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BROKEN

Some things can never be fixed



Korin L. Dushayl

Author of *Shattered* and *Playing With Dolls*



Broken

Some things can never be fixed

Given a choice between slavery and ostracization, Jessica chooses to kneel naked before her department head so she can continue studying for her PhD in psychology. That decision takes her down a dark path to abuse, exploitation, and torment of both her body and her spirit.

Korin I. Dushayl "writes with authority and compassion about those who live within the lifestyle. Broken and Shattered explore issues including finding and initiating a submissive partner, informed consent, and the difference between dominating someone and exploiting their needs."

Elizabeth Coldwell
author, anthologist, magazine editor

Broken
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Chapter One

Jessica Richards picked her way through the wet grass, trying to keep the heels of her Louis Vuitton boots from sinking into the turf. She made her way to the gaping hole next to her mother's grave, clutching a silk handkerchief she could use to dab at her eyes and prevent tears from streaking her makeup. When she finally reached the graveside, the fake grass under the canopy allowed her to stop tiptoeing.

The moment she took her seat and crossed her long legs, a short, balding man in a cheap raincoat and worn, mud-spattered loafers spoke. "Dearly beloved, we gather today to mourn the passing of," he paused to check a piece of paper tucked into his prayer book. "Francis 'Frank' Richards, devoted husband and father." With that last word, he looked at Jessica with an expression he probably intended as sympathetic, but that set her teeth on edge. She had never seen the man before and he had no clue what kind of man her father had been.

For the past several days, she had endured condolences tinged with scorn from anyone who read the news reports about the well-known investor found by his housekeeper with a pistol in his hand and a bullet in his brain. Jessica shut out the Reverend's deep, sonorous voice, focusing instead on the leather scent of her trench coat, the softness of its cashmere lining against her skin, and the drip of the rain on the canvas tent above the plastic folding chairs.

When he finally finished droning on, Jessica stood and

stepped closer to the polished mahogany casket adorned with a spray of white lilies. She put her leather gloves in front of her lips, careful not to smudge her lipstick, and touched the casket. An errant tear trickled down her cheek and her handkerchief came away with a black smudge from her mascara.

Jessica pressed her lips together and stepped away. Walking back to the limousine, she could hear the creak of the gears as the grave diggers lowered the casket into the ground. The thunk as it came to rest at the bottom of the concrete vault reminded her that losing both her parents before her twenty-third birthday would define the rest of her life. She pressed the handkerchief below both eyes, hoping to avoid additional smears.

Before she climbed into the Town Car, Jessica looked around at the meager turnout. Only her father's attorney, Louis Foster, her friend Alyssa Volker, a few of her father's associates, and the housekeeper had braved the drizzly September morning to venture just north of Chicago to Graceland Cemetery. Dozens more had turned out for her mother's funeral a year ago. But Lenora Richards' life had ended in a fiery crash on the Edens Expressway, rather than at her own hand.

Except for Louis, everyone hurried to their own cars, sparing Jessica additional platitudes. Louis followed her into the Town Car and rode back to the house with her. Although he didn't speak, he held her gloved hand in both of his bare ones.

Just before the car pulled into the long, circular driveway of the house on Lake Shore Drive, Jessica swallowed hard. Although she had known him since childhood, she had no clue how to open a discussion about her finances with her father's attorney. She closed her eyes. That conversation, she supposed, could wait. Now, she needed to play hostess if anyone insisted on prolonging the funeral by visiting the house.

Fumbling in her Versace handbag, Jessica found her compact. To her dismay, despite her choice of a waterproof formula, her tears had created a ring of mascara around her green eyes. In addition, the rain had frizzed her normally straight black hair. Knowing she couldn't do anything about her hair without gel

and a dryer, she moistened her handkerchief with her tongue and tried to scrub some of the black mess from the pale skin under her dark lashes.

J

When the battered pickup truck finally pulled away, Jessica eased her blue Mercedes-Benz convertible into a metered spot in front of the dingy coffee shop on Halsted Street. She put the car in park, turned off the engine, and gripped the steering wheel until her hands stopped shaking. After ignoring her phone calls for the past three weeks, Louis had finally had his secretary summon Jessica to meet him in this horrid neighborhood. Jessica took a deep breath, climbed out of the car, and used the clicker to set the alarm.

She hesitated before pushing open the door to the coffee shop, wondering if the secretary had given her the wrong address. Then she saw Louis huddled in a booth at the back of the restaurant, his hands wrapped around a chipped coffee mug.

"Whatever possessed you to select this dump as a meeting place?" Jessica asked, sliding onto the plastic seat across the stained melamine table.

"Get used to it. This is the best you can afford these days." He practically spat the words out.

