

## The Word of a Liar Chapter 4, Part 2 by Sally Beauchamp

"Are you married?" Desi's cold eyes made her shiver.

"I was." Ellen blinked at the fire. "My husband was killed in an accident about seven years ago and left me and my son JD to carry on. That's why I moved. I needed a fresh start."

Ellen turned to Dee. "May I have another whiskey and Coke?"

"Sure thing, honey."

Dee Dee got up and made Ellen another drink. "You know, you and Mad Dog have a lot in common."

Dee Dee handed the can to Ellen.

"How so?"

Ellen took a long drink. Even to this day, talking about Paul and the accident made her sad.

"His wife was murdered a couple of years ago."

"Oh my god!" Intrigued, Ellen straightened.

"It was an awful thing." Her voice low and husky, Dee Dee looked into the fire.

"Gina, his wife, was a bartender at a place called the Ritz. One night when she was closing up, someone came in and shot her."

Tears brimmed in Dee Dee eyes. She sniffled.

"It was awful for everyone." She paused, looking at Ellen. "The police thought Mad Dog did it. They never gave him a moments rest. He was a mess."

Dee Dee turned her attention back to the fire. "He's getting it back together, but it's been rough on him and his kids."

She swiped at an escaped tear.

"Gina and Mad Dog were like Spider and me." She held up her hand with two fingers entwined. "Like this...tight...you know? And what makes it even worse; the murderer has never been caught."

"Testing. Testing. One, two, three," a loud male voice boomed out over the field followed by the sound of hissing speakers.

The conversation ended. Dee and Desi stood, focusing on the man standing on the make-shift stage with something in his hand.

"That's got to be Spider." Dee Dee laughed.

Desi sat back down.

Ellen couldn't tell who it was, but another man jumped up. A robotic voice bleeped. "Desi Harrington, we're looking for Desi Harrington. Desi will you come over here?"

"Mad Dog." Desi giggled, but stayed seated.

Next, Ellen heard Mason belt out, "D... e...s...i!" like Marlon Brando in Street Car Named Desire. "Where are you darlin'? They want you to dance."

Mason's plea carried across the field, the other men's laughter trailing.

"Spider's putting on your favorite song, and if you don't get your sweet little ass over here, they've threatened to kill me!"

At that announcement, Desi stood and looked toward the stage. The thin moon spotlighted the figure of a man, pointing his rifle at another.

"Those guys are crazy." Dee Dee shook her head. "You better get over there.

They're liable to do something stupid, if you don't."

Desi's face glowed. Ellen watched her swagger across the field, obviously reveling in the attention. People began to gather around the trailer, cheering and clapping as she approached.

"Come on, this is going to be great. Desi's a dancer at the Paradise Club." Dee motioned for Ellen to follow.

When they reached the stage, Ellen watched as Mason and Mad Dog hoisted Desi up on the trailer. Music began to play.

"I don't have a hat! How can I dance to this song without a hat?" Desi hollered over to Spider, who was operating the equipment.

Eager to help, men tossed a variety of caps up to her. She chose a black leather biker's hat and nodded to Spider to restart the music. Joe Cocker's, "You can Leave Your Hat On" pulsed the night. Desi's physical refinement made her sensual moves hypnotic. Men howled appreciation as she swung her hips and tossed her head between her long slender legs. Blonde hair fell in a wild silky motion over her delicate face.

Ellen had to admit Desi was truly a beautiful woman. The raw sexuality of her dancing was mesmerizing. No wonder Mason loved her. What man wouldn't? She studied the spell-bound crowd. She thought how liberating it must be to have the confidence to dance like that and be so at peace with your body. With each seductive movement, Desi unleashed something primal in the men's masculinity. Throbbing, sultry rhythm intensified her spell. She eyed the crowd, pointing at Mason. The moon lit up his smile. Joe Cocker roared on.

Kicking off her sandals, Desi rocked her hips from side to side as she unzipped and wiggled out of her jeans, tossing them into a corner. Turning her back to the crowd, she bent over, rocking her thonged round rump in a circular motion,

fused to the rhythm. Piano keys tinkled. A soulful saxophone moaned.

Desi faced the audience, spread her legs apart, and then reached for the zipper of her hoodie. Long, manicured nails, slowly dragged the zipper tab down the length of her torso. The jacket opened, exposing the smooth plane of her stomach and half of each breast. A diamond belly button ring caught flecks of moonlight. Shimmering her shoulders to the heady beat, she walked along the edge of the trailer with high, exaggerated steps. Eyes followed her every move like cobras charmed by a flute. Male mating calls built to a crescendo. When the song came to an end, Desi bowed and flung her hat at Mason. Cheers erupted, followed by chants of, "encore, encore."

"Only if he gets up here!" Desi shouted back.

Several men charged Mason, lifting him up on to the trailer. Ellen found herself laughing with the audience. He looked confused, but then Desi brought him a chair. He sat down and she put one foot on his lap. Tina Turner bellowing out "Private Dancer" drowned out the men's obscene hoots and hollers.

It wasn't long before Ellen realized Mason represented Desi's dancing pole. As graceful as a ballerina she made love to Mason up on the stage. Her fingers languidly traced his torso. She caressed his thighs with undulating strokes of her hips, running her hands through the rich blackness of his hair. Swaying hypnotically, she removed her hoodie and reached for the stars. Her damp breasts dangled before Mason like glistening, diamond pendants suspended from a finely crafted necklace. She looked up at the sky, hair falling across her shoulders. The face of Aphrodite glowed like white marble under the moonlight. The music stopped. Silence hung in the air. A trickle of applause built to a loud climax as the crowd awakened from her spell.

Mason rose and kissed Desi with a long hungry kiss. Ellen's stomach twisted in a knot. The people surrounding her made her claustrophobic. Deep yearnings seeped into her consciousness, shaking loose an emotion she thought had died. Lust rattled her bones. She wanted to be kissed like that. Not able to turn away, Ellen watched as Mason released Desi and helped her gather her clothes. Jumping off the trailer, he landed in the midst of men who patted him on the back. He turned to the stage and held up his hand for Desi. Music played, but people began to scatter in various directions. Some women lingered to dance on the stage.

Ellen realized she stood unguarded. Dee Dee had gone over to the flatbed to talk to Spider. Now would be the perfect time to make her escape. Not wanting to call attention to herself, Ellen walked as quickly as she could toward the farmhouse.

Reaching the narrow path to the barn, she heard voices up ahead. The black night made it impossible to see more than a few feet. Cautiously, she moved forward. Murky figures shifted. Voices grew louder, more distinct. Drunken men argued. She stumbled on an embedded root, falling to the ground. She caught herself with her hands. Her big toe throbbed and her burn caught fire again. She lay on her stomach, not breathing, afraid the men had heard her. She listened like an exposed rabbit for any signs of detection.

"I fucking better never catch you around my old lady again, Apostle. You're a punk!"

"Do you always let your woman play strip poker with other men, Squinch? Scarlet's a whore and you're a stupid pussy for putting up with her!"

Ellen crawled to a patch of shrubbery and peered through the tangled branches. She recognized the young man as Apostle from the card game. An older man, short and stocky, wearing a leather vest and do-rag stood crouched, ready to fight. They circled each other. The stranger had his back to Ellen. His back patch displayed a bandit on a motorcycle. The top rocker read Highway Men. Sweat ran down Apostle's face. The man called Squinch lunged at Apostle, knocking him on his back. His body hit the ground. The thud nearly caused Ellen to scream.

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