

# MISTRESS

*By Susan M. Scott*



*ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART*

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A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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## MISTRESS

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### CHAPTER I Bad News

Michael sat in the waiting room, his hands folded tightly in his lap. Anxiety clearly showed on his young face. It had been over an hour and his mother was still with the Doctor. Desperately, he hoped that this Doctor would disagree with the physician at the public health office. If Michael's mother really needed an operation, they had no idea where the money would come from. It was going to take nearly all of their savings just to pay for this examination. They had gambled, hoping that Doctor Williams would find that Doctor Phillips had made some error.

“Michael Walker?” A nurse in a starched white uniform asked as she stepped into the waiting room. “Doctor Williams would like to see you in his office.”

Michael stood up and followed the nurse through the door and down the hall to the Doctor's office. A black-haired man dressed in coat and tie was sitting behind a large desk. The walls of the office were covered with book cases and plaques, all in a dark walnut that matched the desk. Sitting stoically in a chair across from the Doctor was Michael's mother, Joanne Walker. The doctor told Michael to take the other chair.

Doctor Williams was surprised by the close family resemblance between the woman and her son. He knew from her chart that Joanne Walker was forty-five years old. Had he not known, he would have guessed her age at closer to thirty-five. She was five feet, six inches tall and had dark auburn hair, close to the color of horse chestnuts. Quite trim at only one hundred and twenty-five pounds, her figure was attractive and slim. Her breasts were full, nicely shaped, and still high on her chest. The only thing hinting at her poor health was the yellowish pallor of her skin.

Her son Michael was approximately her height and probably five pounds lighter. He was a remarkably skinny boy for his eighteen years. His thick hair was the same shade as his mother's, proving that her color was natural.

Michael's features were somewhat soft and, as he examined him, the Doctor thought, “He looks more like her thirteen-year-old daughter than her eighteen-year-old son. It's a pity, such a lovely woman dying.”

The Doctor decided that he could not put off the distressing news any longer.

“Michael,” he began. “Your Mother wanted you present when I tell her the test results. I approved. She will need both your support and your prayers in the coming months. I know that I'm the second physician you have consulted with. I want you to know we have checked, double-checked, and again rechecked our results. Joanne, I wish I had good news. You must prepare yourself. My results agree with Doctor Phillips. I'm afraid your liver is failing, the disease is already well advanced. Our tests

show you have already lost close to ninety percent of your liver function. You only have a few months left.”

Joanne had expected that there was little hope. Even in her worst fears, though, she had been thinking she would have a year or two. She could barely speak after the Doctor's sentence of doom. Michael reached over to hug and comfort her. Joanne gratefully accepted her son's supportive embrace.

Her horror of death was great, but Joanne was more concerned for Michael.

*“Michael is still so young,” she thought. “He will need me for years. How will he grow into manhood without support and guidance?”*

Michael was just barely able to keep from crying. He loved his mother. He had never known his father. He had no other relatives. Mother was his whole life.

“Doctor! Surely there is some hope, some procedure that modern medicine can offer?” the boy begged.

“I'm afraid this will be very hard on you. I see that you have no insurance. There is a good chance that we could successfully transplant a liver. Your mother would be an excellent candidate for a transplant. There is a world-class program here, at the Oregon Health Sciences University. The surgery is tremendously expensive and would need to be done within the next three to four months. The State health plan's management has decided they just can't afford to pay for that kind of surgery. Unless you have somewhere you can obtain a significant amount of money, I'm afraid there is no hope.”

“That's not fair! You mean my mother must die when there is a procedure that could save her just because we are poor?”

Joanne now quietly sobbed as she listened to the conversation. She clutched her son as she cried.

“You are right Michael. It isn't fair. More people need this surgery than receive it. The number of people needing a new liver far outstrips the availability of donors. Given those unfortunate conditions, a candidate's suitability and ability to pay are both considered in deciding who will get the few livers that are available.”

“I don't care what it costs! We will find a way to come up with the money!” Michael declared.

Joanne smiled at her son's pluck but knew that there was little chance they could find or borrow the funds.

*“I'm not ready to die. Why not at least know how much the operation would cost,” she thought.*

“Doctor Williams, please tell us. How much would we need?” Joanne asked.

“Around a quarter of a million dollars,” the doctor said solemnly.

He hated hurting people. *“Joanne Walker will die because there aren't enough donors. If only more people and their families realized how many lives could be saved if they would just donate their healthy organs at their death,”* Doctor Williams thought bitterly.

“A quarter-million dollars?” Michael asked in shock.

