

He threw his head back in maniacal laughter and I knew we were in for a bad night. “They decided after that I should be in a mental institution, but I convinced them otherwise. Do you know they actually tried to kill me in a fire? What kind of parents try to kill their own child? Of course, Henry never knew about any of that. They wanted to protect his delicate sensibilities.” He was lost in thought for a minute before shaking his head and looking back at me. “Anyway, I escaped and went on to complete my work. When I killed your parents, I convinced Henry that he should take my place. You know, death isn’t always the easy way out. It can be very painful and I reminded him of that. He gladly took my place. Little fucker was so scared, he didn’t even try to defend himself,” he said laughing. “Then I had to go get rid of dear old Mom and Dad. I couldn’t have Henry going to them for help. I didn’t make them suffer. I just ran them off a cliff in the middle of the night. I read that they stayed alive for a good twelve hours afterwards.”

I looked over at Lola and she had a look of fear on her face that matched my own. He walked over to me and ran his hand down my face. I cringed back from him, not wanting his filthy hands on me.

“Let’s begin. Should we introduce Lola to some of our games first?” I was shaking so bad that my teeth were rattling, but I didn’t want anyone else to experience what I had. It was horrible and I couldn’t watch someone else suffer as I had.

“Please don’t.” It came out as a whisper. He leaned into her with a smile on his face. He reached behind him slowly and I held my breath, waiting for him to pull out his knife. I couldn’t stand to

watch this, but it was like a car wreck. I couldn't look away. I decided that this was my opportunity to work on the tape. I worked the glass down the length of my sleeve, feeling little cuts in my skin. I kept my breathing as steady as possible as I watched him pull a marker out of his back pocket. He wiggled it in front of her face and held up a finger.

"I'll be right back. Just let me grab a visual aide." He walked down the hall towards the bathroom and I gripped the shard of glass in my hand and started cutting. I had imagined it would cut easily, but I cut myself several times and could feel blood start to leak down my hand, making it hard to grasp the glass. I had to stop when he walked back into the room a moment later. He was carrying a small mirror. He held it up for us to see and started laughing.

"Get it. A visual aide. Geez, I crack myself up. Anyway back to the task at hand." He knelt down in front of Lola and started drawing a dotted line across her forehead. I started cutting the tape again since he was distracted, but paused at his next words. "This line represents where I am going to cut you with a knife. When we're done, I'm going to peel back your scalp and then Lexie and I will crack that nut open and see what's inside."

He smiled and rapped her on the head with his knuckles. I heard Lola start crying as he resumed his drawing around her scalp. I started sawing furiously at the tape around my wrist and was relieved when it gave way. I passed the shard of glass to my other hand and continued on. He picked up the knife from the table and cut the tape around one wrist and then wrapped the tape around the chair, twisted it several times to make a rope and

then taped it to her wrist. She could move her arm, but only to mid-chest.

“Do be a dear and hold this up for me. I want you to be able to see my handy work,” he said as he held the mirror out to her.

She started shaking her head and her crying turned into sobs. He got angry with her and punched her hard in the face.

“I told you to do something, Lola. Now, if you don’t cooperate, I’ll just go slower and make it more painful for you.”

She looked over at me and was pleading me with her eyes to save her. I started to cry and continued to saw. He picked up the knife and pressed it into her forehead and started to cut. Her screams tore through me and I dropped the shard of glass. I couldn’t take anymore and I started pulling at the tape with my free hand. I thought momentarily about pulling my gun, but I couldn’t risk it with a knife pressed to her head. I couldn’t say what I hoped to accomplish by getting myself free, except that I wanted to distract him from the pain he was causing her. He caught the movement and ran over to me, shoving my chair over on its side. My head hit the ground with such force I saw spots. My body had fallen out of the chair and he started kicking me in the stomach. I felt several ribs crack and could hardly draw in a breath.