

JOJO BROWN



LET ME SAY  
GOODBYE

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Let me say Goodbye  
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*To Mum and Dad...*

## *Chapter One*

I spotted him the moment I walked into the place. I knew he'd be there; it was Friday night and he always stopped in for a few drinks on Friday night.

The fine cut of his camel hair coat, where it laid across his wide, muscular shoulders whispered promises of strength and stability. The soft, thick material hung in warm inviting folds, he had it pushed back, a hand plunged deeply into the front pocket of the black pants, snuggling his thighs. The hand looked to have a life of its own. Like a small animal, burrowing deeply into the warmth of its bedding to hide from the coldness of the world. With the slightest detour to the left, his long fingers could easily rub against the hidden treasure lying in the depths of those trousers.

I watched the path of that hand's travels, feeling an odd sense of jealousy that they weren't

my fingers searching blindly within that darkness. I knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that I would take that detour with no second thoughts or hesitations. Just the idea of the touch, ignited a small flame in the pit of my stomach. I squeezed my thighs together, pressed the flat of my hand against my tummy and took a deep breath, just to hold myself back.

As I stood there watching, hoping to see a telltale movement across the front of his pants, his hidden hand ignored the temptation of the bulge so close by and instead delved to the bottom of the pocket. Finding the loose change gathered there, he began absently jingling it all together. The fingers opened and closed repeatedly, like a five-toothed metal-eating mouth. The unconscious motion spoke volumes of his disinterest in the conversation he was having with the man in the black trench coat beside him. He was bored, worried, or perhaps preoccupied. Whatever the cause, that simple act, one that I had witnessed many times, made him all the more attractive and sensual.

When his other hand rose, to lift the squat glass of amber liquid to his lips, I watched his profile. The same one I had seen so many times, I could close my eyes and describe each tiny little aspect of it. The chiselled features, backlit by the subdued lighting over the bar, drew me in like a magnet.

His high forehead, only just starting to hold the telling lines of the life he had lived, sat above two thick, dark twin arches that moved with his emotions as he spoke. His eyes, capable of being liquid pools of warm adoration or hard, black forged steel in anger, glistened and sparkled as they crinkled at the edges when his full lips pulled taut across his straight, white teeth in a heart-stopping smile. Those eyes shifted away from his companion to glance around the crowded room, searching for his quarry, but not finding it.

His chin, strong and smoothly shaven, held a slight cleft, which I knew would welcome the tip of my tongue into its crevice. The only perceivable flaw in his otherwise perfect features, only added to the perfection that my eyes feasted upon, the small bump and tiniest of scars on the bridge of his nose.

In my mind, I played out a scenario of boyish foolishness involving a swift moving bicycle, exuberant peers and a low-hanging branch. Would those childish eyes have filled with tears at the pain of a broken nose? I think not, not in front of his friends, at least. That moment of weakness would have been saved for the privacy of his room, where his comic book collection and well-hidden stuffed bear would have kept him company.

Making my way slowly through the constantly

moving masses of Friday night merry-makers, I drew closer to him with each soft step. No one stepped aside to clear a path for me to approach him sooner— there was no need, I wanted to take my time. No one stopped me along the way for small talk or pick-up lines. No one even noticed that I was there; they were all too busy trying to forget the week they'd just finished. Life in the urban jungle can sometimes be just as exhausting as hacking your way through the deepest tangles of the Congo.

I was glad that none of them bothered with me. I didn't want any distractions and I certainly didn't want anything drawing attention to me. I wanted to approach him in my own way, in my own time. I wanted to move in close, share the air that he was breathing, listen to his deep, sultry voice, smell the spiciness of his cologne, feel the warmth of his skin and make my presence known to him with the softest of touches.

I was close enough that the vibrations of his wonderful voice could wash over me when he turned. Dropping the change into the deep darkness of his pocket, his hand shot out to rise in greeting.

"There you are; I was beginning to think you'd gotten lost."

My mind scrambled for something coherent to say. How could he have known I was coming? I

was sure it would be a surprise. Had I made plans to meet him that I'd forgotten? No, that wasn't possible.

Her perfume damn near choked me as she wafted past, directly into his arms. His greeting had been for her. He'd been concerned for her, only her. He hadn't even noticed me standing right in front of him, he was so intent on her blatant sexuality.

As I stood there, rooted to the spot, I could hardly believe my eyes, let alone my ears.

"I'm so glad you could make it tonight. I've been looking forward to this all week," he told her softly, lowering his warm, soft lips onto hers. The sexual tension between the two of them seemed to make all space around them pulsate; it was almost too much for me. Her hand stroked down his chest as their lips parted; his hands, hidden beneath the length of her coat, yet obviously clenching the firmness of her ass as he pushed his hips forward, grinding the growing bulge trapped behind the thin material, was simply devastating.

When I heard her wispy voice, dripping with promises of the night, purring, "I can't wait, I'd been hoping you'd call soon," something deep inside me snapped. This could not be right. He was mine; he owned me, heart and soul. How could he be standing there, grinding against her of all people, my greatest enemy, and right out in



public too? Everyone could see what was going on, some were openly watching their antics; did he have no shame, no decency?

Opening my mouth in a scream that filled the air around us, sending glasses and bottles smashing to the floor, exploding light bulbs and shattering the long mirrored backslash behind the bar, I lunged at them. I wanted to rip every bleached strand of hair from her head. I had to gouge out those insipid watery blue eyes. I needed to tear those puffy, painted lips from her face. Her absolute destruction was the only thing that could stand a chance of calming my rage.

As my fingernails made contact with her face, it felt as though I had plunged my whole arm into the blast furnace of a metal foundry. Sliding through that searing, painful heat, like a hot knife through butter, my hand led the way into a headlong fall. Landing in a crumpled, startled heap on the other side of the bar, I shakily looked around.

Not a single shard of glass was to be seen anywhere. The mirror didn't even have a crack in it. The bitch still had all of her hated features firmly intact and he still looked down at her with arousal shining in his eyes.

