



FATED PASSION

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Prologue

“How long do I have to wait for you to make up your mind, Rob?” Alexia asked, her anger growing as she watched him slip on his jeans.

After an afternoon of passionate lovemaking, she wondered aloud about their future together. She wanted commitment, a promise of marriage and a life together, forever.

Only Robert wasn't thrilled with the idea, judging from the way he dodged the subject whenever she brought it up. Well today, she wouldn't be to be put off any longer.

“Allie, I just can't be thinking about this now. My first book is set to come out in a few months, and my agent is setting up all kinds of plans for promotion. This is just not a good time to talk about marriage.”

“When the hell is it ever a good time? We've been together for three years, and I want to know exactly where we're going from here.”

Grabbing his t-shirt, he quickly yanked it over his head, covering his bare chest. “At this point, I can't make any promises when my mind is so occupied with my career. This all will have to wait.” He sat down on the edge of the bed and started putting on his socks and shoes.

She stood in front of him, clutching her hot pink silk robe about her quaking body. “I'm not someone you can put on hold, Rob. I have a life.”

As he tied the last shoelace, he sighed. “I have a life, too, Allie.” Rising, he stopped to look down into her dark eyes before walking out of her bedroom toward the living room.

How could she love a man who was so difficult to get along with? As hard as it was to believe, it was true. When he wasn't around, she longed for his closeness, yearned for his touch, and ached for his kisses.

It was easy to love him, yet easy to hate him, too. They were both dominating personalities, so it was easy to understand the powerful attraction between them. Everything they did had been passionate from the laughter they shared, to the incredible sex, to the explosive arguments.

Their fights sometimes ended up in short break-ups, but they never usually lasted for long. This time Alexia was determined this was the end. How long could she wait for him to decide to make a commitment? There was so much in life she wanted and waiting around for Rob to consider marriage years from now was out of the question. If he loved her, shouldn't he want to marry her?

Following him out into the living room, her body shaking with rage, she screamed, “Just go! Leave! If I'm not worth a commitment, then I don't want to ever see you again!”

Robert stood at the open door of her apartment as he gazed away from her, sliding on his leather jacket. He remained quieter than usual. When he turned to face her, Alexia

felt suddenly small in comparison. His six-foot six-inch frame filled the open doorway like he'd filled her life for the past few years.

Robert had a pleasing face and a charming aura that had always attracted her like a bee to nectar. Paired with a sexy confidence and a creative sense of humor, he'd quickly captured her heart. Maybe that was why it was breaking into a thousand pieces now. She hated to see him go, but he just had to. That bearded face would haunt her for a long time to come she knew, but it was for the best. Wasn't it?

"This is it then. Goodbye, Allie." His voice was surprisingly calm ... then he simply turned and walked out her apartment.

His cool reaction only enraged her more. *How dare he act so nonchalant?*

Alexia slammed the door after him as a last exclamation to their most-recent fight.

She lifted a shaking hand to her mouth as she held back the tears that threatened to spill forth. He wasn't worth crying over.

The revving of an engine outside drew her to the window. Sure enough, it was Robert. Maybe he wasn't so unaffected after all?

His sports car revved again as he quickly backed out of the apartment parking lot space and peeled out onto the road, driving out of her life forever.

Tears flooded down as she watched the last trace of the car's taillights fade away into the distance.

Robert's out of my life for good. That's what she wanted, right?

For some reason, she felt like she'd lost more than a lover. She'd lost her best friend, too.

* * * *

Why does Alexia have to be so stubborn and demanding right now? He had other things on his mind. Didn't she understand that?

Rob peeled out onto the street from the apartment parking lot, wondering to himself what exactly had gone wrong today. The gray late afternoon sky threatened to open up and pour down icy rain at any moment, fitting his mood perfectly.

She seems to bring up marriage at the worst possible times. Last time was a year ago, around their second year anniversary. Now she'd started dropping hints again that she wanted to get married. He was in the middle of writing his book, which he did in his almost non-existent spare time. Money was really tight too. Freelance writers only made so much money, living from one meager paycheck to the next. Short magazine articles paid peanuts, and he had lived a subsistence life, until his novel was picked up by a major publisher.

Of course, he hoped it would get published. His entire future was pending on the sales of the book. If it did well, he could write more novels and live comfortably doing what he loved--writing. Then again, if sales were poor, he could very well end up in a dry cleaner's washing dirty clothes.

Right now he worried about the future sales. How could he drag Alexia into his world if sales were poor? If she could only wait until he could give her the things she deserved—a good home in the suburbs, freedom to pursue her own dream to write, and, eventually, children.

It wasn't that he didn't want to marry Alexia. He did. It was just that the timing

was off. He wanted to wait until he could provide her with all the things he wanted to give her.

Should he turn around and go back to tell her they could talk about marriage once he was sure of his writing career?

No. Since she was so upset with him, he'd stay away for a while, at least until his book was out in stores a few months from now. Then he would go back and ask her to marry him. He just needed a little more time.

Chapter One
Fifteen years later

Alexia's eyes snapped open as she was awakened by the contractions of a dream-induced orgasm. The dream man that made her body react was no stranger. It was Robert.

Even after fifteen years apart, he still invaded her dreams. Not only time separated them, but a marriage, two children, a career, and a divorce, as well.

Alexia had gotten engaged a year after separating from him, then married a year after that. She had been swept off her feet by a suave, intelligent med student promising a life of love and happiness. Only the lifespan turned out to be a mere eight years. One night, Tom had come home saying he wanted a divorce. It was not entirely unexpected. Alexia knew Tom had been sleeping with a young nursing student, but now he wanted to marry her.

Alexia couldn't regret her marriage to Tom, however. In their time together, they'd had two beautiful twin daughters--Victoria and Elizabeth, now six years old.

Not long after she became pregnant with the twins, he'd begun to lose vision of her as a sexual being and had begun having an affair. When Alexia actually became "Mommy," his desire had cooled even further. Completely tired after taking care of newborn twins, his lack of interest was a blessing.

After her divorce, Alexia found her only sexual partner in her dreams. Robert. He'd haunted her through the years, meeting her in those dreams to love and laugh through the nights like they had so long ago.

But if they connected again, would he still be afraid of commitment like he was so long ago? Did his successful writing career still take precedence over all? When they'd been together, she had been twenty-one and fresh out of college, ready to start living her life, while Rob had been twenty-seven and on the verge of his first big break in the publishing world. Maybe she had been a bit too harsh on him and should have waited longer before pressing to get married?

There was so much she missed about Robert. He'd made her days brighter when he would find something to joke about. He had a natural talent to make her laugh, and she was always a sucker for a man with a sense of humor. There were also those quiet times when they would just watch television together, enjoying the easy closeness. Even when they went out to perform the most mundane tasks, such as shopping, she had to touch him in some way. Just the warm feel of his hand in hers made her feel comforted and close. They had shared a connection she had never found with Tom.

Now, at thirty-six, Alexia knew she was an idiot for letting Robert walk out of her life. Instead of waiting for him to be ready for marriage and children, she had let him go and she'd ended up married to someone else. The only benefit of having that man in her life had been her daughters, who had helped her through the troubled times of the divorce.

Unfortunately, yesterday Tom had picked them up for a fun-filled summer with his new wife. Six long weeks without their happy voices would be torture, but Alexia had been determined not let it get her down. At least she hadn't let Tom see her pain. She'd flashed a wide grin as he showed up in his new SUV to drive the girls down to his beachfront condo in Panama City.

It was easy to maintain her smile because, despite how she felt about Tom and his lack of faithfulness, she wanted her girls to have quality time with their dad, and memories of loving parents ... even ones who weren't married any more.

With the summer free from her job as a third-grade teacher at the local elementary school, along with the girls away on their own summer retreat, Alexia intended to use her time to write another book. Having written three short romances in the past with some success, she hoped to write something longer this summer. Maybe she could be the next Jude Deveraux or Johanna Lindsey?

After getting up and throwing on a robe and slippers, she fixed herself a quick cup of coffee and sat down outside on her patio to enjoy the morning sun. When was the last time it had been this quiet in the backyard? She honestly couldn't say. Vicky and Beth were a constant flurry of activity from the early morning until the evening. Usually, the only time Alexia had to herself was after they went to bed at eight o'clock. Not that she had much energy left to do much else than fall into bed, though, where her dream mind made up for the lack of a life away from the girls.

The dreams of Robert came more frequently these days, though she had no idea why. When had she last sat and consciously given him much thought since the break-up? Probably not too often, but he'd wandered into her thoughts now and again, even while she was married to Tom. She'd made the conscious effort not to spend too much time in remembrance, though. The pain was too much to bear at times.

Now she was free from a doomed marriage, but there was no way she could get the courage up to go and see if Robert wanted to try again at a relationship. He led a much different life now as a best-selling mystery author.

She bought his books, just to have some small way of being close to him. Pitiful, she knew, but it was the only thing she could do. Whenever Robert put out a book--about every year--Alexia would be one of the first to buy a copy. Not a huge mystery fan, she always read it anyway, recognizing the personal details of the man she had once known so intimately. She even recognized herself in some of the female characters, although not always in a flattering light. Not that she blamed him.

The years had rolled by in simplicity until the eventual divorce. Now she wondered about her future. While many people found the courage and strength to search for love again, Alexia asked herself if she could take another risk with her heart. Two strikes were enough to make anyone gun-shy. If she struck out for a third time, would she ever recover?

Finishing her coffee, Alexia went inside to shower and dress for the day. Not that she had to do it--writers could stay home in their jammies and not shower for days if they wanted to. Who would care if she wrote looking like a slob? However, today she preferred to go out to a local bookstore's café with her laptop and do some of her writing there.

Something about a bookstore motivated her. After all, if J.K. Rowling had written her Harry Potter novels in a coffee shop, why not Alexia, too?

Once dressed, she paused in front of the mirror to quickly pull back her long, dark hair into a ponytail. The faded denim shirt and khaki shorts reflected her casual style. She wished she'd lost those extra clinging pounds she'd gained from pregnancy, but she liked to snack on cookies too much to give them up. After slipping on worn-out sandals, Alexia grabbed her laptop and purse, and left her empty house.

As she got into her car, the midmorning sun felt warm against her skin, promising a typical Florida summer day. At least here in north Florida they did not get the daily thunderstorms like Orlando. They rolled through almost like clockwork down there.

In thirty minutes, she arrived at her favorite bookstore's parking lot. As she locked her car and turned towards the store, she saw the standee outside announcing an author signing. Wondering if she knew the writer, she squinted against the morning glare. Then the words cleared and she read them slowly, gasping in shock.

"New York Times best-selling author, Robert Matheson here today to sign his latest release, *Fatal Kiss*." Alexia read the sign aloud, trying to come to grips with the thought Robert was here in Tallahassee.

This morning's erotic dream flashed in her memory as she stood staring at the sign. Dare she even go in and see the man who still made her climax at just the mere thought of him? And what if he didn't even recognize her after all these years? She had changed after having the girls, a few extra pounds rounding out her curvaceous body.

