

A romantic couple is shown in a close embrace. The man, with short brown hair, is leaning his head against the woman's head. The woman has short blonde hair and is looking directly at the camera with a soft expression. They are positioned in front of a Christmas tree that is decorated with warm white lights, red and gold ornaments, and pinecones. The overall atmosphere is warm and intimate.

M&P Destiny Blaine

A
Christmas
to Remember

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Mardi Gras Publishing, LLC

133 Lake Front Dr. #204

Daphne, AL 36526

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Chapter 1

For as long as I can remember, I've watched NFL football. There's something about snuggling up in my flannel gown with a hot cup of cocoa and watching a field full of tight asses run up and down the field. There's nothing like it. I still feel that way even though so much has changed in the way I am able to watch my football games. My name is Cassie Teller and this is my story.

I can't remember ever answering my phone during a football game. All of my girlfriends used to call me during the games to try and grab a quick tip or two on the day's games to impress the guy they were with at the time. Since I have numerous girlfriends who date the jock-type, I just simply quit answering my phone. After all, there were too many things these gals disrupted during the games. Since my fantasies were few and far between, the guys in tight pants won my attention.

The Sunday before Christmas 2005 was the exception. The phone rang during the Pittsburgh and Minnesota game and I happened to knock the phone off the hook or else I wouldn't have answered it. On the other end was Steve, also known as my best friend with sexual benefits. He was in a weird mood and I just knew he was looking for a little roll in the hay so I was snappy with him at first.

"Steve, what are you doing calling me in the middle of a Steelers game?"

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Well, I almost fell over when he said, "Cassie, you are going to owe me the best blow in the world for this one baby, I have tickets to the Christmas Eve Cleveland and Pittsburgh game and I'm calling to see if you've ever been to Cleveland?"

I almost dropped the phone. "Steve, are you asking me out on a date or do you want me to ride with you just to be sure you can make it to Cleveland?" I tried not to let my enthusiasm pour through the phone. Touchdown Pittsburgh. "Minnesota sucks," I said as I rejoined the conversation already in full swing on the other end of the phone.

"Look kiddo, Mandy's going, too. She likes you and wants to get to know you better so I thought you could ride up to Cleveland with us."

Mandy. The very mention of the woman's name just sent shivers down my spine. Mandy was everything I wasn't. She had long black hair and a shapely body that sent most men into orbit every time she swayed into the room, and could Mandy ever sway with those curvaceous hips. I on the other hand, never possessed what someone would call curves and outside of the great tits I carried around, my body was pretty ordinary and almost too skinny.

"So, will I be chauffeuring you and the lovely Mandy to the gate because I know you didn't land three tickets?"

Steve laughed, "Honey, as much as you love football, if I only had one ticket, you'd be the one to sit in the stands."

I waited for his answer.

"I have two tickets so you and Mandy are going to the game."

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"When hell freezes over," was all I could manage to say.

"Aren't you the least bit excited?" Steve pressed on like he did in bed, always persistent and always looking for something to get you going.

I sighed, "I'm about as excited as I would be to land in bed with both you and Mandy."

"Without missing a beat Steve said, "Now there's a great idea!"

"Call me tomorrow," was the last thing I heard as I finished the last drop of hot cocoa and decided to make a hot toddy to finish out the game. Pittsburgh won 18-3 and I won \$500 just like I usually did when I bet on Pittsburgh. Next week would be time for a big payday and with any luck, I'd run into one of those sexy boys from Pittsburgh right before game time. He'd fall madly in love with me on his way to the stadium and we'd just click. Kind of like Steve and I clicked, only without the Mandy.

Chapter 2

It was six in the morning on Christmas Eve when I heard the doorbell ring. Then I heard the key in the lock and knew my morning caller was Steve. Once the click of the lock sounded, I had no further doubts. After all, he was the only one who had access and he was the only person I knew who ever visited before noon. I groaned and rolled over while pulling the sheets tight over my head. The bedroom door was closed but I knew Steve would be straight through the door and into bed within minutes so I went ahead and slid out of my nightshirt and panties knowing sex was inevitable.

"Why couldn't you let me sleep until eight, Cleveland is only four hours away?" I was almost purring as Steve undressed. I could feel him watching me almost mocking me as I tried to pretend I wasn't waiting for him.

He slid in beside me, "hey baby." His cock was already hard and his breath was sweet as he swarmed down on me with kisses. First, around my neck and then lower to the swelling of my breasts. Finally, he was where I liked him best and I couldn't contain myself as his tongue did things to me no woman deserves. This was definitely the spice I needed to start off my day.

After more of the same and breathless sex, we lay in each other's arms talking about the game and my favorite subject, Mandy. Steve talked about how excited she was to get to know me and how she was interested in finding out all she could about football from a "chick's point of view." I didn't tell

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Steve but the chick-thing was enough to curl my toes. In any event, he wanted me to feel comfortable around Mandy because he was sure she was going to be "the one."

Steve was a great looking guy with blonde hair and blue eyes, he really was eye candy for the girls who liked the surfer type but he just didn't have a lick of common sense. He thought every girl who ever cooked him dinner and took him home to meet their mom was in fact, *the one*. Unfortunately, Steve had hang-ups and once the girlfriend discovered I was one of them, she was on to bigger and better things. Though I doubt she found either of those in the bedroom after leaving Steve's bed. In high school, Steve and I were inseparable and everyone used to call us the golden couple because we looked so much alike. We both always had great tans and blonde locks with big baby blues. I guess we were rather cute.

"Oh, I got you a present," he started rumbling through his coat pocket as he said it. After a few moments of fumbling through what must have been very deep pockets, he appeared with an oblong box. Another small box attached on top with thin little green and red ribbons held the neat little package together. This was almost sweet until I made the mistake of sitting straight up in bed exposing my upper half.

"Whew," Steve almost foamed at the mouth, "I will never be able to get enough of those tits."

Moment ruined.

I opened the oblong box first and found the tickets to the Cleveland and Pittsburgh game. There were three tickets instead of two and suddenly I felt more at ease about the day ahead and almost instantly began to look forward to the

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game. Steve had this dumb blonde look on his face like he didn't understand why I was suddenly happy about going. "You mean you haven't been looking forward to the game until just now?"

I didn't want to ruin the moment so I just shrugged and gave him a your-my-pal hug.

The next box took me by surprise. When I opened it, I was half way expecting to find a condom with a little note attached with something crude like, "you wanna go again" or "let's bang" but instead, it was a beautiful antique locket on a gorgeous golden box chain.

"Now don't go making a big deal out of it," Steve began, "it was mom's favorite and she wanted you to have it someday since I was an only child and all." Steve's mom had passed away five days before Christmas last year. I had known her all of my life because she worked at the local library where I spent a great deal of time from the second grade on just so I wouldn't have to go home to a drunken household.