Jessica stared at Louis Foster's lined face, pale against black hair trimmed above his ears, with gray streaks at his temples. She had always thought of him as more like an uncle than her father's attorney, and his tone stung as much as his words confused her.

A busty, pink-uniformed waitress approached the table, a coffee pot in one hand. At least a size fourteen, Jessica thought with scorn.

"You want coffee, honey?"

"I don't suppose you can serve me a mocha?"

Louis turned the cup in front of Jessica over. "She'll have regular joe, just like me."

The waitress filled Jessica's cup. "Anything else?"

"Thanks, no," Louis said.

Jessica found a dish of plastic creamer containers next to the metal napkin holder under the grimy window. She emptied two into her cup and poured in sugar from the metal-topped dispenser. "You going to tell me what's going on?"

He waved his hand across the table. "Isn't it obvious? You're broke."

"Louis, please stop kidding around." Jessica took a sip and grimaced. "This stuff is awful."

"Unless you've got someone to buy you better coffee, you're going to have to learn to live with it. And without credit cards. I've had to cancel all the ones your father gave you as of this morning."

Jessica tightened her grip on the coffee cup until the heat penetrating the ceramic hurt her hand.

"Your father spoiled you rotten, despite my advice to let you learn how to survive on your own. Well, he and the money are gone — you have no one to give you credit cards or pay all your bills. You need to make your own car and insurance payments or sell it. You'll have to come up with rent, groceries. No one will take care of you anymore." Louis stared at the liquid in his cup.

Jessica's looked inside her own coffee cup. It looked like a latte but tasted like dirt. Unable to comprehend his anger and bitterness toward her, she tried to at least make sense of Louis' words. "How am I supposed to pay my rent? I've got at least five more years of graduate school before I can expect any kind of income. My father promised to pay for my education. I could see him setting up a trust to make sure I finished school, but surely he made allowances for living expenses as well?"

Louis looked up at her. Dark shadows rimmed his brown eyes. "Your parents already paid for four years of college and carried you for the past three years of graduate school. With what they've shelled out already, you'd think you could get

some kind of job. There's no trust fund. If you want to continue graduate school, you'll have to figure out how to pay the tuition. You're busted."

"You keep saying that. What do you mean?" Jessica lifted the cup to her lips, sniffed it, and set it back down. Louis seemed angry at her and she had no idea why.

"You do know why your father ate his own gun?"

"He finally succumbed to grief for my mother."

Louis snorted. "Surely you get some exposure to the outside world from your hallowed academic halls. Haven't you paid any attention to what's going on in the stock market?"

Jessica shook her head. Her father had repeatedly told her to concentrate on her studies and not worry about money — that he would always take care of her. She had never held a job, written a check, or filled out a credit card application.

"Well, I'll make it simple then: he lost everything. All the volatile high tech stock he invested in tanked." Louis picked up his cup, drained it, and plunked it down on the table. "You're destitute." The cold, unemotional way he spoke those words punched Jessica in the gut. She almost wanted the anger back. "The house is on the market, but with real estate prices where they are and all the stuff your parents added that no one will pay for, you'll be lucky to get enough to pay off the mortgage."

Jessica blinked rapidly to keep her tears at bay. "But what about the money from Mom's estate?"

"Gone. All you've inherited is debt."

"How could you let this happen? My father promised to support me while I worked on my PhD. I'm having a hard enough time with the course work and my thesis as it is — I'll never make it if I have to get a job."

Louis shrugged. "Then I guess you'll have to quit." He sighed and his voice softened. "Look, Jessica, I didn't let this happen. I've been struggling for the past three weeks trying to figure out where all the money went. I can't even find enough to pay off your father's debts. And, given the state of his affairs, I've essentially been working for free." He ran his fingers through

his hair. "I warned him about ..." He shook his head as if trying to clear his head. "Doesn't matter now."

Jessica stared at him, afraid that if she tried to speak she would burst into tears.

"Sorry, hon." Louis reached across the table and patted Jessica's hand. "I know this is hard for you to accept, that's why I dragged you down here so the reality would sink in. You need to understand sooner, rather than later, the gravity of your financial situation or you're just going to get yourself in a world of trouble. I've tried to straighten out the mess your father left, but I just can't afford to help you anymore."

Louis slid out of the booth, stood, and tossed three one dollar bills on the table. "Coffee's on me, but you're on your own now. Gotta go." He walked out the front door before Jessica could decide if she wanted him to come back.

The waitress stepped up to the table with the coffee pot in her hand. "Ya want a refill, sugar?" She grabbed the money and stuck it in the pocket of her apron.

