

EXCERPT PAGES 27 - 34

CHARACTERS

ELEANOR- 16, plain, unmotivated and uncertain

JOAN- 30's, Eleanor's mother, attractive but hides it

ANDI- 16, pretty, ambitious, confident

BROOKE- 30's, Andi's mother, attractive and does not hide it

SETTING

Altoona Pennsylvania, present day. Eleanor's bedroom, Andi's bedroom,
the free clinic.

ANDI

Why is that your problem?

BROOKE

Well, here's the thing. It might be good for us. Her Mom thinks she needs help and she seems to have a real concern for her.

ANDI

She needs a whole new look...right now she doesn't even have one. She'd need expert help with wardrobe, make up, attitude. I mean, she'd need a lot of help!

BROOKE

I showed her your picture.

ANDI

Why?

BROOKE

Because I knew she'd see what she wants for her daughter. She wants her to be just like you.

ANDI

God, if you really looked at her...plus, some girls like that are smart and that kind of saves them...but that girl is not smart. She's not even average. I mean looking like she does and not even being smart...

BROOKE

But the girl's Mom is desperate. Desperate people can be talked into almost anything...

ANDI

She's too old to give up for adoption.

BROOKE

Use your head honey. Think about what this could mean to us.

ANDI

It might mean...oh, you can't be serious! You think there is some way I can actually help her!

BROOKE

Of course you can help her.

ANDI

Why would I even want to?

BROOKE

Think? You help her....

ANDI

And I get her gratitude. What good would that be?

BROOKE

No. You can get exactly what you really do want.

ANDI

It's not like I don't know what I really want. I know what I really want.

BROOKE

Right baby. Her Mother will want your help. She'll beg you. She's looking for an answer and when people look for an answer...

ANDI

You give it to them.

END OF SCENE

SCENE 6- ANDI escorts ELEANOR into her room

ANDI

Welcome to my own little world.

ELEANOR

It's so beautiful. It looks so sophisticated.

ANDI

I decorated it to make me feel older. I always want to feel older, I mean, until I get to 25. Then I will want to feel younger. I think the best age to be is 25 so I always plan to act like I'm 25. What do you think the best age is?

ELEANOR

I never thought about it. I guess maybe two...you walk...eat, sleep...make all sorts of funny noises...no matter what you do, people think you're cute.

ANDI

(Beat) So let's just get started. Your Mom told you why you're here, right?

ELEANOR

She just kept calling it an evaluation.

ANDI

That's what it is.

ELEANOR

Do you know how much money my Mom paid your Mom?

ANDI

No. My Mom is the business manager for our company. I don't stick my nose into that side of the operation. I put all my energy and attention into my clients. You should be glad that's the way we do it.

ELEANOR

It's just that I don't think she should have to pay money for...this. I mean I just don't want her to throw her money away.

ANDI

Look, if you start into this with an attitude, you *will* be throwing her money away. Then it would be all on you. But if you're serious about this, if you follow all my advice, I could change your life.

ELEANOR

I'm sorry but it's just all a little hard to get used to, you know, to realize you're only talking to me because my Mom paid you to.

ANDI

Oh yeah? Well what about when you go to a doctor...

ELEANOR

You're not a doctor.

ANDI

A doctor can't help you. I can.

ELEANOR

Look, I know you're popular, but that doesn't mean a whole lot to me. Popular people aren't necessarily nice. Popular people aren't a lot of things.

ANDI

Oh yeah? Well what about you? You're nothing! You can't tell me you don't want to change that. I mean you can't possibly stand being you, can you? I know I couldn't. Do you know the kind of things people say about you? If I were you, I would try anything to change myself. You do want to change yourself, don't you?

ELEANOR

Of course I do. I just don't see you being able to do it.

ANDI

Listen...Eleanor...you don't have a fucking clue about what I can and cannot do. If you want to be some kind of critic...some doubter...my Mom made our policy very clear. Our evaluation fee is nonrefundable. So, I'm cool if you want to take your attitude right out that door with you.

ELEANOR

Nonrefundable?

ANDI

It's already spent.

ELEANOR

Then go ahead. Evaluate.

ANDI

Why do you think you are so unpopular?

ELEANOR

You start with that? No softballs first? No "Name your three strengths?"

ANDI

Why are you so unpopular?

ELEANOR

Let's see. I'm ugly. I'm not smart. I'm clumsy. I'm odd. I'm pessimistic. I have no sense of humor. I'm afraid to take a chance. I can't do algebra, but if I could, people would hate me because I could do algebra...I don't have any money. I don't have a father in my life. I am always saying or doing the absolute wrong thing.

ANDI

It seems you've given this a lot of thought.

ELEANOR

It's all I ever think about.

ANDI

How do you see me?

ELEANOR

What do you mean?

ANDI

Compare me to you.

ELEANOR

Jesus, your ego is even bigger than I expected.

ANDI

Just do it.

ELEANOR

This sounds like it's more for you than me.

ANDI

Would you just do it?

ELEANOR

Well, you're pretty. Boys adore you. Everything you do, even if it's stupid, gets a positive reaction. If you want to be funny, you're funny. If you're trying to look smart, you look smart. You know how to dress. Everyone is drawn to you, like you have a magnet in your pocket or something. I'm going to stop now because I'm making you way too happy. You just know how to act and how to look.

ANDI

And all of that takes a lot of effort. I don't come off the way I do without really trying hard. I put thought into it. It takes real time and real effort. You don't think the next time I want some ice cream I'd like to just walk outside and go down the street and buy it? I can't.. I have to prepare

first. Put on makeup. Change my clothes. Look my best so if someone sees me they are impressed.

ELEANOR

But that seems like a burden.

ANDI

No, it's a strategy. I have a strategy and I use it to make it all happen. You have no strategy. None. You just let everything happen to you. All you do is react. Once you have a strategy, a lot of the stuff will go away, or at least some of it will and that will help you have a life...more like mine.

ELEANOR

I can't even imagine what that would be like. I don't have the strength to get my hopes up.

ANDI

Why do you feel that way? I mean, that's got to come from somewhere.

ELEANOR

It comes from somewhere that's for sure. Pretty much like everything else in my life, it comes from my mother.

ANDI

That has got to stop. If your Mom is the reason for all of this...at least she finally got you to me. She gave you a perfect gift. She must know she's a big part of your problems and she wants you fixed. She opened the door. So remember, she owes you. She owes you, I can help you and that's why you have to tell her that I am what you need. That way we can take your evaluation and build on what we've learned to make you...happy. Really happy.

ELEANOR

You want me to get her to keep paying you.

ANDI

If you want to be happy.

ELEANOR

Have you ever met her?

ANDI

I don't have to. I'd rather spend all my time with you.

ELEANOR

What happens next?

ANDI

Let's talk about your Dad.

ELEANOR

I never met him. He left before I was born.

ANDI

Same with me.

ELEANOR

Really? Well we have something in common after all. It pisses me off that he left us.

ANDI

Like it would have been good if he stayed?

ELEANOR

I suppose not. But aren't you, I don't know, curious? Don't you want to know what he's like? I mean, he's responsible for half of you, isn't he?

ANDI

Isn't the whole point that he wasn't responsible for anything?

ELEANOR

But he's... still...

ANDI

You just have to decide whether something like that is going to make you weaker or stronger. It just makes me stronger. It shows me what happens when you pick the wrong boy.

ELEANOR

You mean there is such a thing as the right boy?

ANDI

There is the right boy for every single girl who wants one. Even you. You just have to know how to find him and keep him.

END OF EXCERPT