

## Chapter 16

Skeet's pulled his car into the parking lot, slid into a spot and turned off the engine. He had purposefully parked in the back, hoping Chapin wouldn't recognize where they were. He hopped out of the car and moved around to her door, offering her his hand in a half mocking fashion. She took his hand, stood up then gently straightened his tie. She looked in his eyes, smiled and gave him a light kiss.

He was stunned at just how beautiful she had looked tonight. His past experience was with her was jeans but the little black dress had definitely grabbed his attention. He offered his arm and she took it.

"Where are we going?" she asked.

"There you go, all reportin' like again, gettin' all up in somebody's business," he joked. "Just wait. See what happens when you don't make the decision?"

Skeet led her around to the back of the building.

"The alley?" she said. "Look. I'll do you, but not in the alley in this dress!" They both laughed.

Skeet led her up to the back door of the building and knocked. Low and behold, it was Carl, from the failed fund raiser show.

"Skeet!" Carl said. He looked at Chapin and a big grin crossed his face. "Sorry... press has to wait another hour," he laughed. "Come on in, folks. They've gotcha a table and they're waiting on you."

"Who's waiting on us?" Chapin asked.

Skeet and Carl winked at each other. "Oh, you'll see," said Skeet.

They entered the building and walked down the hall. Chapin began to hear the light sound of an electric piano with the volume turned way down. As she listened more intently, she could make out two distinct pianos. She recognized the tune, "Green Dolphin Street" as one of her favorites and the playing was incredible. "Who is that? It sounds so familiar!"

They came to a door that was slightly ajar and Skeet gave a light knock and walked in. "Chick?" he called.

"Skeet! Man, it has been forever! I'm so glad you called!" The man stood up from behind the small piano and he and Skeet hugged and slapped each other on the back. The man wore a red and orange Hawaiian shirt with a sports coat over it. He was sporting a Cubs baseball cap which covered salt and pepper hair with a small pony tail. He wore John Lennon style granny glasses and a pair of white baggy pants. "What's it been? Two years?"

“I think it’s closer to three. We played together at that Chivas Jazz Fest in Brazil. I think we played with Clark Terry.” Skeet responded.

The gentleman who had been playing the other piano had stood up and walked over when they entered, but had been silent. He was an older African American man with very similar glasses, just a little larger. He wore a red pull over sweater and a pair of dark slacks. His smile beamed wide as he looked back and forth between the three of them.

“Well, you gonna introduce us?” the gentleman said.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” said the first man. “Skeet Seaton, this is Herbie Hancock.” He said with a chuckle.

“Oh I know who HE is,” Herbie said with a grin. He reached out his hand to Chapin. She clasped it and he pulled it to his lips and kissed. “I meant this vivacious picture of beauty.”

“All right, Herbie. I’m laying claim to her right now,” Skeet said jokingly.

“Wait a minute now. Let the man talk,” Chapin said, flashing a huge smile.

Skeet shot her a look and giggled. “Chapin Hanigan, Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock. Herbie, Chick. This is my...umm..errr...”

“Man, if you don’t say ‘girlfriend’, ‘woman’, ‘lady’ or ‘wife’ right now, you aren’t near as bright as I took you for.” Herbie said.

Skeet looked at Chapin who gave him a wink. “Girlfriend?” he said, almost as if he was asking.

She took his hand and squeezed it. “I’m ok with that, if you are.”

“Oh stop askin’ HIM. Pretty as you are, you get to make the decisions here,” Herbie quipped.

Chick offered his hand. “It’s a pleasure. Chapin? That’s a beautiful name. Unusual.” Chick said.

“My mom was a huge Harry Chapin fan,” she said.

“Aren’t we all?” Chick responded.

“So I hear you play some keys?” Herbie asked.

Chapin looked at Skeet. “You play piano too? Who knew?”

“I’ve heard that boy try to play Chopsticks on the piano. Don’t even let him close to anything without a fretboard. I was talking to you, Ms. Chapin!” Herbie said as he moved around to the piano bench he had been playing before.

She continued to look at Skeet. It was as if the words had not truly sunk in. She moved her gaze across to Herbie. Then back to Skeet. “Wait? What?” She wasn’t sure she had heard him right.

“Don’t look at me. You’re the piano player,” Skeet said.

She looked at Chick, who was grinning ear to ear, almost to the point of laughter. She looked back at Skeet, displaying a look reminiscent of a deer caught in the headlights. Skeet leaned in and whispered in her ear.

