



Chapter 2

Bởi:

unknown

The month after the accident was pretty eventful. My husband Mark was buried. My son Robbie moved in with one of our neighbors. Mark's brother Randy came up from Dallas to deal with the lawyers and the insurance companies. And with the doctors. I guess there were quite a few important decisions to be made. I slept through it all.

The doctors later told me I was lucky to have survived, though it would be a long time before I joined them in that judgment. The police estimated that the drunk who rammed into us was going at least 70. With our combined speeds, they said, it was like running into a brick wall at over 100 miles per hour. That image of smashing into an unyielding wall would haunt my dreams for the rest of my life. Mark's neck was fractured when his head bounced off the Cavalier's ceiling and then slammed into the side window. He died instantly, they told me.

In the split second during which Mark was dying, the passenger side airbag exploded from its cocoon behind the dash, and while that prevented me from flying into the windshield (or, more accurately, prevented the windshield from flying into me), it also fractured my nose and gave me a pretty severe whiplash. The drunk was driving a bigger car, and going a lot faster. At the moment of impact, his car's souped-up motor crashed into the space occupied by the much smaller engine of our Cavalier, forcing it back into the passenger compartment. This caused the frame to buckle upward and backward at the same time my momentum was carrying me forward and downward.

In a panicked reaction just before the collision, I'd braced my legs against the floorboard. Both legs were shattered in more places than the radiologists could count. As my legs were being crushed against my hips, my upper body was reeling from the violent impact with the airbag. Something had to give, and what gave was my lower spine. Two vertebrae were fractured and the spinal cord was damaged.

The driver of the other car was not wearing a seatbelt. He crashed through the windshield of his car, and apparently did a somersault across the roof of ours before hitting the pavement some twenty or so yards beyond the point of the crash.

He was also killed instantly. Except in the dark world of my fantasies, where he lived long enough to be castrated and mutilated, flogged and keelhauled, then stretched and

broken on the rack and burned at the stake before being turned over to the mercies of the master of the underworld. It took a long time, but I eventually came to appreciate just how toxic and malignant was the hatred I harbored for the dead stranger who had killed my husband and broken my body. As it turned out, planting that hatred in the Healing Garden was as much a part of my healing as was the medical treatment. Letting go was as much a part of my miracle as was hanging on.