Slamming my fist onto the sticky floor, I cried out in frustration. "What the hell is going on here?"

## *Chapter Two*

**T**he bartender suddenly started to glow beside me. It was like a laser cutting through steel, then there were two of him; exact replicas, down to the brown stain on the front of his shirt. One carried on serving drinks, taking orders and listening to the gossip from the patrons. The other knelt in front of me, smiling warmly.

“You were given the right to come back and say goodbye. Not to interfere or change the course of events. Just to let go.”

“What are you talking about?” I screamed into his smiling face. “I have no intention of letting go, that’s my husband with his tongue down that floozy’s throat. Why her? I hate her. She was always rubbing her over-inflated tits against him, trying to convince him to cheat on me. Clearly she finally got to him, even though he told me that there was no way he would go for her type.

“There is no way I’m just going to let this go.

He has a whole lot of explaining to do, starting with why he's with her. Also, who's that guy they're talking to and where did he get those clothes? I've never seen those before, I usually buy his clothes. I want answers and I want them right now."

Making a move to get to my feet and confront them, the 'barman' held me down. "Grace, you have to relax, try to think for a minute. It's been three years, but you haven't adjusted at all; you've been so depressed and withdrawn the whole time. It was an accident; you weren't ready, it was too soon. There was so much left unsaid, unfinished. So the council made the decision to allow you to come back and say goodbye. The hope was that you would then be ready to move on."

"Move on to what? I don't know what you're talking about. I just want to be with Simon."

"Gracie, think back. Think to the last conscious memory you have. Remember it, Gracie."

Looking up in time to see Simon and the bitch turning to leave, I got to my feet in a rush. "I'll think later... for now I'm following."

Taking off in a sprint, intending to skirt the end of the bar and force my way through the sea of humanity, I screamed again. Spinning around to face the 'barman', I was instead confronted with a clean white wall. A familiar wall, a wall that I had personally rolled two smooth coats of paint onto.

The bar was gone. In place of the dark paneling, the blue haze of lingering cigarette smoke and odour of stale beer, I was standing in front of my own bedroom wall. My heart was pounding, rushing the blood through my ears. My legs had turned to jelly, unable to support me as I reached out to touch the solidity of that wall. I slumped to the deep blue softness of the carpet, dragging great gulps of air into my burning lungs, in an attempt to still my spinning head.

As the room slowed in its roller coaster imitation, sounds began to filter through to me. Sounds that seemed so familiar, yet somehow so foreign. Water was running in the adjoining bathroom, the shower... my shower. Someone was in the shower that Simon and I had worked so hard on. The shower that we'd made a special trip to pick up, two months after buying this hundred-year-old house. He and I had spent a weekend installing it then celebrated with champagne and a shared use of the multiple spray nozzles, as soon as it was ready for use.

Another sound found its way through the fog and into my tortured brain, Simon's voice. He was talking to the shower-user. He was calling them 'sweetheart'. That's what he called me! I had to find out who was in there with him. I had to know whom he was calling sweetheart.

Crossing the room in a flash, I went through the

door into the pale blue room. I don't mean that I went through the doorway; I actually went through the door itself. Don't ask me how, but I felt and saw the layers of paint, the flaky wisps of wood and the dark abyss at the hollow centre. It was such an absurdly disturbing sensation, all I could do was stand there, shivering, trying frantically to rub the feeling off my skin.

Taking a deep breath and deciding to try and figure out the whole door situation later, I turned my attention to the occupants of the room.

Standing at the sink, a naked Simon tossed the towel he'd used at the wicker hamper. He nearly got it in too. Opening the medicine cabinet, he set about his usual morning routine of shaving, hair gelling, tooth brushing and general primping before the mirror. All the time whining, in a humorous way, that his things never stayed where he put them.

"Sweetheart, where'd you hide my shaving cream now?"

"As I've told you a million times before, it doesn't fit in the medicine cabinet. Look under the sink, goofball."

*Whoa! Déjà vu.*

The shower stall door opened and she stepped out... *I* stepped out. I watched me bend over, pull the can from the cupboard and hand it to Simon. I watched as he ran his strong hands over my warm, wet nakedness. I watched as an intimate

smile flitted across my lips.

“God I love the way your skin feels,” he whispered into my wet hair. Cupping my breast, he pulled me tight against him with his other hand. His ass muscles flexed and clenched as he pushed into the softness of my belly.

The memory of how wonderful that felt washed over me; a warm electric tingle settled between my legs and grew swiftly to engulf me in its heat. Our early morning sessions had caused both of us to be late for work more than a few times. Sometimes we wouldn't even make it back to the bed.

Simon would just lift me to the edge of the sink and bury his long, hard shaft into my wet pussy right there. Or on the floor, or in the shower. We'd even made good use of the toilet... it made an awesome seat to use, as my feet easily touched the floor on either side and I could ride up and down his stiff cock, without getting cramps in my knees. We'd made good use of every room in this old house, but the bathroom was by far our favourite.

The sudden movement of Simon stepping back as if pushed, pulled me out of my glorious reverie. “Hey sweetheart, what's wrong? I just want to be with you, just a quickie. So what if you're a couple of minutes late?”

“Not now, Simon, I can't be late today. I told you already, I have to be at this meeting.” Brushing past him, I threw the door open and

hurried into the bedroom.

My head was spinning again and my stomach was churning as I watched *me* rush from the kitchen. Stopping at the elegant oak table in the hall, I snatched up my purse, briefcase and keys. "Stop being a jerk, Simon. I know you want to spend more time together... I know you want to start a family, but we agreed to get as much of this house paid off as possible first. To do that, we need my income. To have that income, I have to be at this meeting. I have to leave now or I'll be late. Just go to work and we'll talk about this later."

Yelling as he stepped from the kitchen, Simon looked as if he'd been fighting back tears as he pulled his suit jacket on. "I'm just so sick of the way you're always running to keep Brad happy. He's your boss, not your lover... or is he? Is that why you always make the extra effort lately to look so perfect when you have a meeting with him?"

