, jamming the dirty kerchief into his pocket. He hadn't knocked the fight out of Ellen after all. He admired her determination, but he couldn't let her stay on this road by herself. It was too dangerous now that the bikers knew about her. Whether she believed him or not, he would keep her safe.

Ellen stood by the bike. He noticed the welts on the back of her legs. Guilt brow beat him. Silently, he mounted his motorcycle, watching Ellen from his mirror, as she climbed on. Her ankle struck the hot exhaust pipe. She bit down on her lip. He knew she had burned herself, but he didn't say a word, instead he made a mental note to take care of it as soon as they got back to the rally.

"Are you ready?" Mason turned. Ellen's narrowed eyes and the tight set of her jaw left little doubt of her anger. She barely shook her head. In an obvious show of distemper, she gripped the sissy bar, instead of his waist. He kick started the bike. Be angry all you want, Ellen Abrams, but I'm doing this for your own good. And if you think I give a shit about you not wanting to touch me, think again. He revved the engine in a show of power. The two men turned their motorcycles onto the pavement. The moon hung low in the summer sky. As they rode, Mason began to realize the absence of Ellen's arms around his waist did matter, and he couldn't understand why.

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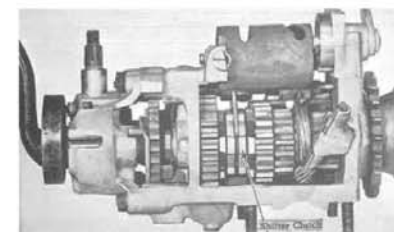
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