

Same Time Next Year

Elisa Adams

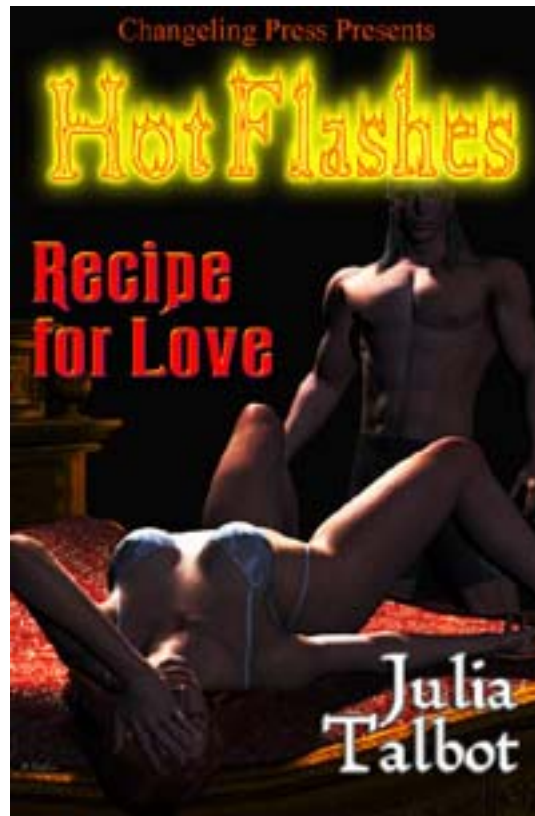
**All rights reserved.
Copyright ©2005 Elisa Adams**

No part of this e-book may be reproduced or shared by any electronic or mechanical means, including but not limited to printing, file sharing, and email, without prior written permission from Changeling Press LLC.

**ISBN (10) 1-59596-344-8
ISBN (13) 978-1-59596-344-4
Formats Available:
HTML, Adobe PDF,
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader**

**Publisher:
Changeling Press LLC
PO Box 1561
Shepherdstown, WV 25443-1561
www.ChangelingPress.com**

**Editor: Connie Alberts
Cover Artist: Bryan Keller**



This e-book file contains sexually explicit scenes and adult language which some may find offensive and which is not appropriate for a young audience. Changeling Press E-Books are for sale to adults, only, as defined by the laws of the country in which you made your purchase. Please store your files wisely, where they cannot be accessed by under-aged readers.

Chapter 1

Stepping through the doorway should have been like stepping back in time, but instead, the walk over the threshold jarred Cayden's whole body and set his every nerve on edge. Music blared over tinny speakers and smoke filled the interior of the room, making it difficult to navigate his way to the bar. His senses on overload, he pushed through the throng of partiers with beer mugs clutched in their hands, singing off-key holiday tunes. No one glanced his way. They were all too busy in their revelry to notice a stranger in their midst.

He sidled up to the bar and slid onto an empty stool, one of the few not occupied by someone drowning themselves in a drink. Years ago, such behavior would have disgusted him, but now he could barely muster the emotion. He had more important things on his mind. Things that had had him hard and aching all night.

His gaze searched the room until he found what he'd been looking for. Rather, *who* he'd been looking for. It had been a year since he'd seen her. A year since he'd touched her. It was far too long and just looking at her made a rush of excitement run through his body and settle in his cock. It hardened against his zipper and he swallowed down the urge to run to her. He had to wait, though it would nearly kill him.

She sat alone in a corner booth, her head bent, her black hair falling all around her in glossy waves. He knew how that hair felt. Soft as silk. His fingers itched to tangle themselves in it. She was so beautiful. Fragile and fair-skinned, and every inch of her belonged to him.

In a room full of garish red and green decorations and red-faced partygoers, she stood out like an ink stain on white paper. One of her hands clasped a full glass of amber liquid, swirling it around, while the other hand's fingers tapped on the tabletop.

An air of sadness surrounded her, something that reached him even from across the room. His heart thumped against his ribs. Her sadness was his fault, and he'd never be able to atone for what he'd done. But somehow she'd forgiven him, and for that he'd be eternally grateful. He owed her everything. *Everything*. Without thoughts of her to warm his many lonely nights until the next time he would see her again, he'd be lost.

