

Prologue

Present time...

I stare into the darkness. I can just make out the white walls surrounding me. I can't remember how long I have been here in this room. Some things I don't recall because of the drugs they give me, but I have memories, which haunt me most nights, and I start to lose my mind. I guess that's why I'm in this place with white walls.

I'm not allowed to have pencils or pens or anything that is sharp and could hurt someone, but they do give me crayons to draw with. I would like to think I could adjust to the life I lead now, but when I awake from my dreams, I go crazy. *Crazy*, a word I don't like to hear or use when I'm locked up in this place. This place would make anyone insane. At least that's what they tell me anyway—that I'm insane.

I hear the sound of footsteps outside my door. A door with a tiny window just above my head, so I can't see out, but they can see in. A light clicks on, the door opens and a man in a red smock walks in carrying a tray of food for me. It's the same man I see every day, which tells me it must be morning. The people here wear different colored smocks, which I guess is, so we can determine what time it is.

"Breakfast," the man in the red smock, says each morning. I am not able to approach him or any of the people who come into my room, or they will strap my hands and feet down onto the metal railing of the bed. I don't like them doing that, so I try to be a good girl and do as they ask.

He sets the tray on a small table in the corner of my room. It's where I eat and draw my pictures of my dreams; some are good, but most are bad. They hang them on the wall for me to look at, but they don't know what they mean to me. The people who work here tell me that the bad pictures are about the girl in my dreams — I know I was only trying to protect her, the girl in my dreams. We were once friends, so long ago in the world outside these walls.

I don't answer back when the man in the red smock talks to me. I sit and wait for him to leave, then I eat my breakfast. I have to eat the food quickly because they come back in and take away the tray if I don't. I've learned to count in my head the amount of time I have. They

give me fifteen minutes to eat. I write crayon marks on the backside of my pictures for each minute. They ask me about the marks, but I don't tell them. I don't even know what day it is, much less the month or year. I guess it doesn't really matter; I'm not going anywhere.

The light clicks on and off twice to let me know that they are coming in for the tray. I quickly make my way to the bed and sit down while they take it away. A woman enters, glides over to the bed, and sits down beside me. Her blonde hair rests softly on her shoulders. I can feel her blue eyes stare through me.

"It's time for you to come with me. If you don't fight, then I won't have them stick the nasty needle in your arm that you don't like."

I nod my head at her.

She takes me to a room that is no bigger than the one I live in. In the center of the room is a large metal table with a chair on each side. A pitcher of water with two glasses sits at the far end of the table, along with a notepad and a tape recorder.

She motions me to sit down and I obey. She sits in front of me, then adjusts the tape recorder between us and presses the recorder button. I don't look at her; I just stare at the recorder on the table in front of me.

The woman takes out a pen from her pocket and scribbles something on the notepad. I can't read what she has written, but I honestly don't care.

"Okay, I want to go over the last matter we discussed. You said there was a story to tell me that went along with the pictures you have been drawing. Could you please start from the beginning and tell me all about it?" the woman asks.

I glance down at my hands that are strapped to the chair and swallow hard to keep down the food. Taking in a deep breath through my nose, I begin my story.

—"This girl that I have mentioned, the one that used to be my friend, it is her story. A story of a love so deep it would cut you like a knife." I snicker before going on. "My friend's love turned into betrayal and fear.

She doesn't understand what I did for her, but I did what I had to do for my friend to be happy again and to live a life free from fear and heartache."