

1 • Calm. Down. Dear

CALM. DOWN. DEAR.

By

Stacy Walsh

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews.

Publisher's Note:

This is a work of fiction. All names, characters, places, and events are the work of the author's imagination.

Any resemblance to real persons, places, or events is coincidental.

Solstice Publishing - <http://www.solsticeempire.com/>

Copyright 2024 – Stacy Walsh

Dedication: *For Leo. A true partner in an imbalanced world*

Acknowledgments:

Thank you first and foremost, to my readers! I send so much gratitude out to anyone that took their time to read my book and I genuinely hope you enjoyed it!

Thank you to my family for supporting and encouraging me to chase this dream of becoming a published author. To my husband Leo, thank you for consistently reminding me that I am capable of doing this and for encouraging me to continue. To my boys, Aiden and Ryan, thank you for always cheering me on and for letting me know that you're proud of me.

Thank you to my mom, for one time telling me when I was a little girl, that she could see me being a writer someday! That seed planted and grew and I appreciate you believing in me.

Thank you to my sister Julie, for being the first one I celebrated with when I finally got my "yes"!

Thank you to my editor Natasha Orionova for helping me get this book into its best possible version and guiding me on how to format my future work!

And of course, thank you to Kathi Spayberry and Melissa Miller at Solstice Publishing for giving me a chance as a debut author. I'll always be grateful for this opportunity and greatly appreciate all the time and effort that you put into making this novel ready for publication!

It's in the ground, it's seeped way down,
Our actions and our voices.
Then we built upon it, town by town,
And lived among our choices.
Now it's too embedded to be torn down,
While some cry foul, a certain group rejoices....

By: Stacy Walsh

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prologue

Chapter 1: Present Day “You’re Being Hysterical”

Chapter 2: 10 Years Prior “You Should Smile More”

Chapter 3: Casey “Get Some”

Chapter 4: Mindy “The World’s Gone Mad”

Chapter 5: 8 Years Prior “Don’t Become an Old Maid”

Chapter 6: Mindy “Can You Hear Me?”

Chapter 7: Casey “Dominate”

Chapter 8: Present Day “Calm Down Dear”

Chapter 9: 6 Years Prior “The Old Ball and Chain”

Chapter 10: Mindy “The Battle is Lost”

Chapter 11: Casey “Stay in Control”

**Chapter 12: 6 Years Prior “Are You Sure You Want to
Wear That”**

Chapter 13: 5 Years Prior “You Look Really Tired Today”

Chapter 14: Present Day “Let me Explain it to You”

Chapter 15: 4 Years Prior “You Ate That Whole Thing?”

Chapter 16: Casey “Are You Crying?”

**Chapter 17: 3 Years Prior “Actually That’s Not How it’s
Done”**

Chapter 18: 2 Years Prior “Don’t Act Crazy”

Chapter 19: 1.5 Years Prior “That’s Not Very Manlike”

Chapter 20: 6 Months Prior “Quit Being Emotional”

Chapter 21: Casey “Show No Fear”

Chapter 22: 1 Day Post Trial “Listen to Me”

Chapter 23: 1 Week Post Trial “You Were Asking For it”

Chapter 24: Casey “Look What You Made Me Do”

Chapter 25: 1 Month Post Trial “Don’t You Look Pretty”

Chapter 26: Casey “Don’t Get Soft on Them”

Chapter 27: 2 Months Post Trial “You’re Acting Weird”

Chapter 28: 1 Year Post Trial “Now You’ve Done it”

Epilogue: 2 Years Post Trial; Mindy “I’ll Wait Right Here”

Prologue

The world changed. We heard about it, from our grandparents, passed down from their own grandparents and the grandparents before that. When did it become this? No one is totally sure, but here we are. It wasn't a hostile takeover; it was a fucking smart one.

They knew better than to use brute strength, they used their minds. Bit by bit and piece by piece, the oppressed gained control. Slowly and surely gaining positions of power; the judges, the sheriffs, the politicians in the highest rank, the leaders and the enforcers of law and justice, those positions were taken over.

Men were removed from their pedestal as the ultimate authority, and women began to claim that role. What was once a patriarchal reign; is now a matriarchal kingdom of control. They must have been so pissed off with how things were going, for it to be what it is now.