“He’s waiting for you to play with him,” he said very softly.

Her eyes bulged and she shot a quick look back at Skeet. She had interviewed some relative big shots in the jazz world, but none of this caliber. And she had definitely never sat down and played the piano with one of them.

“That’s right! He is!” Herbie said in a whisper that bordered on a scream. He sat down and began playing lightly on the keys.

“Oh, I can’t...I mean...uhhh... But you’re Herbie Hancock!” she said.

“Last I checked,” Herbie quipped.

“And...and...you’re Chick Corea!”

“That’s what my parents told me, anyway.” Chick replied. He walked over, put his arm around her shoulder and gently guided her to the piano that he had been sitting at when they arrived. He guided her down to the piano bench.

“Now that’s better! What should we play?” Herbie asked.

“I ummm...I don’t know,” Chapin stuttered.

“She is pretty good with ‘Georgia On My Mind,’” Skeet interjected.

“Georgia it is! Key of B flat?” Herbie didn’t wait for an answer. He launched into the song and motioned for Chapin to join in. She took a deep breath, put her hands on the keyboard and began to play.

Chick and Herbie listened intently and exchanged looks, their eyes wide as saucers. Herbie took his hand away from the keyboard long enough to motion to Herbie to turn the volume up on her electric piano, emphasizing her playing.

It was just beginning to dawn on her that she was playing with Herbie Hancock, the man who played with Miles Davis and recorded the quintessential ‘Bitches Brew’ album, who had pop hits like ‘Rockit’ and had won more Grammy’s than most artists had albums. The magnitude of the moment began to take over and she knew she would come apart if she thought about it anymore.

She decided to treat this like she had her relationship with Skeet, she closed her eyes, threw her head back and went for it until the last note sounded. She opened her eyes to see all three musicians staring at her in amazement. Skeet beamed with pride.

“Good God woman! Where have you been hiding?” Chick said. “There at the end you took it to a whole other level!” He turned to Skeet. “Are you sure she’s not backing you up or something?”

“Well let’s play another!” Herbie suggested.

“Wait a minute, Herb. You had your turn. I think it’s my turn now!” Chick said.

“You sure? You look kinda tired, old man. I can do it for ya!” Herbie joked.

“Not on your life!” Chick replied.

Herbie got up and Chick sat down at the keys. Chapin was still somewhat in shock. She had just played with Herbie Hancock and had managed to get through it. Now Chick Corea? Skeet walked up behind her, put his hands on her shoulders and gave a little rub.

“What do you want to play, Chapin. Just name it.” Chick said.

She thought for a minute. She was a complete blank. She knew she had to come up with something. “Sophisticated Lady?” she asked.

Chick’s eyes lit up. “A nice choice. Key of F?” he asked.

He immediately started into the first notes and Chapin quickly joined in. Her nerves were beginning to calm and she was settling in and enjoying the experience. Chapin and Chick meandered through the song, trading improvisational solos and just generally having a great time playing off each other. The last few notes of the song trickled off and Herbie began to clap.

“What do you do for a living?” Herbie asked.

“I’m a reporter for Jazz Journal magazine,” she responded.

Girl, that’s a quality publication, but I’ve been doing this for over 50 years, and you are in the wrong profession. Skeet, this girl has major chops,” Herbie said.

“YOU realize that, and I realize that,” Skeet began.

“And I realize that,” Chick said.

“But SHE doesn’t realize that.” And Skeet meant it. He had heard her play with Patti and had been impressed, but he hadn’t known until now just how good she was. He had called in a favor from Chick to set up the meeting and he was sure that she wouldn’t embarrass herself, but it was

only now, hearing her playing with two of the greatest jazz artists ever, that he heard just how good she was.

“Well,” Herbie began. “You have an open invitation to play with me anytime you want. I’m serious!” Chapin began to blush.

“Yea, but I’ll actually pay you!” Chick interjected with a smile.

There was a light knock at the door and one of the roadies stuck his head in.

“You’ve got about 15 minutes guys.”

“Thanks,” Herbie said.

“Well, we’re gonna go out and take our seats and let you guys get ready. I really appreciate this,” Skeet said.

“This has been a real honor! Thank you so much!” She paused. “You know, I would LOVE to interview you guys,” she said with a grin.

“First, I just told you you were in the wrong career!” Herbie snapped, but a big smile came across his face. “We’ve got an 8:00 flight in the morning, but we’ll be back through in about a month. Chick, is that cool?”

