

## Her Way

By Amanda Marshall

Caroline is busy, examining her brand new sunflower tattoo. It takes up about two inches of skin, to the left of her right shoulder blade. She was supposed to leave the bandages on for the rest of the day, but she needs to see how it looks. Except being slightly encrusted with blood, it's perfect. It has to be. Tonight is going to be a very important night.

Caroline tosses her still forming dreadlocks back over her shoulder and then examines the tattoo again as it appears between the knotted clumps of hair. These kids, nowadays, with their perfect, small dreadlocks know nothing about originality. Her dreads are natural, expressive, and distinguished. Caroline decides to wear a halter top tonight to show off her new tattoo. No, maybe she would be better off waiting, to add to the surprise. That would probably be better. She is getting ready to stop looking in the mirror and take a shower when Dahlia, her roommate, bursts through the door.

"Jesus, Caroline, I've been yelling for you for, like, forever. Didn't you hear me? Or the phone?"

"What?"

"Phone. I think it's Travis. Did you have music on or something?"

Caroline shakes her head. How could I have missed all that, she wonders, before shrugging her shoulders. She has to get Travis off the phone as quickly as possible. If she's on the phone with him too long... Well, everything has to go as planned or God knows what might end up happening. Caroline grabs the phone and waves Dahlia out of her room. Dahlia sighs and makes a face on her way out.

"Fucking bitch," Caroline mutters. "She's just jealous."

By the time Travis has been dealt with, there is no time to shower. Caroline picks off the crusty scab from her new tattoo, pulls on her tie-dyed top and matching skirt, grabs her fanny pack and Birkenstocks. She's almost out the door when she realizes she sort of smells. She rushes back into her room to put on some patchouli oil. That should mask any odor. She runs out to her car, already late. She was supposed to be at Simon's apartment fifteen minutes ago.

On the ride over to Simon's she thinks about Travis. Caroline and Travis dated years ago, when she was still in high school. They started dating right before he went to jail for armed robbery. Some stupid, uninformed, jealous people like to ask her how she could preach love and peace, but date some low-rent, gun-toting asshole. But those people were just jealous that Travis loved her. Besides, she knew that he was planning on donating that money to needy children.

After two years Travis was released and he immediately went to New Mexico. After Travis left the state, Caroline met Simon. Caroline had lately been planning on joining Travis in New Mexico. That is, she'd been planning to until Simon had started dating other women. She and Simon had just broken up a few months ago, her decision and all, but once he had started dating again... Well, Caroline couldn't have that happening. She would show that stupid bitch who he really belonged to. And she had. She'd shown him, as well. After Simon had told the stupid bitch he was leaving her, the slut brought all of Simon's stuff to a mall, with him in the car, dumped it in the parking lot, and ran over it four or five times before she threw him out and drove away. Caroline wishes she could have seen it.

When she knocks on the door Patrick, one of Simon's roommates, lets her in. She is sure he is snarling at her. She can't wait to convince Simon to move. She hates this place, hates his roommates, hates everything about it.

She knows his roommates hate her, too. They sit there, listening to that testosterone laden aggression they call music, and it fills them with hate. If only they would listen to the Dead, or to some nice Joni Mitchell, or even Neil Young, then they might know what peace and love are all about. But no, instead they're listening to some song that keeps going on about Joe, and Mexico, and killing old ladies. Caroline can't imagine ever listening to such filth. She doesn't even bother to say hello to them, just walks right by them to Simon's room. She'll get him out of this horrid place, and into a more suitable environment, a place where people can love each other, where no one would dream of anything like revolution or fighting. Tonight they'll go see Ratdog play, and Simon'll see the error of his ways.

Simon's room always grates on Caroline's nerves. Everywhere you look there's death, or war, or some other nasty thing. From the fliers supporting the IRA on the walls, to the comic books thrown all over the floor, the whole room just reeks of male dominance, violence, and the objectification of women. Caroline studied sociology. She knows all about these things. In the beginning, when they were first dating, Simon had been much more pliable. She had even managed to convince him to wear patchouli oil and hang out with her friends. She had managed to cut him off from all of his loser friends, just to have them all come running back like pathetic little idiots. But it didn't matter, she could run them off again whenever she wanted.

