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# The Men in My Life

*by Kelly Day*

My father used to tuck me in at night. He never read me stories, but instead he would talk with me. That made me feel so grown-up.

Grandpa smoked a beautiful, hand-carved, wooden pipe that smelled like cherries. One clear, chilly spring morning after my cousin, Andy and I had spent the night at Grandpa's, I caught Andy trying to smoke pot in the pipe. I told on him. He was then completely convinced I was nothing but an immature little snitch.

I thought my Uncle Rog was the biggest ass when he teased me. I always hated to go to his old Victorian house. Rog had a big Saint Bernard, and he always thought it was funny when he could get the dog to sit on me. Everyone but Dad would laugh at me.

Mr. Mati, Dad's delivery boy, always complimented me on how beautiful I was getting. He said that I'd be a real heartbreaker someday. Then he put his hand on my knee. This angered me beyond belief, so I kicked him as hard as I could. I knew my innocence had been taken advantage of. Dad fired Mr. Mati the next week.

Andy taught me how to smoke one summer evening. We walked out onto the moon-drenched shore of the beach and lit up. It took me a while to learn how to inhale. My lungs felt like someone had started a small fire in them. I finally got it right, and immediately passed out. Andy took me to the hospital and called my parents. They revived me and told me I was allergic to cigarette smoke. Dad was so angry he didn't talk to Andy or me for a week.

Chase was the first boy I noticed, well, noticed in that way. He was, and probably still is, cocky and arrogant. He loved to mess around with my head. He was tall, dark, and handsome. It really was too bad he knew it. In the fall of '87 he left and broke my heart. Dad and I rented a movie and got ice cream. He said he'd never leave me and that made me feel a whole

lot better.

When we were sitting in a lakeside restaurant, the sun melting behind us, Mom and I decided to embarrass Dad. We took his picture with every female employee and patron in the restaurant.

I got sick for softball tryouts my first year of high school so I didn't make the team. I felt so bad because I knew Dad had really wanted me to play.

Jenny and I were standing in Amy's new house. Harry, Amy's stepdad, was in the loft above.

"I don't like this," Jenny whispered. "Harry can watch us all the time."

Harry peered over the railing. "Just wait 'til you wear something low-cut."

I told Dad about that when he asked me why I wasn't going over to Jenny's anymore. He put his arm around me and said it was okay and that I would always be his little girl.

On February 25, a day before my 16th birthday, Dad packed up all his things and moved out. He came around occasionally for a couple of months. Now I don't even know where he lives. So, if you read this Dad, I'm still in the same place. My story isn't finished yet, and I'd like you to be here for the end.