“Sounds great, unless, of course we can persuade you to come on the road with us.”

“As tempting as that is, I kinda got something keeping me here,” she said, looking up at Skeet.

“Lucky bastard!” Herbie smirked.

Chapin and Skeet settled into their table and ordered drinks. Chapin had a glass of wine while Skeet ordered a bourbon and coke. Their table was on the right side of the club, about halfway back, which is what Skeet had asked for. A great view of the stage, but far enough back that the stage lights wouldn’t ruin the intimacy.

Chapin was still reeling from her backstage adventure but it suddenly dawned on her that Skeet had said they needed to talk. She couldn’t decide whether to go ahead and ask about it or leave it alone and enjoy the evening. She finally decided that she wouldn’t enjoy the evening sitting there wondering what was going on.

“You said we needed to talk about something. So what’s up?” she said, trying not to betray how afraid she was of the answer.

“It can wait. Let’s just enjoy the show,” he said.

“Look, I’m gonna lay my cards on the table here. I’m getting pretty attached to you and sitting here wondering what’s going on for the next 45 minutes while I’m pretending to enjoy the show just isn’t gonna work. So let’s just get this over with. What’s wrong? Have I done something? Are you having second thoughts? This is moving too fast for you? What?”

Skeet looked at her and broke into a little laugh. “This is not moving too fast for me. You haven’t done anything wrong and I am definitely NOT having second thoughts.” His face became more serious. “ This is really about me, not you. It’s a problem with the record.”

In Chapin’s mind, she breathed a huge sigh of relief, but on the outside, she tried not to let it show. “What’s wrong with the record? I heard it in the studio just a few nights ago. It’s sounded really great.”

“Great? It’s fantastic! That’s the problem.” he said. She was beginning to wonder if he was on some sort of an emotional roller coaster. First something is bad, then great, then a problem.

“Alright. You got my attention. The fact that it’s fantastic is a problem?” she asked.

“No, no.” he paused. “The album I recorded is a great album. The album the record company has is a fantastic album. I don’t know really how to explain this, so bear with me while I spill it,” and with that, he launched into the most fast and frantic explanation she had ever heard. She couldn’t have gotten a word in edgewise even if she had wanted to and she wasn’t entirely sure he had actually taken a breath at any point. He told her about the mystery guitar, what Dave had said, what Shawn had said and what he and Shawn had found when they had listened to the tape. “...and I think I am losing my mind.” He inhaled deeply and looked to her for some reassurance. “This is the part where you say ‘No Skeet! You’re not using your mind. I know plenty of people this has happened to,” he said.

“Oh...no, I’m not ignoring you. I’m just thinking. There HAS to be some logical explanation for it. We just have to figure it out. The only thing I can think of is someone is playing one hell of a prank on you.”

“That’s what I thought at first, but I can’t come up with a who, a how OR a why?” he said desperately.

She sat silent again, trying to piece together a plausible explanation, when she realized he was still staring at her expectantly, almost afraid. “Now Skeet. You are NOT losing your mind. We just have to figure this out. When we get done here, let’s go back to your place and listen to the master and the copy again. Maybe you’ll get lucky and find something you missed the first time. Or maybe you’ll just get lucky,” she said with a flirtatious grin.

The lights in the room went down and Herbie and Chick were introduced over the PA. Two spotlights hit the stage, the audience erupted and they launched into “Green Dolphin Street”, just like they had backstage except with two grand pianos sitting end to end, instead of the small electric pianos they were warming up on backstage. They played fantastically and Chapin was in awe. This was her genre, her arena, her place to really feel at home musically.

She was amazed that she had gotten to play with these two, and Patti. Don’t forget Patti. She had played piano all through high school and minored in music in college, but she had never really been in a jazz band. She had jammed at local piano bars with friends when they were all a bit buzzed on the adult beverage du jour and she had played at tons of recitals from the age of eight until she graduated college, but nothing even remotely compared to the past few days with Skeet. Being with him had allowed her to play with legends, not to mention how she just melted in his eyes. And the sex was pretty out of this world too. She shivered just from the thought, although Skeet tried to wrap his jacket around her shoulders, thinking she was cold.

They had played five or six songs and Chick was busy bantering with the crowd when Herbie walked over and whispered in his ear. Chick looked up, nodded and grinned. Herbie picked up a mic and joined the banter.

