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7 Days

By Debra Colby

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7 DAYS

A Novel

Debra Colby

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Anna was stepping out of the shower when she heard the lock pop and saw the door open. He knew she would be naked. He knew that she would be vulnerable. If nothing else his timing was always perfect. He always chose the times when she was at her weakest to attack.

He stepped inside; his smile widened into a disgusting grin. Anna had grown to hate that smile. In fact, she had grown to hate the man who stood staring at her, his eyes traveling the length of her body; looking like the proverbial wolf ready to devour his prey.

Anna had difficulty even remembering a time when she had loved him. He was her husband and she wanted to kill him. She wanted so badly to take a knife to his shitty grin and cut it out and toss it in the

trash with the snotty tissues and blood-stained sanitary napkins. He deserved nothing less.

She wanted to rip his eyes out of his handsome face and squish them between her fingers. She wanted never to see his gaze land on her again. However, she did none of these things. She simply stood there; the skimpy towel she was holding pressed tightly against her breasts with the ends trailing down to cover the V between her legs.

His mouth was moving, and Anna was sure there must have been words coming out, but she heard nothing. Fury filled her. Fury at the thought that he believed he had every right to continue abusing her over and over. Fury that she had allowed him to break her spirit, allowed him to make her weak.

Her head felt as though it would explode and if she listened close enough, she'd be able to hear her own heart pounding like a piston.

She suddenly felt stronger than she ever had; strong enough to place her hands around his neck and squeeze until his mouth stopped moving and his body fell to the floor. She saw all this in her head. She could imagine herself doing it and the sense of relief and freedom she would have if he were dead; but again, she did nothing.

She watched as his hand reached out to her. She slapped it away. His eyes narrowed in anger; his hands curled into fists. His mouth continued moving, spittle spewed onto Anna's face as his angry words hit her as hard as she knew his fists could.

“Bitch! How dare you hit me?”

His fist cracked into her cheek. Anna's head slammed into the wall from the force of his blow.

Blood trailed down the side of her face.

Anna curled her own hands into fists, she pushed off the wall and into him. She blindly began wailing her small fists into his chest. Her fury rose to the surface, years of anger behind each hit.

"Don't touch me!" Anna screamed.

When her fist connected with his face, Anna was surprised to see him back away. Feeling bolder, she grabbed the scissors that lay on the tank of the toilet and waved them in front of his face.

"If you touch me again, I'm going to stab you in the eye with these."

He backed away and Anna moved towards him. The towel dropped, but she didn't care. She was past caring. This man had beaten, raped and mentally tortured her throughout their entire marriage. She had never known a day of calm. Every day of her life had been filled with the fear of when he was going to hurt her again. She'd been walking on eggshells for so long that she didn't know what it was like to feel peace.

"You're crazy!" he said.

"You made me that way!" Anna slashed and stabbed the scissors in the air in front of him. She felt rather than saw the sharp edge of the scissors strike his cheek. She saw the red pour out of the slice she'd made, and she began to laugh.

"Bleed you bastard, bleed! How does that feel?"

He shoved her away from him and she saw stars as her head once again slammed into the wall.

“You’re going to pay for that!” He touched his cheek and then looked at the blood on his hand.

Anna shook her head to try and clear it and continued to taunt him, “How, Nick? Are you going to run to Mommy and Daddy and tell on me? Have them beat me as well?”

“Bitch!” he yelled, as he grabbed a handful of her hair and then threw her down onto the bathroom floor.

His booted foot connected with her ribs as he began to kick her.

Anna curled into a ball, but she hadn’t been quick enough and heard a nauseating crack as his boot crashed into her ribcage.

“Dad! Stop it! Leave her alone!”

His eight-year-old son’s voice made him stop mid-kick. He turned to his son.

“Perfect timing, Jay. Now is as good a time as any to see what happens to wives who don’t obey.”

A smaller voice spoke up, “Daddy? Why are you hurting Mommy?”

At his daughter’s voice the man seemed to soften.

“Ahh, Meggie. My angel. Mommy was being bad, and she needed to be punished for not listening to Daddy. Good girls listen and obey. Mommy was being a bad girl. This is how bad girls are punished. Mommy is not a good girl.”

“Yes, she is! She’s my mommy! I love her. Stop hurting her!”

The man pointed at the girl, “Meg! Enough! Don’t talk back to me or I’ll have to punish you as well. And Daddy doesn’t want to punish you. You’re my perfect girl.”

Jay pushed his six-year-old sister behind his back.

“Leave her alone! She’s just a little girl!”

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Jay shook his head, “No.”

“You’re going to disobey me as well?”

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“This is how you raise our children, Anna? To blatantly disobey their father. I won’t have it! They’re Madison’s and Madison’s obey their parents.”

Nick turned away from his wife and slapped his son across the face. Jay’s head whipped to the side and he swayed unsteadily from the hit; but he refused to let his father see his pain. Even as young as he was, he knew from past experiences, that if he showed weakness, his father would pounce on it and his beating would be worse. He struggled to stay on his feet.

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Meg screamed when she saw her father raise his hand to hit her brother again, she wrapped her arms tighter around Jay's waist, "No Daddy! Don't!"

"Stop screaming girl!" Nick shouted at her.

Nick stood before his son and dangled the belt in front of him.

"Now take the belt and punish your mother, Jay."

Despite his pain and through his tears, Jay continued to shake his head, "No! I won't!"

Nick frowned at his son's continuing defiance, "Fine, then you'll take her punishment."

And with a quick flick of his wrist, Jay felt his father's belt slap him across the face. Jay screamed as the leather broke open his cheek. He fell to the floor next to his mother.

Meg dropped to her knees beside her brother, "Stop it Daddy, stop it! You're hurting him!"

Her children's screams catapulted Anna into action. Swallowing her pain, she pulled her broken body together and crawled to her children. She placed herself between them and their father to shield them from further harm.

"Leave them alone! For god-sakes, they're your own children, Nick!" she screamed at him.

"That's right, Anna. They're mine. They belong to me, just like you do. And by Jesus they will learn who their master is."

It was then that Anna felt the belt rain down upon her bare back. She huddled closer into her children to protect them and took the brunt of Nick's furious onslaught.

Meg was screaming hysterically, “Daddy! Stop! Stop! Please stop!”

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Nick’s blows stopped when he looked down into his daughter’s tear-filled eyes, “Daddy, please stop. She’ll be good. We’ll all be good.”

Nick dropped the belt and the lashing suddenly ended. Anna tightened her hold around her son and felt his body go weak beneath her. With her other arm she reached for her daughter, but Nick had already bent to pick Meg up.

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"I know Mom. I just need to get bigger. Then I'll be able to fight for you and Meg. I'll be able to protect both of you from him."

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Anna let herself be comforted by her son and her tears fell on them both. Her thoughts were full of self-loathing. She couldn't understand her life, how it had come to this. How she could have fallen in love with a man so despicable; how she could allow that same man to hurt her family over and over.

Ever since she was a little girl, her life had been a spiraling cesspool. She could barely remember a time when she felt safe or even happy.



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