

4 SCORE



Casey Bell

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Music, it's all I need to have fun, Real music, play those instruments, Music it's all I need to have fun, real music, bring on the instruments. I remember the first time we sang that song in the studio. Neither one of us liked it. We thought it was too simple and boring, but because of our manager, we made ourselves enjoy it. The worst thing about it was that it became one of our top songs, which meant we had to sing it everywhere we went, it was very annoying sometimes. People always ask me what it was like being in the music business. I always say the same thing, it was an experience I not only learned from, but will never forget. Most people always dream about being in this business, but don't realize it is not as glamorous as it looks all the time. We had our ups and downs, our downs were so low that by the time we had an up it barely did anything for us. But, before I go any further about the business I endured, let me start from the beginning. I was born to the parents of Keith and Hazel Washington, they named me Antranig Edward. Antranig means first son, I was their third child and first son. I never liked my name. By the time I was in the fourth grade I started using my middle name and by the time I was in seventh grade no one knew what my first name was. My dad was a minister and my mom was the choir director at Holy Tabernacle, so, I spent my childhood in church. I started singing in the choir when I was five and I had my first solo when I was seven. My mother took me to talent shows and pageants all over the place, I won some and I lost some, but it didn't stop my mother from entering me into every little thing. It wasn't until I was fourteen that I told her I wanted to be a theater actor. I told her that I didn't want to do any more talent shows. She was disappointed at first, but she got over it quickly when she decided to start taking me to auditions all over town. I became apart of community theater and I enjoyed it much. Years went by and I attended college. I majored in theater performance and graphic design, (something to fall back on). After graduation I moved to New York with a high school friend to fulfill my dream in acting.

THE BEGINNING

Edward scrolls out of a building with his head down, he turns the corner and continues a few blocks before entering an apartment building. He takes the elevator to the third floor. When he gets to the door he slightly bangs his head on the door, then opens it, he walks in and sees Derek watching television. Derek asks, “How did it go?”

“It didn’t, like always.”

“Well, there’s always next time.”

“It doesn’t seem like it. I’m really getting tired of this.”

“That’s show business for you. Remember you wanted to do this. Everyone knows that it is the hardest business to get into. They say once you’re in, you’re in. So I am sure one of these days you are going to get something.”

“I don’t know. Do you know how many auditions I have already been to?”

“No, how many?”

“Too many. I’ve been going to at least one a day, sometimes two or three of them in a day and nothing. I haven’t even gotten a call back yet. And they don’t even tell me what’s wrong, they just say thank you, and half of them don’t even look at me. How can they know I’m not good for the show and they don’t even look at me?”

“I don’t know how they do things, Edward, but this is your dream. No matter how frustrating it is, you have to make it happen.”

“I don’t know, I’m thinking about moving back to Connecticut and being the graphic designer everyone wants me to be.”

“You know you won’t be happy.”

“I actually enjoy graphic arts.”

“Then, why don’t you do it?”

“I don’t know. I don’t even know why I feel like I need to stay here. There is nothing here for me. No one wants me. I feel like I’ve been to every audition in New York. I think every producer, casting director, and agent has seen me, they don’t want me, and I’m not sure

why. I thought I was talented.”

“You are talented. You can sing better than anyone I know. And you can dance really well, and your acting, don’t get me started on your acting skills, I’ll be here all night.”

“But they don’t see it, they don’t even try to see it, they don’t want it. If they don’t want it, who will?”

“Many people have wanted it. Look at all of the community theaters you were involved with. Why don’t you just get a regular 9-5 in graphic arts and do Community Theater on the side. I’m sure the experience you get from New York Community Theater will elevate your skills with each production. Start off small then move to the top. You know what I mean, community, then regional, off-off Broadway, off-Broadway, then the big guns, Broadway.”

“I don’t know. I seriously don’t think I can go to another audition, I can’t take another rejection.”

“You know all the greats had to go through the same thing. It wasn’t all peaches and cream for them either. If this is truly what you love then you should never get tired of it, you should never give up.”

“I thought the same thing, but if I’m thinking this way, maybe I don’t want it as bad as I thought.”

“Well, do you?”

Edward stops to think about it,

“I don’t know. I don’t know anymore.”

There is a slight pause in the room before Edward breaks it, “Well, enough about me, did you get the promotion?”

“No, Brian got it.”

“Oh, I’m sorry to hear that.”

“No, its okay, I guess he deserved it, he has more experience and education than me.”

“Yeah, but that shouldn’t count. I mean, it’s the food business; you can cook much better then him. I’ve tried his food, he makes very dry turkey. Now, you on the other hand know how to

make it moist. Besides, overall you're the better cook. I can't believe they gave it to him."

"Hey, what are you going to do, right?"

After college I moved in with Derek Johnson. I met him when I was around ten. His mom, Bertha and my mom were best friends in high school. They kept in touch through college. After their graduation is when things changed. My mom moved to Connecticut and Bertha moved to New York. It wasn't until a couple of years later that Bertha moved to Connecticut, (to take a job offer) that I met Derek. After high school Derek moved back to New York, while I attended college in New Jersey. Derek and I made arrangements which allowed me to stay with him after my graduation. The plan was for me to stay until I found a job and got my own apartment, but finding a job was a lot harder than I imagined. After searching and searching and searching I decided to take Derek's advice and get a 9-5 in graphic design. I applied for five different graphic designing jobs and I received two interviews. I went on both and received an offer, which I accepted, with C.S.B. Printing. It was about a year later that I started auditioning again. The first show I did that year was "Kids, The Musical" with The Harper Community Players. I was in the original cast before it went to Broadway. The other show I did was "Queen Loomis", with The Acorn Theater Ensemble. At that point I had realized how much fun I was having that I didn't care about the rejections anymore; It just felt good to be wanted. Although my self-esteem should not have been affected by the rejections, being apart of community theater helped it rise. I spent about eighteen months with Derek before moving out. I was enjoying C.S.B. Printing and community theater, but there was still apart of me wishing that I could do theater and get paid. After moving out it was about another year before I did another audition. At that time I was in eight shows and was involved with six different community theaters, I figured I was ready to give it another try. I went to another audition and from start to finish it was horrible. The day started with me walking to the audition and it starting to rain (I should have watched the weather). I was soaked and so was my resume (the protective sheet I had it in did not protect it). I walk in wet and annoyed and I was thirty minutes late. I walk in and there are a ton of people, I was number 321. I waited and waited and waited and by the time they called me, I was tired and ready to go home. However, I go in ready to sing my best, give them my all and I mess up the song, my voice cracked and I forget

some of the words. I smiled when I was done and all I got was another “thank you.” I left very frustrated and upset and I cried all the way home (like that stupid little piggy). About five months later I came to the conclusion that New York wasn’t for me so I packed my bags and I moved back in with my parents for a little bit. I got a job at Holden Graphics, Inc. About three months later I was able to move out of my parents’ place. I staid there and continued to do community theater. At that point I had no thoughts of going to another audition, but Derek called me and that’s how it all began.

Edward arrives home from a hectic day at work, he goes to the living room and plops on the couch. He takes the remote and turns on the television. He flips through the channels until the phone rings,

“Hello.”

“Hey, Eddie, what’s up?”

“Who’s this?”

“You don’t recognize my voice?”

“No, I’m sorry, I don’t. Who is this?”

“Man, it’s me, Derek.”

“Oh, Derek, oh my gosh, I’m sorry. How are you doing?”

“I’m doing fine. How are you?”

“I’m doing okay.”

“So, how’s Connecticut treating you?”

“Pretty good, pretty good.”

“So, what are you doing?”

“I work at Holden Graphics, Inc.”

“Oh. That’s cool. Are you still doing theater?”

“Yeah, just community though, I gave up on professional theater.”

“Oh, that’s bad.”

“Yeah, it is, but what are you going to do, right? I enjoy my job, so, I’ll keep it. So, how are you? What have you been up to?”

“Nothing much, nothing much. Pretty much everything is the same since you left, except I got a promotion.”

“You’re kidding. You’re one of the main chef’s now?”

“No, I’m the top chef.”

“You have to be kidding me.”

“No, I’m not.”

“How did that happen?”

“Well, it was between Brian and I. I thought he would get it being that he was a main chef, but Brian got too many complaints when he worked, where as, the boss told me I received many compliments from the customers. He congratulated me and made me top chef.”

“Well, that’s awesome. I am very proud of you. Well, I thank you for calling me. It was nice hearing your voice.”

“Yeah, you too. Um...I actually called you for another reason.”

“Oh, really, what is it?”

“Before you say no, just hear me out. I was walking to work one day and I saw an ad for an audition. I read and thought to myself that it’s perfect for you. So, I thought maybe you should go, you know?”

“I don’t know. I really don’t want to go down “Rejection Road” again. It’s comfortable where I am at and I don’t want to leave here. My job pays well, and when I need a dose of theater I can audition for a community theater and not face rejection. I’m at peace and I don’t know that I want to destroy it over some New York audition.”

“But it’s different; it’s a different type of audition.”

“Oh, how so?”

“It’s not theater; it’s an audition for a boy group.”

“Oh, no, I don’t do boy groups.”

“Why not? Don’t get me wrong, you are a great actor and dancer, but your singing is what makes you shine. You have a wonderful voice and probably could get further being a musical artist than a Broadway actor.”

“What if you’re wrong? What if you’re wrong? What happens if I come all the way to New York just to audition and they turn me down?”

“But what if they don’t turn you down?”

“They have already. I’ve spent too much time and money pursuing a performance career; it’s just not going to happen.”

“Trust me man, I know this is you. I felt it when I saw the audition flyer; I just heard your name as I was reading it.”

“Someone was probably calling someone else named Eddie. It’s not that unfamiliar of a name.”

“You don’t get it, do you?”

“What is there to get?”

“You can’t quit because of rejection.”

“Then when do I quit, when I’m poor and old. I spent over seven years trying to succeed. They don’t want me and they never will. I have accepted that and I wish you would too.”

“Do it for me, just do it this one last time, for me, and then if they reject you, I’ll never bother you again.”

“Why are you being so persistent, why do you even care?”

“Because I know you. Ever since I met you I knew you would be something. There was something about you that I just can’t explain. I mean, everyone in school loved watching you on stage. You have too much in you to give up like that. Besides, I don’t know what it is, but I know that this one is for you.”

“You still have my email?”

“Yeah.”

“Email it to me, and I’ll think about it.”

I never understood why Derek was eager for me. Nevertheless it was nice having him as a friend at the time. He was everything I needed to push me when I wouldn't push myself. I got the email the next day and I printed it out. I still wasn't sure whether or not I was going. It was an open call and it was three weeks from the day Derek called me. I thought about it everyday, but it was that fear of rejection that kept me saying "no" to myself. Finally, the week before the audition I called Derek and asked him if I could stay at his place for a couple of days. He happily said yes and the day before the audition I went to his place. We talked for along time that night about the audition, my job, his job, and old times. All that time I spent away from him, I had forgotten how much I enjoyed speaking to him. The next day I awoke regretting that I agreed to this audition. I truly was over the audition process and did not want to go through them again. But, I promised Derek that I would go, so I did. I got there on time and was number 445. There were hundreds and hundreds of boys there, every race, creed, size, and shape. I felt like quitting as soon as I walk through the door, but I knew I couldn't. I took a number and some forms to fill out. I sat in a corner by myself, I was intimidated by the crowd. If there ever was a time where I was discourage to audition, that was the time. Every time I told myself to leave I heard Derek's voice telling me to stay, so I did. I sat there by myself for the most part. Every now and then someone would come up to me and talk. It was good because it made the time go by faster. After three hours of waiting I was finally called in, I walked in not caring what would happen. I gave the accompanist my music; she played, I sang, and then I heard "thank you." I said to myself, I knew it. But then I heard something else. One of the guys asked me if I could stay for the second audition. I told him, with pleasure, smiled, and left. I left the room with a huge smile that I couldn't make go away. It wasn't a guarantee that I would make the cut, but I never got a call back before. Just getting the call back alone was enough for me. I called Derek in that very moment.

