

Screaming In The Silence

By : **Think Pink**

Raleigh finds herself taken captive by three men who had left her for dead in the trunk of their car. Helpless in more ways than one, she soon discovers that her desperation is leading her to believe in and trust one of her captors. As her story unfolds before him, will he ever be able to see her as more than a ransom payoff? This book has been published by WorldMaker Media and is now available on Amazon.com. I have disabled all but the first two chapters for this reason. Much love, Think Pink



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I felt the vibration of the car before I realized what it was. I saw the pitch black interior of the trunk before I realized where I was. And I felt her body, still warm but completely frozen, crumpled next to me before I remembered who she was. The smell of the ocean combined with the rank odor of death lying next to me, filling my nostrils and catalyzing the bile in my throat. A thick, dried and crusted layer of what I can only assume to be blood was smeared across my cheek and forehead. It crumbled away in flakes as I scratched my finger nails over it.

The car spun around a curve causing the body next to me to crash into the carpeted wall. I braced myself against the sides, holding a hand over my mouth to keep from vomiting. The sound of her lifeless corps being thrown from side to side was almost as sickening as the idea of being left for dead in the trunk of a car.

Suddenly, the transmission sputtered and I felt the car gain speed, my once vivid companion rolling uncontrollably towards me. Instinctively, I pushed and kicked her away from me, not remembering how kind she had been, just visualizing her decomposing limbs draped over mine. My feet and fists made contact with her and the car, her malleable form much more forgiving than the metal cage I was being held in.

Then, before I could brace myself, we were both thrown toward the front of the car, her body shaking next to mine as the doors were slammed shut. A dim, creeping light filled the trunk as it was opened. I watched as the light illuminated her blood soaked hair which was plastered to her pale face. The gaping wound in her skull made her almost unrecognizable. Her eyes and mouth were open in horrific panic, displaying the last emotion of her life. Her broken neck bone was grotesquely jutting against the skin like a needle attempting to push through fabric. Scrambling, I pushed away from her and closed my eyes as I hung my torso out of the car, vomiting onto the ground below me. I inhaled deeply, appreciating the crisp ocean air as it filled my nose and lungs.

With my head dizzy from confusion and nausea, I slowly raised my eyes and my vision came to rest on a solemn face. This man, tall with abrupt and harsh features, was standing over me much like a predator would threaten its prey. The car shook again as another door slammed and two more faces appeared behind the one who had been holding my gaze.

"What the fuck is this? You said they were both dead." The face on the right was speaking, his expression as scared as it was confused.

"I thought they were," the tall man's lips moved slowly as if he didn't believe what he was saying.

"What are we supposed to do now, Ray?" The man on the right had turned his attention away from me, making it difficult for me to determine what he was saying. His small frame was blocked almost completely by the

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man in the middle.

"Kill her." His lips were still moving slowly but he was no longer uncertain about what he was saying.

I started to shake my head, as if I could convince them to spare my life. I looked back to the man on the right, perhaps he would disagree with Ray, but his eyes had returned to me without a trace of remorse for what he was about to do. The third man, the one on the left who had until this point nearly escaped my attention, moved quickly, grabbing me by the shoulders and throwing me from the car. My body ached as it was dragged across the bumper then over the rough ground. My clothes were ripping as I kicked my legs furiously, trying to find my footing so I could stand. As soon as I was on my feet, I felt a hard body press against my back, holding me up and pinning my arms in front of my chest with one strong hand around my wrists. His other hand was fingering the material of my shirt, flipping the ends of my hair, and pointing to my shoes. I couldn't see the man who was holding me but his grip was firm yet not painful. His rough fingers would gently leave my skin or hair when he touched me. Ray and the other man were staring at us, their faces brightening as if I were being presented as a prize.

"The basement? It could work." Ray nodded at the man behind me then his eyes forced mine into another stare.

"What's your name?"

I didn't open my mouth as a scene flashed through my mind. There we were, standing by the side of the road, our thumbs raised in an eager gesture, hoping to find our way back to a city of reasonable size. The beach had been pleasant during the day, but now the wind was picking up and the area between the road and cliff's edge offered no protection. It was becoming dark outside so she stepped in front of me, turning to explain that her white shirt would be more visible than my dark blue one. The car came around the bend, completely out of control and the last thing I remember was her head cracking the windshield as I was thrown over the hood of the car.