It's scary to live in a world where just by being male you're lesser than, you're not as valuable, you just don't quite count. What must our forefathers have done to create such hostility? If only we could go back in time and warn them. Stop what you're doing, you can't push people down so much; you have no

idea what rises up out of those ashes, what grows from all of that hate and suppression. It isn't pretty, it's downright terrifying.

Chapter 1:

Present Day “You’re Being Hysterical”

The world breaks us before we even know we’re breakable. That’s what keeps running through Sam’s mind as he looks down at his clenched fists and feels the tension and ache in his jaw from having clenched his teeth so fiercely these past few hours. It’s humiliating, having to recount to the judge before him as well as his own lawyer and Casey’s team of highly efficient assholes, all the abuse, all the ways in which he feels pathetic, unlovable, too insignificant to matter.

He feels broken, and somewhere in the back of his mind he’s surprised by it. But it’s easy to break someone that isn’t paying attention to the threat of it. Someone like him, who didn’t want to acknowledge all the ways in which he was allowing himself to be manipulated, to be shaped, to be controlled by someone other than himself.

He didn’t want it to be true, that the world would allow others to break you and then expect you to continue to function like it didn’t, like you were still whole somehow. Sam feels the tears threaten to spill from his eyes. He wishes he could stop them from falling, from adding just one more way for him to feel completely powerless in front of all these people. But he can’t, so he just sits there in his shell of self-pity and self-hate and lets them all see how broken he really is now.

Sam glances up and over at Casey. There she sits, smug fucking smile on her face. She knows how embarrassing this is for him, and she loves it! That bitch just loves to see him suffer, she always has, that’s why they’re here now. It wasn’t always as bad as it has gotten,

but looking back over their years together, he sees that it was always there. That need to hurt him, to cut him down, to demean him, to hoard her power over him. He didn't have a chance.

Sam thinks of his two beautiful children. Charlie and Sloan, one girl and one boy, the perfect set. Back when they were born, Casey and Sam thought it would be cute to name the kids with the same starting letter as their parent counterpart. Now all Sam can think, is that poor Sloan has to grow up in this world too. A world where he won't matter as much, a world that will hurt him and take away his autonomy if it can. It makes Sam that much more angry and that much sadder at the thought of it. *What must his children think of him now that he is where he is?* This sad sack of a human, who put up with all the bullshit, who just sat there and took it all without fighting back in the least, that is until now.

He is trying to fight now; he wants to be free of it all. Out of his union, away from his cruel partner. And he wants to take his kids with him to safety, of course he does! But looking up at the judge, he can see it in his eyes, the pity, the concern, alongside the inability to do much about it.

Sam feels the beginning stirrings of panic that his whole exhaustive plan could collapse around him in a matter of minutes. All the time he spent planning his escape could evaporate before his eyes and become a useless waste. At least he got a male judge, he remembers thinking that would play out in his favor. But maybe it won't, one judge can only do so much to help, even if he wants to, the law is the law. And the law states that Sam has to provide concrete proof of a valid reason to leave his union with Casey, and even more reasons and proof to have the audacity to take his kids away from her. He doesn't have that kind of proof. Casey isn't beating him, she doesn't play that way. She uses the power and control that

the world has given her to abuse him. There are no bruises to show, and the only hospital records he can provide would just present cases of perfectly legal punishments for his uncooperative behavior.

Sam moves around in his chair trying to adjust and find some comfort under the stare of the judge after his last question. “Explain to us again the surgery you had and why you had it? As well as why you think it gives you legal reason to take your kids from the household and leave your union with Casey?” Sam squirms under the bright lights and attention, under the suppressed laughter from the other table and the obvious pity from his own lawyer. He can feel the absence of what is no longer there in his pants as he moves about. The piece of him that is missing now, the last straw, the thing she did that went far enough for him to at least want to fight back. As impossible as it seems to do so.

He has to say it out loud. He has to say what she did, claiming she had every right to do so. Even though she was always in control of how many children they had, the world made sure of that. But all she had to do to seal his fate was insinuate one little misleading narrative to the doctor.