Maybe I should've given up those cookies? Would he feel the same strong attraction he'd felt so long ago? The thought of him seeing her naked was like plunging into a river of ice as she thought of the extra pounds she acquired over fifteen years, along with a cesarean section scar. She certainly didn't want him seeing that!

No, she decided. *I'll steer clear of the book signing*. In fact, maybe writing at home today was a better idea after all.

Then she realized she was letting a man push her away from what she wanted--to spend the day in her favorite café, writing. And she intended to do just that. Who knew, maybe a glimpse of Rob from across the store would inspire a hot love scene? She could see it now, sweaty bodies sliding up against each other in repeated, heated matings. She shuddered at the image, groaning inwardly. Damn, she needed a man. Not just any man. She needed a night with Robert. But did she want a one-night stand or something more?

With a deep breath, Alexia pushed open the door and strode in, holding her head high as her heart pounded wildly in her chest. She would face the ghost of her past and see if he'd been worth pining over the past fifteen years.

* * * *

Okay, he's worth it.

Alexia had arrived before the signing began, so she placed her laptop on a small table in the café, giving her a perfect view of the signing table already set up and ready. His past books, along with his latest, sat in high piles on the floor and around the table in elaborate stacks. Obviously the store manager expected a big turnout for the event.

As she saw hoards of women and a few men buzzing about, she knew the

manager had planned correctly.

Then Robert appeared and women began pushing to get a closer spot in line to the author. He still had a contagious smile and laugh that charmed anyone around him. Pure charisma made him attractive to all he encountered. A successful writing career made him even more tantalizing to most of the women pushing to meet him. The fact that he was single and straight was like catnip, attracting and enticing.

Dressed in a tan sport coat and dark brown dress pants, Robert was the picture of a successful author, exuding casual comfort with a sexy confidence. She bit her bottom lip as a heated excitement surged through her from looking at him. She pictured herself stripping off those clothes and tasting the skin beneath. A small moan caught in her throat.

She continued to watch through the potted palm plant beside her, giving her perfect coverage if he were to turn and look her way. From here, she had a good view of the side of his face, and she could hear almost everything he said. Or laughed was more like it, as he seemed to be in an excellent mood. He charmed as the women flashed their pearly smiles and tanned flesh, and he ate it up. *Of course, what man wouldn't?*

Feeling jealous wasn't her right anymore, but Alexia was anyway. She wished he would look at her with a winking eye and that charming smile.

He still wore a beard as he had all those years ago, and his dark wavy hair, now peppered with streaks of gray, was trimmed neatly, but showed signs of only being combed by fingers rather than any brush. Was that beard still as stimulating against the skin when he would lick and suck her hardening nipples?

Letting out another soft moan, Alexia felt that jolt of searing heat flow through her again. It was the same each time she visualized Robert touching her, kissing her, making love to her. Even after fifteen years, it had never changed. Liquid heat gathered between her thighs even now. She should have known seeing him again would provoke such a reaction. Her body yearned for his touch as her heart ached for his love. But could he ever give them another chance?

Better still, could she trust him to not walk away in the end? Could she trust her heart to him, the man that had hurt her so long ago? Was she willing to give any man a chance to show her love?

Chapter Two

Robert had the strange feeling he was being watched. It was an incredibly odd sensation, especially at a routine book signing. Sales had been excellent for *Fatal Kiss*, and he couldn't be more pleased. Fans lined up at each new city waiting to meet him, but the one face he longed to see never appeared.

It was still hard to believe it had been fifteen years since he'd last seen Alexia. His plan to wait until his first book came out, and then ask her to marry him had backfired. By the time he was ready, he had read in the newspaper about her engagement to some rich family's son from Florida.

Later, he had read about their wedding. Robert didn't know how to feel afterwards. He had wanted her in his life, but she was another man's wife. Hope that she would show up at one of his appearances always resided in the back of his mind, especially when he visited Tallahassee, knowing she lived in the area.

Ever since they'd parted ways, he had wished to share with her the fruits of his success. She had been around during the writing of that breakout book, and her influence was ever present. That she found someone so quickly after they split often angered him. It had hurt him more than he had been willing to admit. But then again, she had gotten from another what he had been too apprehensive of giving himself--marriage and commitment.

He had wanted to give those to her, but he'd failed to tell her. Maybe he should have turned his car around that day so long ago, and told her his plans. He certainly would've been happier through the years with the woman he loved by his side.

As the years rolled by, there had been other women in his life, but none he ever could take too seriously. They'd provided physical comfort, but no emotional attachments. He just had a hard time trusting his heart to any woman after Alexia. He now knew he should've married her that very weekend.

What the hell had prevented him from turning his car around and going back to her? He should've done just that, even if he'd had to pound on her door to let him in. Damn his stupidity back then to try and establish his career over securing the love of a woman. Not just any woman--Allie, his woman. He was not only stupid, but he had been stubborn. All of it had cost him dearly. Fifteen years without her by his side. It was lonely without her to share in his success. Sometimes--even though he hated to admit it--the woman by his side determined the measure of a man.

Probably the most troubling part of the entire situation was that he'd never tried to contact her later. She got engaged a year later, so he had all that time to call her and ask for them to try again. But he wanted her to come to him, asking for that chance. Damn it, he was beyond stupid.

By the time he heard of her engagement, he had almost broken down to contact her. But, he was too late. He had missed his chance. There was no turning back the hands

of time at that point. He let her go to a new man, and he remained behind, wondering how he could've done things differently.

As he sat there signing his books for the lined-up fans, the time seemed to fly by thankfully. Thinking of Allie made his heart ache for her. Even though he continued to hope that one day, he would see her again.

Only, the face he looked for still didn't appear.

* * * *

"Why don't you go on over and get a book signed, Ms. Bell?"

Alexia hadn't seen the café waitress come up to the table and jumped at the sound of her voice. Turning, she saw Mary, a young auburn-haired college student with a petite figure and a warm smile.

"You don't understand, Mary. I used to know him before he became famous," Alexia said as she glanced back at Robert through the palm leaves.

"How well did you know him?"

"Intimately," she said on a breath, feeling her pulse increase at the thought.

"Wow, you're lucky. I know most women would kill for the chance to know him that well. I mean, look at him."

Alexia and Mary watched the women standing in line with stars in their eyes as he flashed a smile and charmed them all.

"I know," Alexia said softly.

"How long ago was it that you knew him anyway?"

The question drew back Alexia's attention to the pretty redhead. "Fifteen years ago. I wanted to get married, and he wanted a career."

"Bummer," she said, pausing before adding, "Well, why not go over and say hi at least?" Mary's brown eyes darted from Alexia to Robert.

Alexia's gaze slid back to Robert talking to another female reader. *What's the worse thing that could happen?* She could think of a million things at least. He could yell at her to get the hell out of his sight, or ignore her completely, or worse yet, not even remember or recognize her. Or he could simply be happy to see her.

Her nervous hand moved to her head where her hair was still pulled back. Why couldn't she have at least put more attention to her makeup this morning? She must look a complete mess.

Almost reading her mind, Mary piped in, "You can go to the restroom real quick and just put on some lipstick and blush. And I'd take your hair down. You have such beautiful, long hair. I wish mine was that color."

"Thanks." Reluctantly, she followed Mary back to the restroom. After a few strokes of a brush through her dark hair and some light makeup touches, Alexia felt sort of ready to face her past.

She picked up one of Robert's books and went to stand in line. When she glanced over to the café, Mary gave her a thumbs-up. Alexia flashed an unsure smile in response.

Insane. She was insane for doing this. She would be lucky if she didn't pass out before getting to talk to Robert. Her heart pounded so hard and fast, she heard it in her ears. A fluttering had started in her stomach when she found out he was going to be there, and it only increased in speed when she decided to stand in line.

Lord, what's he going to do when he sees me? She prayed whatever it was she could endure it. *One more person in front of me now.* So far, she had managed to keep her back turned to Robert. He concentrated more on each individual, not the other fans in line. As she listened him exchange small talk with the woman in front of her, the sound of his voice made her body react in awareness.

The woman walked away, and it was Alexia's turn. She turned slowly towards him and looked into those dark eyes as the smile faded from his face.

Oh no, she thought.

"Allie," he whispered his pet name for her.

A name she hasn't heard in years. No one called her that but him.

Her heart ached and tears filled up in her eyes. *Oh, please, don't break down now.* "Hi, Rob." Her heart practically skipped a beat as she tried to smile without fainting from nervousness.

He stood up and strode around the table to her. She stood poised in shock as he towered over her by at least a foot. God, she loved that about him. His body exuded power and strength, so male and appealing. Just his sheer height compared to hers was enough to make her pussy react with the telltale moisture of her desire. Her panties were definitely soaking. Even her clit seemed to come to life at his closeness, the invisible bond between them pulling her to him. It was always there years ago, and now, she recognized its power over her body.

When his hands came up to her shoulders, he paused. "Married?"

The warmth from his hands seeped through the fabric of her blouse, sending heated waves throughout her body.

"Divorced," she answered in a hoarse voice, surprised by this unexpected reaction. Was he going to do what she thought he was about to do?

"Thank God." He clasped her face between his hands, leaned down, and kissed her, gaining the applause of the bookstore patrons.

He pulled her to him by the shoulders and her body instantly recognized his, her softer curves melting into his harder masculine body. His erection pressed into her abdomen, igniting the heat within her to a roaring inferno. God, how long had it been since she felt such intense burning?

His lips moved over hers slowly and seductively, tantalizing with each touch. Then his tongue slid across her lower lip, enticing and inviting her to open to him. Tasting like mint and coffee, Robert once again sent her senses reeling.

She glided her hands along his back, brushing her fingers across his flexing muscles. Intoxicated. She was getting drunk on the erotic sensations building within her.

The softness of his beard brushed her cheek as he deepened the kiss, sending shivers of pleasure down her spine, peaking at the apex of her thighs. Moaning, she was swept away by the sensations. No dream had ever felt so good and this was the answer to many of those unconscious hopes that had held her through the night.

Dear God. She melted into his embrace, giving into her dormant needs that were awakened only by Robert. As his tongue stroked hers, she surrendered to him. It was as though she'd come home into the security of his arms. She belonged right there. Her body knew it, and so did her heart as well as her soul. But was this time any different than

fifteen years ago?

Then one of the women in line made a comment. "Whew, I'm going to be jumping my husband when I get home."

Rob must have heard it, too, breaking their kiss. Laughing slightly, he straightened to his full height. Alexia couldn't help laughing, too, embarrassed as well as turned on. Why did he always have that effect on her? It never changed. He molded her into a pliable lump of clay, yielding to his touch.

Sobering, she realized she wanted him. Now. No damn dream could be better than the real thing, the real in-the-flesh Robert.

Gazing down at her, she could read his thoughts on his face, intense and palpable. He wanted her, too. She instinctively knew he needed to feel the passion they'd walked away from years ago.

Damn it, she had been an idiot to let him go.