Jessica didn't look up. The waitress represented everything she didn't want in her life: double-digit dress size, cheap clothing, menial job, no education. "No, thanks." She waited until the waitress' white sneakers disappeared from view, put her elbows on the table, and buried her face in her hands. Her shoulders shook, but she managed, except when she gasped for air, to keep her sobs silent.

J

Jessica unlocked the mailbox in the foyer of her apartment and pulled out envelope after envelope. They all had yellow stickers with her address printed on them plastered over the plastic windows showing the address of the now-empty house on Lake Shore Drive. She had gotten out of the habit of checking her mailbox regularly, since all of the bills went to her father and most of the rest of her mail consisted of credit card offers and flyers

from nearby stores. I bet no one will offer me credit cards now.

Once inside her apartment, she sat down at her desk and stared at the pile of envelopes. Hands shaking, she reached for the Samurai sword letter opener and sliced through the top of the first one. Her three-hundred-eighty-five-a-month car payment, ten days late, required an additional fifty-dollar penalty. Monthly insurance premiums for the car cost a hundred-and-forty dollars. Those two payments alone were almost as much as her rent.

Jessica dropped the letter opener on the pile of unopened envelopes and rested her chin on her open palms. The pile included bills for telephone, cell, electricity, cable television, Internet, and credit cards. She had no idea how much her tuition payments were or if they had been paid for this term. Those bills also had always gone directly to her father.

She picked up the late notice for her car payment. If she sold the car for enough to pay off the loan, she would eliminate that payment as well as insurance, gasoline, and parking costs. Jessica slid the pile of bills into a flat row and picked out the American Express and Visa envelopes. Without money to spend downtown or out in Schaumburg at the mall, would it really matter if she didn't have transportation? She set those two envelopes, unopened, on top of the bill from the insurance company.

Rifling through the bills from the utility companies, she added the phone bill to the pile of suddenly unnecessary expenses. She would rather give that up than her cell. The cable television bill got added to the I-can-live-without-it pile. The bill for broadband Internet stayed with the electric and cell phone envelopes — giving that up would make research more difficult. One by one, she opened the bills and entered the amounts into a spreadsheet on her computer.

Even with all her sacrifices — giving up car, telephone, cable, and shopping — Jessica didn't see how she could manage on less than eight hundred a month plus whatever she needed for tuition and books. One elbow on the black lacquered desktop, she leaned her forehead on the heel of her palm and stared at

the computer screen. She would have to work full-time to earn enough to cover basic living expenses and tuition. "How the hell am I supposed to find time to keep up with school if I have to put in forty hours a week at some menial job?" Neither the computer nor the stack of bills offered an answer.

A tear rolled down her cheek, and Jessica caught it with the back of her hand. Her father's death threatened to destroy everything she had worked so hard on for the past three years. With a doctorate in psychology, she planned to make a name for herself in academic circles, doing cutting edge research on depression.

Jessica let loose a string of expletives and immediately covered her mouth, grateful no one could hear her cursing her father for not making more sensible investments. She closed her eyes, remembering when he quit his job to concentrate on day trading. She would come home from school to hear him brag about making thousands of dollars in the stock market in a single day. Her weekends at home invariably led to shopping excursions with her mother. Reveling in their new luxurious lifestyle, Lenora introduced Jessica to designer fashion, high-end furniture, exotic foods and more.

Pushing away from her desk and her memories, Jessica looked around at the black leather sofa and chairs, the carved, lacquered tables, brass lamps, and Bose sound system. She had acquired most of the hand-carved, Asian-style furniture since her mother missed a curve at a hundred and sixty miles an hour and crashed her new Ferrari into a concrete wall. The high-end furniture, designer shoes, and new jewelry hadn't closed the hole in Jessica's life that her mother left behind. Still, though they provided no solace for her grief, she had become rather accustomed to luxuries. And even if she readjusted to a more plebeian lifestyle, she still had no way of supporting herself.

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About the Author

As a FemDom, I.G. Frederick knows first hand the beauty of symbiotic D/s relationships filled with love. As an observer she sees the many ways BDSM turns ugly. She writes about abusive and tragic interactions as Korin I. Dushayl.



I.G. Frederick trades words for cash, specializing in erotic and transgressive fiction and poetry since 2001. Her erotic short stories appeared in *Hustler Fantasies*, *Forum*, *Foreplay*, and *Desire Presents*, as well as elec-

tronic, audio, and print anthologies. Her novels receive high praise from readers, critics, and other authors.

Ms. Frederick, owns the man she adores who although dominant in the rest of his life, demonstrates his love by serving as her submissive.

<http://transgressivewriter.com>



Other novels by Korin L. Dushayl include:

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