Edward sits back in a corner smiling to no end; he takes his cell phone out of his pocket and dials,

“Hey, Derek, it’s Eddie.”

“Hi, man, what’s going on, you’ve been out for a long time. Is everything okay?”

“Yes, everything is fine. I got here on time, but there was already a line. I’m number 445.”

“Oh, my gosh, did you go in yet?”

“Yes I did. I got a call back.”

“Oh, my gosh, I told you this was it. See, you’re going to get it.”

“Well, I don’t know about that. It’s only the second audition; there are a total of five. I’m just glad I made a call back, but I’m not going to get my hopes up.”

“Well, I think you can do it.”

“Well, thank you for the encouragement.”

“No, problem man. Call me when you make the next cut.”

“If, I make the next cut I will call you.”

“Okay, see you later.”

“Bye.”

So, after another two hours the first auditions were complete. It went from 1, 675 boys to 300. The second audition was a dance audition. The choreographer taught us a dance and we had to audition it. It wasn't difficult, but they taught it quickly and we didn't have that much to rehearse it. They brought us in ten at a time and after you were done they told you whether or not you were going to the third audition. Once I was done I was able to call Derek.

“Derek, congratulate me, I made it to the third audition.”

“Oh, that's great. See I told you.”

“Not so fast there's still three more to go.”

“Are you going to be there all day?”

“No, after the third audition they're going to continue the rest tomorrow. I'm so excited. I don't even care whether or not I make it. It's just nice not to be rejected.”

“Well, I'm glad that you went.”

“So am I. Derek.”

“Yes?”

“Thank you.”

“You're welcome. What are you thanking me for?”

“For pushing me and for believing in me.”

“No problem. I love you, man.”

“I love you too. Bye.”

From 300 to 50, I couldn't believe I was still there. The third and last audition for the day was a song audition. They taught us a song and not only did we have to learn it we had to sing it with one other person. One of us sang the high note while the other sang the low. We sang the song twice each switching notes. They wanted to see if we could keep our note singing as a group. They went from 50 to 20 and I was able to call Derek again. I went back to his place and he had a celebration dinner for me. It was kind of cute; he also invited some friends over. I was very happy and thanking God that I didn't let this opportunity pass. I almost missed its knock, and I know he would not have been back any time soon. The next day my whole outlook was different. I walked to the audition singing, whistling and smiling. I felt differently then I had in the past. It was a nice feeling. The fourth audition they taught us a song and dance. We had to sing the song and dance. Of course they wanted to see our ability to do both. I had much experience so I was happy about this audition. Again we didn't get much time, but I learned it quickly and I performed, which is different from auditioning. I pretended as if I was in the group. Once I was done I stood and watched the others and once all twenty were done it was only twelve of us that made it to the fifth and final audition. I could not believe that I was still there. I was amazed at myself. I thought for sure it was a dream, but it wasn't, thank God, it wasn't. They gave us a ten minute break and when we returned they put us in groups of four. They taught us each the same song and dance and we had to perform as a group. At that point it truly didn't matter to me what happened. I was so proud that I made it that far. My hope and faith had changed. I told myself if I don't make it, it doesn't matter, there are more auditions to go to. I then started thinking about moving back to New York. The studio was in New York and the band would be recording in New York, so I started to prepare even though I wasn't sure if I would be in the group. So, they put us in groups. I was with three other guys who didn't make the final cut, but they were really good. After two hours of auditioning and changing groups and returning for what seemed like endless interviews they had picked the final four and praise God I was one of them. They called me and I couldn't have been more nervous. I walked in and they asked me why I auditioned for the group. I was so nervous because I knew originally I

didn't even want to be there, and I knew if I said I came here for a friend there was a chance I wouldn't make it, and at that point I wanted to make it. So, I quickly came up with the best answer:

"I've been singing since I was five, I had my first solo when I was seven, and I've been doing community theater for over ten years. I started going on auditions and I was rejected one right after the other. I came here, because a friend of mine told me about this. I'll be honest, I didn't want to come at first because I was afraid of more rejection, but I came anyway. When I got the first call back I couldn't have been happier. At that point I didn't care whether or not I got in. I was just happy that I finally got my first call back. However, as I went from one audition to the next, I realized that this is me and this is for me. I never wanted something so badly in my life until now. I enjoy sharing my love, emotions, feeling, joy, whatever, through song and dance and I know I can give something back to everyone simply by doing this." Then they asked me another question: "What is the most important thing about being apart of a group?" "No matter what happens in my life I can't make myself look good or make the group look bad. It's completely about team work. Making sure that I don't over shine my light and my fellow member doesn't under shine his." They then said "thank you" and I left. Afterwards I thought to myself, everything I said was stupid, they hated it, I know they did. Then I started to ask myself questions, did you smile, did you look into their eyes, do you even know what you just said? It was horrible, I wanted to change my answers, I wanted to cry, I wanted to leap, and I was all over the place. They called us in one by one to let us know whether or not we made it through. I was the eleventh person they called in. To know that three already have been chosen and there is one more that will be chosen and there are only two other choices including you, that was a nerve-racking moment. I went in and I was ready to hear, "sorry Edward, but you didn't make the cut." I walked in and they all had smiles and congratulated me. I think I started jumping. I went crazy. All I kept thinking was Derek was right, his feeling was right. Of course I called him and screamed until I couldn't scream anymore. I left the place ecstatic with my confidence rebuilt. I went back to Derek and couldn't stop thanking him. I then went

back home and packed my things. I didn't officially move out of Connecticut until three weeks later. I also gave my job a one week notice. Once I told them why I was leaving they were happy for me and sent me on my way. The next week was the first meeting. I met the other guys and rehearsals had started. The first thing we did that day was introduce ourselves.

THE FIRST MEETING

“Hello everyone, my name is John Franklin and I’m the producer of Four-Leaf-Clover. To my right is Lex Hart, he will be your manager. To my left is Ben Michaels, Louis Right, and Karen Lockhart, they will be writing all your songs, and sitting next to Karen is Samuel Gregory, he will be your vocal coach and also will be teaching you whatever the writing team writes for you. Let’s start by you guys introducing yourselves. Let’s start with Sean.”

“Hi, I’m Sean Cruise.”

The first time I met Sean was at the third audition, he was my singing partner. At the audition they taught everyone both parts and then they split us into two. Once we had our partner we had five minutes to rehearse together. We both said hi to each other and then we rehearsed, after the five minutes the next thing he said to me was, don’t screw this up for me. I got nervous, but I did well, and he thanked me for not messing up.

“Hi, my name is Christopher Wu.” *Christopher was my dance buddy during the second audition. We helped each other learn the dance. It was nice to see him in the final four.*

“Hello everyone, my name is Orlando Romero.”

Orlando was cute, but odd. I watched him during the auditions and he was wonderful, but he didn’t look like someone who should be dancing and singing. He looked like he should have been in a science lab mixing up something. I was the last to introduce myself. After that John talked to us for a little bit and then we rehearsed our first song. “Don’t Break My Heart, Baby”, was the first song that we rehearsed. It was your everyday pop love song, it had a nice sound and everything, but it didn’t have a distinguished sound, something to make us different from all the other boy groups. I remember the first rehearsal because it was the start of something new for me. It meant that I didn’t have to wonder anymore if my journey would lead where I wanted it to. I knew I was on the right path and I couldn’t be happier. During the next months rehearsals got intense. We spent six days a week, twelve hours a day in rehearsal, singing, dancing, and recording. It was about three months later when we signed the contract. As stupid as it sounds none of us really read through it. Both the producers and the manager

went through it with us, and we just trusted them. I think we were all desperate as well. We weren't sure if this train would come again so we didn't want to ruin it by asking too many questions. However, I do wish I would have taken the time to read it, but, hey, lesson learned. It wasn't long before we were almost done with our first album. Everything was coming along until our first dilemma arose. It wasn't anything major, but it took two days to solve it. It was about four months after we started that the producer came to us. He told us that one of the other producers found another underground band with the same name as us. At first we were going to keep the name being that the band was underground and no one had ever heard of them, but John decided that we should change our name. At the time he didn't have any suggestions, instead he had asked the four of us to find a new name for ourselves. We had got together that day and many names popped up, The 4 of Us, Band of 4, Spice Boys, The Tempting 4, The Four Amigos, The Four Walls, Four Seasons, 4D, Quarterly, We 4 Kings, Macaroni and Cheese, Paper or Plastic, The Forth Leg, Channel 4, Fantastic 4, Gang of Four, and so many others. We finally decided to sleep on it. We left that day and came back. I came back with the name, American Boys. Sean came in with Two Plus Two and New Yorker Boyz, but I explained to him that I wasn't originally from New York. Christopher came up with Four Corners. But it was Orlando who came up with our name. He had a couple of good one's all coming from the same idea. He came up with names that were acronyms using our names. He came up with: The CEO'S, 0 Seconds (O.S.E.C.), and The ESCO-Moes. But when he explained 4Score to us we knew we found our name. The 4 stands for, well, the fact that it's four of us. The score is the acronym, "S" is for Sean, "C" is for Christopher, "Or" is for Orlando and the "E" is Edward. We all celebrated the name and were happy to become 4Score. It was at that point that we were ready to start our careers. I must say I was nervous though. Mostly because no matter what happened there were only three things we could be, a band that never made it, a one hit wonder, or a best selling band that everyone will remember. With the songs that the writing team wrote for us it was hard to say. There were only two songs that I really liked, but the rest weren't all that good. The one thing that made me really get nervous was when the team gave us our last

song. It was a last minute song and I wasn't sure why they were throwing a new song at us so last minute, well, until I heard the thing. The song was "4Score We Are." I already knew just by listening to the title that I wouldn't like it. It was our first single and I thought to myself that is the end of our career, but of course the song was released and made the top ten on the charts. I was happy, but very shocked at the same time. I didn't know what was going to happen next, but I was just happy to be finally performing. After a month they released another song, which became a hit, "Dancing Tonight." After that hit the charts our tour was planned and we were on our way to travel. I couldn't have been any happier. I said goodbye to Derek and left not knowing the many things that would happen.

“So this is it?”

“Yeah, I leave tomorrow night. They want us to stay in a hotel so they know we’re going to be where we need to be; so, I’m packing now.”

“You’re leaving now?”

“Well, yes, they’re waiting. The producers booked our rooms already. They want us there by a certain time. I don’t want to mess things up so I have decided to arrive earlier than scheduled.”

“Will I see you again?”