Simon is sitting on his bed, reading some stupid kiddie comic book when she lets herself in. She had really hoped he would at least try to fit in with the rest of the crowd, maybe wear that nice Dead shirt she had given him last year, but instead he is wearing some stupid band shirt, the type of band no one at a Ratdog show would ever listen to. Maybe no one would know who the band was. After all, what are the chances of anyone at a Ratdog show knowing who the Clash is? She winces in memory of that Neil Young show where someone had actually commented on Simon's Black Flag t-shirt.

"Are you ready? We're running late, and there's no time for you to be sitting around reading some juvenile trash." Caroline chooses to ignore the fact that she was the one who was supposed to be here half an hour ago. She notices that Simon looks at her for a second before setting the book down.

"You know, Caroline, I'm not really sure I want to go to this stupid show after all. I tell you what, I'll pay for the tickets, and then you can go alone, or with someone else, or even pocket the money and stay home. Now doesn't that sound nice? I mean, surely someone wants to see this pseudo-Dead thing."

This is not going at all the way Caroline has planned. Simon has to go with her. He has to, or everything will be ruined. She's planned the whole fucking thing, and now here he is about to ruin it all.

"But Simon, you promised me that you would come. You don't want to go back on your word, do you? I mean, what sort of person would that make you?" For such an amoral person, Simon places a lot of importance on his word. Caroline couldn't really understand it, but it had helped her out a lot throughout the relationship. Even if he had never said that he would go, he still would if she swore that he promised. Caroline could see that it was working already.

"All right, fine, I'll go. Can we just get out of here, already?"

Caroline knows she can make this work. There is no way that Simon can sit in the middle of all of the love and good vibes at the concert and not be happy. After that he will definitely come around to her way of thinking, and everything will be taken care of. After all, how could he not come around? Caroline loves these shows. She is surrounded by all of these people who look like her, and who love her, just because. They don't need to know her, they just love her anyway. They just dance with her and offer her places to sleep, and drugs, and a family. With these friends she can say things about how the world is biased and that it is wrong to eat meat, or that if everybody just loves hard enough, the problems in the world will all go away, and nobody questions her. They all agree, and smile at her, and treat her as though she's the smartest, most beautiful person around.

Simon, as easy as he is to get to agree with her, doesn't really love her. Not like them. He's always looking for things that are wrong with her. Like in the car on the way to the concert. She says that she thinks that anger is a horrible thing, and that she thinks that it never does any good, and so then he starts giving her all of these "historical" examples of revolution fueled by anger. Then, as if that's not bad enough, he says that all a love movement has ever done is dump a whole bunch of disillusioned hippies on the world, who preach this escapism bullshit to a new generation. Always someone is trying to bring her down, to make her seem stupid or wrong. Just because they don't know the truth.

Eventually he will try to leave again, they all do. It's just that they can't bear to see the truth. She knows all about love, and peace, and truth. And she is going to make sure that Simon doesn't leave, that he can't leave, even if she does decide to go to New Mexico to be with Travis.

Once they get to the concert Caroline points out every family she sees, from the oldest, to the youngest, who happen to be sitting across from them. Caroline strikes up a conversation with the two of them, and finds out that this is their first baby, that he is three months old, and that they are both sixteen.

"Oh, that's so beautiful," Caroline tells the mother. "I mean, to be so young and already know all about the joys of love and togetherness. What a lucky little baby you'll have." Simon snorts.

"Well, Simon, that was rude, I can't believe you would be such an insensitive...man."

"Oh please, Caroline. What sort of family is a kid going to have when its parents just learned how to drive? You're not that stupid, are you? You studied sociology, remember? Don't you remember all those statistics about the poverty line, and young parents, and-"

"Those statistics aren't true, they're lies the government feeds us so that we let them control us by making us work in a corporate world. It's all a method of brainwashing, anyway. God, Simon, you're so naive."

Caroline can see that Simon is about to say something, but instead he just shakes his head. Caroline knows it will just take him a little while to come around to her point of view.

Well, he hasn't really come along yet, well, not completely. But Caroline's working on him. Every time he backs down, she gains another inch. Caroline knows she's almost there.

Ratdog has finally started to play, and their mellow, melodic wave of love spreads throughout the audience. Smiling, Caroline stands up and begins to dance to the music. These concerts are so much nicer than those cramped, loud shows that Simon always wants to go to. Here you can hear yourself think. You can converse with the person swirling next to you without having to yell. And how often do those shows have seating outside, in the grass, where you can commune with nature, and roam freely around the arena? Caroline starts talking to another young girl about how shows like this expand your mind, and are so relaxing, because they get your creative juices flowing. When he thinks she isn't watching, she sees Simon pull out a book and his miniature flashlight. She lets that one slide. She has more important things on her mind. Things that will change everything. And at least no one has said anything about his shirt. And thank God he didn't bring his little portable CD player.

