

Chapter 6



RAPE

As time went on, I got close to a girl named Trisha. She and I would either hang out with the other girls from the home, walk around getting high together, or simply run away.

Trisha: Come on. I want you to meet Manuel.

Me: Who's Manuel?

Trisha: He lives right next to the school. He's a friend of mine. He gets me high all the time. He's cool. I'll just be a minute.

Me: All right, but just for a minute.

When we got to the door, there was no answer.

Me: I don't think anyone's home.

Trisha: Sure they are. We just have to keep knocking.

And so we did, until finally ...

Manuel: Hey what's up? Who's your friend?

Trisha: This is Michelle. She's cool. We live together in that place I told you about.

Manuel: Okay. Come in.

Trisha: Got some weed?

Manuel: Yeah, a little bit. Wait.

He walked into another room and closed the door behind him.

Me: He seems a little out of it.

Trisha: That's just the way he is. Don't worry about it. He's got good weed. He came out of the room with a little joint in his hand.

Trisha: That's it?

Manuel: Yeah.

He walked over to the stove and lit the joint. We passed it around until it was gone.

Trisha: We've got to go back to school.

He looked at me.

Manuel: Come back to see me.

Me: Yeah, sure.

Trisha: Thanks, Manuel.

As soon as we left I didn't give him another thought. I even sort of forgot about the whole thing until I ran into him after school one day. I was standing there waiting for the Cherity van that picked us girls up after school. Manuel ran up to me.

Manuel: Michelle!

I turned around, but I didn't recognize him right away. I stood there for a moment. Then it dawned on me.

Me: Manuel, right?

Manuel: Yeah. What are you doing?

Me: I'm waiting for the staff to pick me up, they should be here in a few minutes.

Manuel: Why don't you come to my house?

Me: I can't. They'll be here any minute.

Manuel: See me tomorrow.

Me: I don't know.

Manuel: Come on, Michelle. Just for a little while.

Me: Okay.

Manuel: Okay. See ya tomorrow.

I watched him as he walked away. He had a tan complexion, and was quite muscular. I could tell he was at least 19 years old. I was surprised that he took any interest in me. I was only 14. I had a feeling that I shouldn't go, but I already told him that I would. I knew he would be expecting me, so I went.

Manuel: I wasn't sure if you were coming.

Me: I told you I would. I don't lie.

Manuel: I see that. Come into my room. What do you think?

I looked around the room. It was dim even with the light on.

Me: It's a little dark in here, but it's cool.

I continued to look around. There was a little table next to the bed. On it was an empty booze bottle, a pack of rolling papers and a radio. In the corner stood a four-drawer wooden dresser with what looked like clothes scattered on top of it. Though I noticed all of these things around his room, what caught my eye the most was a poster hanging over his bed.

It was a picture of a man in military clothes suspended in the air above the ground with his arms open wide above his head. He had a look of pain on his face. It looked as though he were gasping for air. On this poster next to the picture it read "Why Me?" in big, black letters.

Manuel: Do you want to get high?

Me: I don't know. I shouldn't miss school.

Manuel: Come on. He's right across the street.

Me: I don't know, I'm not sure I don't want miss school today.

Manuel: Come on. Just for a minute.

He walked out the door, motioning for me to follow him. "Damn. I can't believe this" I whispered. I was so nervous. What am I getting myself into? I thought as he and I crossed the street together.

He knocked on a door.

Manuel: Eric, it's Manuel.

Eric: Wait a minute. I got to get some clothes on!

When the door opened, there stood an older man with a long, white salt-and-pepper beard. He looked rough, as though he had just returned from combat.

Eric: Who's this?

Manuel: A friend of mine, Michelle.

Eric: I told you I don't want you bringing people to my house.

Manuel: She's cool.

Eric: Come in. (He looked me over) Sit down wherever.

There was a strange aroma in the room. I thought it was incense until Eric pulled out a huge bag of marijuana and a pipe.

Eric: Don't tell anyone about this place, girl.

Me: I won't. I promise.

I just stayed quiet. Manuel passed me a bottle of whiskey. I took a swig, and nearly choked. (I had never drank liquor before.) Then he passed around a joint. I took a drag, and I felt nothing until I tried to stand up to go to the bathroom. I sat right back down again.

What's happening to me? I thought. I'm scared, but I feel good. Then Eric handed me a little piece of paper.

Me: What is this?

Eric: Acid. You'll like it. Just chew on it.

Me: I don't know. I've never done this before.

Eric: Trust me, chickie. You're in for the ride of your life.

Even though I felt I shouldn't, I put it in my mouth anyway. The drug's effect took no time at all. I remember watching the bottle of whiskey move across the table by itself. Isn't that peculiar? I thought, and that was the very last thought that entered my mind until the next day.

When I woke up, I found myself lying in Manuel's bed with all of my clothes off. Blood saturated the sheets. Just as I was collecting my thoughts, in walked Manuel.