“Of course Derek.”

“Not just on TV?”

“Derek, you have nothing to worry about. I’ll visit. I’m sure in about two years when the contracts change, they’ll allow visits.”

“They don’t allow you to make visits?”

“Not, now. They said they wanted to make sure we keep our minds on business. They said it’s a lot of work and that we shouldn’t be distracted by people.”

“How is a visit going to distract you?”

“I don’t know, but they’ve been in this business for a long time. I am sure they know what they’re doing.”

“Call me at least.”

“Sure, if I have the time. They have us on a strict schedule, rehearsals, tours, interviews, and autograph signing. They keep us pretty busy.”

“Well, don’t forget me.”

“Derek, I can never forget you.” They hug each other.

Derek goes to leave, “you’ll be here when I get back, right?”

“What time do you get off of work?”

“I should be done around seven; I should be home by seven-thirty, eight-o-clock.”

“Oh, no, I’ll be gone by then. They want us at the hotel by six.”

“Why so early, you’re not leaving until tomorrow.”

“We have to leave early in the morning. They want us there early so we can get to bed early. We have an early rise.”

Derek hugs him again, “Well, I’m going to miss you.”

“I’ll miss you too.”

“Don’t forget me.”

“I won’t.”

I think Derek was a little bothered by me leaving. I’m not sure why since he was the one who pushed me to audition. Well, nevertheless, I left for the hotel and was ready for the adventure. The first place we went to was San Francisco, CA. It was our first live performance in front of a large crowd. The place was packed with many screaming fans. The show rocked so much that they screamed for an encore. It was weird being that it was only about four months since we’ve been out and we already had so many fans. After the show we went back to our rooms, well some of us.

Edward, Chris, Sean, and Orlando run to the dressing room. They are overflowing with excitement with their latest success. Lex calls for them.

“Boys, the limo is waiting. We’re leaving tomorrow for Washington. Make sure you’re up and ready to go by seven.”

“We have to get up that early”, complains Orlando?

“Yes, you do, now go.”

Sean asks, “Where is the limo taking us?”

Lex answers, “To the hotel. Where else would he take you?”

“I thought there was an after party at some restaurant. I told some of the girls that I would meet them there.”

“What girls”, asks Edward?

Sean happily states, “Groupies.”

Lex answers, “No, that party is not for you.”

“Then who is it for?”

“For producers, executives, and managers.”

Sean replies, “Oh, so I guess you’re going.”

“Yes, but it’s not so much a party as it is a business meeting. We’re getting together to talk business.”

“At a restaurant”, asks Sean?

“Yes, it’s a relaxing atmosphere; it makes it easier to get producers, and other people to support you.”

“Meaning it’s easier to get them to open their check book”, says Chris.

“Exactly, trust me it will be less fun and more business talk, business talk that you wouldn’t understand even if I explained it to you. So, please, go. The limo is waiting, he’s been idling for some time now, please go before he gets a ticket.”

Lex leaves, the boys walk to the limo,

“This is not fair, we did all the work tonight and we don’t even get to go to the party”,

says Chris.

Edward responds, “You heard Lex, it’s not a party.”

“You don’t believe that shit, do you”, says Sean, “He just said that so we don’t think we’re missing out on anything. I’ve never been to California and I am not missing out. You guys go ahead; I’ll be at the hotel later.”

“Where are you going and how are you going to get back”, asks Orlando?

“I’m going to find a bar and have some fun. I’ll catch a cab back.”

“What if Lex finds out? You know he hates it when we’re not in our rooms at said time”, replies Edward.

“He’s not going to find out. You guys want to come.”

“Hell yeah!” says Christopher.

“No, I’m going to go back to the hotel”, says Edward.

Orlando agrees, “Me, too, I don’t want to get in trouble.”

The driver steps out of the car, “Are you guys coming or what?”

Orlando and Edward get into the car,

Sean replies, “No man you go ahead, Chris and I are going to tour the town.”

The driver asks, “How are you going to get back?”

“We’ll take a cab.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yeah, man, don’t worry about it. We’ll be okay.”

Orlando and I got back to the hotel and went straight to bed. Chris and Sean found a bar, but got kicked out. Chris got too drunk and Sean got into a fight with someone. The paparazzi were all over the story about "2 of the 4Score". Lex was angry. The funny thing about it though was that he didn't find out from the paper. While we were on the tour bus to Washington, Lex had a talk with all of us. We were rehearsing some of our songs when Lex sat with us.

"That sounds good. You mind if I interrupt you guys for a minute?"

"Of course not, Lex", replies Orlando.

Lex continues, "Chris and Sean, why didn't you return back to the hotel?"

"We did. You saw us this morning, didn't you?" Sean replies.

"You didn't return when I told you to. I told you to leave right after the concert. Why were you strolling around San Francisco?"

Chris responds, "How did you know?"

"Shut up, stupid", says Sean.

"You guys are such idiots", replies Orlando, "It was all over the papers the next morning that you got kicked out of the bar."

"You what!" yells Lex, "What do you mean kicked out of a bar?"

"You didn't know that?" asks Edward. "No, I did not. That is not good for your image. What are you trying to do, end your career?"

Chris asks, "Then how did you know?"

"Trevor told me."

"Who the fuck is Trevor?" asks Sean.

"The limo driver. Listen, everyone that is around you works for me, your limo drivers, the make-up lady, the choreographer, the dressers, the dancers, the musicians, the sound guy, every single one of them. They watch you, and if they hear, see, or smell anything suspicious they come and report it to me. So you better watch yourselves. I want more for this band than just the "norm." I want you guys to reach the top; I want you to surpass any and every one's

expectations of you. And that can't happen with you guys being kicked out of bars. You are on this tour for one thing and one thing only and that is to perform. Once you've done that you go to your rooms and sleep. Damn it I don't care if you have sex with each other, but there is no partying whatsoever. You do that on your own time. Perform, hotel room, hotel room, perform, that's it. Nothing more, nothing less."

I think I almost peed in my pants. I made sure after that speech that I would never do anything except perform and go to my hotel room. Two months went by and we were on a regular schedule. It was kind of like pre-school. You couldn't do anything except for what was on the agenda. I called Derek when I could, but the calls were short. Lex had us working every hour of the day (except when we were sleeping). I was beginning to miss my job and community theater.

"Edward get off the phone", says Lex.

"Yes, I'm coming, Lex. I'm sorry Derek I have to go. I have another press meeting to attend. I'll call you later. Bye."

"Edward lets, go, now!"

If we weren't on stage, we were on a video shoot, or a photo shoot for a magazine, or a talk show, or radio show, or interview for something we had no clue about. Lex just took us wherever he thought would make good exposure. We were like puppets, he pulled our strings and we would perform. The performing aspect was fun, but everything else was horrible. It was non-stop, and tiring. It was about six months into the tour and I was ready to end it. We had another six months to go before it ended. During the half mark of the tour we were in Chicago. The day of our concert we went to a local music store to autograph CDs; a local radio station, Pop 107 was there giving away free tickets. Once we were done Lex had a limo pick us up to go back to the hotel and problems struck again. Lex had left to go to some business meeting that we were not invited to (that happened often). We went to the limo and Sean decided he wasn't going anywhere.

“Come on Sean, don’t do this”, says Edward.”

“I’m just going to a store or two.”

“But what about the concert tonight?”

“Eddie, you can’t be serious. It’s only one o clock. The show doesn’t start until eight.”

“But the limo is picking us up at six to take us the theater.”

“That’s still five hours away.”

“But Lex told us to go straight to the hotel. You remember what happened last time?”

“Yes, and if I remember correctly Lex said to do it on our own time. Isn’t this our own time?”

“I don’t know. I guess so.”

“Well, then I’m going. I’ll be back in no time.”

“Sean, please don’t go.”

“Eddie, chill out, you worry too much.”

Sean had left and the three of us went back to the hotel. Six-o-clock rolled around and Sean did not show. We had no clue where he was and the limo was waiting.

“What are we supposed to do”, asks Orlando?

“I don’t know, are we supposed to wait for him”, asks Chris.

Edward walks to the limo and smiles at the driver. “Hi, my name is Edward.”

“I know who you are? Are you guys ready?”

“Not exactly.”

“It’s six o clock. Did Lex tell you I was coming at six?”

“Yes he did, but we’re just not ready.”

“What’s wrong?”

“Well, Sean hasn’t returned yet.”

“Where did he go?”

“I don’t know.”

The driver takes out his cell and dials, “hello, Lex.”

Chris whispers, “Shit!”

“Yes, it’s Howard. Sean is not here, it’s now”, the driver looks at his watch, “6:03. Should I wait for him, and if so, how long?” As the driver receives the instructions the other three look on nervously, not sure what to expect. The driver asks, “Are you guys ready?”

“Well, yeah, it’s just Sean we’re waiting on”, says Orlando.

“Okay, get in the car. We’re already five minutes late.”

“What about Sean”, asks Edward, “How is he going to get there?”

“Lex said it’s not my problem. Let’s go.”

The boys get into the limo and the driver leaves to the theater. Once they get there Lex is outside waiting for them,

“Hey Howard, how are you?”

“Doing fine”, Lex hands Howard a tip,

“Thank you.”

“Thank you, see you later.”

“Sure thing, so boys, where’s Sean?”

The boys shrug their shoulders.

“That’s not a good answer. Where did he go after Randy dropped you off at the hotel after the autograph signing?”

“Well, he actually didn’t go back to the hotel with us”, says Chris.

“What the hell do you mean by that?”

“He said he wanted to go to a store or two. You did say that we could have fun on our own time. It was our own time at that time, right”, replies Edward.

“But he’s spilling into my time. That’s why I don’t want you guys going out, it spills into my time, even when you’re only out for an hour, like Chris.”

Chris responds, “What do you mean?”

“Don’t play stupid with me. Where did you go?”

“When?”

“After the limo dropped you off an hour later you left the hotel and came back an hour later. Where did you go?”

“I just went to a bar to have a drink. How did you know?”

“The front desk clerk at the hotel told me she saw you leave and return. I told you, I have people watching you. You better watch yourselves. Now go inside, and if Sean’s not here by 7:45 the show is cancelled.”

“You can’t do that”, says Chris.

“I can do whatever my managerial skills tell me to do. Edward, call him and tell him to get his butt here now.”

As Lex walks away Sean walks towards the theater.

“Where the hell have you been”, asks Lex?

“What the hell you worried about? You said we had to be at the theater by 6:30 and its only 6:25.”

“Sean, why didn’t you go back to the hotel like I ordered you to?”

“Because I didn’t want to. It was my time and I decided to tour the town on my time.”

“You don’t have any time. All your time is my time. You’re either out here with me or in a hotel room resting.”

“This is bullshit, how the hell am I supposed to have fun if you have us restricted to a hotel room?”

“Who said anything about having fun? This is business, Sean, business! Not a time for you to run around town like some annoying tourist. Remember Sean, and this goes for the rest of you as well. When I say go back to the hotel, I mean it. No more of this running around town like a bunch of hooligans. I want all of you to get ready for tonight’s concert.”