Julie. Her name was Julie.

Ray was waving his hands in front of me as he approached. His step was confident and his eyes never moved from my face.

"What is your name?" He repeated his question. They hadn't realized.

The wind was biting at my nose and chin and I couldn't keep my hair from flying between us. But Ray didn't seem to mind and moved within inches of my face as the arms that were binding me hugged me tighter.

"What. Is. Your. Name." The words flew from Ray's lips as his anger rose, his face reddening at my silence.

I jumped as I felt warm breath on my ear and turned my eyes away from Ray. The man holding me had his lips close to my face and he was saying something I couldn't understand from this angle. He was staring away from me but even in the dreary glow of the night, his eyes shone like emeralds from behind his black lashes.

Harsh fingers grabbed my chin and turned my face away. "Answer me!"

I could feel the force of Ray's demand on my face, the vibrations from his forceful yell resonating through my skin. His breath smelled of rum. I struggled to free one of my hands, stretching my fingers when one was finally released.

R-A-L-E-I-G-H. I spelled my name, knowing they wouldn't understand.

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"What the hell was that?" Ray was laughing now as he turned back to the smaller man who was still standing by the car.

"Sign language?" Ray's attention suddenly returned to me. I took a deep breath and brought my free hand to the side of my face. My fingers went to my ear, tapping lightly, as I shook my head.

Ray stood up straight as he realized what I was communicating.

"Shit. She's deaf," he said to the man behind me.

I was spun around and came face to face with the green eyes of man who had been holding me so tightly. He stared at me, a curious expression on his face. His dark eyebrows furrowed beneath his black hair which hung to his eyes and swept across his forehead. His cheekbones were high and chiseled, his jaw square and strong as his muscles clenched.

"Can you read lips?"

I nodded slowly.

His eyes flickered to Ray behind me and his lips twitched into a sly and sordid smile.

"Can you speak?"

I didn't answer at first, not sure if I wanted them to know the truth. Maybe it would be easier if they didn't know everything I was capable of. So I shook my head, swallowed my answer in my throat, and lied. Silence hadn't scared me this way since I was six years old.

My shoulders were still held tightly in his strong hands. I felt them close around the bones and muscles even more and if I had been blind instead of deaf, I would have thought it was an encouraging gesture. However, the look on this man's face was telling me otherwise. This gesture was one of domination and it terrified me.

Suddenly and without warning, I was thrown over his shoulder, my body hanging carelessly down his back. I nearly vomited again from the pain in my chest but I managed to look under his arm as the smaller man pulled Julie from the car, her head and arms bouncing as she fell from the trunk. He pulled her by the feet to the cliff's edge with Ray's help and I could only imagine the fate of her body as she was rolled out of sight into violent waves below.

As I was thrown back into the trunk, I clung to the shirt of the man with the green eyes. The car shook as doors closed and the engine burst to life. He allowed me to struggle in vain, pulling myself from the dark emptiness of the back of the car by the thin fabric of his plaid flannel. The smile faded from his face and was replaced by a concerned glare as his hands pinned my shoulders to the carpeted floor I was now lying on.

"Stop. You'll hurt yourself."

My silent world went black as the door closed on top of me. My senseless screaming did nothing but cause my throat to burn. If a tree falls in the forest when no one is around to hear it, does it still make a sound? If I scream in the silence, will anyone be around to hear it?

Chapter 2: K-A-D-E-N

Author's note:

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My screaming ceased to bring me comfort a few turns into the drive. I relaxed onto my back, the most comfortable position I could find considering how badly bruised and beaten I was. Large tears were falling from my eyes and mixing with the blood on my face. I wanted to sleep, I wanted to dream, I wanted to be pulled from this nightmare but even with my eyes closed, sleep alluded me.

"Hi, I'm Julie."

"I'm Raleigh. Very nice to meet you."

The look she gave me was a curious one. I was used to this reaction and it didn't faze me any longer. At a younger age, it had hurt and I had been ashamed of my voice, not wanting to speak to anyone. But I learned to move past it. I learned that I had quite a bit to say and even though I couldn't hear it, even though it sounded strange to others, my voice was worth the explanation.

