

Andrea Rains Waggener fiction excerpt describing character

It was a distraction. That's what I do. When there's something I need to face, I'm the master of finding other things to think about or focus on so I don't have to face it. I usually do this until pressure builds up inside me to the point that I feel compelled to do what I need to do. At that point, I generally throw a little tantrum, which consists of swearing and stomping around in protest of the unfairness of it all. Then I allow my more adult side to take over, and I get whatever needs doing done.

At least, that used to be what I did. For two years, I'd been avoiding doing anything at all. Oh sure, I worked at the Stop 'N Get. I puttered at this and that in my off time. But big action was in my past. I was done with it.

Or so I thought.

Before that day, I didn't think of myself as courageous. Out there, sure. But not brave.

I have an "L" tattooed on my forehead. I had it done after I failed at so many things I figured "Loser" was the only title I'd ever hold. But it's a tiny "L." It's located next to a large freckle, and it kind of blends in. You have to seriously invade my personal space to see it. If I was gutsy, the L would extend from the what would have been the silver and black streaks at my hairline if I wasn't dedicated to changing my hair color on a regular basis to my thinning but still arched brows above blue eyes people routinely describe as lasers. Pietro, whose addiction to Tootsie Pops and lack of money to fund it turned him into a candy klepto, says my eyes are so scary they have permanently cured him of his criminal tendencies ... at least at the Stop N' Get.

My name is Cairn. It used to be Karen, but my new best friend, Sylvie, renamed me. She says I'm too weird to have a normal name, and "cairn" fits me because I am as stubborn as a pile

of stones, and I am a walking memorial. By this, she means that I cling too much to the past ... she's right, but even if she wasn't, I wouldn't argue with her. Sylvie is 6' 2" tall, and she spends 13 hours and 11 minutes a week lifting weights ("Any less would be insufficient, and any more would be superfluous").

"So, Cairn," you're probably saying, "are you going to get on with your story?"

I suppose I've distracted myself long enough.