Inscribed on the back of the locket was "My daughter, my friend". Steve explained that his grandmother had given it to his mother and the closest thing his mom ever had to a daughter was me. I cried and for the first time in all of the years I had been sleeping with Steve, we actually made love. It was tender and sweet. In fact, I swear I saw fireworks. I never knew passionate and sweet could top uninhibited and hard core but it sure gave me a different kind of unexplainable pleasure.

Chapter 3

After Steve showered and kissed me good-bye, he drove over to pick up Mandy and was back in time to catch me coming out of the shower.

"I told Mandy I was coming in here to get you off and she didn't believe me."

He grabbed my towel and gave it a fling and I stood in the bathroom pressed up against his tight chest wrapped in his arms. I had another first-Steve moment, I felt safe and secure, almost like I belonged there. "Mandy's in the car," I whispered, "and Steve, I don't know where all of this is coming from but I need to..." I was thinking I needed to go down on him but instead, he pleasured me again and this time with Mandy waiting outside in the car!

Later as we were driving out of town, I almost felt guilty. Poor, dumb Mandy. I was inside my cute little cottage with her boyfriend's tongue and hands all over me while she was waiting in the car trying to decide which shade of lipstick would go best with her Christmas sweater. Wow, I'll take the guy over the lipstick any day of the week. No wonder Steve was so horny. She had other things on her mind. Shades of lipstick seemed to ever be more important to her than what her man might like to have her do with those self-proclaimed luscious lips.

As we drove toward the game, Steve would glance over at her watching her lips move to accommodate the lipstick tube. He seemed to study her for a moment and then quickly steal

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a look at me in the review mirror. I swear it was a look of love rather than just pure lust. Something had definitely changed between us earlier in the day.

Mandy turned around and looked at me after she finished glossing over her lips. She puckered up and said, "So, what do you think? Kissable? Or just tolerable?" Steve looked at me with a 'don't you dare look' so I let it slide.

"You know Cassie, Steve tells me you were the first girl he ever slept with and until now, I haven't been jealous but now, I'm jealous."

I started to stammer around for the right words but nothing would come out and I shot Steve a look. He always had to tell them. He just couldn't keep his mouth shut.

"She's only jealous because you know about football and she says she always wanted to be a football chick that the guys knew they could talk to about football because they knew she was a fan of the sport, too."

Mandy crossed her arms and narrowed her gaze. "That's not it, Steve."

He slowed the car down to stop at the red light, "What then?"

Mandy looked at him and then turned to look back at me. "You're a really pretty girl, Cassie. Skinny, of course, but still very pretty."

I looked at both of them with my I-could-kill-Steve look and managed a, "Thanks, I think."

The rest of the trip went okay and I decided I could probably tolerate Mandy if she wouldn't squeal in an attempt to get a point of enthusiasm across. We talked about our

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jobs. Mandy was a hairdresser and I worked as a blackjack dealer in one of the Indiana casinos so she was interested in the casino stories I could share. Everything was going good until we rolled into Cleveland.

Steve was hungry and said we had time to get a bite to eat before the game and we stopped at one of the few mom and pop restaurants left in Cleveland right inside the city limits.

Mandy jumped out of the car when it halted in front of the restaurant. As she headed into the restroom, Steve and I found the only open booth in the corner. It was one of those round tables with the rounded seat encircling the table and we slid in. Suddenly, I was almost uncomfortable with Steve. However, it didn't last long because just as I debated in my mind of what to say first, he took my hand and put it on his cock.

"Damn Cassie, I need you again—right now."

He didn't blush although I'm sure I was blood red. I tried to remove my hand but he cupped my hand in his and instructed me to stroke it. I knew Steve well enough to know, if I started it, I'd have to finish it so I jumped up and went to the bathroom. I forgot my purse and it proved to be a big mistake.

I passed Mandy on the way to the bathroom at the other end of the restaurant. The restaurant was L-shaped so I almost ran into her as I made a beeline for the restroom. As with most mom and pop restaurants, there was a ladies' room and a men's room. There was a line and so I waited my turn. I could feel Steve behind me as I walked in a few moments later and he slammed the door.

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"Mandy told me to bring you your purse."

I couldn't believe what I was doing. It was almost like I'd sipped on an aphrodisiac or something. The restaurant was crowded. Several strangers saw us go into the restroom together and there was no denying what we were doing in there. We weren't just having a quickie, although that's what most would call it, but we were almost taking down the house with a noisy romp from behind closed doors. His cock stayed hard as if he hadn't climaxed but he did climax and when he did, he held nothing back. His lips ravaged me and his hands fondled me in a way I'd never been touched before and then a knock on the door brought us back to the realization we were in a very public place.

We quickly straightened up and Steve went out first and told the little old lady waiting for the rest room that I would be out in a moment. I dreaded the first step out but fortunately for me as I stepped out into the dining room, two waitresses had a near collision and a glass fell off of one of the trays causing a splatter of shards onto the floor. I was able to escape the humiliation of feeding nature's call and so I quietly walked back to the booth and slid in beside of Steve where my hand rested on the seat locked firmly in Steve's palm.

Chapter Four

Mandy wasn't the slightest bit interested in why we were away from the table for so long. I decided a long time ago that the girls who were most self-consumed in high school were a lot like Mandy and in many cases, went through life relatively unchanged. They were knowledgeable in the art of make-up, gorgeous smiles and nice clothes but when it came to knowing what it took to make a guy go crazy, they didn't have a clue.

I also decided girls like Mandy really had someone like me coming to her, because she was so self-consumed. So much in fact that she didn't even notice her boyfriend's clothing and hair appeared unkempt because he had just had sex in the restroom with his friend who now held his hand under the table.

I was told early in life I did have a clue when it came to making a guy go weak in the knees. I enjoyed sex and never made any excuses for it. I'd screw my best friend's ex-boyfriend just to see if he was as great in bed as she said he was and if he wasn't, I'd tell her where she could find better. My closest friends were a lot like me when it came to sex, but I suppose I was the most daring. I loved sex and didn't mind sharing my best partners between my closest friends. The exception was always Steve.

My mind still spinning, I'd walked out to the car without any sense of reality when Steve interrupted my thoughts. "Mandy wants to stop at the mall before we go out to the

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stadium. She's cold and wants to buy a heavier coat." After some persuasion, I convinced Steve to drop me off at the game so I could go on in and begin to enjoy the football ambiance. Since he knew how excited I'd be to get there, he reluctantly agreed.

A few minutes later, I was walking into the stadium alone.

