

August 9, 2013 Huntsville Prison, Huntsville Texas

The more laws, the less justice.

Cicero

## CHAPTER ONE

The grin on Dr. Lindsey McCall's face was so wide that it nearly split her face in two as she gazed around the Huntsville Prison Emergency Treatment Center with an unusual sense of pride. She who had taken no satisfaction from her creation of a drug which had revolutionized the treatment of heart failure felt an irrepressible joy every time she glanced through the huge plate glass windows of her office at the gleaming technology arrayed in the diagnostic room on her left and the state of the art eight bed patient care area which dominated the Center. The place had been completely transformed from the infirmary she had worked in as an inmate. The peeling and dingy walls, the 1950 style open patient care area and the warren of small and fairly useless offices had been gutted and in their stead was a level one trauma and emergency treatment center rivaled only by those of the Texas Medical Center, sixty miles south of the prison.

Seventy miles north of Houston on Interstate 45 is Huntsville, Texas. Also called Prison City, Huntsville is home to seven prisons boasting about seventy five thousand prisoners. Long known for its tough stance on crime, the state of Texas proudly boasts of a criminal justice system second to none. With a total of 122 prisons and accommodations for close to 30,000 prisoners, Texas ranks first in the United States and second only to Russia in its capacity for prisoners.

Lindsey had only one demand upon assuming the position of Medical Director at the Huntsville Prison System: A total renovation of the infirmary serving the over ten thousand prisoners in the seven facilities comprising the system. Governor Greg Bell had laughed as he signed the executive order granting Dr. Lindsey McCall permission to renovate the infirmary.

"I'd have to be a damn fool to refuse you, Dr. McCall", dark brown eyes dancing and eyebrow raised," I wonder how many other Governors ever had the chance to grant a five million dollar renovation for which the state would pay nothing."

Winking at the cameras covering the ceremony, Bell answered his question by circling his thumb and forefinger, "Nada, not a one, I can guarantee you that."

Because of the family inheritance she had received upon the deaths of her mother and sister, Lindsey McCall had been a wealthy woman but with the proceeds rolling in from the sale of Digipro, Lindsey had become a millionaire many times over and could easily afford the now five million dollar renovation from the trust fund she had established with the help of Hank Reardon, CEO of Andrews, Sacks and Levine, the pharmaceutical company which had funded her research and now manufactured the drug.

Lindsey had spared no expense during the renovation. She had prevailed on the wisdom of former colleagues, trauma surgeons at the Houston Medical Center where she had been one of the leading Cardiologists in the country and had followed their advice, expensive though it had been; she regretted not one cent.

Taking a huge, shaky breath which caught in her throat and feeling the tell-tale sting in her eyes, Lindsey whispered, "Thank You, thank You thank You" in awe, wonder and gratitude at the happiness she had never before known was possible and wondered if her Dad could look down from the heavens he had once soared in to see his smiling daughter and know the totality of her joy. She hoped so.

Shaking her head in exasperation at this unfamiliar incarnation of herself, Lindsey laughed softly, checked her watch and muttered, "Give it up, McCall, you've run out of time." Realizing that the stacks of forms, paperwork and charts awaiting her review would require a couple of hours to complete, Lindsey calculated that she'd have just enough time to go home, take Max for a quick run and then shower and change. Today was her first wedding anniversary and her husband and boss, Rich Jansen, Chief Warden at the Huntsville Prison, had made reservations at one of the finer restaurants in Houston, Perry's, to celebrate; but as Lindsey was packing her brief case to leave, she heard Monica, the chief emergency center nurse and now one of her best friends, yelling for her.

Lindsey raced down the hall separating the administrative offices from the main clinic in time to see Monica and Luke Preston, her favorite guard at the prison transferring a severely injured man to one of the beds in the monitored section of the clinic. Monica did not stop her systematic

emergency procedures to look at Lindsey but the nurse was muttering under her breath with a most unpleasant scowl on her face. If this were any of the other nurses, Lindsey might have figured that she was simply angry at the late interruption of a quiet Friday afternoon but Lindsey knew better. Something was bugging Monica big time but they had no time to talk, this guy was unconscious, most likely in shock either from the extensive trauma or internal bleeding and looked as if he was barely moving his chest to breathe.

