

Chapter 1

Saturday evening, June 11, 2005
Avenue D, Billings, Montana

Lindsay walked into the spacious living room and spied her dad in his favorite stuffed chair.

“Dad?”

He laid the Wall Street Journal on his lap and turned toward her. His big hazel eyes widened and his lips parted some as he surveyed his daughter’s dress.

“This is my new dress. I purchased it, this shoulder bag and these black pumps with the money I earned mowing lawns.”

He looked at Lindsay’s shoes and her bag. Then he eyed her little black dress. He cracked a smile.

Perhaps, he remembers a time past when mom wore something like it thought Lindsay.

His eyebrows perked as he checked the length.

“There’s a respectable waist to hem measure of 16-inches,” she explained.

Dad knows some of my girlfriends wear much shorter skirts thought Lindsay.

“You are a beautiful young woman, Lindsay. I’m proud to be your father.”

“Thank you.”

My full name is Lindsay Allison Britton.

“I didn’t know you were going anywhere,” dad continued.

He seemed a little concerned. Maybe he’s tired. He’s an engineer for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad. Nowadays, he works in Laurel at a large railroad freight yard.

“What’s going on tonight, Lindsay?”

“Many of the seniors are getting together at Gram’s Hotel. We’ll have a buffet supper and dancing. It’s near the Northern.”¹

“You’ve already been to two senior parties, princess.”

“I told her she could go, Phil” said my mom, Allison.

“I hope there won’t be any alcohol?” asked dad.

“Only soft drinks, coffee, tea and punch will be offered.”

“I hope you’re not going to be out too late?”

“It’s not an all night party like the one we had for our graduation bash. I’ll be back by midnight.”

“Is Heather going?”

“Yes, dad, Heather will be there.”

Heather Bridget Peterson is my close friend.

“I don’t want to come looking for you.”

¹ The hotel used to be the Northern Hotel. Not long ago it was the Radisson. The hotel has changed names again. Mom still uses the original name. I picked it up from her.

I smiled.

“You won’t have to, dad, I promise.”

“Very well. Have fun and keep your head.”

Lindsay leaned over and kissed him on his cheek. *He recently shaved and he smells good. Mmm. Perhaps he and mom will make mad passionate love this evening while I’m gone.*

“I’d like to talk to you a moment,” said mom.

She was wearing a white print dress with mauve-colored hues. The hem was mid calf in length. Her radiant blonde braids nearly reached the small of her back.

Lindsay followed her mom to the kitchen.

Even if my mom is forty, she’s a gorgeous woman. She has light blue eyes and a curvaceous figure. When I was old enough to appreciate that I had blonde hair and blue eyes I felt charmed. Mom is half German and half British — an interesting combination. I like her British accent when she speaks English. Interestingly enough, her German syntax is pure. She tells me I have a slight English accent too.

Dad is from Cody, Wyoming. He’s a little older than mom is and he’s smart, witty, athletic and good looking. He has Greek heritage on his mom’s side and English on the other side.

“Lindsay, when you walk in that dress I can see all the lines of your young lithe body.”

“I’m not nude, mom.”

“Boys need little temptation nowadays. I’m concerned.”

“Don’t be,” Lindsay voiced proudly. “Heather and I can handle ourselves.”

Mom has sent me to karate classes since I was knee high. Heather and a girl friend named Madison joined me. We’re black belt champions of our weight group. We usually fight each other to see who gets first, second and third. We have taken several rape prevention classes too. In our sophomore year Heather and I joined Junior Crime Stoppers. We have a fingerprint kit and we report to a real policewoman.

“If you say so, Lindsay.”

My mom and Heather’s mom are good friends. They met at the maternity ward. Each one went into labor on January 17, 1986. At three, the next morning, I took my first breath of air. Heather took her first breath an hour later. Heather and I are Capricorns, but we pay little heed to astrology and horoscopes, except when we’re boy hunting.

“I have something for you,” said mom.

Lindsay looked with increasing interest as Allison removed items from a tuba ware container.

Our kitchen is American, but the knickknacks and Royal Dalton figurines are German and British. She even has a small British flag on the wall with an American flag.

Mom handed Lindsay eight packages of condoms.

“What are they?” Lindsay asked.

“There’s a high quality condom in each package.”

“What for, mom?”

“I wouldn’t ask you to keep condoms for my sake. That’s old hat. I’m suggesting you keep them for your sake. Give Heather a couple as well.”