She glanced up then, but not at him. Her deep, blue gaze trailed around the room and he took that moment to admire her delicate features and full, pink lips. Those lips had been the first thing that had drawn him to her, so long ago. Back when she'd belonged to someone else.

She wouldn't see him. Not yet. Not until he walked over to her table. But he wasn't quite ready for that. He wanted to take the opportunity to study her first, to drink in every detail. He wouldn't see her again until next December, so the images he captured in his mind would have to get him through yet another lonely year.

"What can I get for you?"

Cayden's gaze snapped back to the bar. The bartender, a short, balding man, stood on the other side of the mahogany wood.

"Vodka, please. On the rocks."

A few minutes later the bartender set the glass down in front of Cayden. "She's off limits, you know."

Cayden took a sip of the cold liquid before he answered. "I'm sorry. Who is?"

"The woman. The one over there in the corner, with the dark hair. The one you've been staring at." The man gestured with his chin. "She comes in here a few times a month, but more often this time of year. She orders the same thing every time and just sits there with it for hours. Never touches the drink, won't speak to anyone around here. She's not interested. In anything. Just thought I'd warn you before you waste your time."

"Thanks." He gave the man a polite nod and focused his attention back on the drink in front of him. It had no taste, at least not to him, but just holding the glass and pretending everything was normal offered some modicum of comfort.

"No problem. You look familiar. Have I seen you in here before?"

Cayden shook his head. "Probably not."

"Don't live around here, huh?"

"Not anymore." Cayden set the glass down on the small paper napkin in front of him, his gaze landing on the clock on the rear wall. Eleven fifty-nine. It was almost time. "I'm just passing through."

The bartender nodded. "We get a lot of those around here. This place is something of a tourist attraction. It has quite a history. It used to be a private residence, up until about ten years ago."

"Really?"

"Yeah. Back a hundred years ago or so, newlyweds moved in. But a year after they bought the house, they started having problems. Legend has it the husband was cheating on his wife, and she got back at him by having an affair with his brother. They found her body on the ground below a second story window, and the husband's brother shot dead in the bedroom. I don't know many of the details, but I've heard they never did find the husband."

Cayden gritted his teeth. So many times he'd heard the story, and in so many different forms. It seemed it got more sensational with each year that passed. "I heard the husband was killed by his wife's family."

The bartender blinked, shook his head before he spoke again. "Have you heard the story?"

A sigh escaped Cayden's lips. "Too many times to count." He would have said more, but the minute hand on the clock reached the twelve. Something tightened low in his gut. He closed his eyes for a brief second before opening them again.

It was time.

Without another word to the bartender, Cayden stood and walked across the room to where she waited. The walk felt like a dream, a dream he wished never to wake from.

When he stopped at her table, she glanced up. Finally, a smile turned up the corners of her lips, though shadows still remained behind her eyes. "Cayden. You came."

"Always, Lilith. I would never forget."

Chapter 2

Cayden held out his hand to Lilith, and she took it to help her stand. Once free from the bench she wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him close, her lips grazing his ear. "We have to hurry. We don't have much time."

She'd felt him as he approached and her body was ready. Her pussy was wet, her nipples pebbled and her stomach clenched. A year was too long without his touch, without his warmth and soft, heated words. She licked her lips before running the tip of her tongue down the side of his neck. "Please, Cayden. Let's find someplace to be alone. The night will be over too soon."

He took a step back. "I know."

One night every year. That was all they would ever have. She'd long ago learned to accept it. They both had, because there wasn't any other way.

"Come with me." Lilith took Cayden's hand and led him to the back of the bar.

They slipped unnoticed down a dark, narrow hallway and came to a flight of stairs. She glanced up and down the hallway to make sure they were alone -- a precaution they always took but never really needed to. No one saw them. They were too busy with their liquor and music to notice anything out of place.

They started up the stairs, but didn't make it very far. Her legs, weak with need, refused to walk up another step. Now alone, she couldn't stand waiting any longer. Lilith stopped and turned to him, her arms twining around his neck. She stood on the step above him, putting them at equal height. She pressed her lips to his, rubbing her body against him. The heat of his cock warmed her middle and she ground harder against it. She wanted him inside her. Now. Her pussy dampened even more at the thought.