"Simon, you're being ridiculous. Brad is my boss, plain and simple and I don't look any different today than I have every other day since I got this job. Some people may think that jealousy is cute, but let me tell you, it's not a very attractive emotion at all. You need to get over it and trust me. You know damn well that I love you and I've never done anything to give you a reason to think I'd do anything behind your back. So just quit

acting like an idiot.”

The heavy door slammed behind me as I stormed out. I stood there shaking, watching my angry back run down the steps and along the drive to my old unreliable car. Turning back in a daze as I tore out of the driveway, I watched regret quickly replace the anger on my beloved Simon’s face. “Stop me!” I screamed. “Go after me. Don’t let me get to that intersection, Simon! Go stop me!”

He ran and snatched the door open. *Had he heard me?* He stood on the porch, holding onto the railing in a white-knuckled death grip, staring down the empty road. Lowering his head, he slowly turned back into the house and I saw the tears glistening on his lashes. Picking up the dry-erase marker, he scrawled a message on the white board kept on the wall for just that purpose. Grabbing his own briefcase, he headed back out the door, closing it with a soft click.

Standing there, surrounded by all the warmth, love and silence of my own home, tears burned my eyes as I read the message he’d left.

*My gracious Gracie,*

*I love you!*

*You’re my heart*

*my soul*

*my life*

*Happy anniversary darling*

S



"Do you understand now, Gracie?"

Biting my lip, as tears coursed down my face, I nodded silently. Turning, I looked into Hayden's ice-blue eyes. No longer wearing the barman's suit, he shone a warm, white light that came from within him, as well as above and below. "I forgot," I whispered, "and I never said goodbye. The last words I spoke to him were words of anger."

A terrifying thought came to my mind; so terrifying in fact that my hand flew to my throat as I choked on the mere possibility. "Oh, Hayden, please don't take me to that intersection. I don't want to see the results of my faulty brakes, my speed or my anger. I remember it all now, all of it. The red light, the transport truck pulling out, the panic when the brake pedal hit the floor, the explosion, the twisted metal, spraying glass and the pain. I remember all of it... I don't need to re-live it. Please."

"No." His soothing, lyrical voice wrapped around me, like a favourite sweater on a crisp fall day, filling me with a sense of serenity I could feel tingling along my skin. "You need not witness the carnage of your leaving. You need only know that your passing was not meant to be. Interference in the thread of your life was the cause and due to this factor, your spirit has not settled. That is why you were given the gift of this chance.

"You can do nothing to change what has

happened. You can do nothing to alter the course of events as they play out before you. This excursion is for you, for your spirit. You must come to the place where you are settled within yourself and feel well prepared to face the next level to which your spirit must ascend.”

“My heart is so heavy, Hayden. How do I face all that I’ve left behind, unfinished and unsaid? How do I come to terms with the fact that while my life on this realm has ended, that of my most cherished love has carried on without me? How can you ask me to say goodbye to all of that and wish him well? I don’t even know where to begin.”

“Begin with the present, Grace. See where his heart is. Watch his soul, watch where his eyes search. See him Grace, really see him.”

Hayden’s beautiful, brilliance faded and I was once again standing alone in the front hall. Looking back to the spot on the wall where the white board had hung, I found that it had been replaced with a large ornate mirror.

## *Chapter Three*

I heard Simon's wonderfully deep voice before the door opened. Holding it, he ushered *her* into the warm hallway and closed the door softly behind them. Stroking his fingers down the sides of her throat and across her shoulders, he slid the coat from her. The tender, intimate motion was one I fondly remembered and it hurt to watch this simple act being played out with Lucy.

Lucy Landers, my most hated rival since childhood. Always with her nose in the air in grade school... head cheerleader in high school, all the boys fighting to run their fingers through her golden hair. Family money to back her up and give her anything her heart desired, including her own business upon graduating from college.

She'd always tried to take everything that I cherished, from new Barbie dolls and friends to Simon, when we started dating. Now it appeared

she had him, and all it took was my death.

But why her? Of all the women in the world who would love to spend an evening with a gentleman such as Simon, why did he pick the likes of her? Especially when he knew just how vehemently I had always disliked her.

“Go make yourself at home in the living room,” he whispered intimately against her ear. “I’ll hang our coats up.”

“Are you ever going to do something about the décor in here?” Lucy perched her stiff ass on the edge of one of my rose-coloured wingback chairs.

“There’s nothing wrong with the way the house is decorated. I like it this way, it’s comfortable, and I know where everything is.”

“Yeah, and it’s a shrine to your dead wife.”

“Shut the fuck up Lucy,” *I’d never heard him talk like that.* “It’s my house and I will keep it whichever way I want it. If you don’t like it, close your eyes. You’re not here for your decorating tips anyway.”

Moving to snuggle into Simon’s side on the couch, Lucy slid her stocking-clad foot up his pant leg. “Don’t get all bent outta shape, babe. I was just trying to say that maybe it’s time for you to think about moving on. I could fix the place up for you, if you just gave me the go-ahead.”

Pulling her into him, Simon’s hands disappeared under her shirt. “Let’s not go there

again. You are not going to redecorate my house, anymore than you're going to rearrange my life."

"But, babe, she's been gone for three years and you and I have been having our fun for the last two. Don't you think we could at least talk about moving it to the next level?"

"I'm happy with things just the way they are. That includes the house and the arrangement you and I have. If you're not, you know damn well that you're free to walk away anytime."

Standing in front of him, Lucy dashed my hopes that she was actually going to take his advice and walk away, when she pulled the mauve knit shirt over her head. "I may not be totally happy with the way things are, but you are the best fuck I've had in a long time and I'll take what I can get."

Sitting back against the soft, billowy cushions of the couch, Simon slowly undid his shirt, staring up at Lucy. "What you can get right now, is naked."

His tone was one I'd never heard before. Rather than the warm, sensuous timber I remembered so well, he spoke gruffly, almost angrily.