Once inside, I could breathe again. Steve and I had been bed buddies for as long as I could remember. We were one another's first sexual encounter but it was sex then and it must be sex now but damn he was getting smokin hot in the bedroom! In fact, he was scorching in the public restrooms, too! A smile crept across my face as I replayed the events of the day yet again. I began to fumble around in my purse for my ticket and ran smack dab into Corby Teller. Quarterback for the Cleveland Browns.

"Hello there, little lady." He *was not* just towering over me and smiling down on me like he had just found a kid with their hand in the cookie jar. He couldn't be talking to me. I looked around for another little lady but no one was around. "I believe you may be lost," he continued.

"No, I don't think so. I'm here to see the Steelers stomp that pretty little ass of yours up and down the field." *No I didn't just say that. No! Surely I didn't!* Corby's six foot three frame bellowed in laughter. His green eyes sparkled and he grinned from ear to ear showing dimples the tabloids loved to talk about in their articles.

"Oh my gosh, Corby, I'm so sorry, I don't know where that came from," now I'm really screwing things up—calling the

guy I just met by his first name and without proper introductions?

His grin widened, "Hey don't worry about it but if you are going to one-up me, the least you can do is tell me your name."

Oh, yes, that's true. I could do that now that I've just totally humiliated myself. "My name?"

Corby nodded, "Yes, ma'am, you do have a name don't you?"

Sure, sure, I just can't think of an alias quick enough. I did finally pull it together. "Corby, I'm Cassie." He took off his helmet and I could see his jet-black hair, another thing the tabloids always liked to mention.

"Well Ms. Cassie, with no last name offered, if you will allow me to show you the way to the public entrance of the Cleveland Brown stadium, I would be honored."

In a mockery display, he held out his elbow for me to take and I willingly took his arm and laughed. We walked about 200 steps and Corby Teller pointed to the entrance I should've taken in the first place. I thanked him and started to walk away.

"Ms. Cassie, are you here by yourself?"

I stuttered and stammered as he looked at me dead on as if he were studying every detail. "Oh, I'm here with friends. Well, actually I'm here with a friend and his girlfriend only they aren't here yet, but they will be ... soon." I felt like I'd forgotten how to communicate, but this gorgeous man was also gracious because he didn't seem to notice.

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"I tell you what Cassie, I want you and your friends to be my guests today. I'll take you to one of the suites and let you get comfortable and give your ticket to my Dad. He'll be happy to run down to your seats and meet up with your friends.

"Oh, I couldn't do that, I don't ... I don't ... I bet on the Steelers and will be pulling for them, I can't sit with a bunch of Cleveland fans."

Corby smiled again. "Do you always tell the truth?"

I couldn't believe how much I was telling this man. Right now, I wanted to be a Cleveland fan. I wanted this guy to have a show stopper of a ballgame but the truth was, if he did ... it would cost me a thousand dollars. I was willing to see him lose the game and still sit in his suite. So I took him up on the offer.

After I agreed to wait in one of the luxury suites and met Corby's dad, I began to calm down. Corby thanked *me* for coming to the game and promised an unforgettable show since I agreed to sit among Cleveland fans. As Corby's dad left to go find Mandy and Steve at our original seats, I was rapidly aware of my upgraded ticket status in the Browns' stadium.

I suddenly felt all alone and very uncomfortable until one of the suite attendants came up and started a conversation with me.

"You know, you are a very lucky girl," the cute little brunette said.

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"I don't understand. Lucky?" I couldn't manage much more, the day's excitement was about all any one girl could handle.

"Corby Teller has never brought a date to the suite. Never. He brings his dad but other than that—never a date."

Wow, now how did that happen? "Oh, I'm not his date, my friend gave me a ticket to the game for a Christmas gift and I'm here with my friend and his date but no, I'm not Corby Teller's date." The suite attendant shrugged and turned to walk off, "that's not what he said." By the time it sunk in, she was gone.

Chapter Five

Mr. Teller appeared with Steve and Mandy without a moment to spare before the kickoff. Steve seemed agitated but I ignored him. After all, I knew he wouldn't be impressed with our surroundings even though we were sitting among the pro player's wives, girlfriends, friends and family members.

Mandy, on the other hand, was very much impressed by our suite upgrade. "Oh my gosh. Look over there, is that who I think it is?"

Steve ignored her and focused on me.

"Not now Steve. It's football. It's all about the game now."

Throughout the game, Mr. Teller tried his best to get to know me. He wanted to know all of us. Where we were from and why we chose to come to Cleveland for Christmas. I found him to be very *real people* as they say in the southern states. He didn't seem to want to sum us up so he could report back to his son but instead appeared genuinely interested in watching his son play while making us feel welcome throughout the game. He was the perfect host.

At half time, Mandy excused herself to visit with some of the players' wives and before long, I could hear her talking with the girlfriends and wives about the best shopping in Cleveland and all of the things girly-girls seem to talk about. She fit in with the group instantly and even looked as if she belonged there.

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Steve and I were like a couple one minute and ex-spouses the next. We seemed to be on uneasy ground and I didn't like the feeling because it wasn't at all the normal relationship we shared. Steve and I were easy friends. He was my best friend.

Mr. Teller let me know that his son wanted us to stick around after the game. He said Corby would like to take us out for dinner. The expression on Steve's face said he wasn't at all interested in going to dinner with a professional football player.

Throughout the second half, Pittsburgh continued to stomp Cleveland and Steve continued to act like a jealous boyfriend. Mandy, was just being Mandy. She fit in well with everyone or at least she thought she did.

When the game was over, the Browns fans picked up their belongings and didn't seem too surprised that the game ended with a huge Pittsburgh victory. After the suite cleared out, I waited with Mr. Teller to thank Corby and to let him know that we would have to be getting back to Cincinnati. Mandy and Steve chatted in a corner with a Cleveland Reporter who originally thought that Mandy was the team owner's wife.

About an hour after the game and just before Steve's patience ran out, Corby appeared in the doorway and I knew I was in trouble. He lit up like a Fourth of July sky when he saw me.

"Wow, I'm glad you waited. I was afraid you might have taken up with the QB on the other team!" I laughed but felt rather uncomfortable. He suddenly had the boyish good looks

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I'd read about and I was instantly regretting the fact that I wouldn't be having dinner with him. *Who was I kidding anyway?* This couldn't go anywhere. This guy was way out of my league.

"Did Dad ask you out on a date for me?" Corby's smile illuminated the room a second time. "I, of course want to take you and your friends out on the town and Dad and I hope you'll say yes."

About that time, Steve and Mandy walked up and Corby's Dad introduced them like he had known them for decades. Steve let Corby know he had to work Christmas Day and we wouldn't be able to accept his dinner invitation because of the drive back. Corby looked disappointed.

