

Ashes

By Audrey Peyton



The following is an excerpt from the book *Ashes*. This scene is what happens directly after the video clip located on our web site. For more information or to buy the book online go to www.audreypeyton.com.

"I'm two weeks' late, Kit . That means I'm pregnant, doesn't it?"

I entwined my fingers with hers. "Della, one has to have sexual relations in order to get pregnant. By sexual relations I mean –"

"I know, Kit. I know what it means." Tears sprang to Della's eyes. "I used to be the eldest of nine before they were all killed, Remember?"

I stared at her. What was she saying?

"He said he'd shoot us all if I said what he was doing."

"Who?" An icy hand clawed my heart.

"Griff."

"But he left Catalina."

She shook her head. "He lied. He didn't go – He tied up his boat around Lookout Point so we'd only *think* he was gone."

"Della!"

"Oh, Kit, I think I'm pregnant!"

"Della!"

"Don't tell Alan. I'm so ashamed."

"But – how did Griff –"

"He cornered me in the drug store the day after he was supposed to be gone. He seemed to expect me. I tried not to let him do it, Kit, but he muffled my scream and told me to dummy up."

I pressed a fist to my mouth. Griff and his binoculars. standing on the deck of his boat, watching our movements, learning our habits. Griff! Here we were, seemingly the last five survivors on Earth, decent, peaceful people, and Griff sails into the harbor, the sixth survivor ... a monster ... and maybe ending up getting an innocent thirteen year-old girl pregnant . Bastard!

Della gave a shudder. "He cornered me in the drug store the night after he was supposed to leave Catalina. He waits for me inside there every night after you've all gone to bed. He knows that's when I sneak down to get candy. He always has his gun with him."

I searched her face. No swelling or bruises, as had been my fate when he'd raped me weeks ago. Bastard, treating his last source with care to ensure her continued service.

"Don't tell Alan, Kit. I'm so ashamed."

I held her against me with my good arm and rocked with her from side to side, finding it hard to keep the hysteria from my voice. "Don't be ashamed, Della, you've done nothing wrong. And you're not to worry, you won't have to go to him again."

"But he said he'd shoot us all if I told –"

"I'll go and see him myself tonight and tell him to leave the island, He will, too. I know how to make him. When you wake up tomorrow I swear to Jesus he'll be gone."

I rocked with her from side to side, my rage so intense, I only vaguely heard the roar of a plane streaking through the fluffy white clouds overhead.
