

There was a single string of naked bulbs that ran from the main house to what looked like a barn or some kind of shed, if it was the garage it was the back end of it and the large door was on the other side, making me wonder if there was another way out of there.

I finally worked up the nerve to walk past the house and to that barn, my gut told me that they went that way and not into the house.

On one hand, I was thinking that this was too easy and in the movies this is where they would spring the trap on our "intrepid hero" but I was just thinking that if I didn't hurry the person I thought I was trying to save would die of old age; yet I couldn't shake the feeling that someone was behind me.

As I heard the barn I heard another scream, this time it was louder and more urgent; more insistent and filled the promise of pain, or at the least it's very kiss on her soul. I knew that I needed to hurry and yet I had to be smart to, "two dead makes no sense and helps no one!" I remembered being told over and over again while I trained.

I was thinking about all of this while I got to the door, it was so old and cracked that it almost seemed as if it would fall off if I pulled too hard, I tried to peer between the slats of wood to see what was going on but it was of no help.

It was enough to see a door closing on the far side of the room, as that door opened there was just enough light to see that he was carrying a small bundle on his shoulder and there was movement as if someone inside was trying to wriggle free but he hardly seemed to notice.

I finally pulled on the door handle and it opened immediately with a loud rattle and I turned to see if anyone else heard and was coming when suddenly the lights went out and an unnatural darkness covered the area and I couldn't even see my hand in front of my face if I extended it more than a few inches and I felt that everything was as quiet as a tomb, and the fact that I thought of it that way instead of something nice, a library for example, only added to my tears.

I stepped inside and tried to remember the layout of the room so I wouldn't trip over something and that was when I was hit on the back of my head by something, I couldn't tell what, all I knew for certain as I fell was that I was going to have one hell of a headache when I came to.

Sometime later, I opened my eyes, but it wasn't because I wanted to, but rather because someone had me by the hair and was shaking my head around impatiently, waiting for me to speak though they never said a word to me.

I opened my eyes slowly and started to blink my eyes several times while I tried to adjust to the light and get some bearing on what was going on; I felt as though my head was encased in cotton because everything seemed to be "off" somehow and I thought it might be the effects of a slight concussion because I couldn't focus on anything.

My head hurt so bad that I thought that it was split-open in the back and I tried to reach back and check when he slapped me hard across my face to get my attention.

I wasn't sure if he was doing that or trying to help me focus but then I saw a small child on the other side of the room; I could not tell her age but she looked old enough to know that we were both in trouble and yet she was young enough to feel that there was hope that we might escape.

She was sitting directly across from me and sitting on a chair, it seemed as though she was kept in a place that was dirty or maybe out of the way where people didn't normally go. She was wearing jeans and tennis shoes that were old and scuffed, with an over-sized t-shirt that said "See you at the Pike!" with faded and cracked letters across the front.

I was "willing" her to get up, though her hands were tied at her sides, her feet weren't tied together and I couldn't see where she was tied to the chair but duct tape covered most of her face and features, though it could not hide the fear I saw in her eyes.

She kept shaking her head at me, it was clear that she was too terrified of him, too afraid to try and save her own life; that left it up to me and I didn't feel nearly as confident as I should have though I was not worried about me; she was a little girl after all and deserved to be having ice cream at the mall with her family, or whatever little girls did these days.

The thing of it was, she felt that if she escaped and left me behind it would not be right, and that even if she escaped and brought back an army of help it would not be enough to save me as well.

I was trying hard to think of a plan, my head hurt so badly that I couldn't think straight with so many sharp points in my head and I tried to shake it off but that hurt even more.

Whoever was doing all of this put a rag in my mouth or I couldn't speak to her, I tried to convey messages that we would be alright, that somehow we would both get out of here alive but I knew that my message fell far short of what I wanted, instead I was telling her that there would not be a happy ending that night.

I was still trying to think of something I might be able to do for her, some way to at least calm her fears a little but then he stabbed me, I felt so sharp blade going into my shoulder and tried to scream but the sound was choked off by the filthy rag in my mouth.

He twisted the blade in my shoulder to make me stop moving and leaned forward as if we were old friends and he was simply trying to help me; he whispered softly into my ear:

"Don't worry little trooper, I'm not going to kill you!" he said, "I just wanted you to know what she is going to be feeling for a while and remind you that you can't stop me and you're going to have to live with that reality for the rest of your miserable fucking life!" he told me not so gently.

"Or, if you like, I could push a little deeper and to my left and go straight through your heart, end it all for you now!" he said, "Would you like that?" he whispered as he caressed the hilt of the blade, and then he tapped on it absently.

The pressure was not much but it resonated through my bones and made me want to scream again but I choked it off, I didn't want to give him the satisfaction.

"I could do that for you!" he said, I could end it all right now, but I want you to see my nightmares as they become real! The visions I get night after night! I want you to know the kind of pain that is waiting for you if you ever decide to come after me again!" he said as he ripped the blade out and shoved me aside.

I tried to struggle against the restraints but it was no use and only drew mocking laughter from him, and he came back to make sure I couldn't wriggle free or because I reminded him that he was not finished with me yet.

He shoved the blade back into my shoulder, pushing it down until he hit the bone and then he snapped the blade off as I tried to stifle another scream of pain but this time it was too much and I couldn't hold it back.

He opened the other door and lifted her off the chair as if she was nothing, she was trying to fight him, trying to run to me; her eyes pleaded with mess if I could do he any good at that point, as if I could save her if only she could get to me and hide.

I felt so ashamed that I wanted to turn away and yet I couldn't let go; I focused on her eyes again trying to send a hopeful message when she disappeared behind the other door.

I knew that if I lived through this I would never forget that face for would I stop chasing him until I caught him, no matter how long it took; I was the guy wearing the white hat after all and owed he that much at least if I couldn't save her.

There was not going to be much of a life if I didn't at least try harder to save her when I felt the bonds give a little and felt a shred of hope once more. I started to rock forward harder and felt it give a little with each push, I was at the same time coming to the realization that he knew he left them loose and wanted to give me that little Ray of hope that I might save her, as if I could.

I rocked harder at the chair and felt it give, but my momentum carried me forward and the fall broke my nose, I tried to focus as the room swam in front of me, the coppery taste in my mouth made me want to vomit but I had no time if she was going to have a chance. I staggered to my feet and fell asleep little too the side, looking like a punch drunk fighter as I tried to get to her.

It was so near and yet so agonizingly far from me that it took forever to get there, I was hoping that the quiet on the other side didn't mean I was too late when the entire world exploded around me. As I flew back I was still holding onto the knob, the only thing that saved me from the shrapnel was the door that was between us that I was too slow to open.