“You know, folks we have a special guest joining us in the audience this evening. The stupendous, world famous bass player from right here in Chicago, Mr. Skeet Seaton, ladies and gentlemen. Skeet, stand up and wave to the folks, huh?” Herbie goated him a little, a spotlight swung over their table and Skeet stood up and waved.

The audience roared with applause and whistles. Skeet sat back down and Chapin reached over and gently squeezed his thigh with her hand. She leaned in, kissed him on the cheek, smiled and put her head on his shoulder. It felt so good to be there with him. She closed her eyes and relaxed on his shoulder.

“You know folks, we have another guest in the audience tonight,” Chick continued. “No we had never met this young lady before tonight, but we got to hang out with her backstage and she has some of the best jazz chops we’ve heard in a long time.”

Chapin sat up and looked around the room, anxious to see what other jazz luminary was going to pop out of the woodwork. Diana Krall, maybe? She thought how great her luck would be if the great Diana Krall, her favorite artist, were in the house. Seeing her with Chick and Herbie would be magic.

“And she’s not bad on the eyes either,” said Herbie. “Ladies and Gentleman, Ms. Chapin Hannigan!”

Chapin’s eyes got as big as poker chips and her head popped off of Skeet’s shoulder. She looked around at the stage, feeling like something just pulled her breath out of her body and was now standing on her chest so the air couldn’t return. Skeet clapped mightily as the spotlight shown on them. He guided her up and she waved, and simultaneously turned six shades of red.

“You know, folks.” Herbie continued. “Maybe with a little encouragement, we can get her up here to show us some of those jazz chops. Chick and I would love to play with her again. Come on Chapin!”

Chapin sat in shock. She tried to tell Skeet no, to make them stop, but no sound emerged. “Come on, Chapin. They want you to jam!” Skeet was so used to this kind of thing it never even dawned on him that she may NOT want to. He guided her to her feet again and started clapping furiously. She had no idea what to do, but she knew she had to move since everyone was looking at her. She had two choices, the stage or the exit. She thought about how she was approaching her relationship with Skeet and just going for it, rolling with it. She finally was able to take a deep breath and she headed for the stage. She could hear Skeet whistling behind her.

Chick met her at the edge, took her hand and led her up the steps. She smiled at him half heartedly and leaned into his ear. “I’m sorry, but I’ve only ever played at recitals and the occasional piano bar. I’m not sure I can pull this off.”

“I just heard you. You can definitely pull this off. If you get nervous, just ride lightly and Herbie and I will bring you back. Just relax. Now, what do you want to play?”

“Well, what do you guys know?” She instantly wished she could bring the words back.

“What don’t we know? Just tell us what you are comfortable with and we’ll handle the rest,” Chick said. He squeezed her hand and guided her to the piano.

“Well,” she paused. “I played ‘Birdland’ at a recital in college.” She almost followed with ‘Can you guys do that?’ but caught the words. She replaced them with “if that’s cool with you.”

“What key do you wanna play it in?”

“E flat?” she asked quietly.

“You askin me or tellin me?” Chick said with a grin.

She took another deep breath. “E flat!” she said convincingly.

“Herbie! Birdland in E flat,” Chick said.

Herbie counted it off and began to play. At first she laid back, then Chick sat down beside her, put an arm around her shoulder and began playing with his other hand along side her.

Just as it had happened earlier, she just closed her eyes, leaned her head back and let the music flow. They were really tearing it up. Chick got up from beside Chapin and sat down by Herbie and began playing. Herbie smiled, got up and sat down by Chapin and began playing with her. This happened several times in succession, with Chapin grinning ear to ear and the crowd going wild.

Skeet was almost ready to explode. He was riveted to the whole scene. Chapin, in her black dress, the most beautiful thing he'd ever seen banging out some furious chops sitting next to two jazz legends. He was totally in to it when he was interrupted.

"Mr. Seaton, could you step outside a minute please?" a voice came from over his shoulder.

"In a minute, buddy. Do you see this? She is wailing! My God! Who knew she could play like that?" he said, not even taking his eyes off her to turn around.

A hand landed firmly on his shoulder. "I'm afraid we need to talk to you now, sir."

Skeet turned around and was staring directly at a badge on the shirt of a somewhat sullen police officer. He was apparently not a jazz fan.

"What's the problem, officer?" he said.