While Monica applied electrodes so that they could monitor his cardiac rhythm, oxygen saturation, blood pressure and respiratory rate, Lindsey tried to find a vein to start an intravenous drip. Failing, she grabbed the cut-down set the ever efficient Monica had placed on a tray beside Lindsey, tore it open and quickly made a small incision on his forearm; within seconds, she had threaded a large bore catheter into his brachial vein and started a drip of dextrose and saline. The man's face was unrecognizable; he had been beaten so badly that all Lindsey could make out were the vague outlines of mouth, nose and eyes. McCall's gaze rapidly traversed the man as her hands gently palpated his abdomen and chest, looking for abdominal injuries, bleeding or broken ribs. He was in shock-the reason she had not been able to start an intravenous line; the question was why. Grabbing the portable X-Ray machine out of the corner of the room, Lindsey waited until the guard and Monica had cleared the room, threw on the lead apron that hung there and took several flat plate films of his chest and abdomen.

While Monica was calling in Jake, a paramedic always looking for overtime; Lindsey walked rapidly into the X-Ray room and clipped the films to the fluorescent wall readers.

"Jake can be here in thirty minutes, Lindsey," Monica said, glancing at her watch, "that should give you enough time to get home, change and still meet Rich on time."

"Ok Monica; thanks, this guy will need someone to watch over him pretty carefully but I don't see anything that looks worrisome on these films...." McCall stood and scanned the three films for the third time to make certain that she'd not missed anything on the X-Rays. She scanned the new patient's monitor readings from through the window between his cubicle and the diagnostic room.

“His vital signs have stabilized and his oxygenation saturation is up,” frowning, McCall looked over at the nurse, “Funny, I was pretty sure that he had a flail chest but clearly I was wrong, he’s pinked up and looks pretty good aside from a completely smashed face.”

Sighing impatiently, Monica mumbled something that sounded like, “Like this guy’s worth all this”? And then more clearly, “Lindsey, come on, you need to go or you’ll be super late.”

Turning to look at the normally pleasant dark features now rearranged in a fierce scowl, Lindsey asked, “Monica, what on earth has got into you? I’ve *never* seen you act this way toward one of our patients.”

She was rewarded with a disdainful glare, “Are you telling me, Dr. Lindsey McCall, that you don’t know who this guy *is*?”

Staring at her boss and shaking her head the rigid features began to relax and soften into the attractive face of the Monica Bradbury that Lindsey had come to know and love when she had been an inmate here at Huntsville only two years before.

Incredulous, Monica stared at Lindsey’s bemused expression as she breathed, “Girl, you really need to get your head out of your books, this guy is Gabriel McAllister,” and watched Lindsey expectantly.

McCall shrugged as she turned back to watch McAllister’s monitor through the glass window of the X-Ray room and felt Monica’s hand grasp her shoulder as she hissed, “He’s the guy who raped that five year old little girl, it’s been all over the news all summer, Lindsey.....If there is one criminal that I *detest*, it’s a pedophile,” Monica added shaking her head in disgust.

Still watching her new patient, Lindsey recalled Rich calling out to her on an evening late last week to come and watch the local television news. Her husband knew that she was cramming for her emergency medicine boards which she was scheduled to take in just over a month; rarely did he interrupt her so she knew it wasn’t a trivial issue. Lindsey had sighed deeply as she closed a massive textbook on emergency medicine and joined Rich in their bedroom to watch the late “breaking news” report.

Kate Townsend was being interviewed by the CBS news about her headline story in the Houston Tribune earlier that day. Ever on the prowl for a good story, the Pulitzer winning reporter was commenting on a Houston juror who had recently pled guilty of juror tampering. According to Kate, the juror had sat on the jury selected for Gabriel Macalister's jury and been concerned about the lack of evidence proving that Macalister had raped and sodomized the child. Because two of the state's medical witnesses had stated the presence of an intact hymen in the vagina of the little girl, this juror had researched the possibility of vaginal intercourse occurring in a child with an intact hymen on her computer at home after the first day of the trial. Once she learned that an intact hymen did not preclude sexual activity, she reluctantly found the defendant guilty of three counts of rape along with the eleven other jurors.

Subsequent to the juror learning from a friend that she was expected to make her decision about the guilt or innocence of the defendant based solely on what she heard in the courtroom, the woman wrote a letter disclosing what she had done and why to the Judge who had heard the case. The unnamed juror wrote that she would have found the defendant not guilty had she made her decision based solely on the case as presented by the state in the courtroom; asserting that there was only scant physical evidence of abuse found in the child and that her decision to find Macalister guilty was based solely on the accusations of the child.

The interview ended with the famous reporter commenting on what she called, "a worrisome trend" in divorce and break-ups between couples involving a small child. In more than 50% of custody dispute cases, there were allegations of sexual abuse by the father or live-in boyfriend. Somberly, Kate regarded her Houston audience as she declared, "In upwards of 35% of these cases, the accusations were later proved to be false."

Both Kate and Rich had stared at one another as they listened, wide-eyed, to their good friend Kate Townsend ignite yet another incendiary explosive device in the halls of Huntsville Prison.