"Where are you from?"

"Delaware."

"Oh. I didn't recognize your accent."

I smiled at her. "I'm deaf. There's no accent."

Her face reddened and she looked apologetic. "Shit. Now I feel bad."

But I shook my head. "Don't worry about it. It happens."

She nodded and seemed to move past her embarrassment quickly. "So if you're from Delaware, what are you doing all the way down here?"

"Sightseeing."

"Right. Sightseeing at a trucker stop in Tennessee?"

"I'm trying to get to the coast," I explained. "I got a ride all the way from Indiana."

"No shit! That far? How long did you have to wait for that one?"

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"A few days." I smiled at her. I liked this girl. It had been a while since I had spoken with a female my own age.

"Which beach are you trying to make it to?" She picked up her bag from the ground and slung it over her shoulder.

"It doesn't really matter, I guess. Just one with an ocean."

"Well, I'm on my way to North Carolina if you'd like to tag along. I could sure use the company. These truckers aren't the best conversationalists."

I smiled and nodded, agreeing completely. Julie was the first female hitcher I had met and I was in desperate need of a friend. The road from Delaware had been lonely and even though I had the company of whoever stopped to pick me up, I knew our relationship would be short lived and therefore not fulfilling.

"Alright, then! Let's go find us a ride! Two pretty girls like us should have no problem getting picked up." She smiled at me and extended her hand. I stood up from the curb where I was sitting and followed her to the first driver in a long line of waiting trucks, eager to see where this new relationship would take me.

My breath became heavy as I felt the car roll to a stop. Part of me wanted the three men to forget about me and leave me in the trunk. The other part was dying to stand up and stretch my sore arms and legs. I knew I needed to see a doctor. At least one of my ribs was broken and I wasn't sure how deep the cuts on my face and torso were. But a doctor was out of the question and even if I had been naive enough to ask for one, I knew I would be laughed at.

The trunk was thrown open and I blinked at the brightness of the day. We must have been driving all night and into the morning because the sun was well on its way overhead. As my eyes adjusted, I blinked to see the smaller of the three men speaking to me.

"Get out!" I could tell he was screaming from the tension in his neck.

I sat up and looked around warily, not expecting to recognize where I was but hoping for a miracle nonetheless. Pine trees surrounded us in every direction. The dirt road was barely visible and clearly wasn't traveled often. There was a house carefully situated within the trees, very unimposing and quaint with yellow trim and a brick façade.

I climbed out of the car and winced as pain shot through my ribs. The man put his pudgy fingers around my arms and led me to the front door which had been left open by Ray and the man with the green eyes. The inside of this house did not do justice to the outside. The windows were all open yet there was a heavy, stale smell in the air. The carpets were dirty and ripping from the floor near the walls and the wallpaper was stained or eroding. The two men were already sitting at a table, one of the few pieces of furniture in the house, and pouring out the contents of my bag. Julie's sat on the floor next to them.

There, mere feet from me, being carelessly thrown about, were the entire contents of my life. Everything I owned and all I could carry with me. Clothes, underwear, toothbrush, expensive make-up because I couldn't leave my vanity behind, and my wallet which contained the only piece of identification I still owned.

Ray found the wallet and grabbed for it, opening the leather pouch and eyeing what was inside.

"Raleigh Anne Winters from Dover, Delaware. Never heard of it." I stared at him as he threw my ID aside and continued through my wallet. Watching him pick through my life left me feeling violated. What gave him the right?

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"358 bucksâ not bad." Ray handed the money to the man with the green eyes who glanced at me suspiciously.

"Any credit cards?" He asked, still looking at me as if he wanted me to see him ask the question.

"Four."

My stare returned to his green eyes after Ray had spoken. He stood up and walked toward me, leaving the cash on the table. "Give her to me."

The small man handed me over as Ray watched. "Where are you taking her?"