* * * *

Years of dreaming couldn't have prepared him for the flood of emotions at seeing her again. All he could think of was getting her close to him right away. Only at the last moment before offering her the passion he had held in reserve for fifteen years did he remember why it had been so long. She had been married.

But now, she was divorced. And free.

Relief. He had taken a quick moment to feel the relief at the news before plundering her mouth.

Need. He needed her more than he'd ever realized. Sure he had missed her through the years, but he'd tried to bury his feelings, hoping to ease the pain by not remembering. Now, she responded to his kisses with the same feverish yearning, ripping down the protective barrier he had spent so long building around his heart.

Want. He wanted everything from her. Her mind. Her body. Her heart.

Her body rubbing against him only made his instant erection even harder. Those full breasts brushed against his chest, hardening in the contact. He could feel those nipples become firm like little pebbles as they connected with him. It had taken most of his control not to just throw her down on the table and take her right there in the store. *Now, that'd be some author appearance!*

When he overheard one of the women standing in line make a comment, he took the opportunity to ease away from Allie, his body screaming in protest.

Looking down into her beautiful face, he could see she had been just as affected as he by their embrace. He needed to hold out a little longer, finishing the job he came to do. Then, he could take the time and see if Allie wanted to ... what?

Sex. Hot, no-holds barred sex.

What would she say to such a request? He had loved her years ago, so couldn't they possibly find some way to rekindle that love they lost?

Lord, he hoped so.

"Allie," he said softly. "Wait for me to finish up here, then I'll take you to lunch, okay?" He stroked her cheek as she looked up into his face, nodding.

He watched her walk over towards the café then sit down at a table hidden behind a large palm plant. Smiling to himself, he knew that was the answer to the strange feeling

of being watched. Allie had watched him, hidden away.

About a half an hour later, Robert was through with the book signing and joined Alexia at her table. She had been reading *Fatal Kiss*.

"Looks like you have another best seller here," she said as she looked up from the pages and closed the book.

"Yeah, it's already in the top ten, according to the *New York Times*." He examined the changes time had brought about in her. This woman just got better over the years, and yet she seemed unaware of her attractiveness. Of course, he had always preferred full-bodied women. Who could get excited over a skinny waif when you could have a woman all soft and voluptuous?

Damn, he just wanted to sink right into her.

"Allie, you're absolutely beautiful, you know."

The underlying tension crackled between them as she sat in silence, his eyes roaming over her body.

When she shifted in her seat, he sensed she felt a little uncomfortable.

"Robert, you always did know how to make me feel self-conscious. I do not look beautiful. I look like I've aged fifteen years, and had two terrific children and a jerk of a husband."

"I'm sorry to hear about your divorce."

"He started running around on me while I was pregnant with the twins. It hurt, but I thought it would end once the girls came, but it didn't. At that point, I didn't have the strength to try saving our marriage.

"When he finally asked for a divorce, I was thankful. It took a good year to finally settle it all. We've been divorced for four years now." She sipped at the paper cup half-filled with coffee, glancing off to the side as she thought back to her married days.

"He was a jerk for messing around while you were carrying *his* children." Anger bubbled up, focused toward Allie's insensitive ex-husband. Didn't he know he had a good woman in Allie? What an ass to start cheating while she was pregnant. If he ever met the jerk, he would deck the asshole. Trying to simmer down, he took a deep breath then asked, "You said you had twins. That's amazing. What're their names?"

"Vicky and Beth. They're down with Tom for the summer at Panama Beach with his new, younger wife."

"Do they all get along?"

"They're too young to understand everything going on. They just know Daddy doesn't live with Mommy." A tear spilled from her eye and, as it ran down her face, he leaned closer and brushed it away gently. Her eyes gazed up into his, searching for a hint of emotion, an inkling of the tenderness they had once shared.

"Allie, you know—" he began, unsure if he should admit to anything right now. *What will she say if I tell her I wanted to marry her fifteen years ago, but thought I should wait 'til everything was perfect?* The time he'd spent waiting had cost him so much. He thought he had lost her forever.

But here she was now, in front of him, so close, an image he'd dreamed of for so long, but never brought himself to believe was possible. She was the woman who'd filled his empty heart with her love long ago. Could she find it in her heart to forgive him and

give him another chance to find the love they had once shared?

“Rob, what?” She brought him back from his racing thoughts.

A look of concern shadowed her face. She held his hand in hers, an act he'd never appreciated fully until now. Funny how her simple touch made the wall around his heart want to melt away.

“Allie, I was a fool to let you slip away. I'd be a bigger fool to let this opportunity slide by, as well. For so many years, I dreamed of contacting you, but I'd read you were married. I didn't want to intrude on your life when you were making a go elsewhere.” Claspng her fingers between his, he brought them to his lips and whispered, “I really wanted you in my life. I've missed you so much.”

As he stroked her knuckles with his thumb, her eyes slowly closed as she inhaled an uneasy breath, and said, “I missed you, too, but you have to understand. I've been hurt. You hurt me. Then Tom. Well, I was glad to see him go, but still, that's one more relationship that ended badly. I just don't know if I am ready for any of this. Having you in my dreams is very different than having you in reality. You can't leave me in my dreams.” As she blinked away another tear, he watched it leave a moist trail down her cheek before brushing it away.

When her eyes looked up into his again, he replied in a raspy voice, “I'm so sorry for hurting you, love. Please find it in your heart to forgive me. If I could turn back time, there are so many things I would've done differently. All we can do is proceed from here. It's what we do now that will seal our fates. Do we let this opportunity slip through our fingers, or do we grab at it and explore what we could have?”

“I want to take another chance, Rob. I really do.”

In answer, he said lowly, “Me, too, Allie. Oh, me, too.” He then leaned in closer and kissed her, tender and promising.

Chapter Three

All conscious thoughts fled her mind as his lips moved over hers softly and slowly. It wasn't a lustful kiss as their first had been a few moments before. This one overflowed with a tenderness she'd missed.

She opened herself to him, welcoming him into her heart with little fight. She couldn't even think of resisting him. So many years of longing seemed to disappear as he kissed her. It was though he had never left--no dreadful scene of him walking out of her apartment, no tearful nights regretting his departure, nothing. All those memories were scattered to the wind at this moment.

She'd dreamed of Robert for so long, and now here he was, telling her through his touch how he shared those dreams. They'd kept a connection through the years, meeting in their unconscious thoughts.

As if reading her mind, he whispered against her lips, "I kissed you so many times in my dreams, Allie."

"Me, too, Robert."

"I made love to you like I used to. Sometimes I'd wake up so fucking hard for you. God, I wanted you there with me."

"We met in the dream world then," she said softly. "So many times, I'd wake up because you made me" She couldn't finish as he covered her mouth with his, this kiss more passionate, more hungry.

Sensations swirled about her in a rainbow of colors as he stroked his tongue against hers. Memories of him using his tongue against her clit made her moan. She ached for release after too many years of empty sex, and too many nights of unanswered desires. Within a matter of moments, Rob had already stoked the fire within and satisfaction was only a lick away. If she weren't in such a public place, she'd reach over and draw his hand to her apex and come beneath his touch.

This was torture. She groaned with the burning desire to just lie down and let him take her right there. The fantasy of him pounding into her wet cunt on top of the coffee bar table just seemed to make her wetter, more excited.

She'd wrap her legs about his waist as he entered her, holding him in her moist heat. Her vaginal walls would clamp down around his enormous cock and she'd cry out with her release. It wouldn't take long with Robert inside her for her to come to climax. Holding off such a delightful orgasm would be impossible as he continued to pump into her. He'd answer every dream, every desire with each thrust.

Alexia had to mentally shake herself to snap out of the erotic fantasy of his fucking her in public. Hard to do when he'd cupped her face between his hands, devouring her, inhaling her, feasting upon her.

His neatly trimmed beard brushed against her face, and tiny thrills sparked through her body. Bringing her fingers up to his face, she stroked its softness as he

continued kissing her.

As she touched him, he moaned, breaking the kiss, then leaning back only a breath away. "If we continue like this, we'll have another cop come by and tell us to go get a room," he said in a light but husky tone.

Alexia leaned back chuckling. "You remember that?" He'd broken away just in time. She was ready to touch her swollen nubbin to find some sort of relief. *Nice tension breaker, Robert.*

"How could I forget? You were mortified." He laughed wholeheartedly, and she loved hearing it. He had a laugh that was contagious, and he'd usually managed to get her to laugh with him. She loved his sense of humor, and her heart had been a goner back then, just as it was now.

It would be so easy to give her heart away to him, but wouldn't it get broken again? She'd missed their easy banter and closeness over the years, and he'd said he'd missed her, too. He'd asked to be forgiven. She wanted to think things were different now.

She was different.

And so was he.

The same old passion still lingered beneath the surface, though, and she wanted so much to take another chance. *How many times do you get to find that mysterious sensual connection with a man in one lifetime?*

Once. She had known it all her life it was with Robert, but he'd walked out of her life, she'd thought, never to return. At the time, she had believed it was a good idea, but later she had known her heart would always belong to Robert.

"Well, how about I take you to lunch, Allie? Still like Italian?" His voice had lost its huskiness, trying to ease the tension of the moment.

"You know I love it. There's an Italian restaurant right up Apalachee Parkway, not far from here."

He held her chair as she got up, gathering her laptop and purse. The day would be a bust as far as writing was concerned, but she would not pass up the chance for a few hours with Robert.

They walked out into the Florida sunshine, already pounding its heat mercilessly. Robert stripped off his coat revealing his white short-sleeve Oxford dress shirt. It was so unlike what she was used to seeing him in--a t-shirt and jeans.

Still incredibly tall--a certain weakness of hers--right along with a nice, soft beard, he was her image of a desirable male, complete with a sexy confidence that was enough to drive her wild. Having been strong during her crumbling marriage, caring for young twins, and starting a writing career, she just wanted to surrender and have someone else be strong for a change.

"How are we working this? You want to just ride with me and show me the way?" he asked.

"Sounds like a plan. My car will be okay here." *Overnight if necessary.* She smiled to herself.

He led her over to a car, obviously a rental by the rear sticker in the window. "Impressive," she said as he unlocked the door for her on the passenger side.

"Might as well go with the best while traveling, especially when the publisher is paying."

Sliding into the leather seat, the new car smell mixed with the scent of leather filled her nostrils. Funny how she had always associated the smell of leather with Robert, probably because of the leather jacket he'd always worn when they dated. As she ran her fingers over the buttery softness of the car seat, she thought about writing something about the use of leather in her next book because, to her, its sensual softness equaled sex.

He got in the driver side and buckled up. Then looking over at her, he asked, "What are you thinking of with that grin on your face?"

"Oh, nothing." Trying to chase those images of leather and sweat from her mind, she directed him to the restaurant.

A few moments later, they arrived and parked the car. He got out and opened the car door for her. *Like a gentleman should*, she thought. When she got out, he wrapped his arms around her and kissed her. His tongue slid into her mouth for a taste, then his lips traveled along her jaw and down her neck. Alexia tilted her head to the side to allow better access, and when he nipped the tender skin of her neck, she let out a tiny gasp.