Manuel: Hey.

Me: What happened to me last night?

Manuel: You got up to go to the bathroom, and then you started to take off your clothes, you wanted it.

Me: I wanted what?

Manuel: You know, sex.

Me: You had sex with me?

Manuel: Yeah, what's the big deal?

Without saying another word, he just walked out the door. How could he do that to me? I could hear Manuel in the other room filling the bathtub up with water. I put my clothes on.

Manuel: (from the other room) Michelle, come on and take a bath with me!

Me: No, I need to get back to Charity House. I'm going to be in big trouble.

Manuel: Come on. Just a bath. Don't be mad at me. You wanted it.

I could hear his foot steps come closer to the bed room, then there he stood in the door way.

Me: How could I have wanted it if I didn't even know what was happening?

Manuel: By the way you were acting. Come on. Let's not talk about it.

He grabbed my wrist and gently pulled me toward the bathroom. Once in the bathroom he started to undress me.

Me: Okay, Okay. I'll take a bath with you, but then I have to go back.

I pushed his hands away then took off my own clothes. I did as I said I would. After bathing, I just left, not giving this experience a second

thought. I stayed away, but after a while he would show up at my school to talk to me. He went to my school and pleaded with me to visit him again.

Manuel: I miss you. I love you, Michelle.

Me: I don't trust you.

Manuel: Why, baby? I love you.

I never heard those words "I love you" and I liked his soft words. Maybe I'm being too hard on him. So I went with him. He and I hung out for weeks. He was so nice to me until one day.

Manuel: Hi, Michelle. I missed you so much.

Me: Really?

Manuel: Yes. I think about you all the time.

He wrapped his arms around me and gave me a big hug.

Manuel: Let's go inside and have a drink.

Me: Sure.

Manuel: Okay. What do you like to drink?

Me: I don't know.

Manuel: I got just what you need.

He reached up and grabbed a big bottle sitting on top of his refrigerator. He filled my glass half full with dark brown liquor then filled the rest of the glass with Coke.

Manuel: Here. Try this.

I took a drink and started to gag.

Me: This tastes awful. What is it?

Manuel: Rum and Coke. What you've never had rum before?

Me: No.

Manuel: Come on. Let's go in my room.

He took the bottle of rum and the Coke with us.

Manuel: Come on. Drink your drink!

Me: I am; I just don't like the taste.

Manuel: Trust me. After the first drink, you won't feel a thing.

And so I did. After I was finished with that drink, he poured me another one.

Me: I don't like this stuff. I want to go back to the home.

Manuel: Come on. Just a little more time with me. I missed you. Don't you like me?

Me: Yeah, but I don't want to get in trouble.

Manuel: You won't. Come on. Drink this drink with me.

Me: All right, but then I got to go.

He walked over to his dresser, and pulled out a bag of pot. He then rolled a joint and lit it.

Manuel: Here. Try this. It goes well with rum and Coke.

For some reason I just took it and smoked with him. Before I knew it, I was no longer thinking. I was just doing whatever he said. After a while, I could no longer drink; I kept spilling it.

Manuel: Here. Just lay back.

He pushed me back and then put his hands on my breasts. Then he tried to pull my blouse over my head, but I kept pushing it back down. He ripped it off my body right down the middle.

Me: No, Stop! I don't want this!

He didn't respond. He became a monster, a werewolf or something hideous. He was clawing at me like some vicious beast.

Me: Stop!

I heard him breathing harder and harder as he struggled to take off my

pants. He pulled them down past my knees. I kept trying to push him off me, but he just kept pulling my clothes off so easily. I thought they were stronger than that.

Me: No! No! Please, no!

He pulled my legs apart and shoved his fingers in my vagina, as he licked and sucked at my face. Then he stuck his penis inside me and Raped me as if I wasn't there, but I was.

I was inside my body. My soul was pleading for mercy. I looked around the room trying to figure out a way to escape. His grip got tighter with every thrust.

Me: No! No!

He just kept squeezing my breast and licking my face. Manuel started grunting louder and louder, as he pulled my hair, until finally he exploded. I laid there and stared at the poster that said, "WHY ME?" I was asking the very same question.

He then got off of me, and without a word walked into the other room. I just laid there and hugged myself as I cried. I couldn't believe what had just happened to me. When I got my senses together, I looked around the room and found one of his T-shirts. I could barely put it on. I tried to get dressed, but I could hardly stand up, I was shaking so badly.

I leaned against the doorway to keep my balance. I was still drunk. Terror ran through my mind, Oh my God, don't let him do this to me again. I can't leave. I can't walk. Oh, God help me!

I glanced in the living room to see where he was. He saw me out of the corner of his eye.

Manuel: Where are you going? You can't leave like that; you're too wasted. I just stood there and cried.

Manuel: What's wrong? I love you. Don't cry. Come on. Let's take a nap together. Then you'll feel better.

