

**Abducted**  
**by Deirdre Hall Kelley**

Traci was admiring her nails; the woman did a fantastic job making them look like they weren't actually chewed down to the quick. Getting her nails done was a first for her, though her first time would probably also be her last. She wanted to look her absolute best for her cousin's wedding tomorrow. So engrossed in her thoughts she never heard the car pull up behind her. When a hand clamped over her mouth, she was taken completely by surprise. A bag was pulled over her head and she was roughly shoved into the back seat of a car. The man literally sat on her, pushing her down into the seat nearly crushing the air out of her.

She knew she needed to stay calm but panic was overriding any rational thinking. Taking a deep breath to clear her mind, she listened to the chatter by her abductors. Two men, one in the front seat and one sitting on top of her in the back, were talking excitedly. They were speaking a foreign language, an Asian dialect of some type. After a few moments they were silent and all she could hear was the minutes of her life ticking away. What was going to happen to her, she couldn't help but wonder.

A short while later the car stopped and Traci was pulled out of the car. Her hands were taped behind her and she was led up a few steps. It sounded like they were on a wooden porch. She heard the screech of a screen door as it opened and the click of a lock. The door squeaked opened and she was pushed inside. Panic began to rise in her again, stealing her breath. She anticipated a brutal rape and possibly a beating, maybe even to be killed. Tears began to pour from her eyes; she didn't want to end life like this.

She was pushed through the house, totally shocked when she was pushed into what was apparently a closet. Clothes brushed against her face; they smelled of men's cologne and sweat. A small amount of relief surged through her. She sank to the floor and whispered prayers that she would somehow survive this day. She scooted against a wall and closed her eyes even though she was in the dark still wearing the bag over her head.

The house outside her small prison was quiet; where had the men gone, she wondered. Why were they leaving her alone? Horrific images rose in her mind, stories she had read, images on television about women brutally murdered. Women that had been maimed, cut up, most left for dead. Women that were scarred and emotionally damaged from a terrifying ordeal. Was she about to become one of those women? Would she, should she pray for a quick death? Fear was nearly suffocating her.

Voices. The men were back. The door was opened, the light was turned on. The men exchanged a few words then stood there silently looking at her. She could feel their eyes on her. Was this it, she wondered. Silence from her captors, no sound or movement.

"What do you want from me?" she screamed.

Traci began to sob. The men laughed, mumbling a few words before turning the light off and shutting the door. Were they teasing her, prolonging her torture? Were they playing mind games, seeing if she'd break or something? Or did they come in to make sure she was still there? Like she could have left somehow. Anger began to well up inside her. She didn't have to take this. Feeling around on the floor she searched for something to get her hands loose. Nothing but shoes. The door was suddenly snatched open again, the light flicked on.

“What is this, a joke?” A different man, anger in his voice. Heavily accented English but different from the two men who had abducted her. “It is the wrong woman.”

“Are you sure?” one of the men asked. “She was driving the car.”

“I would know my own girlfriend,” the newcomer announced. Stooping to Traci’s level, he demanded, “Where is Renata?” His breath blew the bag against her face.

“I don’t know anyone named Renata,” Traci answered, her voice shaking in fear.

“You are driving her car, yes?” The man’s voice was colored with irritation.

Realization dawned on Traci; the woman who had sold her the car, that’s who they were looking for. “I bought the car three weeks ago,” she exclaimed.

“Who did you buy the car from?” he asked, his voice light but dangerous.

“A woman, I don’t remember her name. She said she had to sell it because she couldn’t take it with her when she left. I have a bill a sale.” She was panting from her rushed explanation.

“Did she say where she was going, this woman who sold you the car?” Her words had sparked his interest.

“No, no, she, uh, she just said she was moving away. I’m sorry. I don’t know where she went.” A thought fluttered through her mind; what kind of man has his girlfriend abducted?

He grunted. Nudging her with his foot he said, “Get rid of this woman.”

The man’s footsteps echoed through the house with his departure. What was going to happen to her now that they learned she was the wrong woman? The two men spoke amongst themselves for a few minutes, debating on Traci’s fate. She was left alone in the closet again, wondering what was going to happen next. Would her body be found on the side of the road, tossed in a dumpster, washed up on the river bed? After what seemed like an eternity she was removed from the closet and pushed back into the car. The car stopped a short while later and she was drug from the back seat. The tape binding her hands was cut and she heard the car speed away.

She sat up and snatched the hood from her head. She was sitting in the parking lot beside her car. Relief washed over her. She found her purse on the ground next to where she was sitting. Odd that her abductors had been thoughtful enough to leave it with her. It was dark, the shopping center and nail salon long closed. Traci got up, dug her keys out of her purse and unlocked her car, plopping into the front seat weary from the stress and worry. What should she do now? Should she go to the police and tell them about the abduction, about the woman whose life could be in danger? What kind of proof would she have? Though she didn’t feel like she had the energy to deal with it, she knew she had to do something. She headed to the police station; she just hoped they wouldn’t think she was a lunatic with a wild story.