"We should get upstairs. Find an empty room."

Cayden's protest sounded weak and she ignored it. If he really wanted a room, he would have picked her up in his arms and carried her. But he hadn't. She smiled. "I don't want a room. Don't want to wait another second."

"Lilith, not here. Not like this. I don't want to hurt you."

"You can't." She gave him no more time to protest, instead leaning in to crush her lips over his. Her feet wobbled on the narrow step and she clung tighter to Cayden. He'd always been her rock, even when things had seemed hopeless. He wouldn't let her fall now.

The kiss seemed to be all it took to break Cayden's control. He pushed her back against the wall, his fingers working to tug her skirt up until it rode her hips. Her nipples hardened even more against the soft material of her bra, her pussy muscles fluttering. She whimpered and writhed. He pushed aside her panties and stroked along her folds once, twice, before he drew his hand away.

Lilith cried out at the loss of contact, but Cayden quieted her with a fast, firm kiss. His tongue darted into her mouth to brush across hers, then he trailed his lips down the side of her throat until he reached her collarbone. He gave her a rakish smile, his fingers working to unbutton the tiny buttons holding the front of her top together. It didn't take long for him to lose patience -- Cayden had never been known for his control -- and he ripped at her top until buttons popped from the material and scattered across the stairwell around them.

"*Cayden.*" Her eyes widened in shock, but his actions tightened the knot of arousal in her belly. She fought the urge to touch herself, knowing if she waited the night would be so much better.

"Let me do this my way, love."

He leaned down and, pushing aside the demi-cups of her bra, brought his lips to her breasts. His tongue swirled over her nipple before he sucked it into the hot recesses of his mouth. She cried out and arched toward him, offering him more. Every one of her nerve endings tingled. Every cell in her body screamed for more of his touch. It would come. She knew he wouldn't hold anything back. But patience had long ago left her and

she wanted nothing more than to tear his clothes off and demand he thrust his hard cock into her waiting pussy.

He left her nipple and made his way to the other, leaving a path of hot, damp kisses in his wake. She used one hand to steady herself against the wall, and the other found his hair. She tangled her fingers in the dark, silky strands. How many nights had she waited for him? How many nights had she spent pacing the floorboards, waiting in the growing darkness, for Cayden to return?

She'd lost count long ago and it no longer mattered. Now the only thing she cared about was that he was here with her. They couldn't have forever. It wasn't meant to be. But they could have this night. Christmas Eve, once a year, when Cayden would be passing through town on his way home.

He raised his head and frowned at her. Concern showed in his warm green eyes. "You look sad. What's wrong?"

How could she explain to him what she didn't herself understand? "Nothing. I've missed you. That's all."

His frown turned into a sexy smile and he pressed a lingering kiss to her lips. "I've missed you, too. More than you'll ever understand. Will you let me take you upstairs now?"

Always the same questions, always the same answers. She shook her head. "I don't want to wait another second, Cayden. I'm more than ready for you."

He gave a short nod, his expression suddenly grave, before he stepped back long enough to free his cock from his pants. Seeing the hard length of him made her pussy muscles clench and her mouth run dry. It had been far too long.

She leaned in and nipped at his lip. "Fuck me, Cayden."

He laughed. "Such nasty language you've picked up, hanging around a place like this. What happened to my sweet, innocent Lilith?"

He didn't give her a chance to answer. Instead he kissed her, hard and fast, stealing the breath from her lungs. When he stepped back he knelt in front of her and

stripped the panties from her body. They landed on the wood floor at the bottom of the stairs.

"You are the most beautiful woman I've ever met." His tone was soft, reverent, as he looked up at her. "You always will be. If only..."

His voice trailed off, but she didn't need him to finish. They both understood. If things had been different, they would have been free to live a happy life together. But they'd both made mistakes and had been paying for them since. At least they had this short time with each other. If they hadn't been granted that, Lilith would have gone out of her mind long ago.

Cayden lifted her leg and placed it a few stairs up, exposing her sensitive flesh to his gaze. For a few seconds he only looked, his gaze filled with so much heat she could almost feel it touch her skin. But then he shifted forward and used his fingers to part her flesh. He blew a stream of air across the wet skin and she gasped.

"Do you like that?" he asked, a chuckle in his voice.