After that night Lex had nothing but scorn for Sean. It seems like Lex was waiting for Sean to do something wrong just so he could jump down his throat. It was annoying though because it seems like Sean was doing things on purpose just to push Lex's buttons. After that night it was very uncomfortable to be around the two of them because they always had words, nasty words to share with each other. I would write Derek letters when I could, most of the times it was about Sean and Lex. I barely talked about myself or even him. I didn't realize how rude the letters were. Here it is a year later and I haven't seen him and all I keep doing is sending him letters of complaints. During the night when we would come home (hotel) I would call Derek on rare occasions.

"Hi, Derek, it's Eddie."

"Hey, how are you?"

"I'm doing fine. Did you get my letters?"

"Yes, I did."

"I'm sorry for not calling, but Lex has been strict with us."

"I know. You said so in your letter."

"Oh, sorry. Well, I just wanted to check on you and see how everything is going?"

"Everything is fine."

"That's good how's the restaurant going?"

"It's going really well."

"That's awesome."

There's a knock on the door.

"Edward hang up the phone, it's probably Lex", says Chris.

"Derek, I'm sorry I have to go."

"But you just called."

"I know, but I think Lex is at the door. He wants us in the bed. We're not even supposed to be calling anyone at this time of night. I really have to go. I don't want to get into trouble. Bye. I'll call you back, okay."

“Okay. Bye.”

That’s how most of my phone calls were, very short. We didn’t have much time to do anything during the day so we would do them at night, but Lex would come knocking on the door to make sure we were sleeping or on our way to sleep. After about a year of touring we took a month break and then went back on tour, but this time in Europe. I spent the month in Connecticut with my parents and family. I had so much fun that I did not want to leave, but the month ended so quickly. We met in the same spot as last time, in New York at the same hotel and we were to be at the hotel at 6PM so that the next morning we could leave early in the morning. I was third to arrive and Sean was the last arriving at 8PM. It caused a short argument, but it was soon over. Our first stop was England. I was so happy to be traveling to such great places; the only bad part was we weren’t able to explore them. I also got a surprise that made me want to quit 4Score. I was on the plane and Lex came to me.

“You mind if I sit here?”

“No.”

“How’s everything, Eddie?”

“Things are well. Thanks for asking.”

“How was your break?”

“It was wonderful. I went to Connecticut to spend time with my parents.”

“Oh, Connecticut?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s weird; I thought your family lived in New York.”

“No, why would you think that Lex?”

“Because while we were on the American tour you seemed to make a lot of calls to New York. One number in particular”, he pulls out a paper and reads it, “2-1-2-5-5-5-1-3-3-4.”

“How did you know that?”

“Because you made some calls on the hotel phone. I had all the phones in your rooms tracked in every hotel.”

“Isn’t that invasion of privacy?”

“Not contractually, and you shouldn’t be worried. Some of your co-band members made some 1 800 calls, if you know what I mean. So, who is this person?”

“He’s a high school friend. I haven’t seen him in over a year. He’s the one who told me about the audition for Four-Leaf-Clover and encouraged me to go.”

“Is he your boyfriend?”

“No, nothing like that. Just a really close friend.”

“Well, try not to make so many calls to him.”

“I haven’t, I only made a couple. And if you’re worried about the hotel bill, I’ll pay for it. My cell phone hasn’t been working that well lately. That’s why I used it.”

“It’s not a big deal; just don’t call him as often. Remember you’re here for business, not to play catch up with old school pals. Other than that you’re doing a great job. Keep it up.” Lex leaves and goes back where he was sitting. Orlando watches Lex leave; then replaces him in the seat next to Edward,

“What happened? The look on Lex’s face while he was sitting next to you; I’ve never seen it before. What did you do?”

“I called a friend. He told me I made too many calls to Derek.”

“You’re kidding?”

“No, he said; remember you’re here for business, not to play catch up with old school pals.”

“Well, how many times did you call him?”

“Not many. That’s what I don’t understand; it was only a few times.”

“It’s nothing major; he’s just an all business and no fun type of guy.”

I soon got over the fact that Lex was stalking us. Our first performance was in London. I couldn’t believe that people from another country not only knew who I was, but liked me, and knew the words to songs that I sang. It was amazing to see this happening. After London we went to Italy, Spain, Ireland, Turkey, Russia, Germany, Poland, many other places, but the stop I remember the most was Paris, France. The concert was ten minutes away from starting and Sean was no where to be found.

Lex angrily asks, “Where the hell is he?”

Edward responds, “Lex, I don’t know. He didn’t return to the hotel with us.”

“Edward, I told you, you were supposed to keep an eye on him.”

“I know, but he wouldn’t listen to me. I told him that he wasn’t allowed, but he left anyways.”

“Well, you should have gone with him.”

“What so the both of us wouldn’t be here.”

“If you went with him there is no way he would not be here.”

“What makes you think that?”

“Because you are much more responsible than him. You would have at least called me to tell me where you were.”

“Maybe you’re right, but arguing is not going to solve anything. You’re not going to cancel are you?”

“No, you’ll have to do the show without him.”

“We can’t do that”, says Chris.

Orlando responds, “Who’s going to do his solos?”

Lex answers, “Chris you’ll do the first one, Eddie, will do the second one, and Orlando will do the third one. See problem solved.”

“What do we tell the audience”, asks Edward.

“Nothing, absolutely nothing you will go out there as normal, as if nothing is wrong; you will do the concert, the bows, and then go to the hotel, as normal. Understand?”

They each reluctantly agree to Lex’s plan. They stand by the curtains in preparation to start the show.

Edward wonders, “I don’t believe he’s not here. What if he’s hurt?”

“Eddie, I am sure everything is fine with him.”

“How do you know Chris?”

Orlando responds, “Eddie, we’re about to go on. You can’t have worry on your mind.

You'll have to wait until after the show to do that.”

So, the show started and the crowd was screaming in French. It was so cool to see people from France love us the way they did. There was about a ten minute musical introduction, so the whole time I was praying Sean would show up in that timing, but he didn't. We went on without him and started the show. Before we were finished with the first song, Sean ran on stage and started dancing. The crowd went wild as he entered the stage. It was enough time for him to start singing the second song, which he led, "There's Fire in My Heart." At that point I could breath. There was a sense of relaxation that came over me. There was an inner voice that said everything is alright. We finished the concert left the stage and went to our dressing rooms.

“Where the hell were you man”, asks Chris?

“I went walking around and got lost.”

They all laugh at him.

“How did you get lost”, asks Edward.

“It was easy, I didn't know where I was and no one spoke English.”

They laugh again.

“How did you finally find the place?”

“I just kept walking until I found someone who spoke English, well, broken English, but he helped me.”

“Did anyone recognize you”, asks Orlando?

“A couple of people did. It was pretty cool to be noticed in another country.”

“You know Lex is going to kill you, right”, says Edward.

“Lex can kiss my ass. Hey, I got here on time.”

Lex enters, “not enough time, besides it's not about being on time, it's about being early. Where were you?”

“I got lost.”

“How the hell did you get lost in a hotel?”

“I wasn’t in the hotel.”

“Exactly. Why weren’t you there?”

“I’m sick of sitting around a hotel. Why can’t we do something else other than work our asses off on stage and then sit in a boring hotel room? I want to explore the places I’m staying.”

“You’re not here to explore. You’re here.”

Sean cuts him off,

“Yeah, I know, we’re here to work.”

“Good, I’m glad you know that. Let this be your last time that you do this or I.”

Sean cuts him off again,

“Or what, what the hell are you going to do.”

“Don’t get smart with me Sean.”

“I already am smart.”

“Watch your tone, remember you’re not irreplaceable. I will kick you out of here faster than you can get lost.”

“Well, I’m sick of being controlled like a damn puppy on a leash. I’m sick of the damn restrictions you hold over us.”

“You didn’t have a problem when you signed the contracts.”

“That’s because I didn’t read them.”

“Oh, so who’s smart now?”

“Okay, I was stupid for not reading the contracts, but you don’t have to be such a damn stickler. It’s not like you own us.”

“See, that’s where you’re wrong Sean, I do own you. I own 4Score, which means I own you, I tell you what to do, how to do, why to do, when to do, where to, and who to do, and you smile and like it. Now you look, I don’t want to hear another fucking word out of your mouth. You’re this close to the unemployment line. Now get changed and get in the damn limo and go to the hotel.”

Lex walks away.

“He owns us”, replies Chris.

“He sure as hell acts like it”, replies Orlando.

Edward just sits there stunned and frightened.

“Are you okay, Eddie”, asks Orlando?

“Yeah, I’m fine.”

I never realized how Lex thought of us. We were property to him. I've had a different view of him ever since. After Europe we took another month break. By then our sophomore album was about to be released. It was three years and I hadn't written, called, or seen Derek. I went by his apartment as a surprise and he wasn't there. Then I called him and he sounded different. He told me that he had moved. I went to his new place and it was wonderful. He was co-owner of the restaurant and moved to a better place. I met his girlfriend. She's very pretty and nice and she asked me for an autograph. She was a little upset, because Derek never told her that he knew me. I didn't know what to talk about with him, for we had drifted a part. I was upset with myself for being so afraid of Lex. I had stopped communication with Derek, because of Lex. I spent the whole week with him and things got a little better. I thought we could just pick things up where we left off, but we couldn't. He had changed so much, or was it me? I wasn't sure, but we weren't the same friends as before. After the week we said goodbye and I told him I would try to write to him more. Our second album came out about two months after we returned and it was back to work. We did a short American tour and soon after we started our Asian tour. It was in China when things got worse with Sean and Lex, they just could not see eye to eye. Lex for the first time took us around China and we were able to explore. It was only for two hours, but it was better than sitting in a hotel room. The last place he took us to was a gift shop. Near the shop was a tattoo parlor and Sean wanted to go. Lex said no.

“We don't have time for you to get a tattoo. We must get back to the hotel.”

“Lex, come on. It won't be long.”

“Sean, the answer is no. Besides as a member of 4Score you can't degrade your body in anyway.”

“Who says, and it's not degrading my body.”

“The contract you signed says. Now, that's enough. Let's go.”

“No. I am sick of you controlling me. You're not my father.”

“Thank God for that.”

Orlando interrupts, “Sean, can we just go, why do you have to get it now anyways?”

“Shut up Orlando.”

“Sean, you’re making things harder for yourself and us”, says Edward.

“I think you should listen to your band mates. Come on, everyone in the limo.”

Chris walks up to Sean,

“Just get it later, you know, when he’s not around.”

“He’s always around.”

During that trip I shared a room with Sean. Before leaving for the concert I talked to him.

“Why do you keep arguing with Lex?”

“Because Lex is an asshole. I can’t do anything without him breathing down my neck.”

“He’s just trying to look out for us. He’s just doing what he thinks is best for the band, you know?”

“No, he’s doing what’s best for him. You know he gets paid before us. So he needs to make sure everything we do makes a lot of money so his ass can get paid. He doesn’t care about us. That’s why he has us locked away like some fairy tale princess. He wants to make sure his money making puppets don’t run away.”

“He’s just worried about us.”

“Wake up, Eddie; he’s trying to control us. Hell, he’s not trying, he is.”

“Okay, maybe he is a little controlling, but shouldn’t the fact that you want to be a part of this group be enough for you to just obey him?”

“No, I auditioned for this so that I could get away from my mother. And do you know why?”

“No, why?”