“But, mom?”

“You and Heather have been accepted to study at the University of Colorado this fall. If either of you get pregnant tonight, you won’t be able to go.”

As she pushed a braid over the left shoulder of her dress, she looked me in the eye.

“Mom! Calm yourself. I don’t plan on having sex tonight or any night soon.”

She smiled as she removed a condom from a package on the kitchen counter. Mom placed it over a large carrot and rolled down the rubbery material.

“Now I want you to do it.”

Allison opened another pack. She handed Lindsay a rolled up condom and a raw carrot.

“Mom?”

“Come on, honey. There’s nothing to it.”

Lindsay put the condom over the thickest portion of the carrot. Then she rolled the rubbery material down.

I learned the ABC’s of birth control and disease protection in a class for freshman girls. Mom’s refresher is timely.

“You shouldn’t trust the boy to put it on,” continued mom. “You must do it yourself.”

“I don’t know?”

“Don’t frown, Lindsay. Just think about it. It’s very simple.”

“Okay.”

I stuffed the condoms in my bag.

Ding.

“I hear the chime,” voiced Lindsay.

Allison observed how excited Lindsay was. She grinned as she walked with her to the living room door.

Dad got up from his easy chair.

Mom opened the door.

Lindsay smiled when she saw her boyfriend, Clark Weber.

Clark handed Lindsay a corsage.

“Oh thank you for the awesome white orchid,” she gushed.

Lindsay kissed him lightly on his right cheek.

“Won’t you come in?” asked dad.

Clark stepped inside.

All of us walked to the living room.

Every Christmas eve we light up the natural gas fireplace. We have company and sing. Mom lets me have some dark German beer. I don’t like it much. I do like the pink champagne and homemade strawberry cake I get on Mom’s birthday.

Many of mom’s German and British dolls adorn the shelves and some of dad’s wooden handiwork is on the mantel. Dad has a wood lathe in the basement. He makes elves, angels, mailboxes, wind vanes, animals and other objects from wood. His shop

has model airplanes hanging from the ceiling. *I especially love the Dutch windmill he built for me.*

Clark looked at Lindsay.

Lindsay grinned.

Clark winked.

“You look very beautiful, Lindsay,” he said.

“Thank you,” Lindsay said with a bright smile.

Clark is tall, dark and handsome. He has muscles too. Lindsay likes a small dimple on his chin and his warm brown eyes. She knows Clark had to work harder than the brighter students did to keep up his grade point average. As a consequence, he is more thorough than many of his friends are. In July, he will report to the University of Wyoming on a football scholarship.

Mom thinks Boulder, Colorado is too far away from Laramie, Wyoming to keep up a romance.

Mom and dad want me to get a degree before I marry, preferably a master’s degree.

“Clark and dad struck up a conversation. The subject was football. *What else? Back in time, dad was a star quarterback.*

Mom told me it was love at first sight and that dad swept her off her feet. She says it was the Greek in him that beguiled her. Mom went to college, but dad didn’t. They are overly concerned that I might make a mistake this summer. Several girls in my

class are mothers. Some of them were pregnant at age 15. I don't think they knew any better.

Allison helped Lindsay pin a white carnation on Clark's navy blue sport coat.

Dad showed him the championship football he keeps near his chair.

Allison turned her attention to Lindsay's flower.

"I want a picture," said Phil.

Clark smiled.

Lindsay stood close to Clark. Mom stood by Lindsay.

After dad set the automatic shutter release on his Nikon camera he stood by Clark with the football in his hand.

"I guess we should get going," said Clark.

"Yes," voiced Lindsay.

Clark led Lindsay out the door.

Allison followed.

Clark hurried ahead of Lindsay and opened the front passenger door for her.

Lindsay got in and smoothed her dress as she sat down.

"Hi Lindsay," said Heather. "Hello Allison."

"Hello Heather," voiced mom.

"Hi," said Lindsay as she turned to look at Heather.

Heather was wearing a little green dress with a plunging neckline. The color of the dress nearly matched her eye color and accentuated her red hair. *Wait!* Lindsay saw the edges of Heather's boobs.

“Ach du liebe Zeit!”² Lindsay exclaimed off handedly in German.

“Wie geht’s?”³ asked Heather.

“Just fine,” Lindsay answered.

Lindsay can speak, write and read German proficiently.⁴

“Your look terrific with your hair up,” said Lindsay.

