

## Excerpt from Chapter 1

When Karla was nearly six, I met Michael Rosen, and we were married about a year later. I'll never forget dancing with Karla at our wedding to the song "Because You Loved Me." My eyes and Karla's never left one another. Not long after, with Rick's permission, we changed Karla's name to Karla Ann Asch-Rosen as a way to help unite our new family.

About a year after having our first son, Brandon, Michael and I decided in 1999 to move about 30 miles northeast to Chino Hills, a newer community where we would be able to have a bigger home for our growing family. Karla started fourth grade there and, as the "new kid," was worried she wouldn't make friends. How wrong she was! Karla's outgoing personality seemed to always be a magnet for attention; people would often say her infectious smile lit up the room.

A year later, in 2000, I gave birth to another son, Cole. Karla was a proud big sister, and was a huge help to me as I took care of a newborn and a toddler.

As she grew, Karla showed a passion for soccer, and Michael even coached her team for several seasons. We spent many weekends watching her travel team play, and traveled as far as Hawaii for a tournament. (Her nickname on the field was "Speedy.") Though Karla was petite at just 5-foot-1, she was a strong athlete, and we loved watching her on the field.

When it came to her dads, Karla seemed to have the best of both worlds. When she was with Rick, there was affection, fun, and laughter. And while she and Michael were close, Karla often complained that he was too strict. But she knew that she could always count on Michael, who was there for every school conference and performance. Still, when Karla didn't like the way things were going at home, she could always go running to Rick ... and she did.

Karla and I had a great relationship. We somehow balanced the complicated mother-daughter dynamics with being best friends. Of course, by the time she hit 14, we were both learning to navigate the turbulence of the teenage years. In eighth grade, she was on the junior high dance team and was school vice president. Her grades began to slip and she was putting time with friends above her studies. There were the mood swings, the hormones—and every other stereotypical symptom that girls her age experience.

And then there were the headaches.