“I’m afraid he’ll overpower me and rape me within our union, he wants more kids because that’s the only thing that makes him feel fulfilled. I’ve tried to reason with him about it, he knows we can’t afford it, but he won’t listen.” Even as he tried to counter her, he tried to reason with the doctor himself,

“It’s not true, she’s lying, she’s using this to demean me.” Tears in his eyes as he pleaded. The doctor just raised her steely gaze to him and told him she just didn’t believe him. Casey is so poised, so in control, so believable. Sam just sounded like a scared little boy with some deranged fantasies about his living situation. He was

made to appear crazy while Casey just looked slightly embarrassed and sad, but most importantly, sane.

Sam looks up at the judge again, as he waits patiently for him to answer his latest question. His throat is completely clogged with the effort to spit out the humiliating truth.

“She had me castrated,” he barely chokes it out. Through his tears, through his shame, his face burning with hate and rage and the utter embarrassment of it all as his anger grows stronger. Even while knowing an outburst from him now will only add to the narrative of his instability.

“She had me fucking castrated, she disfigured me!” He yells it now, pounding his fist on the table, sobbing it out through the anger, spittle flying from his mouth and his face a beat redder to add to the horrifying mess of it all. So they can hear it over the giggles from his wife and her team. So they can hear it over the beating of his own heart with the pain of it, over the heaviness in his chest with all the shame of it. She had a piece of him removed, and she had every right to do so within this fucked up world.

If only he had run away the first time, he set eyes on her 10 years ago. If only he had taken note of the signs of what was to come. But he didn't, the world never really prepared him for it. He was just a man, and a man wasn't complete within society until he found his woman to complete him. Unfortunately, what Sam found wasn't a woman but a monster. A monster masquerading as a human being that has both empathy and kindness, but those traits never really existed within Casey. He didn't see her coming, and the world wasn't about to help him fight her off and free himself from her. If anything, the world helped create her.

Chapter 2:

10 years prior “You Should Smile More”

Sam looks around his dorm room, feeling that lightness in his chest that comes with freedom. Sitting in his room and reliving how much fun he had the night before, out with his friend Mindy. This is his second year at Westside State University and he’s just so overjoyed that everything worked out for him to be here at all, it wasn’t an easy undertaking.

Sam grew up in a conservative home, as well as a very traditional one. Both of his parents regularly went to the worship weekends at their local temple. They truly believed in their religion and its teachings. So they did their best to model the behavior that the temple suggested was the best way to live and raise their children in today’s world. Sam wasn’t exactly encouraged to go after a career as his primary goal. Being raised in this traditional manner meant that Sam was surrounded with the rules and the foundation that their temple provided. He was surrounded with how his parents interacted within the world, and what seemed most important to them.

And for Sam’s father it was to be the best husband and father that he could be. Staying home and taking care of the kids and all the household needs, and Sam was encouraged in many ways to strive for the same kind of life. He was also taught early on that the kind of work it took to maintain a household and everyone’s schedules within that household didn’t always leave room for any kind of outside job that made actual money.

And even though Sam’s own parents modeled a mutual respect within their living situation, he knew that

this wasn't the case for everyone. He had heard some horror stories from his friends at school with parents in situations similar to his own minus the respect aspect. Within that offset of power, the imbalance it supports could create situations in which the man in the relationship holds so little power he's punished for it. Sam didn't see that within his own parents' union, but the threat was there within the world and he wanted to have the most control over his own life that he possibly could.

Sam always wanted to do something within the world to make it a better place, or maybe a more forgiving and educated place. So, he applied for college right out of high school and is now striving to earn his bachelor's degree in education, specifically elementary education. Sam truly loves kids, and can't think of anything more satisfying than being surrounded by young minds every day and getting to help mold them into, hopefully, caring citizens of the world. Sure, it doesn't pay enough for him to be able to afford an entire house on his own, but if he doesn't meet the right person to share his life with, he is positive he'll be just fine living in a small apartment or shared home as long as he is doing what he loves!

Sam couldn't be happier that he's here, living on his own in his dorm, starting his journey into adulthood. He may come out of college with a shit ton of debt, but he doesn't want to think about that right now, he just wants to live in the moment, be free, be independent and feel the excitement of his life before him, especially after last night. Of course Sam has entertained the idea of meeting the right person for him here at school. Being single isn't something he wants long term. His whole life he has been surrounded by love stories and what it means to find "the one".