“Because she was too controlling. Everything I did was wrong for her. When I left I couldn’t have been happier, but Lex, he’s worst than my mother. I can’t take him anymore.”

“You’re not going to quit, are you?”

“No. I like 4Score too much to quit.”

“Then you have to stop doing whatever you want. Trust me I hate it just as much as you. Did you know Lex checks the phone calls we make in the hotels?”

“No. I didn’t know that. That bastard, that’s invasion of privacy.”

“Not contractually. I’m just as mad as you. One of my best friends is now estranged from me thanks to Lex, but sometimes you have to make sacrifices.”

“Maybe you’re right.”

“Besides, our contract ends soon. We can just ask him to change some things.”

“You actually think he is going to change?”

“If not, we could always get another manager. It’s just that right now, we are under contract and we can’t do anything until the contract expires.”

I was so sure that I could change things with the help of the other three, but things happened that were unexpected. After Asia we did a short tour in South America and then we were back in New York. We had a month vacation. I spent most of it in Connecticut and the rest in New York with Derek. It was weird being around him, he was like a stranger to me by then. Once the month was over we were in New York in the studio recording our next CD.

CHAPTER TWO

CHANGES

“Eddie, where is Sean?”

“Chris, I just got here, what makes you think I know?”

“I don’t know, I thought Lex appointed you his babysitter.”

“Not funny. He’s probably going to be late as usual.”

Lex enters the room,

“Hey, guys how was your break?”

They all respond to his question then Edward says,

“Lex, he’s not here.”

“Who?”

“Sean. Should we wait for him?”

“Oh, Sean’s not coming.”

“He actually called you this time? Asks Chris.

Lex’s phone rings and he answers it, “Hello, Lex Hart speaking.” “No problem come on up, we’re in studio 3B.”

He hangs up the phone,

“So, do you guys like the songs so far?”

“We’ve only heard two so far”, says Chris.

“Which ones?”

“*You Must Believe*, and *Cry No More*.”

“When are we going to be able to write our own songs”, asks Orlando?

“Why? Don’t you like the songs I provide for you?”

“Some of them, besides some of us are writers”, says Orlando.

After a couple of minutes of Lex and Orlando going back and forth two men walk in. Lex says,

“Oh, you’re finally here. Boys I want you to meet Ronald Smith he’s another producer, and to his right is Steven Elder; he’s going to be the new band member.”

“What do you mean”, asks Orlando?

“Yeah, Lex, it’s not going to make much since being called 4Score when there’s five of us now”, says Chris.

“No, there’s only four.”

“What about Sean”, asks Edward?

“Sean is not apart of the group anymore. That’s why he’s not here.”

“Did he quit”, asks Edward, “Did he quit without telling us?”

“No, I let him go. He was causing too many problems. So Steven will be taking his place. Introduce yourselves. Ben and Louis will be here soon to teach you guys the new songs. I have to go into a business meeting with Ronald. I’ll see you soon. And Steven, welcome to the group.”

Steven responds, “Thank you.”

I was completely shocked. I didn't know what to say, and it was difficult to talk to Steven. I know it wasn't his fault, but I couldn't stop thinking about Sean. As strange as the atmosphere felt we still introduced ourselves. Steve pretty much knew us from watching us. He told us that he's been to three of our concerts and how much of a pleasure it was to join the group. We talked for a bit before Ben and Louis showed up and taught us three new songs. It was hard getting used to Steven. It took me about three months to fully realize that Sean was not coming back. I kept in touch with Sean, but of course not for long. After Lex found out I had to stop talking to him. Our first concert with Steven was pretty cool; I must say it was nice not having to worry about whether or not everyone was going to be there. I think the fans were a little disappointed about Sean leaving, but they welcomed Steven. We toured America for a year and I thought that all the problems were gone, but I was wrong. As we toured Chris became the problem. We were backstage getting ready to do a concert when I overheard a conversation between Lex and Chris.

“Hey Chris, how's everything going?”

“Everything is fine Lex. What's up with you?”

“Nothing much. I came over here to talk to you.”

“About what?”

“I guess you forgot that I told you that I had people watching you guys.”

“No, I did not forget.”

“Oh, then maybe you thought that no one would see you sneaking out at night. Just because you use a backdoor doesn't mean no one can see you. I thought I would leave you alone thinking you would stop on your own, but apparently you haven't stopped.”

“What do you mean?”

“Ever since our first Europe tour, you've been sneaking out of the hotel. Where have you been going?”

“No where special. I just wanted to have something to talk about when I got back home. It's shameful to go out of the country and not have anything to show for it. Not many people

get to travel. They depend on the ones who do to tell them what the other land is like. So I just went to a couple of places to buy some little trinkets to bring back home. That's all, no big deal."

"No, it's not a big deal, but sneaking out to go to a bar is a big deal. Do you have a problem?"

"What do you mean?"

"A problem with alcohol. Why is it that you have to sneak away to get it?"

"Because you don't let us go anywhere."

"But why of all places to go you go to a bar?"

"Because by the time I can sneak out that's the only place that is still opened."

"Are you sure that's all it is?"

"Yes."

"Then this is what, I'm going to do. Starting tomorrow, no more restraints. You guys are free to do whatever you want, go where ever, be whatever, you're free."

"Seriously."

"Yes."

"That's great."

I couldn't believe my ears. The first thing I thought was why didn't he do that when Sean was here? However, it was nice to finally to be able to go out and explore the world, not just work the world. Our next stop was Colorado. We did two concerts there. Both times it was sold out. It was really fun and it was kind of weird because after being liberated I didn't know what to do except sit in a hotel room. Chris took us to near by bar. He sat at the bar for most of the day drinking. Orlando and I pretended to be other people. We wore disguises and if people asked if we were from 4Score we lied and said were look-a-likes. I don't know why we did that. I think it was boredom. We needed something to take our minds away from the stressful schedule of 4Score. Steve didn't come with us. He said he had family in the area and wanted to visit them. We left the place really late. When we got back Lex was upset. The next day he

gave us curfews. Steve came back even later than us. It was weird being an adult with a curfew, but I guess that's what happens when you sign a contract without reading it. And about the contracts, we were able to sign new ones, but they didn't change that much. We debated with Lex, but he only changed some things around, but for the most part things were the same. I hated signing it, but I didn't want to give up 4Score. During the tour, like always Lex worked us like crazy. This tour was actually the first time that we learned new songs for another album. Our next album we were releasing was our Christmas album. It was fun to work on our first Christmas album. We also shot the video for "Living My Dreams." We were supposed to do it in New York, but Lex worked it out where we did it while on tour. He figured since we weren't doing anything except hanging out in the hotel that we should work on the music video. The music video however was difficult to shoot, because Chris would show up late.

Lex stares at Edward, “Where is he?”

Edward responds, “I don’t know. You had me babysitting Sean, not Chris.”

“Is that supposed to be some kind of a joke, Eddie?”

“I don’t know. Why are we doing this anyway? Aren’t we supposed to shoot this video in New York?”

“Well, you’re not doing anything, but sitting in your rooms.”

“Because you won’t let us go anywhere.”

“That’s not true. Apparently Chris is somewhere.”

“Why don’t we start without him? We always did with Sean.”

“Eddie that is the last time you mention Sean’s name. You understand?”

“Yes, master.”

“Is he even coming”, asks Steve?

“Does he even know we have to be here”, adds Orlando, “This was last minute.”

“Yes, he knows, I told him”, says Lex, “and he will be here. Ah, speaking of the devil, look who decides to show up...late.”

“Sorry, Lex.”

“Where were you? Somewhere drinking you life away?”

“No.”

“Who are you kidding I can smell it on you.”

“Yes, I went to a bar, but that’s not where I was.”

“Then where were you?”

“Does it matter?”

“Yes it does, because you’re late. When I tell you to be somewhere at a set time I expect you to be there earlier than I said. And you know that.”

“I’m sorry, okay. It won’t happen again, I promise.”

“Oh, you bet. Don’t forget Chris, you’re not irreplaceable. Now go get your costume on for the shoot.”

Lex was always quick to remind people that they were not irreplaceable. And it was always in front of everyone; almost like he was trying to embarrass you into thinking you would be replaced. After the American tour we went to Europe again. It was better this time because we were allowed to roam the streets, not very long, but it was better than nothing. It was also a good time because I got to spend some time with Steve. I didn't realize how much we had in common until I really sat down and spoke with him. He and I went to a café in Italy. Chris went to a bar and Orlando staid at the hotel (he wasn't feeling well). We decided to walk the town and we stopped at a little café. We sat and ordered, well, he did, he knew how to speak Italian.

“L'inglese e la mia lingua madre, in modo da scusilo se dico male qualcosa. Posso mangiare un cappuccino e per pranzo un sommergibile del pollo di Caprese ed anche un'insalata dell casa con la preparazione italiana. E sta andando avere lo stesso. Grazie.”
The waiter walks away.

“Oh, my goodness, I didn't know you could speak Italian. I am truly amazed.”

“No, it's a bit rough, I'm sure the waiter had a little problems understanding me.”

“Well, I still say it was amazing. So, where did you learn Italian?”

“High school and college. I still take refresher classes. It's really nice to be here, because it's helping me to remember everything and to sharpen my Italian skills.”

“You're wonderful.”

“Well, we'll see how good I am by what the waiter brings us. If he brings what I ordered than I guess I'm not so bad after all.”

“Well, what did you order?”

“I ordered a cappuccino, a chicken sub, and also the house salad. I hope you like it too, because I ordered you the same thing.”

“Yeah, that sounds fine.” The waiter arrives with the cappuccinos.

“I guess your Italian is not as bad as you think.”

“I guess not.”

“Steven, I want to apologize to you. I wasn’t all that friendly to you when you first joined.”

“No need to apologize, I completely understand. Me being the new guy and all.”

“To be honest it wasn’t that. It was the surprise. We didn’t even know you were joining until we saw you in the studio. Lex didn’t even have the heart to discuss it with us. But why would he, to him we’re just property.”

The waiter comes with the salad. They both thank him.

Edward continues, “You know one day, backstage, he told us that he owned us. I felt like a slave or something.”

“Yeah, he can be very controlling sometimes. So, what happen with Sean? Why did he get kicked out?”

“Sean was a free spirit. He didn’t like to be bossed around. We always had to stay in our hotel rooms and he didn’t want to. He would leave and go places, sometimes he wouldn’t take the limo back to the hotel and Lex didn’t like it. He even showed up late to a couple of the performances. I guess Lex got sick of him. I just wish he would have told us first. Well, enough about Sean. So, how did it all happen? How did you get picked to be Sean’s replacement?”

“My agent called me. He told me about the audition. There were only five of us there.”

“You have an agent?”

“Yeah, I got one while I was in New York looking for a theater job.”

“You do theater too. Oh, I love theater. Well, I used to. I don’t have much time for it anymore.”

“Yeah, I was in a couple of regional plays and I was in the ensemble for three Broadway plays.”

“You’re kidding. Oh, I tried everything to be on Broadway, well, except get an agent. Maybe I should have tried that. I went from audition to audition and nothing. I got so frustrated that I quit. I moved back to Connecticut and worked for a graphic designs company. I did community theater on the side.”

“You’re into graphic design.”

“Yeah, it was my second major in college.”