“Yes, close to that much, maybe more. Then, following the surgery, about five thousand a year for anti-rejection medication,” Doctor Williams replied, a note of apology in his voice.

“OK, we will find a way. How do we proceed, Doctor?” Michael asked after a moment of thought. There was a firm, determined look around his mouth that Doctor Williams could not help but admire.

Joanne raised her face to her son's and smiled. “*He is a good boy,*” she thought with pride.

She knew, though, it was still her job to help Michael accept the inevitable. “Thank you for that dear, but its not to be done. We should leave the good Doctor and begin to plan for the time we have left.”

“Mother, I won't give up. You will not die for want of money. I WILL find a way. There must be something I can do that will justify a loan or something.”

“Doctor Williams, where do we go from here? How much time can you give us to come up with the money?”

Doctor Williams made a decision right then. “I'll tell you what I will do. I will recommend Joanne be admitted to the transplant program. I will also call Doctor Greenwood at the Medical School and speak with him. He runs the transplant program and we went to medical school together. It will take six to eight weeks for you to be evaluated, admitted, and placed on the waiting list. The waiting list is based on degree of liver failure rather than time of admission to the program. Those with the greatest need are considered first. Of course the first person on the list may not match closely enough to an available liver. Then they go to the next person. You should have six to eight weeks to demonstrate to the program that you have the financial resources. It's not much time but it's all I can do.”

“Thank you, Doctor,” Michael replied. “I don't know how, but we will manage to do it. The boy's determined tone heartened his mother.

As they took the bus from Northwest Portland back to their apartment in the Kerns neighborhood they were thankful for the doctor's aid. He had told them there would be no bill for his consultation. Joanne had thanked him deeply and was silently grateful. She had no hope that they could get that much money. Joanne knew she could not keep her job much longer. The few hundred dollars they had would help once they were forced to live on Michael's meager pay as an apprentice window dresser at Yak's. In a way she was glad it would be over soon. If she went into a long, protracted decline, the strain might destroy her boy's spirit, as well as his financial future. Her only happy thought was for the love she felt from her son.

When they entered their small apartment, Joanne felt simultaneously happy and depressed. She had succeeded in making it their home, yet no amount of homeyness could hide their poverty. It was a one-bedroom apartment with a small dining area that they had set up for Michael to use as a sleeping alcove. The white walls were covered with bookcases made from cement blocks and boards painted black. Joanne's own tiny bedroom was just large enough for her dresser and bed. Furniture in the liv-

ing room was limited to a desk, an old faded couch, a coffee table that was also painted black, and a twenty-year-old nineteen-inch television. The desk had a second chair that they could use on those rare occasions when there was company. There were a number of paintings, all without frames. They were gifts from friends who were artists and lacked the means to share anything but some of their own work with a friend. Each one brought to mind a face. Joanne sadly realized that her word-processing job had taken her away from the more bohemian friends she had once cultivated.

Michael seemed distracted. The boy went to the couch and just sat. Joanne knew he was thinking about how to get a quarter million dollars. She shrugged her shoulders.

*"It might as well be a billion,"* the woman thought. She went to the kitchen and busied herself making a light dinner while she mentally made a list of things she must do before her demise. Briefly, she stopped to cry, but quickly got control of herself. Her practical nature knew that there was no point in crying and that she needed to think very carefully about what she would do with her remaining time.

Michael was quite busy himself. He turned over in his mind many ways to get the money. None seemed the least bit promising. The boy decided his best bet was a loan based on his future earnings. He would go to his bank the next morning and apply for a loan.

Three days later, Michael was discouraged. The boy had been to five different banks requesting a loan. The loan officers were very nice, even sympathetic, but they each informed him that applying for a loan was a waste of his time. One had very carefully tried to explain to the distraught boy that if the money was spent on an operation and then Michael chose not to repay the loan, the bank was totally unprotected. The meaning of the term 'unsecured loan' had become quite clear to Michael.

The boy had even gone to the Multnomah County Library and researched all the bank robberies in Portland over the last five years. Even robbing a bank seemed hopeless. The average take was under ten thousand dollars and seventy-five percent of all bank robbers were captured within a week. Michael knew himself well enough to realize that a successful robbery was over his head. Even if he was wildly successful and robbed three banks the chances of coming up with half of what he needed were almost nonexistent. As the week went on, his mood went from dark to black.

Joanne worried about the boy, but decided to give him a little time to realize the futility of his quest to find the money. She did, at his insistence, go to the Health Sciences University and began the evaluation process for the transplant. Everyone was very nice but she was aware from the first minute they all knew her case was hopeless. Joanne began to focus her time on tending to those arrangements she felt necessary before her certain demise. At night she indulged herself and cried a little. She did not wish to die. She still felt young and attractive. For years she had planned to start her life fresh when Michael entered college. She had even hoped that there might again be a man in her lonely life, to hold and cuddle with in the night.