Heather smiled.

Depending on the light, Heather’s hair color varied from light red to a delicate golden red.

My hair is straight like mom’s is and it reaches my shoulder blades.

Heather’s date was Jim McPherson. Tonight will mark their ninth time together.

Jim has short sandy blonde hair and brown eyes. He’s a little taller than Clark is.

Clark got in and started his father’s 2004 red Buick. He pulled away from the curb.

I waved to mom.

“I love your long blonde hair, Lindsay,” said Clark.

² It means “Dear me!”

³ “How goes it?”

⁴ Mom’s mother is Allison Lindsay York, a British woman. While she was visiting Germany she fell in love with German man called Wolfgang. Mom went to school in Bremen, Germany through the sixth grade. The city is in north western Germany on the Weser River. The Atlantic Ocean was a few miles to the north. As my mom learned the language, customs and cultures of Germany her mother taught her English. Then the family moved to England. Later on, my mom graduated from Oxford University with honors. She has written poetry in two languages, has published stories for children in two languages and she is an accomplished teacher of literature, poetry, English and German. She has taught me many things I would never have learned otherwise. From my infancy to a high school pupil I have also attended Mom’s classes. She’s a stickler for precision. Heather started taking mom’s classes in German, literature and poetry and stayed with it.

Our moms also enrolled us in artistic gymnastics and when we were old enough they enrolled us in dance classes, voice and piano. They firmly believed young girls should exercise their minds as well as their bodies and that idleness leads to delinquency. The hard work paid off. I have played the piano and sang at various functions at school and socially. Often times Heather and I play piano duets and sing duets. We have danced at local theaters and school functions to stellar reviews.

“Thanks.”

“You’re going to have to show me how you put your hair up, Heather.”

“Sure. Mom taught me this morning.”

Clark turned right onto North 32nd Street.

“You’re the most beautiful girl on campus, Lindsay” continued Clark.

“Thank you.”

He turned left onto 9th Avenue.

“What’s the chance of us being hit by a meteor tonight, Jim?” asked Clark.

“No chance,” he replied.

Clark told me that Jim was going to the University of Arizona in Tucson. He wants to be an astronomer.

After we passed under the walkway of the Deaconess Hospital we stopped at 28th Street.

“I went right through that stop sign when I was learning to drive,” admitted Heather.

Jim laughed.

Clark drove to 27th Street and turned right.

The traffic was heavy. As we neared downtown, Lindsay looked at the magnificent high rise buildings. Her thoughts turned to an evening two years ago. *I was going steady with Fred Halstead. We’d been together four years. I thought he was going to marry me, but his family moved to Great Falls in the summer after our sophomore year. I was sixteen. Fred knew some people. They gave him the key to a room. We spent our*

last evening together in a room at the Sheraton Hotel. The lights of the city contributed to a romantic atmosphere. We went all the way. It was my first time. We took precautions so I wouldn't get pregnant. I got home at one. Mom was up and waiting for me. The minute she saw me she understood. I cried. Fred was gone. I cried. Mom and I talked and ate breakfast. When I went to bed my body was so hot I slept without anything over me.

People were walking about. Some joggers were taking advantage of the warm evening.

As Clark stopped at a red light at 2nd Avenue North he turned and looked at Lindsay. Then he leaned over and kissed her neck.

Lindsay turned to face him.

They kissed.

Honk, honk!

“Clark. The light turned green,” advised Jim.

“There's a police car back there,” warned Heather.

Clark drove through the intersection and approached the hotel. He looked for a parking spot out front, but he found zip.

“I'll let you out in front. Then I'll park the car.”

“That'll be great,” said Heather.

“Great,” said Lindsay.

Clark stopped, got out and walked around to Lindsay's door. He helped her out.

Jim helped Heather get out.

When everyone was out of the vehicle, Clark got in and drove to a parking garage.

I can't explain how good I feel. I'm out of school. I have the summer to play. In August I'll buckle down in Boulder.

Every now and then a gentle breeze touched Lindsay's skin, moved her dress around her thighs and pushed Lindsay's hair away from her neck. *I know now that no matter how smart and learned a girl may be, her hormones work overtime to get her pregnant.* Biologically speaking, it's nature's basic plan.

Lindsay watched as Jim stole a kiss from Heather.

She intoned a high sound of surprise and a lower sound of satisfaction. Heather ran her fingers through his hair.

Lindsay breathed in deeply.