Naked, Lucy knelt between his knees and slid the zipper of his pants down. Without any hesitation, Simon lifted his ass, allowing her to pull his pants and boxers down his legs. As they slipped from his feet, I reached out and wrapped

my fingers around the thickness of his long, hard shaft. The warmth of the pulsating flesh permeated through my entire body as I slowly stroked up and down the length.

With his eyes tightly closed, Simon moaned, "Oh God, that feels good. Why haven't you ever done it like that before?"

Bewildered, Lucy looked at him, from her seat between his feet. "I haven't done anything yet."

Reaching out, Simon pushed her face towards his erect cock. "Don't fuck with me, Lucy, just suck me."

I watched in total amazement as his magnificent hard cock-head disappeared into her mouth. As her lips slid up and down, she left red smears on his hot flesh from her lipstick. His moans, as she went deeper and sucked harder, grew louder. I knew he was drawing close to his first explosion. He must have gone without sex for quite some time for it to be this quick.

He had always liked to be sucked first, and then he would set about seeing to my needs. That was the way he had always been. When we first started out, I thought that it was pretty selfish of him, until he explained that he always came fast the first time and liked to get it out of his system so he could relax and concentrate on 'the sweeter things', as he called my multiple orgasms.

His hand on the back of Lucy's head pushed

her harder onto his cock. He was pumping into her throat with such force, I was almost afraid that he was going to choke her. But she was into it. She was forcing her face down into his groin as hard as she could, and from the moans vibrating in her throat she was obviously enjoying it as much as Simon.

I'd never had the opportunity to watch his face, as he enjoyed the moment of release, when it was my face buried in his groin, so I took advantage of it. As his hands dug deeper into her hair, holding her face to him, impaling her with his eight inches, the expression on his face was a glorious mixture of tension and relief. As his brow furrowed with the force of his heart pounding in his chest, his head fell back and his eyes squeezed tightly shut.

Parting to pull gasps of air into his lungs, his soft lips formed my name, as he filled Lucy's throat with his hot seed. Lowering my head, I pressed my lips to his, sliding the tip of my tongue over them. His reaction was instantaneous, his lips parted further and his tongue fought with mine. When I pulled away, he whispered 'I love you' filled me with as much shock as love.

Had he felt me? Did he know it was me he kissed so deeply? Did he know I was there? Surely, he couldn't be saying that to Lucy.

Sliding her lips from his still hard cock with loud slurping sounds, she looked into his eyes.

"What did you say?"

"What?" He was in a daze, not at all sure what was going on. "I didn't say anything to you. What are you talking about?"

"I heard you, Simon."

"Well, I don't know what you think you heard, but I do know that I didn't say anything to you."

That was true! He hadn't said anything to Lucy, but he had spoken - to me. He knew that I was there and he still loved me.

"Don't get mad, babe," she purred, slithering up the length of his body. "I've been itching for you for two weeks and I still have lots of itches that need to be scratched."

Wrapping his hands around her swaying breasts, I watched Simon's fingers dig into the soft flesh, kneading, pinching and pulling on the hard, puckered nipples. Sucking one, then the other into his warm mouth, he rolled the hard nubs around with his tongue.

Lucy's spine undulated under the assault on her breasts, reminding me of the snake that she was. Her glistening pussy pumped against his cock, where she straddled him. Her fingers dug deeply into the couch cushions as lusty cries exploded from her lips.

My gaze followed Simon's hands, as they traced down her back to grasp the round globes of her ass. His strong fingers dug in as he lifted her,



allowing his rock hard cock to stand and slide between her weeping folds. As the mushroom-shaped head disappeared into her, he shifted his grip and forced her down onto his length.

Holding her impaled on his erection he panted, "Is that what you want?"

"Oh, fuck yes!" Lucy cried, throatily. "I want to feel that steel rod splitting me in two - driving deep into me."

"Ride it then, bitch. Let me feel you cum on my shaft."

There she was - Lucy, of 'Lucy Furs', one of the biggest faux fur designer style boutiques in the region, fucking my husband. I couldn't say that they were making love, or even having sex - they were fucking. With absolute abandon, driving each other to the point of pure physical release. There was not even the slightest hint of compassion or deep emotion in either of them.

Her ass blurred in my vision, as it literally flew up and down. She rode his cock harder and faster than I had ever imagined possible. She was like a wild, rutting beast. Her head fell back, a guttural howling sound filled the room as her orgasm exploded, shaking the two of them, with the violent spasms ripping through her.

The instant her quaking and shivering began to slow, Simon pulled her off and laid her on the couch. His face burrowed into her dripping pussy,

lapping up her juices, even before the last tremors had subsided. His tongue swam through her fluids, drilling into her grasping tunnel, rolling and pressing her swollen clit.

Building on the ebbing climax, he pushed her brutally towards a repeat, with amazing speed and forcefulness. Jumping and twitching under his insistent tongue, Lucy grabbed two handfuls of his hair and clamped him to her, urging him on. "Yes, oh God, yes. Drain every drop outta me, you son-of-a-bitch."

When two of Simon's fingers joined his mouth on the brutal assault of Lucy's pussy, I stepped back. Where was the familiar tenderness? Was this what he had always actually wanted? This hard, grinding, unconnected act of sex? This rushed drive to the final climax? The Simon I knew and loved had always been an attentive lover. He had pushed my body further than I'd ever thought it could go, but he had never been as rough, or as animalistic. He was actually grunting between her thighs and crushing his cock between them as he grinded powerfully against her leg.

Lucy's screaming orgasm coated his face with shining wetness that dripped from his chin as he basically threw her onto her stomach. Grabbing her hips, he drove into her depths with one long thrust. I didn't want to see him like that. He was pounding into her so violently; I feared she would

be too bruised to sit properly for a month.

With my back pressed against the wall, I didn't seem able to close my eyes or look away. It was very much like driving past a car wreck. Even though you don't want to see anything too terrible, your eyes still search the wreckage for it, anyway.

