

## *Chapter 5 My Childhood*

As I sat at breakfast, I decided it was time to tell more of my story. Marie had received a few glimpses of my life, but the time was right to give her the abbreviated version. It might help her understand the way I reacted when I saw her child. I was still embarrassed over my tears when I saw Robby. She must of thought I was repulsed by the kid.

Some of this stupid reaction came from my history. I knew that. I probably had more emotional scars over my childhood than I realized. I was a total stranger to her. We had known each other less than 24 hours. My façade of a normal person was lost when I let my old world creep through the cracks. I couldn't understand how I could be such a dichotomy.

I looked at Helen and decided she shouldn't be involved in hearing about whatever I would say to Marie. I needed to talk to Marie first. I actually couldn't figure out what I was doing here except for the idiotic dream, and I didn't know why I was going through this exercise. There was no need to involve someone like Helen. Helen didn't see me cry. Helen didn't see me wait on the thugs to reach the car last night so I could scare the punks in black. Helen didn't hear me tell Marie that I might find a wife at Exit 59. She didn't see me give the soldiers \$100 and tell them to go kill a few for me. Hell, I wasn't normal and I knew it. I guess I was trying hard to put a spin on Shaun Sullivan for Marie's benefit. I would talk to Marie alone after breakfast and try to explain me away.

As we sat around the breakfast table with the spring sun streaming in the east window and falling across the floor, I decided to get Marie alone on the patio after breakfast and continue with my autobiography. It was a warm and sunny spring day, and the patio was the right place.

I wanted Marie to understand my need to help the helpless, to coin an old cliché. It wasn't that I was such a good guy, but I needed to fight back for myself. I put myself in Robby's crib, and I knew exactly what the child was going through. Trapped was all I could think of. The word filled my mind. Children trapped by circumstances. Children trapped by bad homes. Children trapped by birth defects. Children trapped by disease. I wanted to help. I wanted to do something, and my emotions betrayed me. I had no compassion for the pampered of this life, but the people who got screwed in their launch out of the starting blocks of life broke my heart. Yes, I was embarrassed over the episode of meeting Robby. Yes, I wanted to explain my emotional reaction to her baby. The spin on my emotions was to cover up the real Shaun Sullivan. I would invest money and time in helping Marie's little boy even if the family thought I was nothing.