"You're trying to drive me crazy, aren't you?" she gasped on a trembling breath.

"Is it working?" he asked as he tongue-bathed her ear lobe, causing shots of excitement to surge through her body, right down to her weeping pussy.

"Hell, yeah."

"Better stop then," he said as he backed a step away, then closed the car door. Taking her hand in his, they walked into the restaurant.

Stop ... just like that? She wished she could turn off the fire ignited within so easily, but that would be pretty difficult when her every nerve ending was on alert. Taking a few deep breaths as they waited in the lobby, she tried to calm the quaking in her stomach and the pounding of her heart. She hoped she wouldn't sweat too much all over his hand. *How embarrassing that would be.*

"Two?" the young host asked them, holding two menus ready.

Robert leaned over and spoke quietly to him, then the maitre d' nodded at them and said, "This way, please."

The host, probably about twenty-one, led them through the crowded dining areas. They passed a few empty tables, but the host led them further into the restaurant, until they arrived in a back extra dining room, now deserted, except for them.

Then it dawned on her ... Robert had asked for a private area.

Uh-oh.

Seated in the secluded dining room, she asked, "Why are we back here all by our lonesome?"

"Because I wanted you to myself, and I thought we could use some privacy to become reacquainted."

He looked innocent, but Alexia knew better. There was a devilish plot in the works. Raising an eyebrow, she intended to just play along. *Why not?* She wanted to be alone with him just as much anyway.

They sat across from each other in a back booth. After ordering some burgundy and their meals, they chatted, catching up on the last fifteen years apart. Alexia talked

about her girls and their various adventures as babies, and the trials of being the mom to young twins, especially when her marriage had been on the outs.

Robert discussed his writing career and the various things he had done to keep the ideas fresh and realistic. At one point, he'd visited the set of a major movie production just to do research for one of his novels about a fictional famous director's murder.

Alexia was glued to the conversation, mesmerized by how much had happened over time. It never seemed like much while living it firsthand, but in looking back, there were a lot of changes and experiences gained along the way.

As the conversation continued, Alexia felt more and more at ease talking to Robert again. It seemed as if hardly any time had gone by ... like they had only parted ways a mere week before.

Odd how a person could find a magical connection with someone else. She had felt it years ago, and she felt it now. She just hoped he felt it, too.

"Want something for dessert?" he asked, sipping the last of the burgundy in his glass.

Alexia had drunk two glasses of burgundy, and it was now sending a warm comfortable easiness through her agitated nerves. Her body had been put on alert at the thought of seeing him before, and her raging hormones only increased at seeing him, kissing, wanting him. The wine's calming effect brought a little relief.

"Sounds good." Thinking for a moment, she suggested, flashing an evil grin, "How about we share some cheesecake?"

He groaned, knowing she enticed him purposely. Food and seduction went hand in hand. Why do so many couples go to a meal before ending up in bed together? Because the act of eating and enjoying a tasty treat, like sinfully delicious rich cheesecake, tempted more than the palate. It invited so much more.

He waved over the waiter and ordered the dessert. Then Robert got up and slid into the seat next to her.

Let the seduction dance begin.

And she looked forward to it.

"I'm going to feed you this cheesecake, and I want you to show me how much you are enjoying it, Allie." He said her name in a husky, barely controlled voice. She could tell he was getting excited, and that made her body react. The flips in her stomach started again. She was so aware of his closeness and intentions. Moisture gathered once again at her pussy, and she felt her clit swelling, aching.

"I want you to lick your lips slowly, and sound out how good it is for me. Let me taste it through you." He leaned his arm across the back of the booth seat as he moved in closer, piercing her with his intense dark eyes.

Swallowing hard, she nodded. The pressure built and Alexia needed some kind of relief. She wanted him terribly badly. He was close now, and she smelled his heady scent of soap and maleness.

The waiter dropped off the cheesecake with two forks and left them alone.

Robert picked up one of the utensils and scooped up some of the creamy dessert. He brought it up to her lips, and her tongue darted out slightly, touching the richness with the tip. She was rewarded with a small moan from him.

Running her tongue slowly over the fork, she illustrated the deliciousness with a little groan. His eyes watched intently to capture each seductive movement of her tongue.

Then she opened her mouth and he slid in the creamy sweetness as she purred her gratification.

Each mouthful was as hypnotizing as the next, and they were keenly aware this was only foreplay. More would come, and they both intended to enjoy every moment.

A third of the way through the dessert, Robert handed her the fork, then placed one hand on her bare knee. She was thankful she'd worn shorts, giving him easy access to touch her skin.

His hand massaged her knee as he instructed her to take another bite. As she scooped up more cheesecake, his fingers traced small circles, traveling up the inside of her thigh. He leaned in closer as his fingers approached her pussy. She craved his touch.

As the fork touched her lips, his hand slipped under her shorts and his thumb stroked the moist fabric of her panties. Gasping, she closed her eyes as she tossed her head back in ecstasy.

He continued the gentle stroking and asked in a hushed tone, "What do you want, Allie? Tell me." He grazed her neck with silken kisses, brushing the softness of his beard against her skin, arousing frenzied shots of sensations down her spine.

She needed ... craved ... him. No one was around--he had made sure of that--so why not? Just the thought of being so sensual in a public place had its own element of excitement and danger.

"Touch me, Robert," she whispered, then added, "Please," as she grasped his cock, rock hard and ready, through his pants.

His mouth covered hers in a hungry kiss as his fingers pushed aside the offending fabric barring his way to the wetness beneath. When his fingers touched her swollen flesh, she gasped, massaging his large cock through his pants harder. His thumb stroked her tingling clit as his fingers slid through her juices.

Moaning, he murmured against her mouth, "Oh, Allie, you're so fucking wet, honey."

She had no time to react as his fingers thrust up into her soaking wet pussy. Any sounds she'd made were against his assaulting mouth, tasting her and the sweetness of the cheesecake. Tongues danced together as he moved his finger in her, touching her G-spot, heightening her pleasure in quick strokes.

Her control broke as her body began its involuntary contractions in a shattering climax. Her scream was muffled by his kisses as she rode the waves brought on by his touch. It was the most erotic moment she'd ever experienced in her life.

As her body's spasms receded, Robert held her closer, running his hand up and down her back. All the while, he whispered to her, though she couldn't hear exactly what he said.

She moved her hand to his face so he would gaze into her eyes. "Please, tell me that meant something to you."

"Yes, it meant something, Allie. In fact, I was wondering if you would" He paused as his eyes lingered over her lips.

"What?"

“I need you, Allie.” His thumb caressed her jaw. Her own musky scent filled her nostrils, and it was strangely erotic.

“I need you, too.”

“Come back to my hotel room with me. I want to really make love to you.”

Chapter Four

Robert waved in the waiter to get the check.

“Don't forget a takeout box for the rest of the cheesecake,” she said with a smile.

“Oh, yeah?” The devil was in his eye again as he turned back to her.

Leaning in closer, she breathed against his mouth, “You haven't had any yet.” Her tongue flicked out, running it across his bottom lip.

“Fuck.”

A throaty laugh bubbled up as she continued her sensual assault, trailing her lips along his jaw and down his neck. He groaned when she pressed his skin between her lips, grazing it with her teeth. Then she whispered, “It's been so damn long, Robert, and I missed you so much. I need to feel you inside me. *Now.*”

“Where is that damn waiter with the check?” he asked impatiently.

Just then, the waiter showed up. Robert handed over his charge card and asked for a to-go container for the leftover cheesecake. In a few minutes, they walked out of the restaurant, their pace quickening as they neared the door.

Once outside, they gazed at each other then sprinted towards the car, laughing breathlessly.

Alexia had no doubts in her mind of the rightness of her present actions. For so long, she'd lived for everyone else. When she was younger, she had followed her parents' rules. Shortly out of college, she had been married, so she lived to please Tom. When Tom had walked out of her life, she had lived for the girls. Right now, in this moment, she lived for herself.

For the first time in years, she had done what she wanted to do, and that had been give herself to the man she'd always loved.

She bit her bottom lip as she sat in the car on the way to his hotel. Had she just admitted to herself that she still loved him? It couldn't be that. They'd just indulged in the mutual lust brought on by seeing each other again. But then again, she had always thought he was her soul mate.

Maybe this hadn't been such a good idea, running off to his hotel room to have what she knew would be mind-blowing sex. *No, not just sex.* It was making love to her. *God, what if he doesn't feel it'll be more than sex?*

Her eyes glided over to him, driving in silence. Then he looked over at her and smiled as he reached over to grasp her hand. When he brought it to his lips, trickles of electric shock waves traveled down her arm, flowing through her body.

It was definitely more than sex.

* * * *

After arriving at the hotel in downtown Tallahassee, he parked the car and they walked into the lobby, hand in hand. Stepping over to the elevator, Robert pushed the up button.

As she got closer to the moment when she would bare herself to him again, she felt the nervousness start to build yet again. Her heart beat so loudly she was surprised he didn't hear it.

They stood waiting face to face and she had the overpowering urge to just have him completely surround her, touch her everywhere. She just needed to feel a part of him, his other half.

Looking straight at him, she gazed at the small patch of chest hair peeking out from just above the top button of his shirt. It had been a favorite spot to taste him when they'd dated. She leaned in and touched her tongue to the spot, tasting and caressing.

He moaned as she savored the faint salty taste of his skin. His breathing became faster as she touched her lips gently to his skin.

Just then the elevator opened.

"That's it, woman. You're not going to be able to walk tomorrow, because you're going to be too fucking sore from today." He backed her into the elevator and up against one of its walls. After pressing the button for his floor, he enclosed her between his arms, one on each side of her shoulders.

"Robert, don't talk about tomorrow. I want this afternoon and tonight to last."

"It will, I promise. I want to make love to you over and over."

There it was, exactly what she needed to hear. It was more than sex. More than lust.

Her arms encircled his neck and she pulled him down to meet her lips in a hungry kiss.

Just then, the elevator doors opened, stopping their kiss as an older couple entered. Robert held her as she turned her back to him. His embrace from behind aroused her when she leaned back, melting against his body. Desire smoldered just beneath the surface, edging to burn out of control.

As the elevator stopped at their floor, they got out and Robert pulled out his key card as he approached the room door. She rubbed up behind him, hugging her body against his once again, needing to feel him closer. But she wanted more.

Oh, she craved much more.

* * * *

The last string of control strained to the breaking point as Robert entered the key card into the door lock. Why had the act of sliding the card key into the slot helped along his excitement? *In. Out. Damn it, too fast.*

When she'd collapsed into him in the elevator, he'd cursed the people who got on a few floors later. She had been so hot and wanting.

Now she held her soft body against his back, breaking his concentration on the simple act of unlocking a door! *In. Out. Nice and slow.* His cock got a little harder.

The little green light flickered and he opened the door, her body still pressed against him as he moved into the room.

After quickly posting the Do Not Disturb sign on the doorknob, he slammed the door closed behind them.

He turned to face her as she loosened her grip on him. Cupping her beautiful face in his hands, he kissed her inviting, full lips.