His ass muscles clenched and bunched as his sac emptied into Lucy. As soon as he was spent, he pulled out of her and sat back on the couch, leaving her bent over the armrest; open, dripping and gasping for breath.

With a hard slap on her ass, Simon stood and pulled his boxers on. "Don't make a mess on the couch," was all he said to her, before heading to the kitchen at the back of the house to grab a beer out of the fridge.

Moving slowly, Lucy picked her clothes up and walked to the powder room off the hall. She never said a word.

She hadn't been a very happy camper when she came out of the washroom. Simon had been waiting for her in the hall, with her coat. I actually burst out laughing at the look on her face, when she realized that Simon was telling her it was over.

"It's been great, but I don't want to 'move to the next level' with you and it's time for me to figure out what I do want."

I admit that I was rather ashamed of Simon at

that moment; he'd used her to get his rocks off. I guess I felt a little bit sorry for Lucy, but as she was my worst enemy I have to say I was glad to see the back of her.

After her rather unceremonious departure, Simon soaked in a hot tub and sucked back another cold beer. Pulling a fluffy blue towel from the linen cupboard, he stood in the middle of the room holding it to his chest and dripping all over the floor.

"Gracie, can you hear me?"

*I can hear you, my darling. I'm right here, right beside you.*

"Gracie, I miss you so much, sweetheart, it hurts. No matter how much I try to get you out of my system, you're a part of me. You're all mixed up in my bloodstream. I see you everywhere. Now I'm smelling you and feeling your lips on mine. Damn it, Gracie! Let me go, let me say goodbye!"

Tears blurred my vision as I watched him throw the towel down and curl up in the centre of our big bed. Everyone, including Simon, himself, wanted me to let him go. I still just didn't know how. He was in so much pain, how was I supposed to just leave him alone in his misery? I had always been the one to soothe him when he needed it; how could I just turn my back on him now?

## *Chapter Four*

**B**efore I even realized that any time had passed, Simon had spent an entire week pulling himself through his regular routine. He spent long hours at the office, to return to our home with takeout. He drank too much beer and spent every night curled in a tight ball in the middle of the bed. Simon was existing. He was dragging his ass through every day, but there was none of the spark I remembered so well. He never smiled, he never told silly jokes, he didn't watch any television, not even any of the sports he'd always loved. It was as though he'd shut himself off from the world and it frightened me.

Friday night again found him propping up the bar at 'Joe's Tavern'. He'd already downed two double shots of whiskey, when his oldest friend joined him at the bar.

"Hey buddy. How's life been treatin' ya?"

"Life goes on, Adam. That's about all I can say."

"Whoa, Simon, you need to open your eyes and see that you're still here among the living." Pulling a long swallow from the beer that had just been set down in front of him, Adam looked around the busy bar. "There's all kinds of life goin' on right here in front of you. You're a good lookin' guy, take one of these sweet things home and let her rock yer world."

Shaking his head solemnly, Simon looked at his friend. "I had my world 'rocked' last week."

"Lucy again?"

"Yeah, Lucy again."

"Why the hell do you keep dippin' into the bottom of the barrel? You have to know that there's a lot better out there."

"Simple, she knows the deal. She's a fuck when I need one and that's all. No feelings; no messy emotions; no anything except a good, hard ball-slapping fuck."

"Well as much as I hate to be the one to screw with any man's ball-slappin', you might want to remind Lucy about the deal. The rumour-mill has the two of you setting up house."

"Who the hell told you that load of bullshit?"

"I been seeing Astrid, one of the sales girls, on and off for the past couple months, she says everyone's been talkin' about it. Lucy's been talking to interior decorators and looking at samples. Astrid overheard her telling one of the

designers that she can't wait to wipe every lingering trace of Grace outta your life. She seems to think it's all a done deal."

"Bullshit!"

"Look, all I'm trying to say is, maybe it's about time for you to move on. You've been fuckin' Lucy's ass off for the past two years and I ain't seen no other women goin' in or outta your bed. Of course everybody and their uncle's gonna put two and two together and get five. If it ain't the real deal with Lucy, maybe you need to kick her outta your bed and see what else the world has to offer."

A mean-spirited laugh rumbled through Simon's chest. "Half of that's been taken care of, already." He went on to tell Adam about the week before and how he'd escorted Lucy out the door and shut it in her confused face.

"You just suddenly decided that, while she was suckin' your dick?" Adam clearly was shocked. "That's cold man, really cold."

"I told you, it just felt like I was cheating on Gracie all of a sudden. I felt her watching me. I could smell her soft vanilla scent and I swear to God she kissed me."

"Simon," Adam had the look of a man stepping gingerly through a minefield. "I know you loved Gracie. Christ, we all did, but she's gone, buddy. She wouldn't want you to go on living in the past.

She was an amazing woman, full of life and abounding love for you; she'd want you to go on with life."

Gently tracing his fingers across his lips, Simon closed his eyes, momentarily reliving that kiss. "I thought so too Adam, until last week. Now all the wounds are fresh again."

"Is this what you wanted?" Hayden was at my side, whispering over my shoulder. "Was it your intention to halt his progress in life? To hold him so tightly to your heart that he's blinded to anything this world has to offer?"

Seeing him, leaning against the bar there; my beautiful husband looked so sad, so lost and lonely. He was alive, but he wasn't living and it was my fault.

Their conversation had moved on to an idea Adam had. He was taking one of his lady-friends out to a new club the next night and wanted Simon to join them. "She tells me this friend of hers is a lot of fun and buddy, you need some fun."

"I'm not into the club scene."

"It's supposed to be a really nice place."

"Yeah I bet. Loud music, flashing lights, raucous crowds ... oh fun, wow."

*Damn, he was fighting it tooth and nail.* Drifting over to him, my lips grazed his ear, as I whispered softly, "Take the chance, darling. Take a step



towards life, it's okay."

Adam stopped mid-sentence, in his quest to convince Simon, when he saw the full-body shiver vibrate through him. "Hey Simon, you okay, buddy?"