As if on cue, Mr. Teller became engaged in a conversation with Mandy and Steve telling them tales about the Cleveland Browns and the stadium as he remembered it in years past. He talked about how thrilled he was when Corby came to Cleveland to play football and they chatted over a couple of beers while Corby and I began to get better acquainted.

Corby and I sat on the plush chairs overlooking the now empty stadium and football field. We talked about everything during the short time we had. It was like we couldn't say enough. He wanted to know me and I discovered I wanted to know him. We talked about our childhoods, education, dreams and goals. It was comfortable. From the looks Steve shot my way, I guessed it made him uneasy. I told Corby we would probably need to go because we did have a long drive ahead of us. As I stood up, Corby took my hand gently in his.

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"I don't know you but I *really* want to have the opportunity to know you."

I never doubted he was telling the truth. He had this look in his eyes that showed he was very interested in me as a person. "I'd like to get to know you too, Corby," was all I could think of to say.

I smiled and as I turned to go gather my things, I heard Corby say to his father, "Dad, pack the car, we're going to Cincinnati for Christmas."

Chapter Six

As we walked toward the cars, Steve stomped and his breathing seemed labored. He took each step in a heavy stride and I found him quite irritating which is something he and I had dealt with before on one side or another. His jealousy provoked me and mine had definitely pushed all of his buttons in the past so both of us recognized it immediately. This only made him more intolerable.

Steve was mad and Mandy was thrilled. She was very much on my nerves by this point and trying Steve's patience, too.

"What WERE you thinking?" Here we go. Steve never could control anger.

Mandy's eyes widened.

She obviously didn't know that Steve and I could have some very heated discussions when one of us thought the other did something stupid.

Mandy intervened, "Steve, I saw the look on her face when Corby told his dad to pack the car, she didn't invite him to Cincinnati, he wanted to come along so he could get to know her better."

Steve let out a grunt .

I smirked because I assumed he wouldn't get into it with me since Mandy was coming to my defense. A few miles later, my phone rang and Corby and I talked on the phone for about an hour before he asked to speak to Steve. Sixty miles

outside of Cincinnati, Steve pulled over and told me to get out and ride with Corby.

"I told him he could ride the rest of the way in with you but if he gets out of hand, you're to call me and I'll pull over and pick you up." He gave a half-attempt at a smile as Mandy blew me a kiss followed by, "You look great!"

Her words followed me as I hopped in the car with Mr. Teller and Corby. Mr. Teller offered to let me ride in the front with Corby and hopped in the backseat.

As we approached Cincinnati, I remembered the way I left my cottage the morning of the ballgame. When Corby asked where they should stay in the city, I directed him to The Cincinnati Hotel. It was after three in the morning and everyone was tired so Corby and I decided to call it a night.

Steve met us at the hotel and I said my good-byes to the Teller men with quick plans made for the following day. On the way home, Mandy informed Steve that she wanted to go home first and that he should probably crash at my house because he would be too tired to make it to Covington, which is where he lived when he wasn't staying with Mandy or at my house. Funny, but it never occurred to me until that moment that Steve had been almost dating both of us. In any case, Steve was hell bent on staying with me with or without her permission. He kissed Mandy on the forehead and told her goodnight.

As she started to get out of the car, she turned to me and said, "You know Cassie, I hope you have fun with Corby. He's a nice guy and Steve and I both like him. He's probably going to be a perfect match for you."

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Steve and I drove to my house in silence. In part because we were exhausted, in part because something had changed between us and we both knew it. We arrived to a pitch black cottage. I forgot to leave any lights on. We drug ourselves in and fell in the bed in silence. "Merry Christmas, Cassie," Steve said it with deep sincerity in his voice.

"Merry Christmas, Steve."

Chapter Seven

The next morning, it was like Corby Teller didn't exist. I woke up with wet kisses on my belly and Steve's hands cupping my breasts. We had the best sex we'd ever had—again. It was like this caged animal had been inside of Steve and suddenly it was unleashed and the sex was something out of the animal kingdom, too. We couldn't get enough of each other. Exhausted but still filled with lust, I found Steve couldn't stop touching me and I couldn't stop my body aching for him all the more. It was like nothing I'd ever felt before with Steve or with anyone else.

"I love you, Cassie. I've always loved you. I love screwing you sure, but I deeply love you, too." I knew that. We loved each other. We had always loved each other but now, something was changing. It almost made me angry. Why all of a sudden did Steve have the need to *finally* declare his love me?

"You love me now? Why now?"

Steve shrugged, "I guess I always have but something clicked yesterday morning and I know now, now I know," he paused, "I love you."

The phone rang. *Damn.*

"Corby?" Steve looked like a hurt pup after I hung up the phone but he knew it was Corby before I answered the phone. We had agreed he would call when he got up and was ready for a day of Christmas in Cincinnati.

"Yes, it's Corby. Tell me not to go and I won't go, Steve."

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Steve shrugged, "I can't tell you that Cassie because I feel like it wouldn't be fair to you. I've used you for years. You've been my best friend and I've done nothing to deserve you in my life but you've been there through thick and thin and watched as I paraded around one girlfriend after the next. Now, when you have the opportunity to be with someone who could make all of your dreams come true, I'm not going to tell you not to go. In fact, if you don't go, you'll always want to know what if. I've had a lot of what-ifs with you. Now, it's your turn. You have to go."

I went into the den and pulled out a gift from under the tree. In it was a scrapbook I'd been working on for a long time.

Steve opened the gift but couldn't look through it. "I'll do this later, right now we've got to whip this place into shape. You need to get ready so I'll straighten up out here."

When I appeared in the bathroom doorway dressed in a little black dress, Steve's personality had returned to the norm. He let out a big whistle and sent me on my way. I couldn't help but feel guilty. After all this time, Steve was the one being left behind and I certainly knew how that felt.

Pulling into The Cincinnati Hotel, I noticed the expensive cars in the parking area outside. I saw the ladies covered in jewelry and furs as they entered the building and where I typically would've felt intimidated, I didn't. I felt as if I was supposed to be here. Normally a bit self-conscious in upscale environments, I walked confidently into the lobby and was immediately greeted by a kiss on the cheek by Corby.

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"You look," he took a step back and then paused before he said, "stunning."

I returned similar sentiments. He was dressed in Khakis and a golf shirt and suddenly I was entertaining an idea of how we'd spend our day.

Chapter Eight

Corby pulled me into his arms. "You like football, you play golf. Lady is there anything I won't like about you?"

Well, now would probably be a great time to tell him I also sleep with my best friend but I think I'll save that for another day. "Nope, you're going to love me, Mr. Teller," was what I managed with a grin and bow, I didn't know how true that would end up being.