So beautiful, and she seemed completely unaware of it. Her soft curves were so feminine and alluring, calling out to him, awakening the primal call to mate.

Robert couldn't remember the last time he had felt that urge to make a woman his own, marking her as his. Not even Christine had made him feel such overwhelming sensations to just screw all night, just because.

As fast as he thought of the woman he'd casually dated for the past four years back in Philly, he quickly put her out of his mind. He would deal with all that later. Right now, he needed to get those clothes off of Allie and feel her naked softness against him.

Even as he thought of stripping her, Allie's fingers worked at the buttons of his shirt, greeting the revealed skin with her tongue and moist lips. As she pulled back the shirt from his shoulders, she covered one of his nipples with her mouth, suckling voraciously. His already-hard cock jumped at the contact. She was bound to make him come before he even got naked if he let it continue.

"Allie, stop," he croaked, not too convinced of his own statement because she made his entire body come alive with her mouth, her closeness.

"I can't stop. I need ... I want you. Don't make me wait."

Grasping her roaming hands in his, he looked down at her face, flushed with her own rising passions. "I thought we'd go slow the first time after so long." *Not really, but don't women like it slow?*

"Screw going slow. I've waited fifteen years to be with you again. I need you now!"

He watched as her hands traveled to her blouse, pulling it over her head in one swift movement.

Any thought of going slowly left his mind as he peered at that pair of breasts, encased in a lacy bra not truly intended to hold up such beauties.

Then he was aware she'd stopped undressing. "What's wrong?" he asked.

"I should tell you I had a few changes to my body since I had children."

She looked uneasy, unsure of how to proceed. If she only knew that made him want her that much more.

"Allie, you have a beautiful body, and I love looking at you, feeling you. A few marks are not going to change my opinion."

"It's a big scar, Robert. I had an emergency c-section with the girls." He watched her hand cover her abdomen in a self-protective gesture.

"I don't care. You're so beautiful in my eyes, a scar won't matter."

When she didn't gaze up to his eyes, still appearing she hadn't been convinced he loved what he felt earlier pressed against him, he moved to her and proceeded to kiss her shoulders. He felt her resolve melt in an instant, and she wrapped her arms around his waist.

As she ran her fingernails up his bare back, he reached around and unhooked her bra, releasing her breasts for him to caress. Lifting each in his palms, he tested their weight then stroked his thumbs across the pebble hard nipples, each beckoning for his mouth to claim them. Dipping down, he covered one with his mouth, sucking, licking, tasting.

He licked and suckled one nipple as he gently kneaded her breast, then lavished

the same attention on the other. Then he felt movement in front of his pants as Allie worked on getting them off, and quickly. The pace picked up again, and he reached down to pull off her shorts.

Clothes were scattered on the floor as they got rid of any remaining barriers of fabric. Then it was skin against skin, and as they made contact, actions became frenzied in their rush to rub their naked bodies against each other. His hands trailed down and up her back, over her curves, memorizing the feel of her body. It had been too long since he'd last felt her. Never expecting to ever see her again, let alone touch her again, he felt incredibly lucky. Running his fingers through her long, dark, luxurious hair, he kissed the top of her head, letting the clean scent of her shampoo fill his senses.

"Robert?" Her voice was breathy and sexy.

"Hmm?"

She had let her hair grow over the years, and he really liked the feel of it between his fingers. Soft. Thick. Gorgeous.

"Do you have protection? You know, condoms?"

"Yeah, I think there are some in my suitcase." Breaking contact, he walked over to the closet and started rummaging through his belongings.

* * * *

Allie had taken the opportunity to flip down the bed covers and slip between the cool sheets.

"Uh-huh. Here they are."

As he turned from the closet, she was graced with a nice frontal view of the man that had haunted her sensual dreams all these years.

"So you were expecting some action on this tour?" Her eyes traveled down his form. She was turned on by his body. His tall frame was of medium build, not overly muscular, but just right. His chest was feathered with dark hair, as well as his legs and arms. Definitely masculine. And a line of hair traveled down his abdomen to the nest holding the large cock she remembered as filling her to the hilt. Staring at it, she swore it grew bigger before her eyes.

"Well, I was right, wasn't I?" He took one, then set the box on the night table.

She laughed sexily, moving restlessly beneath the sheets. Just looking at him naked made her hot, combustible. She needed that cock inside her. Her pussy ached, dripping with anticipation.

"Get in here," she commanded, pulling back the covers.

"Not until I get to see you like you just did me." He snatched away the covers from her, baring her body to his eyes.

Chapter Five

He didn't know what the hell she was talking about earlier when she'd worried about her body. She was perfect, his image of the ideal woman. She had shapely legs, tanned from living in Florida year round, and muscular calves, strong enough to wrap around his waist and guide him into her again and again. Her curves were soft and tempting, inviting him to run his hands over every inch in exploration, soaking in her beauty with each touch.

As he stood gazing down at her sprawled on the bed, a small smile played at her lips as she teasingly opened her legs slightly, inviting his gaze to her pussy. Moisture glistened among the closely trimmed curls as her outer lips parted in invitation. His mouth watered at the thought of plunging into that slick entrance, pounding himself to the hilt inside her.

"Come on. I'm waiting."

He looked back up at her face. She licked her lips seductively, teasing, alluring. Her breasts thrust forward invitingly as she lifted her arm above her head.

Damn, she was a temptress, from her candy-apple red painted toenails to her thick tresses, now fanned out on the pillow.

He ripped the condom package open and took out the rubber, then rolled it on swiftly.

She wanted it fast, hard, and quick? He'd give it to her. Then he'd take the time later to lavish in her body's treasures, slowly making love to her like he'd relived over and over within his fantasies.

Bounding onto the bed, he landed next to her, covering her body with his in one quick movement. She laughed, but then he began attacking her mouth in hungered kisses, thrusting his tongue against hers, tasting remnants of their cheesecake seduction from the restaurant and the delicacy that was uniquely Allie.

Her fingers grasped his head, urging his plundering of her to become more demanding. His cock rubbed along the slick lips of her pussy, and she pushed up her hips against him, encouraging him to enter.

There was something about Allie and how perfectly she answered his sexual need. She reacted to each caress, each touch, with an enthusiasm that made him crazy with desire. Her body fit like she was made just for him to love, and she had no clue of her own attractiveness, her natural feminine allure. As the head of his cock slid through her juices, he moaned. She was so hot and ready for him. Her sheath had been a delight years ago, and he relished plunging into her heat.

When she encased his penis, he thought that was his own private heaven on earth. No other woman had ever felt the same. Allie was always a bit hotter and slicker and a lot more desirable. And he knew, in moments, she'd clamp down on his length with those inner walls holding him in place. Damn, she had a grip that would make a man want to

die in its grasp.

Ramming, he impaled her pulsating wetness. She gasped at the sudden intrusion, but recovered in an instant as she moved her hips in a quick, beating rhythm. He met her thrusts with vigor, searching for a rapid gratification to the blaze threatening to burn out of control.

She was hotter than ever, and she surrounded him with all that delectable heat. Moving within her center, he connected with her body as deeply as possible. He wanted to just dive into that pulsing core and stay there for all time.

Her breathing quickened, moaning with each sensation of arriving closer to the edge of release. Pressure from his every movement rubbed against the swollen flesh of her clit, bringing her closer to the breaking point.

He loved making her come, and he could tell she was closing in fast. He had a hard time holding back, but he wanted to enjoy each thrust to the fullest. Buried in her to the base of his cock had always made her whimper and pant. God, he loved those little sex noises she made. It was like music to the beat of flesh drumming together.

His balls slapped against her buttocks, and his thighs rubbed along the inside of her silky thighs. The scent of Allie, intoxicating and heady, filled his senses. He dipped down and covered her nipple with his mouth, tasting her again, sampling all that was this incredible, sensual woman.

"Robert, I'm so close. I have to come." Her eyes closed. She tossed her head side to side. She was at the brink of complete surrender.

He tipped his head and licked her cheek, whispering hoarsely against her skin, "Come for me. I need to hear you, feel you." Then he said her name with all the longing of waiting, wanting, for fifteen years. "Allie."

That was when the barrier of containment broke. All control fled as her muscles contracted, clenching around his cock, sucking out his essence, inducing his own earth-shattering climax. He pounded into her as they rode out the tidal waves in pure, harmonious unity.

He thought his entire being was engulfed in flames, hot and searing. As he spilled all that was built up into her womb, he truly felt as though he'd entered paradise. Warmer than the topical sun beating down on his skin, this was a heat that emanated from within. Their connection was everything he remembered and more. It was deep and penetrating beyond the physical act.

He was still in love with Allie--the one who got away. Only such an intense emotion could describe the inferno between them at this moment. It had simmered and lain dormant all these years, and now, with her beneath him, open to share herself once again, it all flickered to life into a powerful blaze. The sheer intensity of his raging emotions was more than he could take.

He nuzzled her neck and whispered endearments to her, voicing some of his feelings, but never uttering the words he longed to say. Why he didn't, he wasn't entirely too clear about. As they'd joined on many levels just now, he was sure that actions did indeed speak louder than any whispered words of love.

As their bodies recovered, Robert eased himself out of her and rolled to her side, laying her head on his chest, holding her close and tender.

Breaths calmed and hearts slowed as they passed the moments in silence, enjoying the simple pleasure of the close contact after a wild, frenzied mating.

Finally, Allie spoke as she ran her fingertips through the hair sprinkled across his chest. "That was incredible, honey."

"Mmm, yeah, it was." He tightened his hold about her shoulder, giving a squeeze, then kissed her on the forehead. "I've missed you over the years. I missed this. We were always great together, especially in bed."

She giggled softly as she teased his nipple to a hard nub with her fingernail. "True. I remember acting like rabbits at every turn, just because we couldn't get enough of each other."

I loved you so much, she thought. And I still do.

The words had threatened to spill from her mouth when she climaxed, but she'd held them back. She couldn't bring herself to say it, fearing her depth of emotion would not be returned. It had been an incredible experience, but she couldn't risk her heart. Right now, she just needed to enjoy the closeness of Robert. Everything else could wait until later.

She leaned up and moved slightly over his chest, touching her tongue to his erect nipple, gaining a small intake of breath from him.

"You're still insatiable, Allie," he said, holding her head steady over his chest, guiding her to continue.

She tasted his skin, traveling up to his neck, relishing the roughness of the area shaven earlier that morning. She whispered against his skin as she rubbed her body along his length, "Are you complaining that you make me want you so much?"

His breath caught as he felt her wet pussy brush along his leg, "Hell, no."

"You ready for more?" She positioned herself over him, alert nipples brushing across his chest and strong thighs straddling his own. She stretched over him and reached to the night stand to take another condom from the box. He took advantage of her breast now in his face and licked her hard nipple.

She lingered for a moment, enjoying his tempting mouth over her breast, then leaned back to open the wrapper. He watched as she slid the new rubber onto his huge cock, already rock hard and willing.

Lifting her body over his, she lowered herself over his hardness, gliding him into her wet passage.