After a few songs, though, Caroline begins to feel neglected, and she starts trying to make Simon get up and dance with her. He finally stands up and Caroline thinks that he's coming around, but instead he walks away, coming back twenty minutes later with a beer and, of all things, a hot dog.

"That better be tofu!" she hisses, hoping no one notices him. For the rest of the show Caroline tries to distance herself from Simon, hoping that no one will question whether or not she belongs here. When it is finally over, the last encore played and the last dance danced, Caroline tells Simon, through her teeth, to get up and start moving. He obliges, and walks several feet ahead of her all the way to the car.

On the way home Caroline asks Simon what he knows about Utah. She could marry both Simon and Travis if they all moved to Utah and became...

"Simon, what are those people called?"

"What people?"

"The people in Utah, you idiot. Aren't you listening to me?"

"Do you mean the Mormons?"

"Yeah, those people. Aren't they like a cult?"

Simon starts to explain the Mormon thingie to her, but stops once he sees she's not listening. Mormons. She could marry lots of men. Then lots of people could love her. And they would all have to swear to love and cherish, and be faithful. For eternity. To her. What a deal. She wonders if she'll have to pick up their cult practices. If they were reasonable they would let her just live there, and marry lots of men, but leave her alone. Why should they mind?

"Jesus, Caroline, watch the road!" Simon shouts.

Caroline looks up just in time to swerve back into her lane, narrowly missing the car beside her. The driver gives her the finger.

"God, you know, some people are so rude. He should watch where he's going. I mean, if they aren't going to pay attention to the road, why are they even driving? Simon, stop gripping the door. You make me nervous. Don't you trust my driving?"

Caroline hates it when he gets nervous like this. She also hates it when other people drive like that maniac next to her. She's a good driver. Just because other people aren't paying attention most of the time, is she to blame?

She sees Simon rolling his eyes, but decides to let it go. There's really no point, she figures, in getting into a fight this close to home. She still has her secret to reveal, and she doesn't want to ruin all those good vibes the concert created in the two of them. A fight would just bring Simon right back into his normal hateful mind set. So instead she just sighs her most disapproving sigh and shakes her head. Never let it be said that she can't let someone else think they're right. She knows she's right, but it's the kind thing to do, letting people believe they know what they're talking about every once in a while. Of course, she just wishes she didn't have to do it so much.

Simon's looking out the window, not paying any attention. She wonders if he even heard her sigh, or saw her disapproving head shake. Maybe she should do it again. After all, it's one thing for her to let him think that he's right, but an entirely different thing for him not to know that she is simply letting him follow this delusional train of thought.

She wants him to pay attention to her, but she can't think of anything to say that would generate a conversation. So instead she starts to hum.

"Caroline, are you humming a Phish song?" Simon asks with a smirk.

"What? Of course not. People who like Phish are a bunch of fraternity boys who think getting stoned is a form of rebellion, something to kill the time between date rapes."

"Well, then, what were you humming?"

"I don't remember. Probably the Dead."

"I don't know, Caroline, it sounded an awful lot like that Phish song I heard in the background the other day when you called me, you know, that song that you claimed was playing because Dahlia wanted to hear it? Remember that, honey?"

"God, Simon, I swear, you should have had one less acid trip. You seem to hallucinate all the time. I mean, maybe they shouldn't have let you out of the institution after all."

She knew that would shut him up. He didn't like to be reminded of that one bit. His parents had institutionalized him after he had a bad trip. All he would do was sit in a corner and talk about how they were trying to plant electrodes in his brain or something weird like that. And although it would probably ruin the good vibes from the concert, it would make him forget about this whole humming thing. And then later she could remind him of how much she had helped him along these past few years, about how much crazier he had been and how much she had helped him. Caroline loves to help him. She just wants to give.

"Caroline, you know that the only reason they put me there was because they found me having a bad trip and drove me straight to the hospital, right? Because I was a problem child, and they wanted to make sure I didn't do any damage to myself or others by taking acid again, remember? That mainly they just were pissed off that I was doing drugs and they thought I had a problem, right?"