Our Christmas Day was turning out to be just perfect. After I picked up Corby and saw that he looked more like he was ready for 18 holes than a date, we ran by my house to pick up some clubs and I changed quickly into my pants and golf shirt too and we were off. Eighteen holes later and I had decided Corby Teller not only had perfect looks but could hold his own on a golf course which sent him up a few pages in my little black book.

After our unusually beautiful day in December turned into rain, we went back to the clubhouse. We sat at the bar to take in the Christmas decorations and called his dad to make Christmas dinner plans. While I insisted on preparing a Christmas meal at my house; it was Mandy who saved the day when she called to invite us to her parent's house for a traditional dinner with her family. The Tellers loved it and Steve was glad we would be keeping up our tradition of spending every Christmas together.

Throughout dinner, I must say, Corby was very charming. He told football stories and engaged in conversation with

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everyone around the table careful not to leave anyone out. Mandy's family loved him and the kids there adored him. He wrestled with the boys and played ROOK successfully as Mandy's father's partner and we later discovered this factor was very important when playing ROOK with her dad.

Around 8:00 we turned on the tube and settled in to watch the NFL Christmas Day Game but just as we were ready to watch, the cable went out as an electrical storm set in outside so we opted for a game of Twister. Funny, I didn't know Twister could be so sexy but I was definitely turned on by the game and what's a girl to do when she has one good-looking pro player under her and one sex machine over her? I decided to show cleavage and it worked beautifully because I could tell that both Corby and Steve were getting hot and bothered.

Even though we were all laughing and having a great time, it suddenly dawned on me, I had a brewing problem. Corby seemed to be the man every girl would want in her life and the tabloids had expressed as much dubbing him the most eligible bachelor in NFL. I could see why he'd earned the title and knew I should be planning on how to make him completely in awe of me.

Steve, on the other hand, held my heart and I just couldn't seem to focus completely on Corby without a thought or two about Steve. My heart's strings continued to do their dance as first one man twisted around me and then the other. Twister seemed like the appropriate game to play. After all, I was beginning to feel much the same way inside.

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After Mr. Teller and Mandy's father had one too many drinks, Mr. Teller came in to announce he wanted to go back to the hotel. Corby and I drove him over to the hotel with the intentions of going back to Mandy's. We didn't make it. As we drove by my house, Corby suggested that we go to my house instead. He didn't have to ask me twice. We ended our Christmas night in front of the fireplace, snuggled under the Christmas tree drinking rum and flirting with the idea of sleeping together.

The rum won out and when I woke up the next morning, I was fully clothed sleeping in my bed and Corby was on the sofa, also fully clothed. It was a nice feeling that he didn't feel the need to take advantage of me. In fact, I began to think about a long courtship where we waited to sleep together but it was very short lived.

I bent down to kiss him on the cheek and it was like he had been waiting for me all night. He cupped my face in both hands and planted one right on my lips.

He pulled me closer and whispered, "Cassie, I want to be respectful of you and if you want me to stop, tell me right now but I also want you. I watched you sleep in the firelight last night. I ached for you because I wanted to ... I wanted to be inside of you and I know none of this makes any sense but I feel like I need to get close to you."

Speechless and, as I said, my first notion of a long courtship was *very, very* short lived; I toyed with the idea of walking away. If for no other reason because I felt as if I would be betraying this new love I had finally professed to Steve deserved a chance. Still, I couldn't help but notice the

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full rise in between Corby's legs and call me fickle but I wanted to find out what he held in store for me.

As I stood over him from leaning down to kiss him on the cheek, Corby pulled me to him and next thing I know, I'm straddling him and can feel the strength in his cock. He kissed me passionately. He probed his tongue deep and licked my lips as if he wanted to taste me before he took me for his own.

"Feel me," he whispered. "I want you to know every inch of me and let me know you want me." The more he talked to me the more I wanted him. In fact, it was me who unzipped his pants and it was certainly me who moved my lips to places I was sure he wanted me to go and then I don't remember anything else except pure satisfaction.

Chapter Nine

The phone rang and it was Corby's father.

"Corby, it's your father. He's being taken to the hospital."
Corby took the receiver from my hands.

He spoke quietly with his father and then replaced the receiver. "Dad has frequent anxiety attacks and lately with the football season and all, I think he has the attacks more frequently." He continued, "I'm sorry we can't pick up where we left off before the phone interrupted."

He leaned over and kissed me on the nose. It was quite funny really. A kiss on the nose. We hurried to get dressed and left for the hospital.

We pulled into the parking lot and quickly walked toward the help desk. The staff was quite impressed with Corby but he seemed not to notice so much. Corby was pointed in the direction of his father's room and I told him I would wait for him in the lobby.

About an hour or so passed and Corby finally appeared. It was like an out-of-body experience when I first saw him. It was like something you see in the movies where you see someone walking in slow motion and then suddenly everything goes chaotic. That's what happened. He was walking toward me with a relaxed smile on his face when suddenly over the intercom, "CODE BLUE ROOM FOUR—CODE BLUE ROOM FOUR—ER ROOM FOUR."

Corby turned to look back toward the hallway and I knew instantly by the look on his face it was his father's room. He

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sprinted back through the doors toward the emergency room before the door could even securely fasten behind him.

Later, he would tell me his father never regained consciousness. Corby's father had a massive heart attack as soon as Corby left the room. Within seconds, he was gone.

I don't think I've ever seen death taken so hard. Corby shook he cried so hard. I asked him who I could call for him but the only call he wanted me to make was to his coach. Ironically, the coach recognized my name and took the call. Corby had told me I might have to go through a lot of channels to get to him but I simply asked for him and explained that I was a friend of Corby Teller's and I was put right through.

After I made the call for him, I tried to encourage him to leave the hospital lobby but he didn't want to leave. He walked back to the nurse's station one last time and asked to see his father again while I waited. When I finally convinced him to leave wrapping my arm around his waist, I realized I could easily care for him. I tried to hold him close and felt his strong body tremble from the heartache. In the moments that followed Mr. Teller's death, I felt very close to Corby and he leaned on me for the strength he couldn't find on his own.

Corby and I went back to the hotel to gather his father's things along with Corby's belongings. He cried the whole time we were there. I was crushed to see this man so full of life hurt so deeply and didn't know how to help him. There wasn't any way to help him.

Pain runs a particular course often so brutal that it's hard to fathom and Corby Teller was in the throes of it. We sat for

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hours by the Christmas tree in my small home and he told me about his father's humble beginnings as a shoe salesman who wanted nothing more than to take care of his son and offer him the best education money could buy. He painted a picture of his life, vividly recalling his mother and how she had passed away when he was only three years old. A faraway look came upon his handsome face as memories continued to spill from his lips. His father's sister who was the only other living relative he knew had died the year before from a drug overdose.