Leaning back, she moved her body up and down, taking his entire cock into her, delighting in the sensations of having him completely in this moment in time. Her face beamed with desire and passion, her lips parted, hands balanced on her working thighs, moving in a rhythm as old as time.

Unable to lay back and watch her impassioned body without touching her and building her excitement higher, he cupped her glorious breasts in his hands, embracing each globe while tantalizing her sensitive nipples with his questing fingers.

The picture of his every waking--or sleeping for that matter--dream, she moved herself slowly and easily over his length, taking pleasure at her own pace, driving him insane with want. Her head was tossed back, hair flowing down her back, and the image of the moment would live forever in his memory. He couldn't see letting her go out of his

life after this amorous reunion. He wanted this to be his daily torture, to have her make love to him, unbridled and bewitched.

She leaned down to him, her breasts now slapping his face, right in sucking distance. He cupped them into his hands and feasted on each, lavishing their beauty with his mouth.

Damn, she's intoxicating! He could spend an entire night just suckling her voluptuous breasts, tasting their creamy softness over and over.

Her moaning increased as she continued to pump over him, climbing to the precipice once again, reaching for the ultimate release. He'd never found such satisfaction with anyone else like he had with Allie. The heat of passion was theirs to share, and none could ever match it.

Muscles began their contractions about his cock as she screamed his name, pressure releasing in an incredible orgasm. The sound, the feel of her had been enough to send him into an explosive climax, but it was the thought of the words he longed to say that broke his last rein of control.

At that moment, the urge to scream the one thing he had held back crashed through his mind.

I love you, Allie.

They lay in the afterglow for some time and each drifted off to sleep. Allie felt at home, completely secure in Robert's arms. Having him inside her had been more explosive than she'd ever remembered. It was beyond magical. It was a spiritual experience coupled with the physical joining. Her love overflowed and it all hit a head as she climaxed around him, sucking him into her body deeper than ever before. Even now, her body yearned for his.

"Robert?"

"Ummmm?"

"I want you again, Robert. You up to it?"

He grasped her hand and pulled it to his hard cock, so hot and pulsing. It felt like silk covered hot steel in her palm and she squeezed it gently.

"Oh, damn, Allie. That feels fucking great."

"You feel great. God, so big, it's a wonder you don't split me into two with that sword of yours."

He flipped her onto her back so fast, she giggled. "You love it." He kissed her, hard and deep, just the way she liked it. His passion flamed to an inferno in a moment, enflaming hers just as quickly.

His mouth moved over hers then traced her jaw line to her neck. He nipped at the sensitive skin there and she gasped. His body pressed into hers, his penis nestled against her thigh, and he seduced her completely. He not only kissed her, he loved her with his whole being. The hair on his chest brushed her nipples, causing them to perk and strain for his touch. His skin slid along hers with a thin layer of sweat forming at the points of contact. His scent--soap, sweat and pure masculine essence combined with the smell of sex--permeated her senses.

And to know he'd dreamed of her for years, wishing she were there to answer his desires even as she'd longed for him, too, was enough to intoxicate her. His hands molded

and shaped her flesh, squeezing and memorizing as he continued to lick and tease the skin along her neck.

“Robert, hon, I love it when you lick me.”

“I’ve only just begun, Allie.” He left her, and she missed his body heat covering hers. Reaching for the Styrofoam box on the nightstand, he flipped it open as he knelt on the bed, her legs pinned between his legs. With a wink, he said, “I always wanted to try out body paints.”

“Edible body paints you mean?” she asked with a small laugh.

“The sweetest kind.”

He eased a finger into the remains of the cheesecake and scooped some of the rich dessert onto his fingertip. “And even sweeter when it is smeared on the body of a luscious, voluptuous woman like you.”

He stroked his coated finger over her erect nipple. She giggled and it bounced as she shook. “That tickles.”

Then his hot mouth enclosed over the straining nipple, sucking in the dessert along with the aureole. Her laughter turned to groans as he suckled at her. Her fingers dove through the thick, wavy strands of his hair, holding him to her breast, urging him to continue his attentions.

“So ripe and delectable,” he murmured against her breast. He pulled his mouth away with a loud smack of his lips. “Fucking delicious. I think this cheesecake is even better eaten off your breasts.”

“Maybe you need to make sure. You know ... just to be safe.”

“Mmm, yeah, I think you’re right. I’ll just double check to make sure.” He dipped into the takeout box again and lifted out a generous amount of dessert on his finger. Topping her other nipple with the sweetness, he quickly covered it with his mouth, licking and teasing her nipple to a hard pebble. She moaned again and arched her back, wishing she could spread her legs and have him enter her.

“Yes, very tantalizing, Allie.”

“Robert, please,” she gasped.

“Don’t rush, baby. I want to enjoy you. It’s been too fucking long since I got to have you. And you’re so very sexy. I can’t believe you thought I wouldn’t want you.”

“We all change over time.”

“And you attract me even more now. Perfect.” He said this as he smeared more cheesecake on her body, through the valley between her breasts and down to her belly button. “I love your body, Allie. You turn me on.” And with that, he leaned over and began to lick away the cake.

His tongue laved and caressed each part of her and she felt as if she would burst from the building need. Her cunt ached in readiness for his cock to fill her.

His hands kneaded and stroked her skin as he kissed and worshipped her. Her hips lifted in response and she thrashed beneath him, her passion building with each pass of his tongue on her skin.

“Oh, dear God, Robert, I can’t stand it anymore!”

His body lifted off of hers and he moved her legs from their immobile state. Lifting her ankles to his shoulder, he also eased up her hips and placed a pillow under her

lower back. She leaned on her elbows as she adjusted to the position. Then he entered her.

"Damn, you're wet," he moaned as he paused. She could feel him grow within her, filling her, completing her. He was the missing piece to the puzzle of her life. He made her whole in more ways than the physical sense.

"For you, Robert. I've wanted you for so long," she panted between breaths as he began to ease in and out.

"Damn, I don't want to think about being without you." He thrust in hard as he made his point. "You're mine. Mine."

She wiggled her hips, taking him in deeper, and gasped as he squeezed his hands on her hips. She bit her bottom lip and fought back screaming as she felt the convulsions erupt. Her whole body quivered as she climaxed. From the tips of her toes to the hairs on her head, she was one with him. She wasn't sure they were two beings, so intimately connected. Where she and he joined, it was as though there were no individual beings. They merged and mixed together in a mutual moment of pleasure.

He let out a yell of primal release as he spilled into her body. No barrier between them. Skin to skin. Flesh encased in flesh. It was a true mating of bodies, minds and souls.

As she held him in her, she just hoped it was a meeting of hearts, as well.

* * *

A few hours later, Robert and Allie decided to take a major food break, but hated the idea of dressing and going out. So they called a local Chinese place and ordered delivery.

After calling in their order, they lay together, holding each other close, enjoying their intimate closeness. It had been moments like these in the quiet, loving embrace of Robert in between their frenzied lovemaking sessions that she'd liked best. How could she watch him walk out of her life again after sharing herself with him? It had been hard enough the first time, but this time, it would be devastating.

When their food arrived, Rob slipped on some pants and answered the door. The pants were right back off after he set their food out on the bed.

She sat up, covered only by the thin sheet, watching him move about the room naked and completely at ease.

"Chinese picnic ... my favorite," she said as he got back into the bed across from her.

"There is a trick to this setup, though."

"Oh, yeah, what?"

"You cannot feed yourself. You feed me, and I feed you."

An eyebrow shot up as she considered the arrangement. It was full of possibilities. Although it would be slightly different to her use of cheesecake a few hours ago, tempting him to taste it against her skin would be fun. The opportunity to have him tongue bathe her, from the toes on up was intoxicating. Dipping her fingers into the sweet sauce of the sesame chicken, she picked one morsel up and held it out to him. "I think you look hungry ... like you've worked up an appetite."

He leaned in and took a gentle bite of the succulent meat, licking her fingers,

careful not to leave any of the honey-like coating behind.

After he ate from her hand, he reached for a piece and offered it to her. She flicked her tongue out, tasting, then slowly nibbled at the morsel, purring out her contentment. When she got to his fingers, she drew them into her mouth, sucking away any last trace of sweetness. A low growl emanated from his throat, encouraging her to continue her sensual seduction.

Piece after piece, they fed each other, tempting as they played out the meal.

Finally, Rob could take no more. They had made love twice before dinner, but it was not nearly half enough. He wanted her again, especially after eating from his fingers, enticing him with each pass of her moist tongue over his flesh.

They had the entire night ahead of them, and he intended to love her every minute of it.

Tomorrow just did *not* exist.

Bending toward her, he grazed her lips with his own in a tender kiss. She answered his gentle touches. His hand went to her face, cupping it in his palm, caressing her cheek with his thumb. Her eyes fluttered closed as she succumbed to his slow, soft seduction.

As his lips traveled over her face, she whispered his name as a plea, "Robert."

"Allie," he whispered as he reached for her shoulders and brought her flush to his body in a passionate embrace. She returned his caresses as the heat built quickly between them.

His mouth traveled across her shoulder to her back and he continued down to her hip. Positioning her on her hands and knees, he worshipped her feminine curves. Running his hands across her buttocks, he followed with his mouth, raining nips along her skin. When she moaned, he knew she was ready. His fingertips dipped into her cleft, sliding along her juices to the responsive nubbin, causing her to jump at the pressure.

"Rob, please," she breathed as he strummed her clit.

"Please what, Allie? Tell me. Be bad. Tell me what you want."

"Fuck me, Rob. Please. Now. I need you inside me. Fuck me now."

He paused a moment, slipping on another condom, then plunged into her wet cunt from behind.

As he rocked with her, balls knocking into her thighs with each thrust, he told her, "God, Allie, you feel so wet, so hot, so tight."

"Don't stop, Rob," she gasped, meeting each thrust with a lift of her hips.

He braced his hands on her hips, guiding himself into her deeper and deeper. There wouldn't be any way to prolong the eruption threatening to burst forth.

Then she sobbed as the first tingles of orgasm hit her, crying out into a pillow, muffling her screams.

As her pussy squeezed around his cock, he spilled into her, meeting her each spasm with hot sprays of cum.

Chapter Six

Tomorrow had arrived.

During the night, Allie had nestled in Robert's arms and fallen into a contented sleep. It probably had been the best few hours' sleep she had in years, knowing she slept with the man she truly loved.

But then the sun's rays peeped around the curtains of their hotel room, signifying the beginning of a new day. And the departure of Robert, back to Philly.

After they awoke in each other's arms, they made love one last time, slowly and soulfully. When Allie climaxed to his leisurely loving, she told herself, *No tears*. She wasn't going to cry.

They ate a quiet breakfast before driving out to the bookstore to pick up her car.

Once there, she followed him out to the airport so he could catch his midmorning flight. Listening to some morning show chatter hadn't helped ease the heaviness she felt in her chest.

She parked her car in the visitor lot then walked to the front entrance of the terminal to wait for him to return his rental. When he walked up to her, he took her by the hand and proceeded to check in.