"We'll talk to you outside, sir. If you could just step this way, please?" the policeman said in a very dry, monotone voice. As Skeet stood up, the officer grabbed him under the arm and began to guide him out to the door. He looked back up at the stage and saw Chapin was having a great time with Herbie and Chick. She was really cooking and he didn't want to miss it.

"This won't take long, will it?" he asked. "That's my girlfriend on stage up and I really want to be here for this."

"We'll talk when we get outside, sir," the cop replied in the same dry tone of voice.

They went through the door and Skeet turned to the cop. "Ok, so what's the problem, officer?"

"Would you turn around and put your hands on the wall please, sir," the cop replied. "We need to make sure you aren't carrying any weapons. It's for our protection."

Skeet reluctantly turned around and placed his hands on the wall. The officer kicked his ankles slightly, indicating for Skeet to spread them apart, to which he complied. "Would you place your hands on your head please, sir?"

He put his hands on his head and felt the cold snap of the handcuffs. "What's going on here? Am I being arrested?"

"Yes sir. We'll explain it all in a couple of minutes. First we need to read you your rights?" The officer began reading Skeet his Miranda rights while his partner, who had been largely silent up to this point, began talking on the radio that was attached to his shoulder.

"Sir, do you know a," the officer began thumbing through a small notebook until he seemed to find what he was looking for. "Chapin Hannigan?"

"Of course! She's my girlfriend."

“And sir do you know Ms Hannigan’s whereabouts this evening?” he asked.

“Yea. She’s inside with me. What’s the problem here? I don’t understand.”

“Sir, you are being charged with the kidnapping of Chapin Hannigan. Now we’re gonna get in the car and head...” Skeet cut him off.

“She’s right inside! I didn’t kidnap anyone. Go ask her!” Skeet pleaded.

“Sir, there was nobody inside with you. You were at a table by yourself.”

“She was up on stage sitting in! My God! Just go ask her!”

“Sir, you’ll have a chance to tell us your side when we get downtown. Now lets...”

“Skeet? They’re looking for you. They want you to sit in.” Chapin suddenly noticed that Skeet wasn’t having a casual conversation. “What’s going on here? Why are you in handcuffs?” Chapin turned her attention to the policemen. “What are you arresting him for? There must be some mistake. “

“They’re arresting me for kidnapping YOU!” Skeet said, the desperation climbing in his voice.

“Kidnapping me? But I’m not kidnapped! What the hell is going on here?”

“Maam, what is your name?” the officer asked.

“Chapin Agnes Hannigan,” she said.

“Agnes?” Skeet asked, with a giggle. “Your middle name is ‘Agnes’?”

“Use your right to remain silent, Skeet!” she said, then turned her attention back to the police officer. “Obviously, I’m not kidnapped, so could you please let him go?”

“Just a minute, maam. What’s your birthday?” he asked.

“March 4”

“What year, maam?”

“You’re getting kinda personal there, aren’t you, Joe Friday?” Chapin snapped. She was not fond of revealing her age, especially to a stranger. It was just a quirk, but it still irritated her.

“Chapin!?” Skeet exclaimed.

“Maam, I’m trying to help you two out and give you a chance to clear this up here. We can always go to the station and clear it up if you prefer.”

“Chapin, tell the nice man the year you were born, please,” Skeet said straining hard to sound calm.

Chapin shot them all an irritated look, and actually thought for just a second about remaining silent. She finally relented. She could tell by the way he was looking at his tablet that he already knew, he was just checking.

“1972” she said reluctantly.

“Thank you!” Skeet exclaimed.

“Do you have any identification, maam?”

Chapin began digging through her purse. She had almost decided not to bring it, but was thinking now how glad she was that she did. She pulled out her driver’s license and gave it to the cop.

“Ok, maam. I’ve got to call the precinct on this one.”

“Officer? Can I ask a question? Who said I was kidnapped?”

The officer was already on his radio and ignored the question completely.

Skeet looked at the ground and kicked one foot with the other in disgust. “I am not fucking believing this,” he mumbled.

“We’ll get it taken care of. Just hold on for a sec,” she said.

“10-4,” the officer said into his radio. “Ok, Phil,” he said to the second officer. “It checks out. Let’s get the cuffs off him. Sorry for the inconvenience, sir.”

“How did this happen? What made you think I kidnapped her?” Skeet asked. He was relieved, but now curiosity was taking over. Was this another practical joke? Was someone trying to drive him insane? First the album and now this.

“Uhhh...,” the policeman said, thumbing back through his notebook. “Agnes Hannigan, the victim’s mother.”