One of his favorite shows in high school was a show about a man that was living alone and was so lonely

and scared of being alone forever. The show was called “The Big Alone”, appropriately, and it featured a fairly plain looking, but still attractive man, living a solitary life. Until one day this man meets the love of his life! A glamorous and well-established older woman who swoops in and saves him from his prison of solitude! Of course it was a little over the top with the love story part and the fantasy of meeting not only a gorgeous older woman, but one that was loaded and able to give him all the things he wanted in life. Sam loved watching that show and fantasizing about his own life, even while knowing that the show was not a very realistic representation. It was just fun to watch and live in the make-believe world of everything turning out the way that most people would like, even if they won’t admit it to themselves.

Sam believes he’s attractive enough to find suitable companionship, he doesn’t consider himself ugly or plain at least. However, he also knows that he doesn’t look like the models he sees in magazines, or even the ones he sees on TV. Including the lead actor of that favorite show of his. The lead actor of that show is purposefully made to look a little more homely, that helps the fantasy that even average looking men can have their dreams come true. But viewers could tell, the actor was actually exceptionally good looking. It was just more relatable to make him look as though he wasn’t. As though he looked like the rest of the population instead of the fortunate few who are gifted with greater than average beauty. Sam knows he’s decent looking, he’s just not delusional enough to believe he has movie-star good looks. Most of the population resides in that average looking realm in Sam’s opinion. Very few are lucky enough to be seen as the truly beautiful ones among us.

Sam’s best friend Mindy is always giving him a hard time about what she sees as his obsession with his outward appearance. She laughs at him and tells him to

stop worrying about how he looks so much. He's funny and kind and smart and all of those things mean so much more than external beauty. Easy for her to say in Sam's opinion. Unlike him, Mindy was born with the gift of beauty, making her one of those rare exceptions in the general population. And she is at this university studying to be a surgeon. So obviously, she can date pretty much anyone she wants!

For some reason she doesn't though, and Sam has never quite figured out why. Every time he and Mindy go out together, she is warding off advances from at least a handful of men, no matter where they go. Even if it's just to the laundry mat to catch up on their dirty clothes and eat really bad food. She could be in dirty sweats with absolutely no effort put into her appearance, and still a few men will approach her. Sam just laughs at the common occurrence now. He knows that the brave souls that find the courage to come talk to his friend will be sent merrily on their way.

Sam met Mindy at the new student orientation brunch when they were both incoming Freshmen. She made him feel so safe and at home here at the school right away. Coming from his somewhat sheltered home life, Sam hadn't had all the experiences that Mindy had. Mindy had traveled to other countries while growing up. She was sought after by at least three other universities before choosing this school for its pre-med program. She's so smart and accomplished, she is what most universities would consider a dream student.

She is not only academically high achieving, she is also a talented singer, so of course she got into school easily with a completely free ride on tuition and housing. Sam had decent grades in high school, but he wasn't into all the traditional things that universities seek out to throw free money at. He never liked being in front of a crowd or the center of attention, so singing, theater, dancing, band,

debate; those things just weren't for him. He loved to play soccer, but no one is passing out free money for that kind of thing, no matter how good you are at it. It's just not the kind of thing that garners a crowd or generates any money, so it is largely ignored.

Regardless of the struggles he had to get to here, he is here now, and he is loving it! He just went to a party at one of the sororities with Mindy last night. Apparently, it is THE sorority of all the sororities. Delta Alpha only accepts the best of the best; the musicians, the actresses, the debate queens, the dance stars. This sorority calls themselves The Alpha's, and the women that seek them out to join their ranks have to be smart too to be accepted into their group. Or at least smart enough, there does seem to be more focus on the recruits being exceptional at the other stuff that the sorority deems important. The stuff that society counts on to entertain us; dancing, theater, spirited live streaming debates among the most clever women alive.