"Yeah, sure, honey, of course I know that. That's what you tell me. And of course, I believe you. But you know, you did do a lot of drugs. Who knows what side effects you might have? Aren't you glad I'm here to help?"

Simon doesn't answer her, but he also doesn't bring the whole humming thing up again. And at least she's reminded him of how much she loves him and takes care of him. She likes making sure he knows just how much she does for him, so that he knows how much she cares. He would never do as much for her.

"Look, Caroline, I think I should just go home and get some sleep. I'm tired, and I have to do some work tomorrow..."

"But, Simon, I wanted you to stay with me tonight. I don't really feel like driving anymore right now, and we're so much closer to my place than yours... I'll take you home as

early as you want in the morning. I promise. As soon as you want to go, we'll go. But I really just don't want to do it tonight."

"Maybe I'll call someone from your place, and get them to pick me up there."

Caroline shrugs. She knows that once she gets him into her room, and the entire surprise is made clear to him, he won't be going anywhere. He'll stay all night, and probably tomorrow, too. Maybe he'll even move in. He's going to be so excited, so happy.

Caroline pulls up in front of her building. Simon says that he wants to get to the phone and call someone immediately, but Caroline tells him that she would really rather that he come up to her bedroom, just for a little while. He agrees, of course. What man will ever turn down the possibility of sex? Caroline knows that's what people see her as. Someone to fuck, someone to hold. But she also knows the truth: they really do love her. They can't help but love her. They might delude themselves into thinking all they care about is the sex, but she knows that when they go home they don't call because they miss her too much, or because some jealous person tells them something untrue about her. But they all love her, deep down, Simon included. And she's going to make sure that he knows he loves her.

She leads him up the stairs. Why, after all, shouldn't someone love her forever? Why do they leave her alone? It's not that she can't handle it, she can. It just doesn't make any sense. She knows they love her. They tell her that they do when she asks. But still, they're always trying to leave. Everyone would leave her if they could, and she doesn't know why. She just wants them to love her, and to stay by her side. Why can't they just admit to themselves how they feel? Don't they know how much they hurt her? All she does is try and help them to be better people, to see things the way they ought to, to make sure that they learn from her. But it's of no importance now. She'll never be alone now. Not any more.

Caroline opens the door to her bedroom, and Simon follows her in. She tells him to sit down while she lights some candles and some incense. She presses play on the CD player and sits down beside him. Joni Mitchell comes out of the speakers.

"You know how much I care about you, don't you Simon? You know how much I love you? I mean, I know that I was saying that I was going to go be with Travis, but I just couldn't bring myself to leave you."

"Well, now, that's news. How sad for Travis."

Caroline thinks she picks up a strain of sarcasm in his response, but she's probably just imagining it. After all, how could he know what was really going on with her and Travis. She had told him, a while ago, when he looked like he might be losing interest, that she was through with Travis and she only wanted to be with him. Unless he had been reading her diary or something he couldn't know that they were still talking. He must be serious, then.

"Well, anyway, I wanted to let you know how free and happy I feel with you, and how much I want for us to be back together."

"Look, Caroline, I still like hanging out with you and stuff, but I don't see any reason-

She cuts him off, kissing him first on the lips, then moving down to his neck.

"Oh, Simon," she says between kisses, "you make me so happy already, and if we were together always..."

"Yeah, but Caroline-

She cuts him off again by pulling off her top, repeating how happy she is, and turning slightly away from him so that he can see her shoulder and the tattoo.

"When did you get that?" he asks.

"Just today, when I was thinking about how happy I was with you, and how much better I felt now that we're spending time together again."

"But Caroline, I'm not sure that we need to change the way things are right now."

"Simon, my skin's really dry around it. Could you get the lotion off of my dresser before we finish this conversation? Come on, it'll just take a second. Don't you want to do something nice for me?"

Simon sighs and slowly gets up. He walks over to the dresser. She can see that he's about to reach up to search for the lotion, and then... He sees it! His hand drops. Caroline can see his body sag. He's seen it! He knows! Any second now he will start to tell her how happy he is. She watches him pick it up.

"What the fuck is this?"

"Surprise, honey! I'm pregnant! I'm going to have our baby. Simon? Simon! Look at me! Say something! Aren't you excited?"

Simon turns towards her, a blank expression on his face. He slowly crosses the room and sinks back down onto the bed. Caroline knows that he is so quiet and so shocked because he is so happy, and stunned, that he is still trying to process all the joy he is feeling. Someone once told her that too much joy could overload a person if their body didn't help them to smooth it out. Or something like that. Anyway, she is sure that is what's going on right now, with Simon. Any second now he'll come up with something really cheerful and ecstatic.

