

CHAPTER 2

Todd hated the rain, especially on a Saturday morning. He had lawn work to do, but of course, you can't do that in the middle of a thunderstorm. The grass was going to be knee-high by the time he could get out there, and that wouldn't be till the following weekend.

His work required a lot of travel, and ordinarily, he liked that, but he was getting tired of sleeping in motel rooms and eating alone in strange towns. It would be nice to have a home-cooked meal once in a while. He was hoping for a promotion that would put him in the home office more and eliminate the travel, but that wasn't forthcoming.

Todd's dark, curly hair frizzed in this kind of weather. It was sometimes annoying, but he didn't do anything about it. It was especially bad after his workout, which was where he was now. He tried to keep up with it when he was on the road, but that didn't always pan out. The Trim Gym was a good place to work out, except for that one lady trainer who was always coming on to him. He didn't appreciate that. She wasn't his type. He didn't have a type. He just wanted to be left alone. No, that wasn't it. He wanted his independence.

He was finishing up on the treadmill when his phone buzzed nearby. He stopped to answer it, wiping the sweat off his forehead. It was his dad. Good old Dad. Always picked the best times to call.

"Hi, Dad," he said warmly.

"Hi, Son. I hope I'm not disturbing anything."

"No, no, of course not. I'm just finishing up at the gym. Isn't this rain something? It wasn't raining this hard in Los Angeles. They would gladly trade their drought for a good rain like this."

"You should've seen it earlier. It just poured several days in a row. I just stayed inside."

"So, how are you?" He was walking back to the lockers.

"I'm fine." A slight pause followed. "Say. I was wondering. Do you have any plans for lunch?"

"Lunch?" Todd stopped walking. Since when did his dad ask about lunch? "No, can't say that I do. You got something in mind?"

"I've been thinking of going to that Mel's Cafe out on Highway 41. Do you know that one?"

"Yeah, I've heard of it. Haven't been there though."

"Well, let's go check it out. I hear it's a retro kind of place."

Todd laughed. "Okay. As long as the food is good."

"It is if you like hamburgers."

"That I do. I'll be over soon."

Craig checked his email before getting ready for lunch. He wanted to make sure the plan was still in tact. He ran his fingers through his receding hair, now white with age, except for his dark eyebrows and smiled at the mirror. Today might be the happiest day of his life.

End of Excerpt