Sam was so excited that Mindy let him tag along with her to the party. He couldn't believe how intimidating it was being surrounded by all that glamor and feminine power. Initially he was too overwhelmed to even talk to anyone, but Mindy, being Mindy, was able to calm him down. She got him a drink and let him tag along after her as she made the rounds and introduced him to everyone she knew there.

Sam was aware before going to the party that this particular sorority desperately wanted Mindy to join them, but that she had turned them down on multiple occasions. She was nice enough about it to stay in their good graces, but sororities just are not her thing. She is always spouting off to Sam about how toxic and overpowering the chicks that are in them behave. She doesn't mind hanging at their parties for free drinks or whatever, but they are not really her vibe for close friendship. That role is for Sam, and he is happy to fill it.

As much as Mindy and Sam are close as friends, there have never been any romantic feelings that have blossomed between them as they've gotten to know each other. In fact, Sam has never really seen Mindy date anyone that he is aware of. He often wonders if Mindy is not really into men at all. Women that are into other women isn't really an easy path in this world.

He hopes she might confide in him someday; he knows she feels safe around him, but so far, she has kept that part of herself to herself. Sam knows it wouldn't be easy for her to come out if that is indeed the case. Women are supposed to be strong and fearless and willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead. And they are supposed to have the hottest man on their arm while they do just that. Two women being together is viewed by many as weak and non-conforming. Which just means that it makes some of the alpha females in the world uncomfortable so they do whatever they can to vulgarize it.

Sam doesn't care if Mindy likes men or women, he is just happy that they have found each other, and that he has a best friend to navigate life with by his side. The past two years surviving university with each other has been some of the happiest times Sam has ever had. Not to mention the latest benefit that has developed for Sam due to Mindy's friendship.

If it hadn't been for Mindy and her offer of tagging along to that party, Sam never would have met the most astounding person he has ever met before. In the middle of the party last night was when this magnificent human being walked into the room. Sam noticed her as soon as she entered. Hell, the whole room seemed to stop and notice her when she graced them all with her presence. It was like she had this aura around her that said *"I am the most important person here! Bow down you peasants!"* Not that she said that of course, that would have been a turn off. But her whole being kind of shouted it. She was just so

glamorous, so in control of her surroundings, so magnetic. She just seemed superior to everyone around her.

Sam gasped as soon as she walked in. “Oh my gosh! Who is that? Mindy, do you know her? Oh my gosh, she is so beautiful!” Mindy rolled her eyes at him. “Yea I know her, her name is Casey Freemont. She is the star of the theater department; president of this sorority and she has a golden spoon shoved up her ass because of her high-ranking political mommy. And most importantly, she is a huge bitch! Do not even think about it Sam!”

Mindy’s statements made Sam feel as though his heart fell to his gut, as though he could literally collapse inward and away from her harsh words about this fascinating person. He could feel his face redden and his chest deflate after Mindy gave him her likely correct, but still overly brutal assessment. “Oh, is she really that bad? She’s just, I don’t know, kind of dreamy.” Sam laughed it out to cover up his racing heart and the heat he felt in his pants when he looked at this person that Mindy obviously hated.

“Just trust me Sam, do not go there. She’s a life wrecker!” Mindy delivered the last statement while trying desperately to get Sam to look at her instead of at Casey with obvious stars in his eyes. Sam did trust Mindy, she is his most valued friend after all. *But seriously, just look how gorgeous this woman is*, Sam was thinking to himself! How could something that looks that lovely be that horrible? He wanted to ask the question, but one look at Mindy’s face and he knew he would be shut down.

Sam wanted to listen to his friend and turn away from staring all googly eyed at this stranger. But the longer he sat watching this woman interact with everyone around her, and the longer Sam sipped on his beer, he knew he had to at least try to meet her before the night was over. Hopefully without the prying eyes of Mindy. Sam remembered thinking that maybe once Mindy got distracted

and wandered off, he would work up enough courage to accidentally bump into this Casey.

Eventually, as the night went on, it was Sam that wandered away from Mindy. The more beer he consumed the less nervous he felt being at the party. And Mindy knew so many people there. He knew she would stay busy talking, and likely rejecting many passes from her male admirers, that she wouldn't notice him as much or see what he was up to. So Sam kept one eye on his new infatuation and one eye out for his best friend, hoping she wouldn't take notice that he was kind of stalking the person she had just warned him against.