Snatching the glass of whiskey from the bar and tossing it back, Simon tried to force his hand to stop trembling. "Let's do it, Adam. Tell your friend's friend to put her party shoes on."

## *Chapter Five*

The water was cascading over his warm skin where he stood in the shower. His clothes were laid out on the bed, waiting for him. Twice during the day he'd picked up the phone to call Adam and tell him to forget it, but a quiet little voice in his ear had reminded him that it would be rude and cowardly to cancel the date.

I was getting used to slipping through seemingly solid items now, so joining him within the spray was not hard. He had a magnificent body. Most people didn't believe that he didn't spend countless hours at the gym, but I knew that it was just his natural form.

The mixture of the steaming water and the closeness to Simon's nakedness started a fire in me. Being careful to not touch him with any more pressure than the spray, I traced my fingertips across his chest and down his abdomen. When they came into contact with his penis it sprang to

life. The suddenness of his erection caught both of us off guard.

Softly wrapping my fingers around it, I heard his sharp intake of breath, followed by a long moan. I watched as he braced his hands on either side of the shower stall and looked down at his pulsating shaft. His foreskin slid gently back and forth within my grasp, alternately hiding and exposing the shiny head.

“What the fuck is going on?” he whispered.

When I closed my lips around his deliciously hot, wet erection, he instantly exploded into me.

“Oh God, Gracie, I miss you so much.”

Literally falling out of the stall, he sat in the middle of the bathroom, staring at the spraying water as it hit the walls. Tearing his gaze away from the small space he looked down to his slowly deflating erection. Holding it in his palm, he ran the pad of his thumb across the still dripping slit and shivered. “That was one hell of a fantasy. I’ll never look at the shower the same way again.”

\* \* \* \*

Simon met Adam and the two ladies at the front door of the club. Adam made the introductions. Simon found himself paired up with Missy, an extremely talkative tall brunette with green eyes, a perfectly flat stomach and huge jiggly boobs,

which she pressed against him at every opportunity. Her outfit only just covered her essential bits. I stood there watching in amazement that nothing fell out; she must have used two-sided tape on the front 'V' of her black slinky top that plunged all the way down to her pierced navel. The wisp of material that she tried to pass off as a skirt, only just covered her round ass and when she leaned over to whisper in her friend's ear, her matching black g-string screamed that she was ready to play.

What could Adam have been thinking? This was not the type of girl Simon would be interested in, but at least it got him back out into the world, amongst the living. It just might be good for him.

Knowing the resolve he'd made to at least give this a shot, my heart bled for him as he dropped his head and followed the other three through the doors of the club. He'd been right about the music being loud and it being crowded, but other than the actual dance floor area, the lighting was very subdued. After handing over the cover charge for all of them, Adam led the way to a reserved booth.

Glancing at some of the other patrons in the booths as he passed, Simon was obviously both shocked and amazed. This was definitely unlike any club he'd been to in the past that I knew of. The low lighting was clearly intended to hide a plethora of activities. In the quick trip to their

booth I'd seen three blow-jobs being performed, two white lines of powder on the tabletops and one woman clearly enjoying being tied to a post. I could only imagine what was going through Simon's mind at that second. Moments later my intuition was proved correct.

Sliding into the plush U-shaped seat of the booth he grabbed Adam's arm. "What kind of place have you brought me to?" he hissed between clenched teeth.

"Why? What's up?"

"Didn't you see what's going on around us?"

Taking a quick look around, Adam smiled. "You need to loosen up, buddy. Nobody's gonna force you to do anything you don't want to and nobody will stop you from living out your fantasy either. From everything I've heard about this place, it's all about letting yourself go and enjoying whatever the moment brings."

Pressing into the back of the seat, Simon sat looking around nervously. "Well the moment better not bring anything too extreme to me."

I felt so sorry for him. Missy was a fireball, she wanted to dance to nearly every tune and her idea of dancing was very nearly obscene. She ground her boobs and groin against him, rubbed her naked ass on him and let her hands run wild all over him. He looked so uncomfortable, especially when she was openly fondling his balls right there

in public view. He was definitely out of his element.

When he did finally get her peeled off long enough to take a breather in the booth, he and Adam sat watching the two girls gyrate around the dance floor. "Where on God's green earth did you find those two?"

"Well," Adam sighed, with an ear-to-ear grin, "Abbey came into the shop one day and we got to talking. That was about six weeks ago. She's a wild woman in bed, by the way, and when she told me she wanted to come to this club and that her friend was a lot of fun, well you know the rest."

"So basically, all you know about her is that she's good in bed and has a 'fun' friend."

"Yeah, basically." Turning to look into Simon's eyes, Adam's expression became serious for the first time that night. "Look, Simon, I have no intention of settling down with Abbey, but she is a hell of a lot of fun, she sucks cock like nobody's business and she is extremely bendable. I've had her in positions I didn't even think possible. She's not looking for Mr. Right either, so what's the harm? If Missy is anything like her, you could be in for a night you'll never forget."

"I've already had more than my share of those," Simon muttered as he got to his feet. "I'm gonna go empty the hose. I'll stop at the bar on the way

back, you want another one?"

"Sure," Adam was distracted again, clearly watching the bouncing of Abbey's breasts as she jumped around with Missy and a few interested men.

## *Chapter Six*

**S**ilently following Simon out of the men's room, I drifted right 'into' him, when he suddenly froze in his tracks.

"What the hell is *she* doing here?" he choked.

Following his gaze across the large room, I felt my heart leap into my throat, with a jarring thud. I had been so absorbed with my selfish need to be with Simon, I hadn't even given her a passing thought. Not consciously, anyway. Although I am sure that she was on the edges of my thoughts ... somewhere.

Pushing his way through the crowds, Simon made his way across the dance floor, with me hot on his heels. Coming to a halt in front of the slightly plump, tall brunette with the huge deep, brown eyes, we asked in unison, "What's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?"