I shared experiences too and realized with each recounting, the invisible thread that bound us together grew stronger. We really weren't that different.

Around five the next morning, the phone rang and it was Corby's coach.

"Cassie, Mr. Teller and Corby were very close." He expected me to not know this I suppose. He must've thought I had been one of the many NFL groupies just bidding for time with his quarterback.

"Yes, Corby and I have spoken about his father at length." My air with this man surprised me.

"I am in Cincinnati already and I'm here to take Corby and Mr. Teller home." His voice was cold and straight to the point. I would learn later that it wasn't anything I should have taken personally because his coach was in fact, one of Corby's most dedicated friends.

I asked Corby to speak to him and he finally found the words to thank him for coming to Cincinnati and then hung up.

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"You just met me and I have no right to ask this of you," Corby began, "but if you wouldn't mind, I could deal with this better if you were there beside me. I need your strength, Cassie."

What could I say? I actually saw this coming a mile away. When I was with Corby, it wasn't like I was with a superstar professional football player, we had become fast friends and were headed for something much more involved than friendship. In fact, it looked like we were headed for something deep and meaningful. Of course, I didn't have time then to think about Steve. Corby needed me and for some reason, I wanted to be who he needed.

"Of course I'll go with you to take your dad home Corby." It was all I could say and I could see the gratitude in his eyes. There was something else in his eyes that I just couldn't put my finger on but I was far too afraid to give it much thought at the time.

Chapter Ten

I used to collect my "paid time off" time as if I would be spending it on an exotic vacation one day. My friends at work used to tease me about it. I never used it. I had enough time off accrued to take off as much time as I needed when Mr. Teller passed away. Who would have guessed I'd be using it to help my new boyfriend get through his father's funeral. It was a shame I'd never get to know Mr. Teller. The short amount of time I was with him showed me his gentle character and love for his son and I think we would've liked one another.

I stayed with Corby in Cleveland for a few days after his father's funeral but on the fourth day after his burial, I told Corby I needed to return home and back to some level of normalcy in my own life. The look on his face showed disappointment.

"Cassie, I know you have to go at some point but could you just stay with me a little longer?"

I stayed.

At the end of the second week, things began to get back to what I imagined would be normal in a relationship with Corby. We had sex for the second time and it wasn't just sex, it was a wild sex romp all over his penthouse apartment. The best damn sex I've ever had bent over a balcony I might add! He could get me hot just by talking to me and in fact, talked me right into an orgasm while he was driving me back to Cincinnati. Yes, I decided this man was one hot commodity.

He was sexy and great in bed and could do things with his cock that I never knew could be done to a woman. We were having a good time together.

The sex was, as I said, incredible. He was handsome and considerate and of course, turned heads everywhere we went. However, he only had eyes for me and I loved the attention.

Still, I was surprised when I found Corby on one knee with rose petals spread all over my bed when I came out of the shower my first night home.

"Marry me."

I can't marry you, I don't even know you. I was speechless, "Corby, honey, I think you are moving too fast and you'll regret this later. We can't right now, you are still grieving the loss of your father."

He looked so sincere and this time with tears in his eyes, he took my left hand and said, "I loved you the day I first saw you at the stadium. I need you, Cassie. We're good together. I want you to be my wife."

I kissed him on the forehead and he slid the ring, which was a rock by the way, on my finger, and while my head began to swim, he began with his promises for a happily ever after which given my history as a child, sounded pretty damn good. Of course, then I thought of Steve.

As thoughts of Steve darkened the whole proposal, Corby picked up a bottle of champagne and popped the cork. However, once we were soaking in champagne and licking every delicious sip off each other's bodies, Steve disappeared from my mind again. After all, an engagement was an experience and a taste worth savoring. Even though it was

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hot and incredibly sexy, I later decided what I felt for Corby paled in comparison to the love I had for Steve.

Yes, Corby rocked my world that night just as he did every time I was with him but I had to try to make some sort of sense of everything happening so fast in my life. I was sure what I had with Corby was just lust and even though it was delicious, it wasn't love. Love and Steve went hand in hand. Love is what I had felt for Steve for most of my life. I just discovered what to call it a little too late.

Chapter Eleven

I heard the door click and felt he was there but forgot the fact that I was lying in another man's arms. My body had already started to want him and yet I couldn't wake up enough to see him. Steve walked right in on us.

Our entangled bodies were under the sheets but he knew, of course, what had taken place. He apologized immediately as Corby sat up in bed scratching his head like he had missed something while blinking his eyes, "Oh, hey man, how'd you get in?"

I told him quickly that Steve had a key and grabbed for my robe. Trying to be a perfect gentleman Corby said, "Hey, grab you some juice out of the refrigerator and let us get ourselves together and we'll be right out."

Steve didn't like to be dismissed in my house and I could tell it didn't go over too well with Corby that he had a key.

Steve shut the door and went into the kitchen where I heard him fumbling around in my cabinets looking for coffee no doubt.

Corby jumped in the shower and I tossed my hair into a clip and put on a robe to join Steve in the kitchen. He was looking out over the kitchen sink into the back yard and didn't turn to face me.

"Nice rock."

I'm sure I looked a bit dazed by the comment and started to ask him what he was talking about and then remembered I

was newly engaged. "Oh yeah, well, Corby gave it to me last night."

Steve's eyes blazed. "Did it ever occur to you that you could've said you didn't want it? Or how about, hey I can't. I love someone else."

I couldn't find the words to calm him.

"Did it ever dawn on you that he may be rushing things because he is grieving over the loss of his father?"

I moved around him to pour myself a cup of coffee Steve had freshly made and answered him softly, "Yes, it did and keep your voice down if you don't mind."

"I love you Cass and I know you love me, too," he paused, "We just waited far too long to recognize it."

I turned to say something and he wrapped me in his arms and kissed me hard on my mouth. His hands never wandered south this time. He just kissed me passionately and then he was gone.

Corby appeared neatly dressed in jeans and one of my Cincinnati Bengals t-shirts a moment later. His black hair was still moist from the shower, "Hey gorgeous, where'd Steve go?"

Without missing a beat, I said, "He had an errand to do for Mandy." I grinned, "Nice shirt."

Corby picked up that something wasn't quite right, "Cassie, what's going on?"

I looked at him through tear-stained blue eyes and suddenly burst out, "He's my best friend Corby ... and ... and ... I ... don't ... know ... what..." I couldn't finish what I

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wanted to say, Corby was suddenly holding me and caressing my hair.

"Honey, I know, it's scary to leave behind your friends but you can visit often and I'll build a nice house with a guest cottage for Steve. He'll always be welcome wherever you are."

