

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HERE NOW

"Our group leader wanted her confidence back. She wanted to be able to love someone. She'd been a jock. She'd like to be able to play sports again. A couple of guys had asked her out, nice guys she thought, probably, but she was so scared that even when she managed to accept them she'd end up canceling in terror.

"Her terror manifested through asthma attacks, her throat constricted, her eyes swollen, her ability to think clearly dissolved. The only thing she'd be able to do was lie flat on her back, preferably on a hard floor and talk herself through each breath. Hours of her life had been spent like this. Dates, potential dates that is, the sight of anything to do with baseball, then later even football or soccer but now again back to merely baseball, could set her off.

"She had no men friends. She knew that all men weren't rapists but they had done it together, in a group, complete with textbook male bonding cheering and somehow that scenario had forged itself into her mind as definitive male behavior. Groups of males walking down the street towards her often caused spontaneous irrepressible tears.

"She had come from a pretty typical middle class family. She had brothers and sisters and mostly they were all reasonably successful normal people. They tried to be patient with her. "Why can't you just get over it?" She had a lot of trouble with her periods, they would last for weeks or not appear at all. She didn't think that she was a lesbian but she had a hard time imagining how having a penis inside her would even be pleasurable.

"And me, well, I had been raped as a child and a few times later in various forms, mostly borderline cases, nothing as dramatic as gang rape but when a man takes a sexual encounter and turns it into a hurtful purposely cruel experience, that counts. I can remember a man saying to me, after all his sweet seductive talk had gotten us naked, he said, poised above me in a push up position looking down, his penis hard, ready and partway inserted, a leer cutting across his lips. "You want it? Well I'll show you. I'll give it to you. I'll fuck you so you won't ever need another one." I didn't move. I lay there as still as I could because he was falling into me with such force that I knew I'd be damaged if I moved at all. After eons of heartbeats he fell asleep and I was able to slip out quietly into the dark, stunned and alone."