

Chessa could tell immediately that it wasn't his first drink when he stood to greet her. His face was flush and he slurred his words a little bit as he welcomed her home and gave her a perfunctory hug.

Chessa's heart dropped with dismay. She was hoping to talk to Darren when he was sober. So she decided to make small talk, delaying the inevitable. "Sorry I'm late. We had a lot going on at work. Where have you been?" she asked, not looking at Darren as she sat her briefcase and purse down on a chair and hung her coat up in the foyer closet. "I thought I'd beat you home." She turned to find her husband standing, glaring at her.

"I bet you did." She noticed Darren's tone was acidic. "What do you mean where have I been? I've been working hard, trying to get votes. Where have you been?"

Chessa felt a stab of fear clutch her insides with its icy claws. *Here goes*, she thought. "You mean my trip?"

"Of course I mean your trip."

"Let's sit down and discuss it."

Darren sat back down in the recliner. Chessa took a seat nearby on the couch and took a deep breath.

"I went to see someone you wouldn't approve of me seeing...but I did it for you, for us, for all of us. I believe it was the right thing to do."

"Chessa, can you get to the point? It's been a long day and I have a splitting headache."

Although his eyes were tired and bloodshot, Chessa felt they were like lasers focused on her now. There was nowhere to hide, and no way to postpone the truth any longer.

"I went to see Leif Mitchell."

Darren sat up on the edge of his chair, knocking his drink over and sending its contents across the cream-colored carpeting. He let out a swear word as he picked up the glass and banged it down on the end table next to him. "Please tell me you're joking."