Of course thinking about it this morning, Sam is sure he was obvious in his attempt to scope Casey out. He's sure she noticed him snooping around after her. Luckily for him though, after several moments of Sam sneaking glances at her, she did finally approach him. Sam can't help the huge smile that spreads across his face when he thinks back on it.

He had lost track of her when he went to get another beer, and as he was desperately looking around trying to find her again, he felt a tap on his shoulder from behind. "Hey, are you looking for me? I couldn't help but notice that you were maybe, like tracking my every move all night." She made the slightly stinging remark with a smile on her face. A confident and knowing smile. A smile that most people wouldn't be able to resist even if they tried. Sam felt his face flame as he tried to stammer a response.

"I um... I was looking for my friend really, I mean sure I noticed you and stuff, but I was just looking for my friend." He barely got the words out over the lump in his throat. He couldn't believe he was actually talking to this person! She was the most beautiful person Sam had ever seen, he decided, and she was talking to him! He couldn't quite believe it.

“It’s okay.” She said it with a noncommittal shrug. “I kind of like being checked out. That is if the person who is doing the checking is as handsome as you are.” Her eyes twinkled when she spoke. A dimple popped out on just one cheek as she casually flirted with him. Sam could feel his pants tighten at the crotch and he desperately tried to readjust himself before she took notice.

She seemed so perfect! Sam couldn’t believe Mindy could be entirely right about her. “I’m Casey by the way.” She extended her hand for him to kiss it. Sam did what was expected of him and kissed her hand with a slight bow to his head.

“I’m Sam. And yea I’ll admit it, I was kind of looking for you.” He ducked his head a little as he spoke to her, feeling slightly more confident now that she at least said she thought he was handsome. “Want to go get us a couple beers and talk for a bit?” She asked him. “Sure, okay, sure!” Sam stuttered out his response. Surprised that she really did want to talk to him. “Let me go do that, meet you back here?” Casey just casually nodded her head at him with a glint of amusement in her eyes at his obvious awkwardness around her.

So Sam ran off to get them drinks and brought them back to a still smiling Casey. They talked for a little bit about school, about their backgrounds. She seemed genuinely interested in what Sam had to say. And Sam could feel himself leaning into her as she spoke. She was so eloquent and funny. Being around her, Sam could feel his own confidence rising. As though just being in her vicinity increased his own self-worth somehow.

Unfortunately, they didn’t get to talk for too long before Sam noticed Casey’s gaze wandering around the room. A group of guys had come into the party, clearly drunk and clearly Freshman making spectacles of themselves. They were obviously wanting everyone’s attention. It distracted them both and they fell into some

awkward silences. Eventually, Casey made a quick excuse to leave their conversation, but not before getting his number.

Maybe she was going to flirt with those intoxicated fuck boys that wandered in, but Sam was just a little too excited to care. He was star-struck and hoping with all his might that Casey would use the number he gave her and call him sometime soon. Walking back home with Mindy after the party, Sam got yet another earful of what kind of a person Mindy thought Casey was.

“Seriously Sam, don’t go if she asks you out, you don’t know what kind of person she is.” Mindy attempted to talk Sam out of his clearly infatuated state with her logical reasons for not pursuing Casey. Sam nodded and tried to act like it was no big deal, but he knew he wouldn’t stop thinking about her. Even with Mindy’s warnings, he couldn’t stop himself from thinking about her soft blonde hair, her mischievous grin, her piercing gray eyes along with her obvious charm and popularity. It was an intoxicating mix, and Sam wasn’t sure he would be able to help himself if she did ask him out.

This morning Sam is still grinning from ear to ear about it. At least he was, until Mindy burst into his room to make sure Casey hadn’t called him for a late night booty call that Sam, she was sure, would be stupid enough to accept.

“Thank God!” Mindy exclaimed when she came bounding into his dorm room. “You didn’t sneak back out and hook up with that monster. Seriously, Sam take heed. Run away! She’s no good!” Mindy went on after bursting into Sam’s room.