The man who now held me, his grip just as strong as it had been last night, turned to face his friend at the table and said something I couldn't see. Ray nodded and returned to my bag and I found myself being pulled from the room and up the stairs. Horrifying scenarios raced through my head as I struggled against him, tripping and scraping my shins on the splintered stairs. I could only imagine what he was going to do to me and I wasn't ready for any of it. I pulled against his hand, pushed his arm away with all my strength but nothing helped and I was too sore to fight for long.

At the top of the stairs, I was pushed into the bathroom and pinned against a wall.

His face was within inches from mine as he spoke to me. "Look, you may not be able to hear me, but I don't believe for a minute that you can't speak. Everything about you from your designer jeans to the four credit cards in your wallet screams Daddy's money and higher education so if you want to keep up the act, that's fine. Just know that I'm not letting you out of my sights. You aren't going to fuck this up for me."

I stared at him, more of a glare, really, and waited for him to say something else. This man was perceptive and even if he didn't know who I was or why I had been on the side of the road, he knew my type: spoiled brat from up north with too many advantages and not enough ambition. He glared back, challenging me to speak but when I didn't, he released my shoulders and took a few steps back, lowering the lid to the toilet seat and sitting down.

"Shower," he commanded and pointed to the curtain. "You look like shit."

I finally looked away from him and glanced in the mirror. The girl staring back at me was not someone I recognized. Her once blonde hair now appeared brown from all the blood and dirt. Her grey eyes were red and swollen and blood was smeared from her forehead to her neck and caked around her nose. Her lips were cracked. I had to look away as tears welled behind my lids.

The man with the green eyes stood up from his seat and pulled back the dingy and stained shower curtain, pointing for me to climb in. I shook my head. He was crazy if he thought I was going to get undressed with him still in the room. But he grabbed my hand and pulled me toward the tub. It was stained with mold and rust and I had used cleaner ones at the truck stops I had been through in the past few months.

I looked up at him and pointed toward the door. A warm shower would feel so good right now but not with him watching.

"I'm not leaving," his stern face glanced to the window above the sink and I finally understood his reasoning. If he could feel how much pain I was in, he would certainly know that jumping from a second story window was out of the question.

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"You can either shower with or without my help. But you need to." His face softened as he reached for my arm. "It will be good for you."

I pushed his arm away and signed for him to fuck off before I stepped out of my sandals.

His fingers gripped my cheeks as he jerked my head up to look at him. "Fuck you, too."

I stepped back in surprise. He had understood?

His lips crept over his teeth as he smiled at me. "You're not the only one with secrets."

I smiled sweetly at him, mockery streaming from my eyes and lips. He laughed and released my face, pointing again to the shower and grabbing a towel from the shelf above my head. I slowly undid the buttons on my jeans, not wanting to bend over to pull them down because I knew how badly it would hurt. I managed to wiggle them down my hips and stepped out of them, glancing at man who had returned to his seat on the toilet. He was staring at me with a concerned expression which angered me but I looked away, not wanting him to know that his presence bothered me.

I tugged at the bottom of my shirt and attempted to lift it over my head but the pain in my chest was too much and I cried out as my shirt fell back into place. I held my eyes shut until the throbbing lessened, fresh tears of pain and embarrassment already falling onto my cheeks. The man was standing in front of me when my eyes opened and I jumped, startled he could move so quickly.

"Sorry," his mouth twitched at the corners like he wanted to smile. "Let me help you. Arms up."

I hesitated but obeyed and he carefully pulled my blood stained shirt from my body. I winced as it was ripped from my torn and raw skin but was relieved when I was free of it. He threw the shirt on the floor next to the remnants of my jeans and bent over the tub so he could turn on the water. I watched him carefully, unsure of what to think. Was he really trying to help me or did he have ulterior motives? It had been him, after all, who had convinced Ray to spare my life. What did he want with me?

All of my questions were put aside as I felt the steam start to fill the room and soothe my aching muscles. The man with the green eyes stood up once the temperature was to his liking and looked at me.

"Thank you," I said, barely using my voice at all.

He smiled at me as if he had won a contest. "You're welcome, Raleigh."

"What's your name?" I asked, no longer caring that I was having this conversation in my underwear.

He lifted one large hand and spelled it out for me. *K-A-D-E-N*.

I nodded and turned away from him, slipping out of my panties and bra before stepping into the shower.

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