"Are you sure it's mine?"

Well, not as cheerful as she had hoped, but, "Of course I'm sure. Simon, honey, you know you're the only one I love."

"Yeah, but Caroline, not being in love with someone isn't a recognized form of birth control. I mean, if that was all it took to avoid pregnancy, well then, maybe we..." Caroline is curious as to what he is thinking, but instead he just trails off, smiling ruefully.

"I'm shocked that you would even accuse me of such a thing!" Caroline announces in a hurt voice.

"Of what, exactly, have I accused you of?"

"Why, of sleeping around. I'm offended that you could even imagine me to be unfaithful. I told you, you're the only one I want." Travis, after all, is thousands of miles away. And he had already told her that he was never going to support a baby. Not that she mentioned the pregnancy to Travis. Yet. "Besides," Caroline continues, "you should know that of course, I've only been with you."

Simon looks unconvinced. It's so shocking that people should be so untrusting. If only they were more open and accepting, their lives would be so much happier. Caroline is about to tell Simon just that when he stands up suddenly and walks to the other side of the room.

"Well, then, what do we do about this thing? I'm assuming you're not going to have an abortion?"

Caroline doesn't think she should have to respond to such a stupid question, so she just glares at him and he continues.

"And you won't give it up for adoption?"

"God, no Simon. And let some stranger raise my baby? How do I know what sort of family she'll go to?"

"Well, for one, the agencies do checks. Then the baby would go to a family that was mature enough, stable enough, and monetarily secure enough to raise a child in a positive, healthy way."

Caroline glares at him again. How could she want to spend the rest of her life with someone so naive and just plain stupid?

"Grow up Simon. How could our baby possibly be happy with anyone other than its natural parents? Everybody knows that as long as you just love your child, no matter what else, the child will be healthy."

Simon mutters something that sounds a lot like "stupid bitch" and something, maybe, about welfare, but she's not really listening. She's too happy to be brought down by his ugly attitude. Besides, Simon, although naive and ignorant about life, has this weird sense of ethics, and Caroline knows that even if he wants to bitch for a little while, he would never leave her

alone to deal with a baby that could be part his. He would be there every step of the way. Of course he would, he had to. He couldn't possibly leave her.

Simon's been quiet for a few minutes. When the Joni Mitchell CD ended the CD player had moved on to the next disc, a Neil Young CD. Caroline hadn't really noticed it until just now. Simon is sitting in the corner across the room now, looking almost happy, rocking back in forth in time to "Down By the River." Caroline is so happy to see him enjoying some good, positive music for a change. In fact, every time the chorus plays, his eyes seem to take on a new shine.

"Oh!" Caroline exclaims. "I knew you'd be just as happy as I am! Don't you think that my sunflower is a good symbol for how wonderful you feel right now?"

She beams at him and pats the bed beside her invitingly, but he doesn't move.

"Caroline?"

"Yes, honey?"

"How, exactly, did you manage to get pregnant? I mean, you're on, or- You were on the Pill, right? Of course, you stopped once you knew you were pregnant, but you were on the Pill, right?"

"Well, ummm..." Caroline trails off, avoiding his eyes. "I mean, yeah, I was on the Pill. Sometimes these things happen. I mean, it's a proven fact that sometimes..."

"Yeah, but the chances are like one tenth of a percent, and I have never managed to belong to such an elite group in my life. When did you stop taking them?"

"I told you, just recently. God, what difference does it make?"

"When recently, Caroline?"

"God, Simon, I'm not exactly sure of the exact-"

"Guess, then." he says, cutting her off.

"I don't know, really."

"Okay then, has it been days?"

Caroline shrugs.

"Weeks?"

She shrugs again. She is beginning to feel very uncomfortable. She scrunches up her face and rearranges herself on the bed. First she busies herself tucking her feet up underneath her.

Then she begins to fidget with the fringe on the purple scarf by her bed. She is still, however, aware of the fact that Simon is watching her very closely.

"Months?" he asks, and Caroline notices that his voice is taking on a very nasty tone.

Caroline looks around the room, avoiding looking at Simon. Why should any of this be important now? After a little thought, she says as much to Simon.