I knew that wouldn't be true if he knew what my and Steve's history had been like. No man would want his wife around her former lover with a history like ours. Still, I became calmed by Corby's soothing voice.

Chapter Twelve

Corby went back to Cleveland and called every hour on his way home. From the phone sex to his claims of missing me from the moment he left, I couldn't escape the phone and really only wanted time to think and to be alone for awhile.

First things first, Cassie, I thought. Call Steve. Pack. Call Steve. Pack. Call a real estate agent. Call Steve. Call Steve. Shit! I can't do this anymore. I gave in and called Steve. He didn't answer so I could move on. *Call him again.* I called again and left a message then I headed over to the casino to turn in my official notice.

I crossed the ugly state line from Ohio into Indiana and headed out to the casino to tell my supervisor that I wouldn't be coming back to work. Corby didn't want his future bride working in a casino and I knew I would be expected to move immediately to Cleveland. Everyone at work already knew about my romance with Corby so it came as no surprise to anyone.

As I drove home, I decided to take a detour and head for Kentucky. Right outside of Cincinnati is Turfway Park. It's in Florence, Kentucky, not far from Cincinnati and not far from Covington where Steve lives. We used to meet at the track anytime Steve had women troubles and he would pour his heart out to me while I drank beer and bet on the horses. In the dead of winter, the only races I would be watching would be simulcast.

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I grabbed a Daily Racing Form on my way in and took a seat near the bar to start handicapping the ponies. That's when I saw him walk in. He knew me so well. I slipped my hand in my purse and turned off my phone. Corby would be calling and I didn't want any interruptions.

"Hang on, I'll be right back," when he reappeared he had two ice-cold draft beers. Steve slid in the chair beside me.

We sat in silence as he watched me pick over the races I pretended to want to watch. Finally, I noticed a tear fall down on the form. He wiped it away and said, "Come on baby, let's get out of here." We went to the parking lot and without a word, we both got in our separate cars and I followed Steve to his house. He was never home so no one would think to look for us there and it was time to resolve this unfinished business between us.

I walked in and tripped over Christmas packages.

"Mandy, went overboard," he explained.

"You could've picked this up and showed her you appreciated the effort," I commented.

"Yeah, I know, I should have."

We sat down on the futon sofa and looked at his small Christmas tree. Steve turned to look at me and started to say something when I cut him off. "No, not this time, let me go first." He nodded and I continued, "I think I've loved you before I knew I loved you. I think I thought we would always be like we were. You would have the occasional girl friend and we would do our thing regardless of who she was or how involved you became with her." My eyes started to tear up, "I always thought this day would come ... where we would say

good-bye to life as we know it ... but I think I thought it would be like always ... with me left behind." That was it, I was mush. Sobbing and choking on my words.

Steve wrapped me in his arms and pulled me in close, "Oh baby, I just waited too late didn't I?" He rocked me back and forth and occasionally kissed me softly on the lips or on the forehead. We must've sat like that for hours and I dozed off to sleep. When I woke up, I was in his arms and the futon bed was pulled out in the bed position and we were snuggled up like two spoons. I felt happy and then I panicked. Corby. I looked over at the clock and saw that it was four in the morning. Shit. How did I sleep so long? I jumped up and went out into Steve's greenhouse and sat on the edge of the hot tub and dialed my messages. "Hey babe, it's me. Give me a call." "It's 9 o'clock, do you know where your fiancé is?" "Hey, hon, pick up. It's two in the morning, where are you?" I slowly dialed his number.

"Corby, I'm so sorry. I fell asleep and just now woke up. I must've slept through the ringing."

He was forgiving, "I knew that was what happened and I should've let you sleep. You've been so great through everything Cassie and I know you must be exhausted." That was the understatement of the year. I was exhausted both mentally and physically. So much so that I didn't realize I had stopped talking and stopped listening. "Cassie, are you there?"

I finally managed a "Mmmm" and he told me he loved me and we'd talk tomorrow.

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After I hung up, I walked back inside to slide into bed beside Steve but couldn't sleep for thinking about how things had moved so fast since Christmas. I looked at the four-carat diamond on my hand and knew my life was going to change drastically and yes, it would be virtually overnight. I moaned and got undressed and found my way to the hot tub.

As I sat there with my head back and my lids closed, I thought about how wrong it was to keep crawling back to Steve. He'd always done the crawling and sneaking around. However, we were bound by the ties that would forever bind us and it seemed as if I couldn't give him up yet Corby could offer me a life I never thought anyone with my humble beginnings could have. Yes, his fame and status held part of the appeal but I did have real feelings developing too and those feelings couldn't be ignored entirely. Still, I didn't want to give up Steve. I didn't know if I could.

"Now there's a sight for sore eyes."

I'd just began to contemplate going back to bed when I heard his voice. I opened my eyes and grinned. Steve's manhood was clearly showing through his boxers, "If I come in there Cassie, you're going to be in trouble so I will just stay out here and look in on you from time to time." He had his sense of humor back and was making gestures toward his penis and then peering over the tub at my very exposed chest, "I don't think you could handle this tonight, baby."

I pretended to swim up to the side of his eight-person hot tub and sent a wave splashing toward the front of his boxers. "Well damn, I guess *it's* going to have to come out and play. You can't stand there with wet boxers on, now can you?"

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He smiled but there was a sadness in his eyes as if it would pain him to be inside me, to touch me the way only he could touch me. I licked my lips and pulled him to the side of the hot tub and took in every inch of him. I didn't want to stop but he moved me over to his side and slid into the hot tub beside me. "I wanted to finish what I started." He grinned and pulled me in for a deep kiss, "I want you Cassie and I'm savoring every moment because this is all we have right now."

I stood up and started to get out of the tub. I was hot and bothered and wanted to feel Steve inside of me. I acted like I tripped and he got up and stood behind me. His hardness was incredible. He stroked my back and then bent me over the tub and thrust inside of me with fierce passion. I whimpered and he whispered in my ear, "It's you Cassie, it's always been you. I love you. I love being inside of you. Oh damn, I ... I..." He collapsed onto me and I knew he had reached his climax early. I turned around to face him and pushed him down to the seat in the hot tub and straddled him so that he could caress my breasts with his tongue. I stayed seated on top of him with his cock inside of me savoring the feeling when I couldn't contain it any longer. Our bodies moved in unison and we climaxed together until we collapsed in each other's arms.

I got out of the water and realized my phone still had the speaker mic light on. Shit. I clicked the end button and hoped Corby had not just witnessed the whole sex romp with Steve. We both had been pretty vocal about what we wanted from the other one and there would be no denying the fact that we

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were sleeping together if Corby hadn't hung up the phone on his end when we said good-night.