"You know I do. What are you waiting for?" She squirmed, the cool air washing over her breasts and her pussy and nearly driving her to the brink. If he didn't touch her soon, she'd explode.

"Nothing." Without another word, he buried his face in her pussy.

Chapter 3

Cayden's tongue stroked across her clit, swirling over the tender bud until Lilith felt like she'd come out of her skin. He knew just what to do, just where to touch her, to make her crazy. Then again, he'd had years of practice. He was the only man who'd ever bothered to learn her body as well as her mind, to put her needs before his own. Not that there had been many men in her life. Cayden was only the second.

He was also the last.

His tongue stabbed into her, and she tangled a hand in his hair to anchor herself in place. She could barely balance on the steps, but that only added to the intensity of the encounter. Thoughts of falling, thoughts of being caught stimulated her even more until her pussy throbbed and her clit ached and she was thrusting her hips toward him, silently begging for more. He gave it to her, bringing his thumb to play across her clit while he continued to stroke that warm, wet tongue deep into her.

Her belly constricted, her inner muscles tensing. She was close. Too close. It would take just one more touch in the right place to send her over the edge. Cayden knew that, too, and he held her back until the sensations had built into something she couldn't describe, couldn't control. She wanted him with an intensity she'd never felt. She gave his hair a sharp tug.

"Please, Cayden. Time is running short. I want you inside me."

He drew his tongue out of her and pressed his lips to her clit, chuckling against her skin. That was all it took to send her over the edge into a soul-shattering orgasm. Tremors racked her body, pulled her inner muscles tight. She flattened both hands against the wall to keep from toppling down the stairs, but it was unnecessary. Cayden's hands gripped her hips, holding her in place against him while he continued to lave her quivering flesh with the tip of his wicked tongue.

What seemed like hours passed before he released her and stood, his gaze so hot it made her shiver. Her body, limp and pliant, stirred to life again.

He lifted one of her legs and placed it over his hip. His fingers found her clit and stroked across the hard bud, sending another shock of pleasure through her sated body. On the heels of such a powerful orgasm, it was almost too much to take. She whimpered.

"Are you sure you're ready for me?" he asked, his tone rough. The tip of his cock prodded her entrance.

"Yes. God, yes. *Always.*"

He needed no further urging. Holding her hips steady, he thrust his cock inside her, filling her with his warmth. He stilled, pressing his forehead against hers, his hot breath mingling with hers. She arched her hips toward him but he shook his head.

"Let me enjoy the feel of you surrounding me. Just for a little while."

"Okay." Her arms came around his neck and she held tight, never wanting to let go. She loved him. Always had, always would. Time and distance would never change that, even if it sometimes seemed like forever between his visits.

It wasn't long before his cock twitched inside her and he started to thrust. His lips grazed her cheek, her neck, before latching onto her earlobe. Cayden sucked at the tender flesh while his hips pistoned, anchoring Lilith to the wall behind her. He released her earlobe and she let her head drop back, a low ache starting in her belly. Their positions made it nearly impossible for her to keep up with his thrusts so she clung to him, enjoying every feeling, every sensation he evoked. She never felt alive unless she was with Cayden.

The tremors from her orgasm still raced through her body, tightening her pussy muscles around the length of his cock. Her bare breasts rubbed against the rough fabric of his shirt, spiraling her higher until she shattered and came apart in his arms. Her body bowed as the orgasm took her, her arms tightening around his neck. She leaned forward, letting the tremors wash over her, and pressed her lips into the side of his neck. With deep, jagged breaths she drank in his spicy, clean scent, intent on imbedding

it in her mind to keep with her on the many lonely, cold nights that faced her until next Christmas.

It wasn't long before Cayden stiffened, pressing her harder against the wall. Her name escaped his lips in a whispered plea as he emptied his hot seed inside her. He kissed her forehead and, after not nearly long enough, pulled out to step back.

"You're amazing." The sound was no more than a breath of air, but it reached her all the same. He started straightening her clothes.

Tears welled in her eyes. "So are you. I love you, Cayden."

"I love you, too."

"Lilith!" The voice broke through her happiness and jarred her back to reality. Urgency clenched her stomach and swelled her throat.

"He's here."

Cayden shook his head. "He's not. He isn't real."

