



*Excerpt from: The Truth Behind the Walls*  
--CHAPTER 1--  
**THE TRUTH BEHIND THE WALLS**

**THE DAY IT HAPPENED**

It was on the cold, but sunny morning of January 23, 1982. Tara popped out of bed early that morning eager to start her chores. Saturday around her house were normally set aside for heavy cleaning. On this particular morning, something seemed rather different but Tara could not figure out what it was. She turned her bedroom stereo on as she began her cleaning. It seemed as though every radio station she turned to was playing slow music. Tara did not want to listen to slow and sad music. She was pretty upbeat and bubbly. She put on her mother's favorite 45-record by Marvin Gaye entitled, "Sexual Healing." Normally her mother would walk to her bedroom door and dance. Tara thought that it was rather strange that her mother had not made her way to her bedroom door. Just as she stuck her head out her bedroom door her mother calmly walked by Tara as though she wasn't even there. It seemed rather strange to Tara that her mother was up and dressed so early with her purse on her shoulder and headed out of the door. As she passed Tara, she quickly asked her mother where she was going. Her mother never answered and never made eye contact with her as she walked out of the house. She got into her car and drove off. Tara went back to her bedroom and continued her chores. She was very excited; she had big plans for that Saturday night. She planned to hang out at her favorite spot, the skating rink. Tara was trying to put her life somewhat back together after her father's latest attack.

Saturday night, January 23, 1982, it was cold outside but the weather was not about to spoil Tara's plans. Tara was at a

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skating rink just twenty minutes away from home. She was with her sister, Sarah. It was around 10:00pm when they were all skating and dancing to everyone's favorite song at that time, which was "Rock, Bounce, Skate and Roll." All of a sudden the music stopped. The disc jockey paged Tara and her sister to go to the front door, but instead, Tara continued to dance and skate because she was not ready to leave yet. She thought to herself, her mother showed up a bit early which was pretty unusual. As she skated around the floor once more, she got closer to the DJ booth, which was by the main entrance. She saw her first cousin, Debra, and her neighbor, Ruth, motioning for her to come off of the floor. "One more time," is what Tara yelled at them as she passed them by, and she skated around the floor to find Sarah. Sarah asked her, "What are they doing here at the skating rink?" Tara replied, "Maybe Charlene is having her baby." Charlene was Tara and Sarah's sister. Charlene had become pregnant at age seventeen in her junior year of high school. But even though Tara's mother was somewhat taken by Charlene's teen pregnancy Tara was excited. Tara soon remembered Charlene's due date; she was not due to have her baby for another month. Tara started thinking that maybe the baby came a little early. Her curiosity was beginning to get the best of her she could not wait any longer. She left Sarah and skated over to Debra and Ruth and asked them if Charlene was having her baby, but Debra would not answer her. Ruth, her neighbor, had this terrified and worried look on her face, a look that Tara will never forget. Debra had a different look on her face as if she wanted to tell Tara something, but did not know how.

Tara's mind quickly started to flash back to her father's last threat on her mother's life. In her mind she recalled the last

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beating he inflicted upon her battered body. She remembered her father's last words to her mother as he stood over her bloody and bruised body. He pointed his finger in her face as she lay there helplessly and said to her, "If I can't have you bitch then nobody will." Tara remembered her father's last words before walking out of the door that day. He said, "Bitch I'll kill you before I let someone else have you and I'll take my kids and you will be dead and gone." He walked out of the house and slammed the front door.

Just as Tara gathered her thoughts together it was then that she knew something was terribly wrong. She immediately got Sarah and told her that they had to leave. When they all got in the car, no one said a word. Tara remembers that it was so quiet that she could hear a pin drop. She asked her cousin, "Why did you guys pick us up instead of my mother?" No one answered. Everyone was completely silent. Her neighbor was sitting in the back seat of the car next to her. She then asked her cousin, "Did Charlene have her baby?" But her cousin, Debra did not respond. Instead she kept her eyes focused on the dark road as she quietly drove the girls to an undisclosed location. As the car approached the Newtown Community, Tara's mind began to spin out of control with thoughts of grief and remorse. She was trying to grasp what could have possibly happened to her mother. As she reflected back to the beginning of her life she could only see gruesome patterns of physical violence. She experienced thoughts of denial. Tara's mind wondered for a quick moment, why was she ever born into a family of such violence and turmoil.