“Get out. It was my major in college. What was your first major?”

“Theater. Did you major in theater?”

“No, I minored in it.” “That’s cool.” “So, how did you become apart of 4Score?”

“I auditioned. I wasn’t going to, but a friend of mine.”

At that moment I stopped to think about Derek. I hadn’t contacted him at all, in fact I momentarily forgot about him.

Steven responds, “Eddie.”

“What?” “What happened, you stopped talking.”

“Oh, nothing. I was just thinking about Derek. He was a great friend. He told me about the audition for the band. He even pushed me to go, I wasn’t going to go because at that point I was frustrated with auditions.” “

What happened? You’re not friends anymore?”

“I don’t know. We’ve become estranged. Lex wouldn’t allow me to make phone calls, and I haven’t had the time to write to him. We drifted apart. During our breaks I would visit him, but it felt like he didn’t want me around. I miss him.”

“Sorry to hear that.”

“Don’t be. Well, anyway I went to the auditions and made it. There were five auditions all together in a two day time period. It went from over a thousand men to just four. I was amazed that I made it.”

“Wow, one thousand.”

“Yep”, he looks at the waiter, “If these are the chicken subs coming, then your Italian is

not all that bad.”

The waiter approaches the table, “Two Caprese chicken subs, enjoy.”

Edward says, “Grazie, signore”,

Edward laughs at Steven, “Did you know he spoke English?”

“No, I feel kind of stupid.”

“Don’t feel stupid. You’re in Italy, there’s nothing wrong with speaking Italian.”

Edward continues to laugh.

Steven says, “You know, I was very happy to get this job, but I want to go back to theater.”

“I’m not even sure how I feel about theater anymore. Being around Lex has made me numb.”

“What do you think Lex would say if I asked him?”

“Ask him what?”

“If I could do a show or two?”

“I don’t know. It would have to fit into the schedule, you know.”

“Yeah, I guess so. I just really like theater. I don’t think I could stay away from it too long.”

“Well, the only way you’ll know what Lex will say is to ask him. Maybe he’ll surprise you and say yes. Hey, you never know.”

“Yeah, maybe you’re right.”

That same day Steven asked Lex. Lex told him not now, that it wasn't the right time. I didn't tell Steven, but in Lex's language that meant no. After lunch we walked some more and returned back to the hotel. We only had an hour to get ready because the limo was coming to get us. Chris was no where to be found. We got into the limo without him.

"I hope we don't have to go through the same things with Chris", says Orlando.

"No, I'm sure he has a valid reason for being late", says Edward.

Orlando continues sarcastically, "What? He got lost?"

We got to the center where the concert was and as always Lex was waiting for us.

"Where's Chris?"

Orlando answers, "We don't know, you know maybe if you spent more time with us instead of always going off to some producers meeting you would know where we were."

"Watch your mouth. Go inside and get ready."

Chris showed up thirty minutes late and there was something wrong with him.

"Chris, you're late", says Lex.

"Don't you think I know that? What happened? I was at the hotel at 6:15, I waited and waited and the limo never came. I had to catch a cab."

"That's because I told you to be ready at 6."

"You lying bastard. You told me 6:30. You said Chris make sure by 6:30 you're ready because the limo will be ready to pick you up."

"Chris you must be hallucinating. I specifically said 6-o-clock. It's always 6-o-clock."

"I know, that's why I was confused when you said 6:30."

"I never said 6:30."

"You did so. You're doing this because you don't like me. You're trying to ruin me, aren't you?"

"Chris, what's wrong with you", asks Orlando.

"Shut up, Edward."

Edward says, "I didn't say anything."

“You did to; you just said there was something wrong with me.”

“I did not.”

“He did not”, says Orlando, “I did. And I didn’t say there was something wrong, I asked you if there was.”

“Shut up, everyone just shut up. You’re all after me aren’t you?”

“Lex, he can’t go out there like this”, says Edward.

“What’s wrong with him”, asks Steven?

“There is nothing wrong with me and I am going out there. Lex is just trying to ruin me. I know he is.”

Chris went on stage with us for the first act, but wasn't feeling well and had to sit out for the second act. I wasn't sure what was wrong with him, but I knew there was something wrong. We traveled for a little longer before returning to New York to record the next album. After spending some time in New York and at Derek's, which was weird, we left for another Asian tour. We were there for some time when we ran into Sean. He was on tour as well. He had a hit single out, "Love Me Baby." I think Lex was upset that Sean was able to become a successful solo artist. I was happy for him. I barely got to speak with him thanks to Lex. One thing that stands out the most about this tour was the concert in Singapore. Chris showed up fifteen minutes late, which really upset Lex. We started the concert on time though, and everything started okay. During the second act I was watching Chris and I realized that there was something wrong with him. I looked around to see if anyone else notice, but I don't think anyone did. It wasn't very long after when Chris passed out on stage. We had to stop the concert and rushed him to the hospital. The next day Lex sent him back to New York where he staid in a hospital. Lex cancelled the rest of the tour and we went back home. Lex wouldn't allow us to visit Chris. All I know is when Lex called us back for rehearsals for a performance we would be doing on a television show, Chris wasn't there. I knew in my heart that Chris was out of the group, but I was in denial. I kept saying Chris, will be here, Chris will be here. About ten minutes after I got to the rehearsal hall Ronald was there with another boy. That's when I knew for sure that Chris was gone.

CHAPTER THREE

MORE CHANGES

“Boys let’s gather together”, Lex says, “As you know this is Ronald and to his right is Cyril Patel. He will be taking Chris’ place.”

I didn’t find out until I read the paper the next day that Chris had almost died of a drug overdose. All those times he snuck out and was going crazy he was high. I just thought he was drinking too much, but it was more than that. He was in rehabilitation and because it was a long process Lex had to hire someone else. Before leaving New York I went to visit Derek for the last time. Things got heated and I haven’t been able to talk to him since.

Derek opens the door to his apartment. Edward smiles,

“I thought I’d surprise you.”

“Come in. It’s good to see you. I read about Chris.”

“Yeah, I just read about him. Lex wouldn’t even tell us. So how have you been? I’ve missed you?”

“I’m doing well. So why are you here?”

“We had to cancel the rest of the Asia tour. We had another rehearsal here so I figured I’d come by and say hello.”

“I thought you had forgotten about me.”

“No, of course not. I just haven’t had the time and Lex doesn’t want us doing much.”

“Do you know how long it’s been since I’ve seen you last?”

“I don’t know two maybe three years. I’ve been busy, Lex keeps us busy.”

“So why don’t you quit?”

“Because I like being in 4Score. I love performing, you know that.”

“I just don’t understand why you want our friendship to continue? You’re never around and you can’t contact me, so what’s the point?”

“Because you’re a really good friend.”

“We don’t talk, we don’t see each other, and you don’t even write to me anymore. What,

has Lex stopped you from writing too?”

“No, but I’m always busy. I try, Derek, I try to contact you, when I can I do, and when I can’t I don’t.”

“I thought you understood that.”

“I thought I did too. I thought I understood you. You’ve changed.”

“I didn’t change; you’re the one that changed. I came here because I’ve missed you. I could have gone anywhere else, but I came here.”

“For what, so you can say goodbye in ten minutes and not see me for another three years. You let fame get the best of you.”

“You’re not jealous, are you?”

“No. How dare you accuse me of jealousy?”

“Then what are you crying about. I am doing everything I can to see you, to call you, to write you, but I’m just too busy.”

“Well, then how can I be a good friend if you’re too busy for me.”

“Because you were always there for me.”

“Well, I’m not now, so why are you still here?”

“Goodness, Derek, what the hell is wrong with you? You’re the one who told me to audition. It was your idea, why all of a sudden do you hate me for it?”

“I don’t hate you. Okay, I didn’t know that auditioning for 4Score would make you go away. I spend years not seeing you. By the time I see you there is nothing for me to say to you. All my memories of you have left me. And don’t try to act like you haven’t forgotten about me during your travels.”

“Never.”

“You’re lying.”

“Okay, maybe once, or twice. Derek, I’m away for long periods of time. It’s not my fault, Lex has us.”

Derek cuts him off, “I know already, Lex has you wrapped around his finger. You do

whatever he tells you to do including, forgetting your friends. Think about it Edward, a manager that doesn't want you calling your family and friends, that's not good. I would have quit the group a long time ago. Are you still that desperate? I mean you're famous now, I'm sure you could get a job on Broadway by now."

"I don't want that anymore. And why are you calling me Edward. Everyone who knows me calls me Eddie, you know that."

"Yeah, but I don't know you."

"Derek, how could you say that?"

"Edward, I don't know if you noticed, but Lex had made you into someone I don't know. And if you look hard enough, I don't think you know him either. It was nice seeing you again, but I don't think I can see you anymore. Our friendship was wonderful while it lasted, but I think it was for only a season. Our season together is over. There is no reason to cry over it. I have accepted it, now it's time for you to accept it."

"Derek, I don't want to lose you."

"You already have."

After he said that I just left. I didn't even say goodbye. At first I thought he was crazy, but I realized later in life that I did allow Lex to change me. And was I so desperate? Was I holding on because I thought 4Score was the only thing for me? I'm not sure, but it made me think about some things. After New York we went to Hollywood to film a movie. We only had a cameo role, but it was cool to be in a movie. Just like before it was difficult getting used to a new band mate, but as time moved on I got used to Cyril. It took me even longer though because I was afraid that as soon as I get used to anyone they'll be replaced. This time though was good, because we truly didn't have any problems. Everyone pretty much was on time and we didn't have anyone staying out past curfew. After Hollywood we went back to New York to release our new album. Once it was released we staid in the states and did some interviews, radio and TV shows, and introduced Cyril to everyone, before going on Tour again. This tour was different because Lex was allowing us more time to tour the places we went. I had more

freedom, but I didn't really use it, I couldn't stop thinking about Derek. I called him a couple of times, but he wouldn't answer. I also wrote to him asking for him to call me, but he never did. It took me a while to realize that our relationship had really ended. I spent most of this tour in the hotel rooms. When I did go out I spent time with Cyril. We didn't have much in common, but it was nice talking to him. He told me that Lex had hand picked him from a bar. He said he was working part time at a jazz type bar. He would sing with the house band. I thought that was pretty cool. I later found out from Lex that one of the many producers he works with told him about Cyril. It was nice to get to know Cyril, but I had started to miss Chris. I was hoping that he would come out of rehab soon so that I could see him, if Lex would allow it. After our first tour around America Lex gave us another break. I spent that time in Connecticut with my parents. They were so happy to see me, and I was happy to see them. I also got to see Bertha. I told her about my last conversation with Derek and she said she knew. She told me there was nothing to worry about. She explained to me that sometimes life works that way. The people, who you think will be in your life forever, are sometimes seasonal people. And no matter how much it hurts, you must move on. So, after spending time in Connecticut I finally had the strength to move on. We returned to New York and our first meeting with Lex was not so good.

“Where is he?”

“Lex calm down, I’m sure he’ll be here”, says Orlando.

“It’s not like him to be late”, says Steven.

Edward enters the room,

“I am so sorry for being late. I missed my train and I had to wait for the next one.”

“You couldn’t call me”, asks Lex?

“Sorry, my battery died, and I couldn’t plug it in.”