As they waited in line, she told herself again, she wasn't going to cry. Clutching his hand hadn't been enough. He must have read her mind, pulling her into his arms, encircling her, absorbing her.

They stood quietly enjoying the closeness, all too aware their tryst was nearly at an end.

He lived in Pennsylvania and she lived in Florida. *He might as well live in France for all I'll ever see him*, she thought.

Once the bags were checked and examined, and he registered with the airline, they walked slowly to the lobby, standing before the security area. Safety measures required non-ticket visitors not to go beyond the security check point, otherwise she would have seen him off at the terminal. But then again, maybe it was better this way.

"Rob, what is to become of us?" She laid her head against his chest as he stroked her hair.

"I just don't know, Allie. I wish I lived closer or things were different. My life is up north."

"Mine is down here." She squeezed against him, trying to absorb as much of him as possible. His unique scent of soap and Robert filled her nostrils.

Taking her face in his hands, he bent down and kissed her tenderly, a kiss full of emotion, sadness, regret, loss, love. He whispered against her lips, "Goodbye, Allie."

"Goodbye."

Then she felt the sudden loss of his warmth as he let her go and strode away through the security check.

Watching, she said to herself, If he turns and looks back at me, there may be hope for us yet.

Still he didn't turn.

Through the security, he stopped. Her heart flipped as he paused, then turned back at her. She smiled as he brought his palm to his lips and blew her a kiss.

He turned and continued on to the terminal, and she said the words she longed to say. "I love you, Robert. No matter what goes on in our lives, I will always love you."

And again, she told herself she wasn't going to cry.

She walked out of the airport and back to her car. Once inside, she sat and waited in silence. After thirty minutes, she turned the key and started the engine.

The station she'd listened to earlier now played a song she had always associated with Robert. Only now, it was even more appropriate. As the singer crooned the tune of letting the man she loved go, the dam burst.

Allie cried.

* * * *

Idiot. He felt like a complete idiot leaving the best woman he'd ever known behind. He should've bought her a ticket and made her spend a few weeks with him in Philly. He should've called and delayed his flight a few hours, or better yet, a few days.

He should've told her he loved her. Always had, always would.

So what was he doing on a plane at thirty thousand feet up, traveling away from her?

By the time he landed in Atlanta forty-five minutes later to catch his connection, he was no closer to figuring out what to do about Allie.

She had a life down in Florida. She also had two kids. How would they react to him? What if they didn't like him? Would Allie ever want to be with him if her kids hated him? But then again, what if they liked him?

Questions plagued his active mind the entire flight back to Philly. No answers presented themselves, but he knew one thing. He couldn't let Allie out of his life again.

Arriving at his apartment, he dropped his baggage by the front door, went to the refrigerator and took out a cola. Popping the top, he slugged back a few gulps, feeling the cool, sweet liquid run down his throat.

The light was blinking on his answering machine, indicating a few messages. He absently pushed the button to listen. As he listened halfheartedly, he stepped to the glass sliding doors and opened them to walk out onto his small balcony.

His apartment overlooked the busy Ben Franklin Parkway, and in the distance stood the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He realized just then he had not visited the museum in years. It always reminded him of Allie, who had loved going there. The last time he went, he had been with her. He'd loved watching her eyes sparkle as she gazed upon the various paintings, especially Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, her favorite. He wondered if she still had the print she had bought that day.

"Hi, Rob," the message machine played the message left by Christine. "I missed you so much, hon. I'm so glad the book tour is over and you're home. I planned a nice night together here at my place. I'm cooking spaghetti and I rented *Casablanca* to watch. Come on over around six. Call me when you get in. Love ya, hon."

He groaned, not wanting to talk to Christine just now. He didn't know how she would react to his wanting to drop her due to one wild night with his old flame.

Wild? It couldn't even touch how he felt about being with her again. It had been incredible, and he needed more. He wanted more than sex from Allie. He wanted her soul, her heart, her love.

She'd had his heart for years. He was pretty sure she loved him, though she hadn't exactly said so. But then, he hadn't told her those words either. But their actions had spoken louder than any words last night.

Holding her in his arms as she slept had been one of the most tender moments of his life. She'd seemed truly happy and content. When she awoke, she'd looked up at him with her brilliant dark eyes. That look was so full of love, he couldn't resist making slow love to her that morning.

He intended to not let that be the last time.

* * * *

Alexia lay staring up at the ceiling of her bedroom that evening. The house seemed more quiet than usual, but then the girls weren't there. But it wasn't the girls she missed at the moment.

Laying her arm across her eyes, she tried to block out the hurt of Robert leaving that morning. She had known it would be difficult, but she just never imagined the onslaught of pain that would flood in on her later.

Thinking about what she had done twenty-four hours ago was torture, but then, wondering what he thought about her now was worse.

A breath caught in her throat as she allowed her mind to slip back to the night before. Never had she enjoyed herself so much, other than fifteen years ago when having him each night had been the usual, and never dull.

The images and sensations of his mouth against her flowed through her mind as she ran a hand across her body. How she wished it was his hand touching her right now.

After making love several times, she'd suggested they break out the cheesecake. It had been his turn to have some dessert. She remembered his heated look as he watched her smooth the creamy substance across her body, tempting him to taste her.

Allie dipped her hand down to her cleft, finding herself already wet as she rubbed her swollen clit, thinking of his tongue on her body.

Her breathing became ragged as she remembered him loving her with his mouth, licking away the sweet dessert from her skin, feasting on her sensitive flesh. Her hips lifted up off the mattress as she felt his hot breath against her mons, tempting her with a flick of his tongue against her clit.

Feeling the first ripples of her own self-induced orgasm, she bit her bottom lip as the waves rolled through her body.

But she couldn't hold back, calling his name as she plummeted over the edge. Rainbows of pleasure danced before her eyes as her body climaxed, but it wasn't satisfying. The empty feeling of her orgasm washed over her with the same strength.

She lay there, her body's rhythm slowing back to normal, convinced she deserved better than to sit home and masturbate to the thought of Robert. Not only did he answer her physical needs, he met her soul's needs, bonding to her with more than his body. There

was only one thing she could do now. She had to have him in her life, come hell or high water.

He belonged to her, and she was ready to let him know it.

Getting up out of bed, she walked out into the kitchen and retrieved her laptop. She went to work to buy an airline ticket online, then proceeded to pack her bags.

She devised a plan to go to Philly and tell that man she loved him. A thousand miles was too damn far away. She'd move back up there if it meant they could be together.

Pausing, she thought about how Vicky and Beth would react to Robert. She had no doubt they would learn to love him. He would surely come to love them, too.

When she went to bed later that night, pleasant images of another reunion with her lover filled her mind. Only this time, there wouldn't be any worrying of what would happen when he left. She intended to never let that happen again.

She couldn't turn back time and fix things that had gone wrong in the past causing their ultimate break up. But she could do her best not to lose him again.

Sleep didn't come easily as she made her plans.

* * * *

Robert waited at Christine's apartment door after he rang the doorbell. He really didn't feel like telling her what was going on, not wanting to hurt her.

The door opened and she beamed up at him. "Robert, honey, I missed you." She leaned up and kissed him.

He kissed her back, with no feeling of passion. He liked Christine, but she was more of a convenience than a life partner. At that moment he knew his mistake had been in continuing their relationship as long as he had.

There was no fire, no longing in her kisses either. His hands didn't burn to touch her skin and his body didn't feel complete as she pressed against him.

She backed away, obviously not noticing the revelation he'd had. "Come in Rob. I made your favorite tonight. Then later, we can have some cheesecake in bed. I know how much you love NY cheesecake."

The mention of cheesecake only flooded his memory of Allie coming in the restaurant as she'd teased him with the creamy dessert. His cock hardened at the image of Allie's tongue licking off the sweetness from her full lips. Damn, he had had her just that morning, and he'd let her go ... again. What the fuck was he thinking?

"Mmm, I can see you like the idea," Christine said bringing Robert back to his present situation. She eyed the bulge in his pants and he knew she thought it was for her.

"Christine, we need to talk."

"About what, Rob?" she said over her shoulder as she walked into the kitchen to gather up the evening meal. She didn't sound concerned.

"I saw Allie," he blurted. He couldn't stall much longer. He had to tell Christine the truth, and soon.

She appeared in the living room. Worry etched her face. "Allie? How's she doing? Still married?"

"She'd divorced now with two daughters." This was difficult. Four years with Christine, and he just couldn't bring himself to want her. Not after he touched Allie again,

felt her skin, tasted her honey.

"Oh," was all she said as she crossed the distance to him. "Are you telling me that you're going to renew your relationship with her?" She was sounding more and more like tears were about to spill from her any moment.

"I still love her. I never really stopped loving her. And now...."

"And now you both are free to love again, right?"

"Yeah." He stepped closer to her. "I'm sorry, Chris. I'm leaving to go back to Tallahassee and ask Allie to marry me."

"So soon?" she asked.

"We've wasted enough time." He was silent for a moment, then added, "We always said we had an open relationship here. No real solid emotional ties."

She stood in silence, and said, "I know. I remember. And I do understand." She sighed then said, "Rob, I wish you both luck. Go and make her happy." She paused then added, "If you ever find that you want to ... well ... I'll be here for you if you ever need me."

He laid his hands on her shoulders and said, "I won't, but thanks." He kissed her on the forehead, turned, and left.

Surely, a beautiful woman like Christine wouldn't be alone long. Whenever they'd gone out to dinner together, she'd always captured the glances from men around her. She knew it, too. Any man in his right mind wouldn't leave a woman like her alone for long. Once he got back to his apartment Robert started making plans to fly back to Tallahassee, and Allie.

Calling the airlines, he had been able to book a late flight for the next day. It was longer than he wanted to wait, but it had to do. Maybe he could call tomorrow morning and see if there were any cancellations to leave earlier?

How would Allie react to him just showing up on her doorstep anyway? She had given him her personal information on a business card, so he was sure he could find her house. *Then what?*

He would tell her the things he should have told her the night before.

He loved her still, and he wanted her in his life, permanently.

When he went to bed later, he wondered how she would react to a proposal and a quick wedding out in Las Vegas, complete with an Elvis impersonator.

She'd probably laugh and love the idea. At least, he hoped so.

Chapter Seven

Alexia sat alone in the Atlanta sky bar sipping on an overpriced glass of burgundy. Her flight to Philadelphia had run into engine problems, delaying the flight, then canceling it altogether. Now, she sat there and expected to sit for a few more hours until the flight she had been able to book left at nine. That was six hours from now.

Luckily, she had thought to bring her laptop and took the opportunity to write a little as she waited in the sky bar. It wasn't a great place to write, especially when strange men waved to her from the bar, trying to catch her eye. She had even had one or two try to buy her a drink, but she sent them back each time. The last thing she needed was some weirdo wanting her to pay him back for the 'free' glass of wine.

She paused and looked up from the monitor, gazing out over the people all walking along the concourse, rushing off to meet their connections.

Sighing, she glanced back at the words she'd just written. Inspired by her own love story, she had begun writing a fictitious account of the affair. But what kind of ending would it have? Would the hero want the heroine in the end?