Rebecca's face lit up, as soon as she recognized Simon. All of the shyness, which had been



cloaking her as she stood at the edge of the dance floor, dissipated in an instant. Throwing her arms around his neck, she pressed a soft kiss to his cheek. "I could ask you the same thing, Simon," my little sister laughed.

"I got dragged here by Adam and his idea of a fun date."

"I guess you could say basically the same thing about me," she shouted over the booming music. "Marcy felt I needed to get out of the house and let my hair down. This place is a bit much though."

I couldn't tear my eyes away from Rebecca. As Simon convinced her to join him at the relatively quiet booth, I watched her every minute movement. I'd forgotten how beautiful she was and how very much she was like a younger version of me.

The way she walked across a room, the quiet air of self-confidence about her. The way she tilted her head slightly to the left whenever she was truly interested in a conversation. Even the way she nibbled on her bottom lip when concentrating, it was all like looking in a mirror.

She had her own strong personality traits and mannerisms too, which had irritated me to no end while we were growing up. A section of hair from behind her left ear was in a constant spiral caused by her nervous habit of twisting it in her fingers. Her every emotion showed clearly on her

beautiful face, even a stranger could tell what she was thinking or feeling at any given time. The pronounced rolling of her eyes made it terribly apparent what she thought of Adam's choice of a fun date for Simon, when she was pointed out.

Feeling a strange need to give them some space, I hung back and watched my husband and sister from a distance. They had their heads together as they talked. Rebecca's hand was resting on Simon's thigh, her thumb softly rubbing back and forth ever so slightly. Simon laid his arm along the back of the seat behind her. By the time Adam and the dates returned to the booth, his fingers were gently massaging Rebecca's shoulder.

When Adam went chasing after the disgruntled Missy and her sympathetic friend, both Simon and Rebecca burst out laughing. Within minutes, they got up and left the club together.

The next few hours were spent sipping iced-tea and nibbling muffins in an all-night coffee shop. They talked about everything; the weather, their jobs, the family, the house Rebecca had just purchased. But, when the topic they'd both been avoiding finally came up, smiles were replaced with unshed tears and thoughtful looks.

"I miss her so much, Simon," Rebecca whispered. "There was so much I didn't get the chance to tell her. So much I wish I could have said, things I would have liked to ask her. It's

getting better though, I figure I have to go on with life and do the best I can. I don't think she would want me to bury myself in the pain of the past. She'd want me to be happy. She'd want all of us to be happy, that's just the kind of person she was."

Simon reached across the laminated tabletop and took her hand in his, "You're right. I think she does want us to be happy. I just don't know how to let go of what we had."

"Why let it go, Simon?" she asked softly. "She's an important part of who you are. She's a part of your heart. Don't try to push that aside or forget it. Embrace it, build on it. Use everything you learned from her love to move forward and find your place in this world. Otherwise, what was it all for?"

Letting her hand go, Simon turned to stare blindly out the big window where the horizon was just starting to soften with the approaching dawn. Rubbing vigorously at the tears that had sprung forth to glisten on his lashes, he whispered to his own reflected image. "My head knows you're right, Rebecca. I just need it to convince my heart."

## *Chapter Seven*

Most people were stirring in their beds, getting ready to start their day, when Simon finally crawled naked between his sheets. He'd been awake for nearly twenty-four hours and drifted almost immediately into an exhausted sleep.

Watching him dream for hours, I began to feel a stretching sensation around me. It was as if a part of me was trying to pull away and separate from my very core. Something very important was shifting, changing in the most elemental way possible. Closing my eyes I concentrated, trying to focus on the origin of the pulling.

It was small, the tiniest increase of space, but it felt like the Grand Canyon. Simon was trying to let me go. Even in his deep sleep, his subconscious was convincing his heart that it was time to move into the light of life.

"What are you doing, Simon?"

"I have to live, Gracie. You left me here and as

much as it hurts, I have to live.”

“I know, but why do you have to push me away to do it? Why can’t you take me with you?”

Slipping into the bed beside him, I pressed my naked body against his side. Running gentle fingers over him I felt his heart beating slowly, air filling his lungs deeply. Sliding my fingers lower, I found his own fingers already wrapped around his erection, slowly stroking up and down.

Cupping his heavy sac, I gently massaged his balls and smiled at the sound of his soft moan.

Carefully pushing his hand to the side, I moved to straddle his hips. As the heat of his hard shaft filled me, his hips thrust up, driving in to the hilt.

His hands touched me; held me and stroked up my sides as I slowly rode up and down his wonderful cock. Pulling me down to him, he sucked one of my hard, puckered nipples into his warm mouth. Suckling it, rolling it around with his tongue, he moaned against me and gently grazed his teeth across the hard nub. My other swaying breast was held and massaged by his hand. Talented fingers pressed into the soft flesh, twirled and pinched the nipple.

His mouth released my breast and trailed fast, hot kisses across my chest, collarbones and throat. Fingers dug into the fleshiness of my hips and ass as he urged me on faster.

Our mouths found each other. He tasted like

perfection, so warm and moist, soft and yet at the same time firm, his tongue torturing mine with its urgent dance of hunger within my mouth.

Pulling away from his kiss, I pressed my palms onto his stomach as my own began to twitch with the deep shudders of orgasm. My pussy clenched and squeezed along his driving cock, pulling on it, begging it for its gift.

As the head swelled even more with the first explosion of release, Simon's eyes flew open. Looking down, he lay there watching in amazement as his full cock emptied into my unseen depths.

I felt his hand pass through me to touch his gleaming, wet shaft. Slipping off him to snuggle into his side, I watched as he lifted his fingers to his nose, smelling the muskiness of me before licking the long familiar wetness from them.

Rolling onto his side, facing me, his eyelids drifted closed again, "I love you, Gracie."

"I love you too, Simon," I whispered as I closed my own eyes, content and feeling fuller than I had in a long time.

## *Chapter Eight*

Over the next month, Simon seemed to change. He and Rebecca went out for coffee, a movie or a walk through the trails by the river at least twice a week. They had never been to each other's homes, or done anything more than hold hands, but whenever they were together, Simon seemed lighter, more stress-free. It was the rest of the time that had me worried.