Three weeks after they heard the grim news, Joanne realized that she was worse. She would soon be out of sick leave at work and would be forced to resign or be fired.

She had been missing more time each week now for several months. Michael was more of a problem. His mood was black and he was not willing to discuss her pending death. She decided to wait a few more days before pressing him, but realized it could not be much longer. There were things to be discussed and arrangements to be made. She was filled with horror, imagining Michael just finding her dead in her bed one morning and not knowing what to do. She pictured the boy sitting with her corpse for days unwilling to admit the reality of his loss. Joanne had always loved Michael's sensitive and emotional qualities but now she wished he could be relied on to be more practical.

*“What's the good of making arrangements for disposal of the body if I can't rely on him to keep his head and call the funeral parlor?”* she thought.

In desperation she wrote the boy a long, loving note explaining exactly what was to be done with her remains. It explained that all was paid for and whom he should call. She also included the information he might need, including bank account numbers, records, and her will.

A week later Michael was cleaning the apartment while his mother was at work and found the note. Reading it over, his soul felt as if it was tearing in two.

“She really is going to die and in spite of all my boasting, I haven't been able to do anything,” he accused himself.

Tears flowed down the boy's cheeks as he tried to continue cleaning. He knew he had to finish and get himself pulled together before his mother returned. The boy struggled, and bit by bit the apartment was cleaned. When he thought he had a grip on himself, he decided to carry the trash to the building's dumpster in the basement. The trash room was near the building's laundry. There, his grief overtook Michael again. He thought he was alone but was surprised when he heard a voice.

“Why, Michael Walker, what can the matter be?” It was Mrs. Cole, the landlady.

Everyone in the building had warned Michael and Joanne that Mrs. Cole was not really a nice person. Joanne had taught Michael to ignore rumors and the boy had always made a point of being polite. Mrs. Cole's building was well maintained and she respected her tenant's privacy. She was about fifty-five, white-haired and a little plump. There were many rumors concerning things she was said to have done, but Michael didn't believe them. Occasionally, strange people visited her, but the boy never considered her friends any of his business. Mrs. Cole appreciated Michael and his mother, Joanne. They were always pleasant to her and minded their own business. She was concerned when one of the few 'decent' people in her building seemed as upset a Michael clearly was.

The boy tried to answer her question, but the tears just kept coming.

“You poor dear,” said the woman. “Why not come to my apartment and have a little tea? Then you can tell me all about it and I will find a way to help.”

She helped the boy to his feet and guided his shaking form up the stairs to her apartment. She sat him on her couch and went to make the tea. By the time she returned, Michael was starting to regain a little self control.

"I'm sorry to trouble you, Mrs. Cole," he began. "I'll just be on my way now. Thank you for helping me back up the stairs."

He started to stand but the woman took control. "Michael, you sit back down instantly. You aren't going anywhere until I know what's wrong. You and your mother are two of the best people in this building. I will help if I can."

Michael realized he needed someone to talk to. Slowly, he let the story out. He told her of the visit to the doctor, the diagnosis, the second opinion, his own efforts to come up with the money. Finally, he finished with the letter from his mother discussing what he should do when he found her dead.

The white-haired woman listened in silence. She smiled slightly when Michael revealed to her his abandoned plan for robbing banks.

"My boy, you have got pluck. But you're right. Robbing banks pays very poorly," Mrs. Cole said.

"I know, but what else can I try? I must do something. To save my mother I would do anything," Michael protested.

"Michael, do you mean it? Would you do anything?" inquired the woman.

"Just name it! If it will provide the money for the operation, I'll do it. Why, I even considered prostitution, but from what I read, I couldn't make more than a few thousand in the few weeks remaining."

"That's interesting, Michael," Mrs. Cole continued. "You mean you would let men have their way with you?"

"Yes, even that. Anything that will raise the money. I'd cut off my arm if I could sell it for a the quarter-million the operation costs."

"If you are serious Michael, there may be a way," the woman began slowly.

"Someone might pay that much for my arm?" Michael asked in wonder.

"No dear. Not your arm, but your person. I know I can count on your discretion. Once, many years ago, I was a Madam and ran a pretty nice little whore house. I saved my money and was eventually able to buy this building and a few others and get into property management as an alternative to selling young peoples bodies. I know a man. A very rich man of unusual tastes. He might advance you the money if you were willing to meet his needs."