“My mother!?” Chapin exclaimed.

“Yes maam. You might want to give her a call and let her know you are all right.”

“Oh I’ll give her a call, all right!”

“Sorry again for the inconvenience, Mr. Seaton. Just doing our job, sir,” the cop said, tipping his hat.

“Umm...yea.” Skeet was beginning to feel somewhat indignant. He looked over at the other officer. “What are you? The strong, silent type?” he snapped.

“Something like that, sir,” the other officer said with a grin.

“Just shut up and come on!” Chapin said grabbing Skeet by the hand and dragging him back toward the door.

The cops got back in the car and drove away as Skeet and Chapin stood by the door. Skeet was rubbing his wrists where the cuffs had bitten into him.

“I’m so sorry!” Chapin told him. “I’m not sure what’s going on, but I’ll find out.” She whipped out her cell phone and punched up her mother on speed dial.

“Well, I’m assuming I won’t be the honored guest at Thanksgiving dinner with your folks,” he said sarcastically.

She started to try to kiss him, but her mom answered the phone. “Mom! What in the...yes, I’m fine! No, I WASN’T kidnapped. Whatever gave you the idea that... No, he’s a really nice guy. We’ve been dating a short while now but why did you... NO! I told you! Jack and I are not together. We haven’t been together for almost nine months. Geez, mom! What’s it gonna take to... You talked to him? But why? No mom! Listen to me. I was NOT kidnapped. Stockholm what? Stockholm syndrome?”

Skeet looked at her and over exaggeratedly mouthed the word ‘WHAT?’.

She patted him on the arm. “No mom, I am not in love with my kidnapper!”

“Well, now I’m hurt,” Skeet said in a sarcastic tone. “I really didn’t want to find out this way!” he said playfully. She pursed her lips at him.

“No mom... Jack lied. I was not kidnapped.” She paused. “His name is Skeet and you just had him arrested! But mom, he DIDN’T kidnap me! Look mom, I’m on a date and...with Skeet. He’s actually a wonderful guy.”

Skeet straitened his tie in a mocking fashion.

“I know you liked Jack, mom. But he is not right in the head. No mom, we are NOT going to work it out. We WON’T all talk about it at Thanksgiving. I told you he is not invited! I don’t care if you already invited him. I told you to uninvited him. I TOLD YOU, if he’s there, I’m not going to come. Look, I’ll talk to you about it tomorrow. I gotta go... No, he didn’t tell me to say that. I’ll talk to you tomorrow. I love you too. Bye.”

She closed the phone and stared at it for a second. She was so embarrassed. Her psychotic ex boyfriend had convinced her mother and father that the man she was now dating had kidnapped her and tried to have him arrested.

“Well, “ she said with a sigh. “I’m a writer and supposed to be good with words, but I can’t find anything other than I am so sorry.”

“Wow, I fix it up where you can play with some jazz greats and you get me arrested.” He was clearly going to have a little fun from this. “Now does that seem fair?”

“You’re not gonna let me forget this one, are you? Well, I can’t blame you. This is just plain crappy. I’m so sorry.”

“And you know the worst part?” he continued. “I pictured you, me and handcuffs in a completely different way.” They shared a giggle.

“You are soooo getting laid tonight!”

“On a serious note though, I am just wondering what your parents think of me. I mean, they think I kidnapped you? And what was that syndrome thing? Have I given you some terrible disease?”

“Oh, my mom is an amateur psychologist. Stockholm Syndrome is when a kidnap victim falls in love with the kidnapper. Unfortunately, she still kinda thinks that you kidnapped me and that’s why I fell for you and if I would just come to my senses, Jack and I could work it out. It’s pretty sad,” she said.

“Hmmm...never heard of that. Anyway, I think I am gonna have to skip the ‘Turkey day with the ‘rents’ gig. I think it would just be better if I didn’t go,” Skeet said. He really was disappointed. He had wanted to meet her parents, try to make a good impression and maybe the relationship could continue to grow. “I mean, not sure they are going to get over the whole kidnapping thing in two weeks.”

“Look, let me work it out. It will be fine. Sometimes my mom is a bit stubborn. I’m sure I can get this straightened out.”

“That’s cool, but I still think it might be better for me to skip this particular holiday. I can meet them another time.”

She crossed her arms and stood cocked with most of her weight on her right foot. “Look, buster. If you’re not going, I’m not going. It’s that simple.”