He didn't eat right. He worked too many hours. He hardly slept. He was driving himself too hard. It was almost as though he'd made up his mind to rejoin the land of the living and was doing everything he could think of to put as much distance between the two of us as he could.

Our night of passion was never repeated, as much as I tried, I couldn't seem to touch him anymore. He couldn't hear me anymore either, not even when I yelled right beside him. He'd put up a barrier and I was unable to figure out a way to

break through it.

Hayden kept telling me that it was time to let go, but Simon wasn't settled. He needed me. He had to have me there, in case all this stress dragged him down. Who else would look after him, if something were to happen?

\* \* \* \*

It happened one afternoon on his way home from work. He continuously dug at his eyes as though trying to clear his vision, a cold sweat broke out all over his body. Pulling, haphazardly into the driveway, I watched as he barely dragged his fever-ravaged body into the house and shut the door before collapsing onto the hardwood floor.

I tried everything I could think of to rouse him. I was desperate to grasp him and at least pull him to a more comfortable place, but my hands simply passed through his flesh. There was nothing I could do. No way I could help him as his own body attacked itself. The fever was so high; it was as if it was trying to boil his blood. He was so worn down; he didn't seem to have any reserves left to fight this fever.

I sat near his head for hours upon hours, just watching him and begging him to fight with whatever he had. He never stirred. He just lay there, breathing shallowly and sweating.



Even when the doorbell rang at around ten o'clock, he didn't move. The phone had stopped ringing about an hour earlier and now Rebecca was at the door. Pushing it open, she called out, "Simon, is everything okay?"

Seeing his deathly pale form, lying right there, she screamed and ran to his side. The moment she assured herself that he was still breathing she snatched the phone from the hall table and dialed 9-1-1.

\* \* \* \*

Leaving his bedside, I moved into the hospital hallway with Rebecca and Adam. He was holding her as she cried into his shoulder. "He's in good hands here, Rebecca. You did all you could," he reassured her.

"I should have gone over to his house sooner. I knew something was wrong, as soon as he didn't show up or call to say he'd be late. He's never stood me up, or even been more than five minutes late before. He must have been lying there for hours; he still had his coat on and his briefcase was right beside him."

Sniffing and blowing her nose on a crumpled tissue, she sat down on one of the hard plastic chairs, twisting a rope of hair. "I knew he wasn't feeling well. He's been down for the past couple of weeks or so. I tried to convince him to see a

doctor, but he said he'd be fine. Why didn't I force him to be seen? Why didn't he listen to me when I told him that he needed to get some medicine?"

Lowering himself into the chair beside her, Adam slowly shook his head. "When have you ever known Simon to listen to good advice?"

Snapping her head up, my little sister glared at Adam with as much protective indignation as I was feeling.

Holding up his hands, Adam tried to defend himself. "I'm just saying that Simon is a grown man, who does what he wants and doesn't usually let anyone make decisions for him. It's always done him well, especially in business, but he has a bad habit of not using the same common sense when it comes to him and his health."

I had to agree with Adam on that, unfortunately.

## *Chapter Nine*

Simon's built-in protection system had shut his body down; he was in a coma. He held his own though, no need for life support. An I.V. tube, inserted into a vein in his hand, kept a constant supply of nutrients flowing into him as well as precious, life-saving antibiotics. A catheter carried away the useless bodily fluids and electrodes on his chest kept track of his heart rate and breathing.

The physiotherapist showed Rebecca how to move his arms and legs, to keep them limber and to ensure that the muscles didn't atrophy. She even learned how to turn him and give him a sponge bath.

Rebecca spent every moment she could at Simon's side. She spent countless hours talking to him, holding his hand and reading to him, when she ran out of things to talk about.

She and I were like two solitary warriors, both fighting the same battle. Neither of us knew

whether a victory was in the future or not, but we each prayed for one. We both continually did our utmost to convince Simon to hold on to life.

\* \* \* \*

Three weeks after she'd found him, lying in the middle of the front hall of his house, Rebecca and I were once again at Simon's bedside. She was talking softly to him about something that had happened at work as she gave him his sponge bath. Seeing the gentle way she was rubbing the warm, soapy cloth over his balls made me glad for him but also slightly jealous that I couldn't be the one to help him. As she lifted his penis from the matt of soft curls, it stirred and began to thicken.

"God, that feels good."

It took a minute before either of us realized that it was Simon that had spoken. Looking up to his face, Rebecca burst into tears when she found him looking back at her. My heart soared to see those beautiful eyes open once again, no matter how bloodshot and unfocussed they were.

Embarrassment for both of them flaming her cheeks, she pulled the thin covers back over his groin. "Oh, Simon, welcome back. I'll go get the nurse."

He weakly held her hand, "Just a second. I want to talk to you first, before they come in." His

voice was extremely gravely, like his throat was terribly parched.

"I heard you. I heard you talking to me. I felt you holding me here. Thank you, Rebecca. I love you too."

She simply smiled shyly and walked out as if in a daze, to find the I.C.U. nurse.

"I heard you too, Gracie," he whispered. "I'll always love you. You could have easily pulled me over to your side. Thank you, sweetheart. Thank you for letting me go. Thank you for letting me say goodbye."

\* \* \* \*

Simon and Rebecca were married six months later, in a simple backyard ceremony. Hayden and I sat on a lower branch of an oak tree to watch their union. Seeing the tears staining my cheeks, he touched my shoulder softly. "It is as it should be Gracie."

And he was right. A new family lives in our hundred-year-old house now. They are filling it with their love and their memories, and that is just the way that it should be.

## *About the Author*

**J**oyo lives in a small town in southern Ontario, with her husband and daughters. She is a natural story-teller, if you were to ask her family they would tell you she has been telling tales her whole life. She is also a devout lover of sensual fantasy. So, it seems only natural that erotic romance should become her genre.