He pulled me back into the room and laid me next to him. I prayed to God, please don't let him hurt me again. In only a moment he was asleep. I stayed long enough to sober up, then I left. I never spoke about what happened I let it fade into the back of my mind as I did everything else.

~O~

Eventually, the home lost financial support. I didn't understand what they were talking about. All I knew was that the home was going to shut down. I was given a choice to either live with the house parents, Naomi and Jay or to go to another group home. It would be an entirely new setting with new girls, new staff that I have never met before.

I just couldn't fathom all of those changes at one time, so I chose to stay with Naomi. She and I had developed a bizarre relationship that began in the group home and continued once I moved in with them.

It all started one night while I was sleeping in the staff bedroom with her. I was the one who instigated the relationship between us, at least in the direction in which it escalated. I touched her breast not knowing the reaction I was going to receive. I had never done anything like that before, and I wasn't sure why I wanted to touch her.

I didn't know what I was doing or why I was doing it. She didn't resist; she just laid there motionless, and with each caress I could hear her breathing getting stronger and deeper. I wasn't sure if touching her was right or wrong. The concept of morality wasn't clear to me at that time. It was pure

instinct: I wanted to touch her, and so I did.

Our relationship grew from there. I was 14 at the time she looked to be about 30 She taught me how to please her, showing me what felt good to her and what didn't. When I moved in, she and I slept together almost every night. When we weren't together, I was overwhelmed with jealousy. I got so angry at the fact that she was sleeping with her husband, too, and when I saw affection between them, I became irritable and frustrated to the point where I would just run away from those foreign feelings.

Naomi became violent when I wanted to be with someone other than her. The violence always followed sex and vice versa. The extremes became intolerable. I had to get away, but how? Whom was I to run to? No one knew what was going on, including me. Out of desperation, I kept running away, hoping that the situation would just magically mend itself, change somehow. I couldn't breathe anymore. I tried to tell one of the church members who used to be a counselor at Charity Home what was going on, but the words would not come out. Not only was I embarrassed about the whole situation, but I couldn't put this relationship into words. How was I supposed to explain to someone what I didn't understand myself. Eventually my social worker was so frustrated with my constant running away that he locked me up.

~O~

It happened when I was 14. I had ran away from the group home I was staying at, sure I had ran away many times before, but this time was different, something happened in one moment that would change my life years to come. I was wondering around the streets and saw a man watering his lawn, why I spoke to him, why he was there, what happened next, why it happened is all a mystery to me. we engaged in a conversation and it was all down hill from there, he invited me in out of the sun, why I fallowed I don't know. I was 13 years old unaware of illness and disease, I didn't know what intravenous drug use (shooting up) was about, or the differences in drugs, I didn't know anything I was on this ride called life and unsure where it was going to take me. He said to me come into this room with me, he introduced me to his friends there stood two men and a woman, they had something in there hands, and they huddled around me I could see a television in the corner of the room to my far left, for some reason I kept glancing over to it, maybe It was because I was nervous and the television was something I could relate to, maybe it was the only thing that made sense to me under these circumstances . One of the men tied a small rubber hose around his arm tapped on the crease in his arm and proceeded to stick a needle into his vein I didn't understand what he was doing or why he was doing it, he then took the tunicate off from around his arm and tilted his head back slightly and shook his head, he let out a slight laugh as if he enjoyed what he had just done, then the woman next to me did the same thing, then they turned to me, and asked me to pull out my arm, why I didn't say no, why I didn't run away. I don't know. I just simply put my arm out there. The man that welcomed me into his house tied the tunicate around my arm "Now this is going to pinch just a little bit, but then you are going to be fine" I just sat there and watched what they were doing to me. I saw him hold the needle straight up in front of me tapping on the vial as he squeezed the syringe between his thumb and two writing fingers. he then

stuck the tip of the needle into my vein, "hold still". at first it was only a pinch, then it was the strangest but most incredible feeling I have ever felt, I felt as if I were going very fast even though I was sitting still, everything around me seemed to make absolutely no sense yet I felt great, I looked at the TV once again. this time I only saw a white line across it's screen, I could hear what seemed like wind rushing past my ears, I don't know what happened in the few hours that followed, but it seemed to me that night fell quickly, the last memory I had of that evening was being woken up by two police officers. how I got on the floor I don't know, I don't remember falling asleep. as I was walking I saw what looked to be six adults around me sleeping on the floor all paired up in couples. with one exception there sat the man that man that welcomed me into his home, he was sitting at the kitchen table with a phone book opened up in front of him and a dirty white telephone lying next to his hand, I hardly remember what he looked like, I just remember he had dark brown hair he was lean he was sitting there with his legs crossed smoking a cigarette, but the expression on his face I will never forget, he wouldn't look into my eyes he sat there looking very sad he wouldn't take his eyes off the floor, "Why did you turn me in?" I said as the police walked me out the door.