In all those romance novels they lived happily ever after. She wondered if her real life romance would end so wonderfully. She hoped she wasn't about to make an ass out of herself, chasing after her dream to love Robert.

Just then, the waiter came over to her table, interrupting her thoughts. "Ma'am, another gentleman wishes to buy you a drink."

She looked up at the waiter, a man dressed in black pants, a white dress shirt, with a black apron tied around his waist. "Really, I don't want anyone's drinks. Please tell the gentleman I'm not interested."

"Yes, ma'am," he drawled in a southern accent.

She went back to tapping away on her laptop, not giving it a second thought.

* * * *

Robert just couldn't believe his luck. What the hell was she doing there in the Atlanta airport? Then it hit him. She had been traveling up to see him. She had the same exact idea!

Wanting to just rush over and take her in his arms, he stopped himself as he planned a romantic reunion. Calling over the waiter, he told him he wanted to buy her a drink.

Robert watched the waiter go over and exchange words with her.

The waiter walked back to him wearing a frown. "She doesn't want you to buy her a drink, sir," he said in a thick accent.

Flashing out a few dollars, Robert ordered two glasses of burgundy.

Once he had the glasses in hand, he walked up to her table and sat them down, saying, "Allie, I'd ask what you were doing here, but I think I know."

She looked up and the smile that lit up her face was one of genuine delight,

making her even more beautiful. "Robert!"

She got up so quickly from her chair she nearly knocked it over as she threw herself into his arms, nuzzling into his chest, melting her body against him. Nothing else existed but the two of them holding one another.

Stroking her hair, he took a few moments to savor the feel of her. Then he knew the time was right.

Pulling back her head from his body slightly, he cupped her face between his hands. "Allie, I love you. Let's not be fools and allow what we have to slip away again."

"Robert, I love you, too. I don't want to be without you."

He bent down to capture her lips with his, tasting her, a delicacy made just for him to savor.

"Marry me, Allie," he said against her lips, never breaking the intimate contact.

"Oh, Robert, yes."

"Excuse me," the waiter interrupted moments later.

They broke their kisses and turned to the intruder on their reunion.

"Yes?" Robert asked, annoyance in his voice.

"You're disturbing the other patrons. Why not just go get a room to do that?"

Allie started to laugh and Robert couldn't help but join in.

"Okay, pal. We'll take your advice," Robert said in good humor.

"We do it every time we are together, don't we? Just like fifteen years ago," she said, giggling softly.

"Yeah, well, some people can't stand watching others be completely in love with each other." He reached for their wine glasses and handed her one. "To our future together." Clinking their glasses, they drank the dry wine.

Afterwards, they made their way to the ticket counter to have their baggage collected. It would take a day for the baggage to be rerouted. When Allie expressed some concern, Robert turned to her and said in a seductive voice, "Woman, you won't be needing any clothes for what I've got planned."

* * * *

"So, what do you say to a quickie ceremony in Vegas?" he asked as they rode the elevator to their room at the posh hotel in Atlanta.

"Sounds fine to me, but only if Elvis can come." She laughed as she slid her hands along his sides, feeling his muscles move under the fabric of his shirt.

"It's a must," he said with a laugh as the doors slid open to their floor.

Once in the room, Allie started pulling at his clothes, anxious to get his skin next to hers as quickly as possible. He let her as he worked on the buttons of her blouse.

A deep sigh escaped her lips as her naked body first came into intimate contact with his. Her eyes closed, she rubbed herself against him, melting against him. "God, you feel so good," she gasped, excitement edging her voice. Her hands ran down his back, her nails grating lightly along his skin.

"Oh, you know what would be good about now?" he said, before kissing her shoulder.

"What?"

"A nice warm shower ... together."

“Mmm, sounds perfect.”

Taking her by the hand, he led her into the luxurious bathroom and started the shower. Quickly, the room filled with steamy heat, but neither paid much attention. Once naked, Robert engulfed Allie in his arms, kissing her with all the passion he had suppressed over the years. Finally, they were together, about to unite as husband and wife. It was their destiny.

As his skin slid against hers, he moaned and deepened the kiss, drinking from her sweet mouth like a man denied sustenance for fifteen years

“Allie, I love you,” he murmured against her lips, then along her jaw. “I love you ... love you.”

She could feel the intensity behind his words underlined by the strength of his hold on her body. “Robert, I’ve wanted you for so long,” she said as her lips trailed wet kisses along his chest, then around his nipple. She teased at it with her tongue and he groaned. Pleased with his response, she bit down lightly on his nipple.

He gasped and held her head steady to him as she suckled.

“Woman, you’re driving me nuts again.” His voice was thick and husky.

Her hand enclosed around his length. She relished the hot, silky hardness, and she chuckled. “I love to make you crazy for need of me.”

Clasping her face between his hands, he said, “You’ve got that already.” He kissed her again, leaving no doubt of his desire.

The room was hot, moist and steamy, blending perfectly with the sexual heat building. He leaned away, but only for a moment as he stepped into the shower and offered his hand to her.

Once under the warm spray, Allie let the water sluice over her body and Robert followed the streams with the tips of his fingers.

“You’re so beautiful. Absolutely perfect and feminine.” His eyes followed his fingertips as they traced the watery paths down her shoulders, over her breasts and down her abdomen, then back up again. He lifted her breasts, one in each hand and tested their weight. As he rubbed a thumb over her erect nipples, he said, “I could suck on those all day and never get tired.” He leaned over and took one in his mouth.

She held him to her as she traced her hand over his powerful back. As she traveled down his body, her movements became slower as she grasped his hard cock once again and began to slide along his length. He gasped with each stroke of her hand as the steamy warm water caressed their bodies.

Catching her hand, he begged, “Stop, not yet.”

“What?”

“Let me wash you.”

He proceeded to lather up a washcloth, slowly running it across her skin in small, circular motions, cleansing her slippery flesh. Starting at her shoulders, he eased the soapy cloth over her skin. There was much more to his touch than the functional cleansing, especially when he cared for each breast tenderly.

Droplets of water clung to his beard and they dripped over her skin as he kissed the rinsed-clean skin of her shoulders.

Getting down on his hands and knees, the water sprayed against his back as he

eased unhurried strokes over her mons with the cloth. When he dragged the washcloth through her folds, she gulped as she clutched his shoulders. He continued his attention to her apex, washing then rinsing. Then she felt his warm breath against the area, and his tongue flicked out, touching her throbbing clit. She lifted her thigh over his shoulder and braced herself against the shower wall as he licked and teased her into a frenzied surrender that wracked her body with uncontrollable, explosive convulsions.

Her entire being climaxed beneath his tongue. She felt the muscles squeeze and release in rhythmic pulses as he continued to lick and suckle at her center. "Robert, yes!" she cried as she rode the sensations of blissful ecstasy.

Before she was able to recover, he stood up and positioned himself behind her. Bending her slightly over, he entered her slick feminine passage from behind.

Her hands holding onto a towel bar gave her the leverage to spread her legs more, allowing his deeper penetration.

She didn't need to touch herself to climb back up into the world of physical pleasure. Just his cock filling her sheath was enough. Her body rejoiced at this reunion of souls. She reached climax again, and voiced her celebration by calling his name.

Within a few hard thrusts, Robert yelled out his release as his seed spilled into her body, becoming one with her in the world of undying love and never-ending devotion.

* * * *

A few days later, Robert and Allie flew to Las Vegas and were married in a Chapel of Love. Immediately following their vows, a young Elvis impersonator sang his rendition of *Love Me Tender* for the newlyweds.

Both agreeing it would be for the best to inform their families after the fact, they kept their union private for a while.

For the next ten days, they spent most of their time in their room, enjoying their intimacy with an occasional trip downstairs for food or gambling.

Upon their return to Florida, Allie thought it was time to go tell Tom and the girls of her new husband.

On the drive down, Allie felt a bit car sick, but kept it to herself. She decided it must have been all the traveling--first the plane, then the car trip, the combination making her feel nauseous.

When they arrived at Tom's house on the ocean front in Panama City, he was shocked to find Allie had shown up with a man.

It always amazed her how Tom seemed to be more interested in looking like a beach bum than the successful doctor he was. His deep tan and sun-streaked hair made him look like he spent his days riding the surf instead of treating patients in the hospital.

"Who the hell is this?" he asked in an angry tone.

"I happen to be her husband," Robert offered, drawing Tom's attention to himself.

"Husband? When the hell did that happen?"

"A few days ago," she said as she walked between the men.

"And you didn't think to consult me?"

"She doesn't need your permission, Jack," Robert said as he pulled Allie to his side, wrapping an arm about her shoulders in a possessive gesture.

"It's Tom."

“Whatever.”

Allie giggled at his side, knowing Robert had just insulted him, and Tom didn't even realize it.

“I want to have the girls to spend a few days with us down here, so they can get to know Robert.”

Tom looked them both over, then eventually sighed. “All right. They're in their room playing.”

“Thanks,” she said, leaving Robert's side to call the girls.

“Oh, and one more thing,” Robert said as Tom turned to him.

Before Allie knew it was going to happen, Robert swung his arm back and his fist made contact with Tom's jaw, knocking him to the floor.

“That was for running around on her when she was carrying your children.”

Tom rubbed his tanned, clean-shaven jaw, looking up at the man now towering over him. “I had that coming, I guess.”

“You sure did, Jack.”

* * * *

Allie sat under the umbrella in the shade, watching Vicky and Beth breaking down into hysterical laughter. They had taken to Robert in an instant, fascinated with his height and natural charm. She also figured they were both intrigued by his soft beard, as Allie watched them stroke his face several times. *Like mother, like daughters.*

Right now, he was helping them build a sand castle, gaining bursts of giggles from the girls as he made engine noises to a plastic truck he moved in the sand. It had been like watching a six-foot-six-inch kid.

Another small wave of nausea swept over Allie as she reached for another saltine cracker from her bag. When they'd arrived a few days ago, she'd thought it had been a bad case of carsickness. But it continued. Thinking back, she tried to remember if she and Robert had ever had sex without protection. Then it hit her. There were several times they'd made love without protection. Hmm.

The night before, she'd gone out and bought a pregnancy test on a hunch. That morning, she had gotten a positive result.

Watching Robert snatch up the girls, one under each arm, dashing off to the surf to threaten to dunk them in, all to their delighted laughter, Allie knew he would love the chance to have a child.

A while later, he strode over to Allie, leaving the girls playing in their castle, then flopped down next to her. “They can really wear out a guy.”

“Yeah, they are a handful.”

“You did an incredible job with them, Allie.”

“Thanks, I hope to do it again soon.”

“Now, that would be great.” His hand started to slide up the outside of her leg.

“Want to start trying?”

“Too late.”

She watched his face as the meaning sank in and she smiled with a nod.

“You mean, we're ... you're ... pregnant?”

“Yep.”

Reaching up, he held her face with his hand, and said, "I love you, Allie."

"I love you, too. Always," she whispered against his lips as he captured them in a tender, loving kiss.

The End.