She caught the desperation in his voice, something that echoed deep inside her. She knew his words were true, on some level, but it was too late. Past had begun to mix with present into a swirling mass of agony and betrayal. She ran up the stairs, clutching her dress to her chest.

Cayden's hand landed on her arm and she spun around.

"You must leave. If he finds you here, he'll kill us both."

"I can't leave you alone. Not like this."

"Cayden, please." Tears streamed down her face now, hot rivulets that scorched her cheeks. Jack always did have a mean temper. She could only imagine what he'd do if he found out what she'd done with Cayden. "You have to go. I won't put you in danger for my stupidity."

He took her hand and brushed a kiss across her knuckles. "I won't leave you. I love you too much. Don't ask me to abandon you. We'll face this together. Explain to him that we've fallen in love. He hasn't been faithful to you. We'll have to find a way to make him understand that he can't hold on to you forever. You belong with me, Lilith. I'll treat you like a queen."

He dropped her hand and she reached for him, needing his touch. But she only grasped air. He'd become transparent, an apparition of the man she'd always love. Her body, too, had begun to fade. It wouldn't be but a minute before they were separated again. She cried out, her heart aching. "Cayden, don't leave me!"

"I wish there was another way. I love you, Lilith. Always remember that. At least we have this one night every year. One night is better than an eternity alone."

Those were the last words she heard before he vanished and her world turned to black.

Chapter 4

Mickey walked into the bar and locked the door behind him. Christmas day and he should be spending it with his family. He would be, as soon as he picked up the present he'd bought for his wife. He'd left it in one of the upstairs rooms, knowing she'd search their house until she found it. Ally was like a kid this time of year. She could never wait to find out what he'd gotten her, so he'd started leaving it at the bar until Christmas Eve. Though he'd forgotten it last night. So he'd had to make a trip in very early this morning before she got out of bed.

Halfway up the stairs he noticed something small and shiny tucked into the corner of a step. He leaned down and picked it up, turning the round object over in his fingers. A black button. How did that get there? He put the object in his pocket and made his way to the room at the end of the hall where he'd left Ally's necklace.

The door creaked softly on its hinges as he opened it -- something he'd always meant to get fixed but had never gotten around to. Once inside the room, his gaze landed on a couple of black and white pictures hanging on the wall. Jack and Lilith Foster stared back at him from one frame, and Jack's brother Cayden from the other. He'd found the pictures in the attic not long after buying the old house to convert into a bar. Ally, thinking of the macabre history of the house and the fate of its inhabitants, had told him he should throw the pictures away, but he hadn't been able to bring himself to do it. The dead deserved respect.

Cayden Foster's picture drew his gaze and he frowned. The man looked so familiar, like someone he'd met before. Come to think of it, Lilith Foster's face had a ring of familiarity, too. He laughed and shook his head, dismissing the feelings. They'd been dead a hundred years. Yeah, the guy who'd come in and ordered a vodka looked a

little like Cayden Foster, but it had to be his mind playing tricks on him. Besides, Cayden Foster wasn't the ghost that supposedly haunted the bar.

So many people told stories about the ghost of Foster House -- a beautiful, pale woman with long dark hair and a wistful expression. Many swore they'd seen her pacing the floor or glancing out windows. Others claimed to have seen her sitting at a table in a dark corner of the bar, alone, never looking at or speaking to anyone. But Mickey didn't believe in any of that stuff.

A cool wind blew across the back of his neck and he shivered. A voice whispered something in his ear. He spun around, but no one was there.

Maybe Ally was right. He was working too late, not getting enough sleep. His mind had started fabricating things that weren't there. He grabbed the small, gold-wrapped package and left the room, shutting the door carefully behind him. If he was lucky, he'd be able to go home and get a few extra hours of sleep before he had to get up so the kids could open their presents.

He yawned as he walked down the stairs. Lack of sleep. That was the only explanation for what had happened upstairs. Everybody knew there was no such thing as ghosts.

The End

Elisa Adams

Born in Gloucester, Massachusetts, Elisa Adams has lived most of her life on the East Coast. Formerly a nursing assistant and phlebotomist, Elisa has enjoyed writing has been a longtime hobby. Now a full time writer, she lives on the New Hampshire border with her three children. Visit Elisa's website at www.elisaadams.com