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*Some last names have been withheld to protect the privacy  
of the individuals in question.*

# THE QUEEN'S DAUGHTER

She survived a woman's  
worst nightmare.

A true story.

Melissa McCormick



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## Freedom

**F**riday the thirteenth. The time of day is unknown. I sit, waiting. I cannot move. My eyes slowly survey the room and again I see the picture of the Isley Brothers. I remember hearing earlier, “A black man from the ghetto can only make it two ways – sports or rock music.”

I sit on the couch that occupies half of the room, a bedroom converted to a den. My back is toward the door that leads to a narrow hall.

Joe enters the den and crouches to look at my swollen face. For a moment, I sense what might be compassion in his eyes or in his voice.

“Mark and the other guys will be here soon with your car and then you can go home,” he says. He makes an effort to sound reassuring, but promises of freedom don’t register anymore.

Although Joe is not a big man, he projects power. He stands around five foot ten and is quite thin except for the muscles that are visible only when he is naked. His skin is medium black

and his hair is styled in a short Afro. His profile is mean, his face haunting and mysterious. Among his friends he is the undisputed leader.

Joe is violent, angry at the world, and as much as I hate him, I also pity him.

He leaves the room and again I am left alone to sit and wait. Suddenly I hear angry voices. The tension is high.

“No way, man!” yells someone. “We let her go and she’ll run to the cops. She can identify us, man!”

“Ya! I say we kill her like we planned.”

“Ya, we can dump the body in the ditch at the end of the street,” says another.

Then I recognize Joe’s voice: “I say we let her go.”

Suddenly he is standing beside me. “Follow me and just do what I tell you,” he commands. He holds me tightly by the upper arm, and we go out the front door of the house.

The sun hurts my eyes. I squint. To my left I see five of the men from the night before.

I look to Joe for direction. He glares at me and orders in a clear, dominating voice, “Get in the car and drive.”

My yellow Pacer, now somewhat damaged, is parked on the street and the driver’s side door is wide open. I do not hesitate for I know that when Joe gives an order, you obey.

One of the five men explains, “To get to the tunnel back to Canada, drive down there.” He points to the end of the street, but I remember the ditch they talked of earlier. I get in the car and drive in the opposite direction.

My movements are mechanical since I am still in shock from the previous night. There is a stoplight ahead indicating a busy intersection. I think about how to leave Detroit and get back to Windsor without drawing attention to myself.

I just want to go home to my tiny apartment and my regular routine and pretend that nothing happened.

But my wallet had been stolen leaving me without money for the tunnel passage or identification to get back into Canada.

After driving two blocks, I notice a police cruiser parked on the right side of the street. A policeman is sitting behind the wheel writing a report. I park behind his cruiser and as I get out of my car, I can feel that I am actually alive. For the first time in over twelve hours, my movement to approach the policeman is of my own choice.

My intent is simply to ask for directions but the moment the officer looks at me, I break down and sob hysterically, my body shaking with fright.

“Help me please! They are following me! They’re going to kill me!” I plead.

“Nobody is going to hurt you. Calm down,” he assures me.

He helps me into the back seat of the police car and soon there are more policemen present.

“I’m Sergeant Lennon,” the first police officer says. “Tell me, *who* is going to hurt you?” He is a husky man with an authoritative presence.

“The men who kidnapped me last night – they are following me!”

“Tell me exactly what happened.”

“I was raped.”

“How many men are you talking about?”

“There were about ten or twelve.”

“Which one of them raped you? Can you remember his name?”

I cry uncontrollably, punching my fists into the air. I scream, “They all did! They all took turns raping me!”

This outburst leaves me emotionally and physically exhausted. I begin rocking myself back and forth, wishing I were dead.

The Sergeant is visibly upset and his obvious display of anger alleviates part of my burden. After many assurances of my safety, we proceeded to cruise the streets in the area hoping to locate the house from which I had just left, but a positive identification is impossible.

Eventually I am taken to the Sexual Assault Unit at the Detroit police station where information is needed about the rape.

I just want to go home, to be alone and forget, perhaps start all over. I want to wake up from this horrible nightmare.

But before I can go back to Canada, I have to tell the police my story.