“Well, thank God, you’re here. I thought I was going to have to replace you. Now, let’s get to business. We’re starting another tour soon and we’re going to be learning some new dances and songs for the tour.”

“Lex.”

“Yes, Orlando.”

“You think we could chill with the tours for a minute. I’m getting sick of them.”

“Well, excuse me, Orlando, but I don’t care what you’re getting sick of.”

“Lex.”

“Yes, Eddie.”

“He’s kind of right. Being on tour has caused me to lose a dear friend, not to mention I barely get to see my family. And I’m sick of hotels, right about now. All we ever do is sit in hotel rooms, it’s so dreary.”

“That’s nice and all, but everything is set, I’m not changing anything. Any other problems? Okay, then let’s move on.”

“Lex.”

“Yes, Orlando.”

“When are we going to be able to sing our own songs? I’m sick of singing these songs people write for us. They’re getting corny.”

“They are pretty corny”, replies Cyril.

“Shut up, Cyril, you haven’t even been here long enough to say anything. Now, look you

ingrates. I work my ass off to make you the top boy group of all time, not only the top boy group, but the top band, and the top artist. The least you could do, is appreciate all I do for you.”

“What’s to appreciate? I feel like a slave”, replies Orlando.

“A slave, a slave! A slave doesn’t get to stay in five star hotels, a slave doesn’t get to travel the world, and a slave doesn’t get paid millions of dollars.”

“Who cares, what’s the point in having all of that and you can’t enjoy it because you’re too busy working”, says Orlando.

“He is right. We spend more time working than we do anything else. A five star hotel is nice, but what’s the point in traveling if we can’t tour the damn place. And what’s the point in making money you can’t spend because you’re too busy working.”

“Shut up, Eddie, no one asked you”, replies Lex, “So this is how you really feel? I work you like a slave, I jail you in hotels, and give you corny songs to sing. Is there anything else you want to tell me? What about you Steve, huh? You seem pretty quiet.”

Steve answers, “No, I’m fine.”

“I don’t care what you think about me or how I manage you. You do as I say or you pack your things and leave. Don’t forget, you’re not irreplaceable.”

I don’t understand why I staid in the group for so long. Lex was always mean that way. Yes, he had his nice days, but they were nothing compared to his mean days. I started to evaluate my life and see if quitting the band was something I should consider. As I was considering it I was interrupted by Steven.

“Eddie, can I talk to you?”

“Sure, what’s up Steve?”

“Well, I talked to Lex again about doing theater and he said no again.”

“It’s not, no, it’s just not now.”

“I’m not stupid, I’ve been around Lex long enough to know that means no.”

“Well, maybe it wasn’t meant to be.”

“I can’t accept that.”

There’s a pause between them before Steven continues, “I got in touch with my agent.”

“Oh, really, what happened?”

“He contacted some people and he got me an audition for *Kids, The Musical*.”

“Really, I was apart of the original cast, before it went to Broadway.”

“That’s cool.”

“So, are you going to go?”

“I want to, but I’m afraid.”

“Of what, rejection?”

“No, Lex. I’m afraid if he finds out he will be upset.”

“What makes you think he will find out?”

“Because he’s Lex. I’m surprised he hasn’t talked to me about calling my agent yet.”

“Well, you already troubled him into getting you the audition, you might as well go.”

“That’s the thing though, if I decide to go, I’m going to quit 4Score.”

“Why?”

“Because if I should make the audition, Lex will not allow me to do it, and I am not turning it down. I told you I liked theater too much to give it up. And I am not letting Lex control my life. Well, at least not forever.”

“But what if you don’t make it, what are you going to do then?”

“It doesn’t matter, I’ll just audition some more. I’ve been on Broadway before it shouldn’t be a problem.”

“Then do what you have to do. Why did you tell me this?”

“I wanted you to be the first to know. I know once I leave Lex won’t tell you guys anything. This way you’ll know the truth.”

It was two weeks later that Lex told us he had to fire Steven. He wouldn’t tell us why, but I wondered whether Steve quit or was fired. About three months later the news was announced that Steve would be starring in “Kids, The Musical”; I knew that he actually quit and Lex just

said he fired him to make himself look good. It was one week after Steve quit that we met Solomon Rosenberg. Again I had to take the time to get familiar with the new band mate. By that time Chris was out of rehab, but Lex still wouldn't allow us to see him. I called him a couple of times and got in trouble each time. Four months later Chris had a relapse and went back in. I blamed myself because I knew Chris needed someone to talk to, but I was too scared to reach out. It was crazy because I had turned into a slave controlled by Lex. I didn't realize how bad it was until the last visit with Derek, and it got worst as time went on. Our first tour with Solomon was in Europe. However, before we went to Europe we spent a month in talk shows introducing the new member. By the time we were in Europe, Steve was on Broadway. I read a couple of articles online about him. I was very happy for him. Germany was our last stop for that tour. We returned home for a short break before heading out to Asia. Once we returned I got sick. I told Lex to replace me, but instead he gave us a three month break. They were rumors about the band breaking up, but there were false at the time. I spent the three months in bed. I wasn't that sick, but I was exhausted. After having time to think I came to the conclusion that I couldn't do 4Score anymore. When we returned to New York for our first meeting in a long time, I told Orlando I was quitting. I figured since he was the only original member, excluding me, he should know before Lex.

“Okay, boys, like always I got some new songs for you.”

“Lex, can I talk to you in private?”

“What’s the matter, Eddie?”

“I rather not discuss it in public.”

“Why not? We have no secrets. Whatever you talk to me about you should be able to talk to your band mates about. Now, what is it?”

“I can’t do this anymore.”

“Do what?”

“4Score, it is too tiring.”

“You had a three month break. You want to another month?”

“No, I don’t want to do this anymore. I’ve become a completely different person; I don’t even know who I am anymore.”

“You’re Edward Washington. There, now you know. Let’s get started.”

“You don’t understand. I’ve lost my closest friend because of you.”

“What did I do?”

“All those damn restrictions and checking up on my phone calls. And having a bunch of babysitters every where we go. I mean, damn, Lex, we’re adults. We don’t need people watching our every move. Why don’t you trust us?”

“The same reason why I didn’t trust Sean, Chris, and Steve. I turned my back for a second and they stabbed me in the back. I did everything I did out of love. I wanted only the best for you. Why can’t you see that?”

“Why can’t you see that it caused so much pain? I can’t be your slave anymore.”

“Oh, here we go again with that slave stuff. Well, you know what, if you want to leave, leave. See if I care. Remember Eddie, you’re not.”

Edward interrupts, “I know, I’m not irreplaceable. How many times are you going to remind me? I haven’t forgotten. None of us has forgotten. But you make it so difficult to enjoy 4Score; none of us care whether or not you replace us.”

“You’re not here for fun, its business.”

“Well, if I can’t have fun, I don’t want to do it anymore.”

“Then you’re welcome to leave.”

Orlando responds, “If you’re letting him go, then I want to go too. I can’t stay here any longer either.”

“Orlando what are you doing”, asks Edward?

“If you don’t stay there’s no reason for me to stay either. I only staid this long because you staid. I always figured if you staid it must be worth staying, but if you’re going to leave, I can’t stay.”

“You can’t leave 4Score”, replies Lex.

“Why, am I not irreplaceable?”

“You’re not; I can replace you in a minute.”

“Then what’s the problem?”

“Go, just go. Both of you go. I don’t need you. Do you know how many boys out there would love to be in your shoes?”

“If they knew you, none”, replies Edward, “you are the nastiest, most selfish person I have ever encountered. I lost a friendship that I can never regain.”

“Oh, would you get over your stupid friend. He was too low for you anyways”, replies Lex.

“I hope you can find a replacement quick enough for your next tour.”

“You can’t leave, Eddie, you can’t leave. You signed a contract, remember.”

“Then sue me. Sue me for all I have, hell, kill me if you have to, but I can’t do this any longer.”

“Hell you might as well sue me too”, says Cyril. This band is nothing without Orlando and Edward.”

“Cyril, you do not have enough seniority to talk to me like that.”

“Lex, I can talk to you anyway I want.”

“You have anything to say, Solomon?”

“No, well, except, maybe, we should just call it done. I mean 4Score has been together for six years. And with three changes already I don’t think it could stand any longer if you add any more replacements. Just let it be. You can announce the break up next week sometime. We can have a good bye tour and that will be the end of it.”

“I’m not doing another tour”, replies Edward, “I’m done with 4Score. Lex good bye. Whatever you do it’s your choice, but I can’t stay any longer.” Edward walks to Orlando and gives him a hug, “I’m going to miss you, take care of yourself.” He then looks over to Solomon and Cyril, “Guys, it was nice meeting you, whatever happens, make sure you never put your work before your friends and family. Bye and good luck in all of your endeavors.”

I walked out after that I had not one clue of what was going to happen. The next week Lex announced that the band had broken up. It was a bitter sweet moment, but I will admit it was more sweet than bitter. The only thing I really missed was the band mates. We spent so much time together that we automatically became family. After quitting I took a break for two years, I went on hiatus. Sean made another solo album and Orlando made his first album. Chris got out of rehab and I was able to visit him this time. I pretty much spent most of my time with him, talking about his problems and what lead him to such destruction. He told me that he was sober for two years before joining 4Score and thought he would be okay. He thought doing something he loved would keep him from using, but with Lex treating us like slaves he relapsed. We talked about everything and he was well again. Steven continued to do Broadway. He was in two more shows. And Cyril and Solomon went with another record company and became a duo. They called themselves 2 out of 4. After two years of not seeing any of 4Score I decided to have a reunion party. I had contacted all six of them and told them that I wanted to see them. However, I never told them that I had invited 4Score, so, it was such a surprise for them. Orlando was the first to show“

Hey, Eddie, long time, no see. How are you?

“I’m doing well. Congratulations on your new CD.”

“Thank you. So, what have you been doing with yourself?”

“Nothing much. I took a much needed break.”

“I hear you.”

“I also have been visiting Chris.”

“Oh, how is he doing?”

“He’s doing well. He’s doing much better.”

The door bell rings. Edward happily opens the door.

“Hey, Steve, how are you.”

Orlando replies, “Steve, hey, what are you doing here?”

“Hey, Orlando, it’s so good to see you.”

They embrace, Steve continues,

“Hey, Eddie, you didn’t tell me Orlando would be here.”

“And he didn’t tell me you would be here either.”

Edward replies, “I thought I keep it a surprise.”

“Is anyone else coming”, asks Orlando?

Edward answers, “Anyone else like whom?”

“Anyone from 4Score.”

“Well, if you must know I invited everyone.”

“Everyone like whom”, asks Steve?

The doorbell rings again, Edward says,

“Orlando why don’t you open the door and see who it is.”

Orlando walks towards the door and opens it, “Chris!”

“Orlando, what are you doing here? Where’s Eddie?”

“I’m over here.”

“Oh, my gosh, I wasn’t aware Orlando would be here”, he notices Steve, “hey, how are

you?”

“I’m doing well. How are you feeling?”

“I’m feeling much better. Well, how do you like this? Eddie invites us over and doesn’t even let us know that each of one us is coming.”

“Don’t you guys like surprises”, asks Edward?

“Are there anymore”, asks Steve?

The doorbell rings again, Edward goes to the door, “Welcome, welcome, welcome.”