"Who is he? How can I get a hold of him?" Michael demanded.

"If you still want to know tomorrow, I will call him and arrange a meeting. Let me tell you more about what he will demand in exchange for the money."

"Call him now, Mrs. Cole. I will do anything, but time is important. I must demonstrate financial means to the transplant program next week."

"If you go ahead with my suggestion, that won't be a problem, Michael. This man's tastes may be more than you are bargaining for. You said that you would give up an arm. I believed you. Will you give up something more important to you?"

"Anything, Mrs. Cole. My legs, my eyes. What ever."

“What about your manhood?”

“My what?” the shocked boy replied.

Mrs. Cole continued, “Your manhood. This man—I shall call him Mr. H.—likes boy-girls. Boys who grow breasts and live as girls in every way except the secret they keep between their legs. A secret that is just for Mr. H's enjoyment. He likes to force boys to become girlish and then he keeps them as his mistress. He treats his mistresses well, providing them with money, but they must be his sex slaves. Doing whatever his perverted fancy may desire.

A friend from the old days came by last week. She told me that the last boy-girl I found for Mr. H. had run away a few months ago. The man is now desperate for a new mistress.

“Michael, I'm not in that business any more, but looking at you I'm sure you could make a perfect little boy-girl, ...if you were willing. Are you interested?”

Michael stared at Mrs. Cole for a long moment. He had never imagined that such a being as a boy-girl existed. He could barely imagine what one would be like, let alone contemplate actually becoming one. But he was desperate. Even if he was only clasp- ing at straws, the boy felt he must do something.

Hesitantly, he replied, “Yes Mrs. Cole. If I can be paid enough to save Mother, I will gladly do whatever is required.”

“Good boy! I was sure that there was more to you than talk. Now you go home and think about it overnight. If, on reflection, you think you can really live as a girl and give pleasure in bed to a man, come see me in the morning. I'll call around and find out what we must do if you want to proceed.”

A confused and bewildered boy left Mrs. Cole's apartment. For the first time, Michael had real hope that he could save his mother. He was also very afraid of just what it might entail.

With his slight build he had been unsuccessful with girls all through high school. Many liked the good-natured and helpful boy, but were unwilling to consider him more than a friend. He had found also, to his dismay, many girls were stronger than he was. Few were willing to go on a date with the class weakling. Even as a senior, when he tried to date the mousiest freshman girls, he was turned down. Michael had hoped that in college his body would fill out and that the more intellectual girls would look beyond his skinny arms and slight frame to see the love he was prepared to offer.

He was horrified at the idea of becoming some kind of fake girl and being the object of those romantic couplings he had imagined himself someday engaging in.

Joanne noticed her son seemed different that night. Michael's mood was less black, but he seemed worried. It was as if he was considering some matter of great significance. She hoped that he was finally considering the reality of her coming death. She wanted to talk to him, prepare him, and be sure that he would be all right before the darkness engulfed her.

The next morning Mrs. Cole heard a hesitant knock at her door. She smiled to her- self. She had been fairly sure that the boy would be back, but there was always the

chance he would change his mind. She vowed that if he wanted to go ahead, she would get him and his poor mother a very good deal. Plus, of course, a very nice commission for herself. She opened the door and found Michael waiting.

“Mrs. Cole, I still want to go ahead if there is enough money in it to save my mother,” he announced.

“Come in Michael, and lets talk.”

She lead him to the couch again and suggested he sit down.

“I want you to trust me. I will negotiate for you and get enough to pay for your mother's operation—and more—but you must do as I say.”

“OK, just tell me what to do,” the boy meekly replied.

“First you must go with me to Mr. H's attorney today. I arranged the meeting last night. If you can convince her that you are willing, she is authorized to negotiate a contract and start the process. The meeting is in an hour. Do you want to go ahead? If you do and we sign a contract, there will be no backing out later. The process will start today.”

Michael's throat was very dry. He was so afraid that he had trouble speaking. In reply he shook his head up and down, yes.

Mrs. Cole took the boy downtown to meet Mr. H's attorney. There was a one-way window in the attorney's office of which Michael was completely unaware. Ms. Janik, the attorney, seemed nice enough. She conversed initially with Mrs. Cole about trivialities. They were interrupted by a very brief phone call, then the women got down to business.

Mr. H. had been watching, and listening, and, when he was sure he wanted Michael, had been the voice on the other side of the phone call. The lawyer already knew the type of agreement he would make and proceeded to close the deal. Before Michael knew what was happening he was being escorted by Ms. Janik and Mrs. Cole to another office in the same building. It was a medical office.