

## Chapter 6

Liz's life as a stripper and sometimes prostitute is neither a happy time or a sad time. It's more commonplace to see her dancing at Kats than anywhere else. Her life is nothing more than a day-to-day existence. She and Madison become the best of friends. Seven months after moving to Fayetteville Elizabeth is still sleeping on Madison's couch.

Her prostitution amounts to quick blowjobs in the alley behind the strip club. Liz despises men and refuses to get into bed with any of them. To get through each day dancing and servicing clients Liz has taken to smoking weed and taking caps of Seconals. Commonly called reds, the prescription drug is a barbiturate which took in higher than recommended doses results in a high stupor, poor judgment, and slow uncertain reflexes. Thanks to Madison's prodding and supplying. It's the only way Liz survives each night.

All the girls have to split the extra money with they're boss and Liz only pockets ten dollars an act. Cash is always tight and she struggles to make ends meet.

One freezing dripping night Lulu Love leaves work at three in the morning. She stands outside the front door of the club bundled up in her light summer-coat contemplating how to get home. She doesn't forward to walking the nine blocks to the apartment. A semi-attractive young man appears from nowhere.

"Hi, I'm Ken, but my friends call me Squirrel."

"Not interested. Leave me alone!" recognizing the patron and assuming the fellow is looking for a date.

"Want to buy some smoke or something to warm you up?"

Liz figures she could use a little for the cold walk home, "How much for two reds?"

"For you, Sweetheart, five each."

Liz forks over a ten and handed two red capsules.

"Why don't we go to Lou's for a cup of coffee. You look like you need someone to talk to."

"I don't think so."

"Come on. Biz is slow tonight, " looking up at the angry leaking sky. "Besides I have a warm dry car. One cup and I'll drop you off anywhere you want."

She looks over the skinny guy. His chocolate-brown wet hair plastered against his head, with bangs trailing streams of water down his face. But those magical Hazel-nut eyes are too much to resist. Liz follows Squirrel to his car. They race over to Lou's All Night Diner.

Sitting in a worn-out green booth they stare at each other shivering while waiting for the coffee.

"Look at us," the young man comments. "A couple of drowning squirrels without any nuts." both break into laughter.

The pair sits enjoying each others company for a couple of hours over the hot beverage and a burger followed by a slice of stale apple pie. The rains stop as the sun rises. Liz looks out the picture window next to them, "It's getting light. I really need to get home and go to sleep."

True to his word, Squirrel reluctantly stands, "All right but I need to see you again. Can we have dinner and catch a movie?"

“I’m off on Mondays. Would that be alright?”

“Elizabeth anytime is alright with me.”

After their first date, the following week, they become inseparable and spend every opportunity together. Four months later they are again at Lou’s sharing an early morning breakfast in the dark. Liz is quiet and not herself. Squirrel is scared it’s over and waiting for the hammer to drop.

“What’s going on, Elizabeth?” he can’t stand it any longer.

After a long moment staring into his intense haunting eyes...those eyes. “Ken, I’m pregnant,” anticipating he’ll run like a squirrel fleeing a trap.

“That’s wonderful. Let’s get married!”

Stunned by the jolt, “Married? Are you sure?”

“Of course. We’ll go to the justice of the peace this morning.” He braids a small band from his unused napkin and places it on the third finger of her left hand. Laughing the pair make plans for their future.

By nine-thirty, they’re husband and wife. Early afternoon they find a large run-down house, out in the country. The drug dealer hands over a month's rent and deposit. Rushing back to Liz’s apartment the pair grabs her limited belongings.

Her husband waits in the car while Liz goes into Kats and tells Madison she married and moved out. Madison squeezes her tight and long, “I’m so happy for you. Does he have a brother?” Both enjoy the hysterical moment.

Liz heads to the office to quit. Denny’s furious. Charlotte is outwardly calm, “Lulu you can’t just walk out. You’re revered here by all of us and our customers.”

Liz is crying. There is no way she’s staying, besides she’ll be showing before long and couldn’t work anyway.

The boss woman continues, “Honey, we both happy for you. Why don’t you take some time off? Babies are expensive and you’ll need as much money as you can make. After birth, get into shape and come back, even if it’s just a couple of days a week. You’re always welcome here.” She ends, “Good luck, Elizabeth and keep in touch with us.”

That’s is exactly what happens. After baby Emily is brought into this world Liz returns to Kats three nights a week.