“Hi, Eddie, how are you?”

“I’m doing well, go right in the living room; there are a couple of surprises.”

They both walk in the room. Orlando says, “hey Solomon.”

“Hi.”

Edward says, “Okay, Solomon, this is Steve, and Chris, I believe your know Orlando.”

“Yes, I do”, he shakes Steve’s and Chris’ hand, “It’s nice to meet you both.”

“Same here”, says Chris.

Steve says, “It’s a pleasure to meet you too.”

The doorbell rings once again, Edward gets the door, “Hello, Cyril, thanks for coming.”

“No, problem.”

“Go straight to the living room just about everyone is here.”

“Who else did you invite? I wasn’t aware that anyone else was coming.” He walks in the living room and is surprised, “oh, my gosh, look at this.”

Edward continues, “Okay, Cyril, this is Chris, and, I think you know everyone else.”

“So, is this everyone”, asks Orlando?

Chris says, “No, Sean is missing”, mocking Lex, “where the hell is Sean? Did he get in the limo? You better watch it; I’ve got people watching you.”

They all laugh at Chris.

“That sounds familiar”, says Cyril.

The doorbell rings. They all look at Edward,

“Well, you know he’s always the last to arrive.”

Edward goes towards the door and opens it,

“You’re late.”

“Who are you, Lex?”

They embrace; Chris and Orlando walk towards the door,

Sean continues,

“What the hell, I don’t believe it. What are you two doing here?”

“I invited them.”

“And you didn’t tell me?”

“I didn’t tell anyone. Let’s go to the living room, there are some people I want you to meet.”

They walk to the living room.

“Okay, everyone this is Sean, that’s Steve, Cyril, and that’s Solomon. I believe you know the rest of us.”

“Yes, I do. So what is all of this?”

“I missed 4Score, I just wanted to see everyone again, that’s all. I decided to have a reunion. There’s food in the kitchen, and being that Orlando and I are the only one’s who knows everyone, the rest of can get to know each other.”

Everyone slowly, but surely started talking. I turned on some music, which helped the atmosphere. We talked and soon we were down memory lane.

“I think my favorite song was, *This Love*”, says Cyril.

Everyone agrees, Steven continues,

“My favorite was, *The Love We Shared*.”

“I hated that song”, says Chris.

“You know what song I really hated”, says Orlando, he walks over to the piano and sings, “*Music, it’s all I need to have fun, Real Music, Play those instruments*”, Chris joins in, “*Music,*

it's all I need to have fun, Real Music, bring on the instruments."

Orlando stops playing the piano and they all laugh.

After a couple of seconds Steven continues, *"I just came home from work, And I feel like a pile of dirt"*, Orlando continues to play while Steven sings, *"I'm tired, I'm tired, I need something to let my mind at ease, I need"*,

Cyril and Solomon join in, *"Music, it's all I need to have fun, Real Music, Play those instruments, Music, it's all I need to have fun, Real Music, bring on the instruments."*

Sean sings, *"Just stepped in the club and already being asked to dance, Those sad pick up lines just make me want to cry, I'm not here for alcohol"*,

Chris sings, *"I'm not here to talk to you"*,

Orlando sings, *"I'm not here to make a friend"*,

Eddie sings, *"I'm not here to pick you up I came for the"*, (they all sing), *"Music, it's all I need to have fun, Real Music, Play those instruments, Music, it's all I need to have fun, Real Music, bring on the instruments"*,

Eddie, *"I don't need your number"*,

Chris, *"I don't need any friends"*,

Sean, *"Don't have to cover charge"*,

Orlando, *"I don't have to drink"*,

Steven, *"When I need to party"*,

Cyril, *"All I need is"*,

Solomon, *"Music, it's all I need to have fun"*,

Everyone sings, *"Real Music, Play those instruments, Music, it's all I need to have fun, Real Music, bring on the instruments."*

After they finish singing they laugh with each other.

"That was a stupid song", says Chris.

Cyril says, "Lex always gave us the most sappy and corny songs."

"We should have written our own", says Solomon.

“Lex never allowed us to write our own songs”, says Orlando.

Sean says, “He never allowed us to do anything.”

“The one thing I learned about being in 4Score was how to make yourself have fun in a hotel room”, says Edward.”

“I learned that no matter what I did there was someone watching me”, says Chris.

“I learned the most valuable lesson”, says Sean, “That no matter what...I am not”,

They all say, “Irreplaceable.”

They all laugh then Edward continues,

“I still can’t believe that I staid with 4Score for six years.”

Chris says, “The seventh year he rested.”

They laugh at the comment, and then Solomon continues, “Did you hear about Lex?”

“What, is he dead?” Asks Sean.

“No”, replies Solomon, “He’s starting another band, an all girl band.”

“That’s funny, they’ll regret it”, says Orlando.

“What’s their band called?” Asks Cyril.

Solomon answers, “Sweet Honey.”

“That’s pretty cool”, says Edward.

Chris says, “Have you guys ever thought of a reunion tour?”

“Who would be in it, all of us or just four?” Asks Orlando.

“All of us, I guess.”

“We wouldn’t be able to do that”, says Sean.

“Why not?” Asks Cyril.

“Because Lex owns 4Score. He would sue us if we did that without his permission.”

“Maybe we could change the name”, says Edward, “Besides there’s seven of us now.”

“So are we really going to do a reunion”, asks Steven?

“We won’t be able to sing any of the songs. I’m sure Lex is going to fight that”, says Sean.

“Then we’ll write our own”, says Edward, “We’ll find a record company who will sign us and we’ll begin a new band, without Lex.”

“That sounds pretty cool”, says Cyril.

“So, what do you guys say? You want to do a reunion”, asks Chris?

“I guess”, says Solomon.

“Sure, why not”, responds, Orlando?

“I’m in”, says Steven.

“Do we all agree”, asks Chris?

They all agree with Chris.

Edward continues, “So, what do we call ourselves?”

We sat there for thirty minutes coming up with names. It wasn’t until Sean asked Orlando how he came up with the name 4Score that it came to him.

“Orlando, how did you think of 4Score? I remember you were the one who named us.”

“Well, I started by using our initials to make an acronym. I used every possibility. When I got to S.C.O.E. I sat there staring at it. I finally added an “r” to make score. It wasn’t until the next day when I was listening to the movie soundtrack of Hair that I came up with 4Score. I was listening to Abie Baby.”

“I love that song”, says Steven.

Edward begins to sing, “Four Score and seven years ago, our forefathers, brought forth.”

Chris interrupts, “That’s it.”

“What’s it”, responds Sean?

“Seven years ago. That can be our new name. There are seven of us. We were once 4Score and now we’re seven years ago.”

“I don’t know”, says Sean.

“I think it can work”, says Orlando.

“It makes sense, I think the fans will get it”, says Cyril.

“I think Lex will get it too”, says Solomon.

They pause at the last comment then they laugh.

“You know, at this point I don’t care what Lex does. I think we should do it”, says Edward, “Who’s in to becoming seven years ago?”

Edward stands and puts his hand out.

Solomon stands and does the same, “I’m in.”

Cyril and Steven stand and adds there hand to the circle.

“Seven years ago here I come”, says Orlando. He stands and adds his hand.

Chris stands and adds his hand.

They all look at Sean.

“What do you say, Sean”, says Edward?

“Well, I guess so, I’m in.” He stands and adds his hand.

Edward says, “Okay, on three everyone. One, two, three.” Everyone shouts Seven Years Ago.

After that we found a record company that was willing to sign us. We made one album and had three hit singles that hit the charts. Lex tried to sue us, but he soon dropped the case. We became close friends and continued to contact each other. Within three years we were all married. I attended everyone's wedding. Mine was last. Sean is now a successful solo artist who continues to record albums and tours. Chris is the founder and owner of The Christopher Wu Rehabilitation Center. He also wrote a book about his life and how he overcame addiction. Orlando is not only a solo artist, but he also writes and composes songs for major artists in the business. Steven is still acting on stage all over the country including Broadway. Cyril started his own pop/rock band called Rocking Cats. They do a mixture of pop, rock, and soul music. They're really good and have two number one hits. Solomon became a manager for the best-selling group, Kenny and the Flowers. He also became the new manager for Sweet Honey. They banded together to fire Lex and hire Solomon. Lex, after getting fired, started a five member boy band, Lexis. They have two hits at the moment and already went through one band member change. I guess they found out that they are not irreplaceable. As for me I auditioned for a Broadway show, "One Hundred Reasons Why I Love You", and am still a cast member. I'm very happy to be on the stage everyday. Life didn't exactly go the way that I planned it, but I am just glad that it is going. During the Christmas season I went to visit my parents in Connecticut. As for Derek and I we haven't talked since that day. I think about him every now and then, but I have finally let him go. I realized you go through life meeting people all the time. Some are lifetime people and some are seasonal. But through it all I have learned that no matter what happens in life you are not irreplaceable. :)

4Score By Casey Bell

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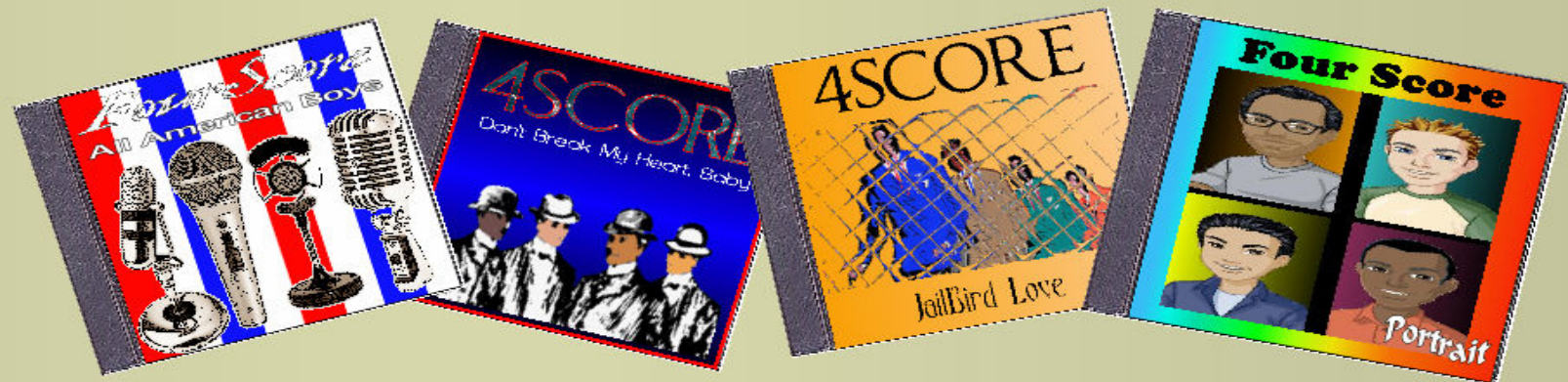
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About the Author:

Casey Bell shares many interesting stories and his creativity and imagination is greatly shown through his writings. *The Diary of Stephanie Dane, The House on Atticus Lane, and Maria's Troupe* are just some of his great and interesting stories. In all of his books, he takes us on a journey that one wishes would never end. Casey, also a playwright, has been writing since the age of twelve. Stay tuned for more exciting books from Casey Bell.

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