“I get it that she’s popular and pretty, but I’ve heard some stuff about her. And I’ve gotten to witness just how horrible she can be firsthand my first year here when I entertained the idea of joining that stupid girl club they call

a sorority. She's evil and she was a big factor in me deciding not to join."

Mindy continued to lay out all the facts as to why Sam entertaining any idea of dating Casey would have a devastating outcome for him. Sam sat up and listened, making all the right noises as though he was actually planning on taking Mindy's advice. Even while mentally shuffling around the stories Mindy was laying out to fit the narrative Sam would need if he did decide to go out with Casey.

"She was just a Junior when I showed up for rush as a Freshman. And even then she was commanding control over the whole situation, and she was awful about it." Mindy continued, trying to persuade her friend to not make the mistake of getting involved with her. Sam tried to listen, he really did, but he kept wandering off in his mind. Wondering what it would be like to actually go out on a date with someone as intriguing as Casey.

"Sam, hello! Are you listening to me? Seriously, there was even a rumor that she got some poor Freshman super drunk that year and convinced him in his incapacitated state to go down on her. Then she filmed the whole thing and let it circulate around campus. It was awful, this poor kid's sloppy attempt at pleasing her being displayed for the entire university to watch. The guy could barely form a sentence and there he was trying to lick her clit with his slobbering mess of a mouth that he couldn't control and she was literally laughing at him the whole time! The kid almost committed suicide when the video got out! His parents had to take him out of school and transfer him to a completely different university."

Mindy explained it to Sam in all its horrid detail. Her eyes bugged out of their socket at the ugliness of it all. Sam had to admit, it sounded awful, but he also had to consider the source. *Mindy clearly hates Casey! Who knows, maybe she's just jealous of her? Maybe Mindy*

herself has a crush on her? In that moment, Sam was willing to entertain all sorts of scenarios, no matter how unlikely, if it meant he could justify getting to go on at least one date with Casey. Just one opportunity to be in her presence again. To feel that feeling again, of being a cooler more attractive person himself just by being around her.

Sam continued to nod and listen to his friend that morning in his dorm room. He made all the appropriate disgusted sounds at how horrible Casey must be and all the understanding phrases of why Mindy was clearly right in her perception of her. He promised his friend he would be careful, he wouldn't get too tempted by Casey's looks and charm. He would listen to his friend that was only trying to protect him.

Sam was finally able to steer Mindy away from the Casey conversation after a full thirty minutes of her ranting. Sam wanted to be done talking to Mindy about it, mainly so she would get off the subject and quit ruining his fantasy version of Casey that he was creating in his mind. Sam could feel a slight rebellion building up against Mindy after that talk. *Who was she to tell him who he could and could not go out with? Casey is just so beautiful, she's just too exciting to resist. Really what's the worst that could happen to him if he accepts a date from her? Sam can make up his own mind about her, it's not as though he isn't capable of making sound judgements. He can just find out for himself, surely there's no harm in that.*

Chapter 3:

Casey “Get Some”

Casey wakes up and stretches in her bed. She rolls over and gazes down at the passed out form of the young boy that shared her bed with her for at least part of the night last evening. He’s lying there, snoring peacefully, as though he hadn’t been pushed off of her and onto the floor after she was through with him last night. She was hoping he would take the hint and leave, but apparently being shoved off of a bed wasn’t a big enough sign for him.

Granted, Casey always tries to act as though it’s an accidental shove from an unconscious mind. But usually even then a few of them can guess that she is through with them and leave. It’s these other few that just curl up on the floor assuming it was an accident that they ended up on the floor that Casey hates to deal with. She has to play it just right to achieve her desired outcome. And sometimes she is just exhausted by all of it. Casey groans as she gets up to walk around him. She grabs her water bottle and takes a healthy gulp before starting to trickle some onto her oblivious companion on the floor.

The water does the trick, and he jostles and bolts to attention. “Hey what the hell?” He partially slurs out. Maybe he’s still drunk.

“It’s time for you to go home....um babe.” Casey for the life of her can’t quite grasp what he told her his name was. Ray, Richard, Regan? She can’t remember, and it doesn’t really matter since she has no intention of seeing him again. He was fun last night, she won’t discount that, but he is absolutely not serious dating material for her. If he was, she wouldn’t have been able to so easily convince