

Man

By K. E. Ward

Prologue

May Dawson walked along the stony path away from her high school at the end of the last bell. She was in the twelfth grade, about to graduate, and she was happy that she was getting out of school. Keith, from homeroom, had chatted with her for about fifteen minutes during lunch. She didn't find him particularly attractive, but he was such a nice guy, a good athlete, and a good student. That's why she liked him. On the other hand, her friend Jennifer was too busy for her, lately. She missed the times they had spent lunch together and when they would hang out after school.

But it was a good day, anyway. The good outweighed the bad. Now, she concentrated on walking home. She did not drive; she had passed driver's ed a couple of years ago, but never took the driving test, because she felt fearful behind the wheel. But thankfully, her house was close by, about a half of a mile away from the school.

When she rounded a corner in a picturesque residential neighborhood, something horrifying happened. A male figure grabbed her from behind, who was a few inches taller than her, a little skinny, but with a few muscles. He had Brunette hair,

small eyes, and delicate features for a man. Before she could say anything, he put his hand over her mouth and pulled her towards a vehicle. He took out some rope and tape. He tied her up and put tape over her mouth. He put her in the trunk, closed it, and started the car.

Chapter One

They were driving along a highway or something, because it felt like they were going along very swiftly. It was probably late in the day now, considering how much time she thought had passed, which was maybe a few hours. The methodical *thud, thud*, could have put her to sleep, but she wanted to stay awake. She would not forget that she had been abducted. She could not relax and lose her guard. She was terrified.

She heard him humming in the front seat. It was a high-pitched hum, some tune which sounded happy, but bittersweet. The man had looked like he was in his early twenties. He looked too old to be a student at her high school, and too young to be her father. And then the man started singing lyrics. She could not perfectly hear the words. They sounded like, "and it's true, true, the love I have for you..."

More time went by. May tried to stay awake as best as she could. She intentionally kept thoughts in her head. She thought about her family and what they were doing right now, whether they were extremely worried or had called the police.

She began to think of ways to escape, but could not think of any. She tried to move her arms and legs, but the rope was too strong, and the knot seemed impossible. She was not good with knots. She could not identify a knot to save her life. She tried to bite the tape with her teeth, but could not.

A couple of hours later the car slowed and then came to a stop. May could hear the car door open and close. She heard his footsteps. And then he opened the trunk and pulled her out. She could smell him now. He was sweaty and dirty. But she got a good look at his eyes again. They were blue and cold. They looked at her with such a calculating intensity that she wished he would not look at her anymore. And then his eyes narrowed even more.

He took the tape off of her mouth, leaving the rope around her body. "What is your name?" he asked.

"Maybe I won't tell you my name."

He looked offended, but he untied her, anyway. She did not run away, because she could guess that he was stronger and faster than she was.

"I know what your name is. I only asked you because I wanted you to tell me yourself. It's May. I know your name because I saw it in the school paper. You wrote an article about the senior prom."

"That's right," she said. "I liked everything about it."

And then he snickered. "May, you're not as afraid of me as you should be."

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm going to kill you, May, but I want you to talk to me a little bit before I do so. Will you do that?"

She did not want to speak, at first. "Fine. But I don't like unpleasant conversation."

"May, I think you're pretty," he said.

She found the compliment creepy. But he looked at her with softness after he said that.

"What's your name?"

"I won't tell you that."

"Fine."

He had a pensive expression. "Alright, I think I've done enough talking, for now. Let's get you back into the car."

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