

TOO MANY CHOICES



SAMPLE

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Chapter One

We lifted weights until we were numb and our muscles went into distress. We dragged out of the gym while Brad was trying to rally support for the next workout. Basically, we blew him off. He wasn't on my list of favorite persons at that moment in time.

Meanwhile, I'd made plans to meet up with Margie for some afternoon tennis. Bad move. Shouldn't have done that until after the workout, right? Anyway, after she beat me one set, I didn't have the heart to tell her I literally "let" her win, just to give my legs and back a rest. I was so spent I decided to drop her off and head home.

That didn't happen. On the way to her house she decided to test me with a true confession.

"Bruce, I think you should know my secret," she looked so serious.

"Secret? You've got a secret you're hiding from me, your best friend and true love? Your soul mate? Why would you do that?" My muscles were suddenly not the primary focus here.

"It's not what you think, Bruce," Margie frowned, "calm down."

"OK, I'm calm. You got another guy in your life, or what?" I was tense, I'll admit. But I wasn't totally serious. I knew she loved me; I just didn't like "secrets" between us. Of any kind.

"We're starting a band... a Christian rock band," she blurted out.

"Is that all? Hey, that's cool!" I was relieved but concerned that wasn't all of the secret. There was more; I could feel it.

"And?" I waited impatiently.

"And... well, we enlisted Nikki as lead singer." It was one tidy, neat little bomb dropped right on top of my head.

“OK, that’s cool. Yeah. Why shouldn’t that work?” I paused, “Because, Margie, I hate to break this to you but Nikki is not a Christian. In fact, pretty far from it, I’d say.”

“You’re wrong, Bruce. Nikki Houston is a Christian... a wounded and broken one, for sure, but I’m not giving up hope. Besides, she’s a professional and we’re happy to have her!” Margie had that look on her face – the one that let me know there was no point in arguing with her.

Now, let’s consider my situation. This was worse than being caught between a rock and a hard place. This was being caught between your girlfriend and your ex.

Get the picture? I’d call this a lose – lose; there’s no way I was going to win here. Are you kidding? I was walking a straight line between the two and I wanted to lean neither to the right nor the left. A lot harder than coloring within the lines, you know? This was not going to be easy.

So I decided to stick close to Margie, of course. I surprised even myself with my next move – divulging details.

“Hey, Margie, I got to be honest with you. Be careful with Nikki Houston as your lead singer. She’s pretty popular, you know,” I heard myself saying.

“Yeah, but maybe our first gig won’t be a flop if she invites her fan base,” Margie suggested.

“That would do the trick; just make sure you have extra security on hand.” Guess I drifted off momentarily.

“But is there more to this story? Something you’re not telling me?” Margie asked like she could see right through me.

So I told her the whole truth. “OK, you’re right. No, it wasn’t just her popularity; she was off trying to be a rock star and didn’t leave any room for me. Every time we talked, she was at some party and acting too cool

for a high school guy. This was no kind of relationship and to be honest, I sensed she was going to break up with me, so I did it first.”

“So because of all this you think it’s a bad idea to bring her on?”

“No, but you have to realize this may be temporary for her, understand?” I brushed the hair from her eyes and drew her close to me. “So I’m hoping you don’t get too close to her. Nikki hurts everyone that gets close to her... sooner or later.”

Nothing short of ironic, a text came in. Margie looked pensive as she read: Margie & Marcie, sorry for the self-pity scene. Talk? Coffee Brewers in 2?

“Well, looks like I’ve got to make some fast decisions,” Margie looked perplexed. “Take a look at this. She means in two hours, right?”

“Yep! You want me to come?” I didn’t really think she’d agree to that... and she didn’t.

So, I took her home and decided to try my favorite video game, Warriors of Armageddon. Ironic. I realized that if I didn’t play this right, the situation – not the game, of course, it could turn into Armageddon for my relationship with Margie. It was just this gut feeling I got. Some strange impression that I was being put to the test.

Now that is strange, right? I mean it’s all between them, so how did I get involved in this, anyway? Have I mentioned I don’t understand women? And if you think you do, watch out; you’re probably heading for trouble!

But one thing is for sure. If it comes to it, I never back down from my own opinion or course of action. I could only hope this was something Margie was ready to learn about me. And I was about to learn how much Margie really trusted me or valued my judgment.

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Too Many Choices 2 (Free Sample Chapter)

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Too Many Choices 2 is a young adult novel and second in a series, filled with comedy and drama. In a variety of high school athletic events, quadruplets are the name of the game.

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1. Fiction—Young Adult Comedy

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This book is dedicated to my family, with special acknowledgment to God for the inspiration, and to my son, Dan, my editor and partner and motivator.