"I mean," she continues, "we're going to have our own little baby to love and play with and raise! What does it matter when exactly I took my last Pill? They made me feel so artificial. I mean, birth control is such an unnatural thing. Especially those Pills. What difference does it make?"

"The difference... It matters to me."

"But why?"

"Because you lied to me! God, you are such a manipulative bitch!" Simon's very close to yelling right now, and he's now pacing around the far end of the room. Caroline recognizes this behavior. He gets this way whenever he feels like there is injustice being done. Caroline knows that if she lets him get too excited she'll never be able to calm him down. Although, why should she calm him down? How dare he accuse her of anything? But still, she can do away with this silly lie idea easily.

"Oh, baby," she says, walking over to him. She tries to place a hand in his hair, but he shakes her off. She can't believe this! What an ungrateful bastard! How can he be so shallow and ridiculous? I mean, over such a silly thing. But wait!

"Simon, I never lied to you. When I told you that I was taking the Pill, I was. Just because you never bothered to ask me if I still was... I mean, you showed no concern for how the Pill might make me feel, how it might affect my well being. I didn't know that I had to inform you of every decision I make every day. I mean, if that's what you want, fine. We'll start tomorrow. I'll tell you everything I think about for the rest of my life."

"That's not the point, Caroline, and you know it! You knew that it was important to me whether you were taking those pills!"

"That's right, you don't want to know what I think or feel. You just want somebody around who you can hop into bed with. You don't give a damn about me! You are such a shit, I don't think I even want you... Besides, if birth control was so important to you, why didn't you take some of the responsibility upon yourself? What is this, 1950? It's not all the woman's responsibility anymore, cave man."

"Well, I would have been glad to, but you said that you were taking care of everything! I guess I'm the fool for trusting you."

"Get out of my house, you asshole! I don't ever want to see you again. I'll take care of this baby by myself! Don't worry, I wouldn't dream of inconveniencing you with my problems! You make me sick!" She's shouting now. How dare he? Besides, he needs to get out and see the error of his ways before he'll apologize.

"Go on, get out! Find your own way home! And don't expect to have any part in your child's life, then!"

"Caroline, come on." Simon says, but she's not about to let him off that easily and eventually he walks out of her door, down the stairs, and out the front door. Caroline can't believe he actually went. But she's not really that surprised. She's always suspected that he would leave her if he could.

She's suddenly very tired. Caroline lies down on her bed and thinks about all the others who who had told her that they loved her. They were all weak. They didn't understand that she could make them so much happier, that everything she ever did she did for them, and for their relationship. All she had ever wanted was for them to stay with her, to love her, and to feel the joy she felt. The more they were like her, the more they would know her greatness of spirit, and they would see things as she saw them. Once that happened, everything would be perfect. But they never did. They always ran away, leaving her all alone. They were afraid of their love.

Slowly she falls asleep and drifts into a dream. She's standing on a cliff, above the ocean, and she's all alone. She hears something and she turns around. There's a field of wildflowers behind her, and it's so beautiful she can hardly breathe. She starts walking towards the flowers. She wants to pick some for that guy, she can't remember which one, but she trips and falls. Her stomach hurts. And suddenly the cliff collapses, and she's falling towards the ocean, and she's having these intense pains in her abdomen and she screams again and again as she touches the water that is too thick to be the ocean...

"Oh my God!" Dahlia says, as she opens Caroline's door and turns on the lights.

"What?" Caroline asks, groggily trying to figure out what's going on, and why her stomach still hurts and why...

Dahlia wants to call 911 but Caroline convinces her not to. Instead they go to the hospital together, in Caroline's car. As they are wheeling her into the emergency room Dahlia asks Caroline whether she would like anyone notified.

Caroline grabs her hand, to make sure that she can tell her what she wants. Simon would feel so guilty, she thinks to herself, if I had her call him from the hospital like this. But instead she squeezes Dahlia's hand and shakes her head.

"I'm sure Simon would..." Dahlia begins, but Caroline shakes her head again and the nurse pushes her through the entrance, leaving Dahlia behind.

After all, Caroline thinks, the only person who'll ever stick by me is my baby, and of course they can take care of her here.

As the pain starts to fade, and she gets drowsy, Caroline wonders when Simon will find out. Then he'll feel so guilty that he'll never leave her, or her baby. Yeah, it'll all work out just right. She can't wait. She knew everything would work out the way she wanted it to. After all, she's always doing for other people, now it's time for her reward. She deserves it.