

**The Road to Nowhere**  
**By Tracey L. DeBrew –**

The cruel wind is whipping and spinning me around in circles as it takes the lead in some awkward dance. It challenges me to keep a firm grip on the bag of groceries, the umbrella, and my hat. The rain hits my face hard like a pellet gun being fired mercilessly. Fighting the force of the elements, I try to lift my head to see how much farther I have to go before I reach the home that has my car sitting in the driveway. My husband would not allow me to drive my car as if I were a grounded teen. Surely he is sitting back in his easy chair awaiting my arrival wondering what I will cook to satisfy his pre-historic appetite. I suspect he is not looking out of the window praying that I return safely from being outside in this monsoon. The bottoms of my jeans are soaked from having splashed blindly in the deep puddles that have greeted me with every tenth step. I hear rumbling in the distance and hope that God holds off the lightning show until I make it securely into my home.

A gust of wind peels my umbrella inside out. I force it against the wind to fold it back into position before I'm totally soaked. Consciously I decide to take my chances on losing all of my items in the soggy brown paper bag while jogging toward my front door. The ball of my foot is paining after it kicks the door several times to summon him to let me inside to warmth. After what feels like an eternity, he answers. The door flies open and he walks away. Never mind him taking the partially ripped bag while I shake and close the excess water from my umbrella and attempt to strip the clumsy hat from my head – his phone call is more important.

“I'll talk to you later,” he says before he hangs up.

I leave the door open for him to feel the chill that stiffened my joints and muscles for the last twenty minutes as I pass him to go into the kitchen. I dump the heap of mess onto the table and retreat to our bedroom to put on some dry attire.

“Why didn't you close the door?!”

I hear him yell from the living room, followed by the front door being slammed shut like the lid of a coffin. He starts fishing through the items on the table and grumbles to himself. His footsteps pound toward our room as I hurry to pull the fresh pair of jeans over my hips to be fastened and grab a shirt to cover my bare breasts. I turn my back to him when he enters and slip my shirt on my cold frame hoping he caught a glimpse of nothing.

“You only making Manwiches?”

“Yes.” I quietly respond.

“I told you I wanted beef tonight.”

“Well since you didn’t specify, we’re having ground beef mixed with that can of sauce on a bun.”

“You smart ass. You’re a smart ass aren’t you?” he walked closer toward me. I kept my back turned hoping he would just ignore me as usual and leave what used to be our 30 x 30 square foot domain of love and passion. “Turn around.”

“I’m tired, And-.” I called him “And”, short for “Andrew”. I awarded him this nickname when it became too painful to say his entire name.

“Let me warm you up,” he insisted as he tugged at my shoulders to swivel me in his direction. Of course I resisted and paid a hefty price.

“Don’t touch me, And-!” I commanded.

He spun me around and tossed me backward on the bed. I bounced once and scooted back in a poor attempt to escape. He crawled on top of me, releasing the air from my lungs and onto his face. His hands groped any mound they could find underneath my shirt. My frail hands folded underneath his chest as I struggled to push him off of me.

“Why don’t you want to do it anymore?” he said as he tried to kiss my mouth that remained tightly closed.

“And-, cut it out. I’m not in the mood.”

He stopped wrestling with me for a moment and leaned up onto his hands to look into my eyes. His eyes that glowed with sheer hatred, crept down to my exposed

stomach and he gazed upon it briefly. He pulled my t-shirt down to cover it and climbed off of me, but not before giving me a shove.

“You’re never in the mood. Some wife you are. Just go make your Manwich and enjoy being alone. I’m going out.”

“When are you coming back?” I pleaded just for acting purposes.

“You’ll be asleep,” he said from the other side of the partially opened bedroom door.

I heard the front door slam shut and heard the car that he wouldn’t let me drive to the store speed away. I smiled wryly and reached under the bed to get the T-bone steak that I had stashed for myself before he came into the room. I was sure that And- would be gone for at least five hours. So I decided to run myself a bubble bath, enjoy a delicious dinner, watch a chick flick and then take something that would put me into a soulless sleep well before he walked in later that night.

Our fairytale marriage had become uncomfortable and at several times embarrassing. He thought that I had no idea about his mistress, but I've known for the past year about his affair. That bastard stripped me from my home, my friends and my wonderful life as an Interior Decorator and Designer in Los Angeles, just to reject my faithfulness and what I blindly called love. Once I found out about her, I purposefully made having sex with me unpleasant and boring. Still, he would force himself upon me and at times it would push me into an inescapable depressive state. He used to love me dearly, and often called me his flower before we found out that I was unable to have children. A tragic female curse, some labeled it, but everything happens for a reason, right?

\* \* \* \*

Later that night, And- returned and popped himself some popcorn. I could hear him rifling through the cabinets to find the salt shaker. He doused what seemed like ounces of salt on a full tub of the fluffed treat. I had grown to

despise the sound of the crunching and smacking that ensued whenever he ate it. I had come to dislike almost everything about And-. Much to my surprise he stayed in the living room and left me alone that evening. I'm sure he was beyond having a strong dislike for me. We rarely talked and as the days went on, we spent less and less time together. I wanted to go, but I had to plan my escape just right. He often accused me of running away from our problems, but there really was nowhere else to turn in spite of it all. For me the only answer had been to run. However, the escape that I planned was going to require me to run to the point of no return. There weren't many options.