Steve didn't notice the phone; he was already behind me rubbing up against me as we moved into the bedroom. Tired from passion, exhausted by confusion and destined to sleep, I fell into bed and forgot about the phone.

In Cleveland though, it was a different story. Corby sat on the bed staring at the speaker phone. He had heard every whimper, every sexual request and every moan. He was motionless and angry. Most of all, he was hurt.

Chapter Thirteen

The sun was shining deep within the room and invaded our sleep as if to beckon us outside. I moaned and rolled over and found Steve already sitting up on the side of the bed pulling on his pants. "You have to go."

I looked at him kind of confused and rolled over, "Yes, you do. Mandy called and Corby is at your house. He didn't have my number. You have to go."

Oh shit. Why on earth was he at my house? This didn't make any sense. Forgetting about the cell phone and the last call to Corby, I grabbed my stuff and headed to the shower.

When I came out topless, I was in a hurry looking for something to wear in Steve's closet. "I boxed up all of your stuff Cass, um ... to make it easier for you. It's over there."

He pointed to a box and I grabbed a sweatshirt off the top and slid my hair into a ponytail. I walked over and kissed his cheek and made light of everything, "Well, this has been an interesting four weeks. I fell in love on Christmas and met the man I'm going to marry. Too bad both of these men aren't one in the same." I made an attempt at a half-smile and turned to walk away. I wanted him to tell me not to go. He never said a word. Not even good-bye.

I cried all the way home. Cincinnati and Covington aren't far enough apart for me to cry my eyes out but I got a lot of it out before I finally pulled into the driveway to find Corby and Mandy on the porch.

He walked over to me smiling, "Hey babe,"

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I sighed as he said it; he hadn't heard Steve and I the night before. "What a nice surprise, what are you doing here?"

Mandy looked like a kid just dying to tell me something. "He's here to take you away to get married."

I'm sure I looked puzzled. "We haven't even set a date yet Mandy."

Corby swooped me into his arms and literally swept me off of my feet. "The jet's waiting, we're heading to Vegas baby. I never want to spend another night of my life without you beside me."

Chapter Fourteen

There's something about a private jet that makes you feel important. Maybe it's the feel of the leather under you thousands of feet in the air. Maybe it's the fact that there are hundreds of movies to watch, every liquor imaginable and the best of everything or maybe it's just because the private jet means you've finally arrived. That's what Mandy said. She said, "You know you've finally arrived when you are in a private jet." I didn't feel like I'd arrived. I felt as if I'd just left everything behind.

After Corby finished calling everyone he wanted to tell that we were getting married, he informed me that a couple of his buddies were going to join us in Vegas to be part of the ceremony. I nodded and suddenly felt sick to my stomach. "Is there anyone you want with us other than Mandy and Steve?"

I looked surprised, "They're coming to the wedding?"

Corby grinned from ear to ear, "Yes ma'am. Mandy said she would have to get Steve a suit and some clothes for Vegas so I'm sending the jet for them tomorrow morning. Honey, don't worry about a thing. Mark's wife, Suzy is a wedding planner and they're on their way to Vegas now. We're going to get married tomorrow night in a beautiful ceremony at the Monte Carlo."

The Monte Carlo. Right. Sure. I know it. After all, I went to Vegas once and saw it. Sure, fine. Plan it all. It's your wedding anyway. Thoughts ran together and I fell asleep in Corby's arms wanting to tell him all of this was a bad idea but

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everything had already been put into motion and there was no turning back now.

When I woke up we were on the ground in Las Vegas and Corby was grabbing our things and kissing me with little kisses on the forehead every time he walked by me. "Rise and shine beautiful," he seemed so happy. I stood up and we walked to the door just as the limousine pulled up on the runway.

As the steps unfolded before us, he announced, "Welcome to Vegas, Cassie, this city is going to love you." I had no doubt he believed I would love Vegas, too. Corby had a way of believing you saw things the same way he wanted you to see them. I actually liked that about him but it also brought to mind why there seemed to be a sudden urgency to get married.

We were whisked away in the limo to the Monte Carlo. We stayed in the nicest suite the Monte Carlo had. As we walked in, I spotted the champagne and strawberries and helped myself to a glass and then another while nibbling at the strawberries.

Corby grabbed me from behind and wrapped his big, strong arms around me. "You smell good enough to eat," he whispered, "but we have some shopping to do!" Like a half-cocked gun he began to ramble about what I needed to buy. A wedding gown would be purchased and he wanted to see me try everything I liked on because he didn't believe in the notion of bad luck if you see the bride in a wedding gown before the wedding. We were going to have a perfect wedding and a perfect marriage. I watched in amazement as he called

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several jewelry stores and told them who he was and to bring over an assortment of wedding bands. He called several of the stores and "ordered" wedding gowns. Size 3 dress and Size 5 for my ring finger, why didn't he just ask?

When his best friend Mark arrived with Suzy, I was ready for a break and Suzy caught on to the fact that Corby was an over-anxious groom in desperate need of a drink so she sent Mark and Corby on their way.

"He is crazy in love with you," she began.

I didn't say anything. "Aren't you just giddy about him?" *Giddy? Now, that's a word to consider. Am I giddy about him? No. I'm amused by all of this. Consumed by it even but giddy? No.* I just smiled and poured another glass of champagne. I knew better than to confide in the wife of one of Corby's best friends.

By the time the guys returned, Suzy and I were plastered. We had ordered another three bottles of champagne and Suzy taught me the ropes about how to charge very pricey bottles of champagne to the room.

Mark patted Corby on the back, "What'd I'd tell you Corby, leave Suzy with Cassie for a few days and she'll have her trained to spend your money in no time."

Everyone laughed. The knock on the door broke up the party and in strolled gowns like I'd never seen before. There were styles fit for a queen and I was able to try them on one by one while Mark, Suzy and Corby gave a thumb's up. Suzy was the only one who ever gave a thumb's down gesture. Finally, one fit the look they must've been looking for in my

wedding dress. Corby even looked a bit teary-eyed. Suzy announced, "That's the one" and I had to agree.

The cost of the dress was \$25,000. It wasn't the most expensive but far too much for my taste. I walked over to Corby and asked if I could speak with him alone. He was accommodating and followed me into the bedroom.

"What's wrong, baby?"

I looked at him searching for a way to tell him the dress was more than I made in a year at the casino. It pretty much came out that way when I did tell him.

He laughed and handed me a little box. "Open it," he said. I did and found a checkbook with my name and his on it. "As soon as I made up my mind to marry you, I had the bank send me these checks so you could have your own money. I've deposited \$100,000 in the account and it's yours as a wedding gift. Of course there's more where that came from."

I looked at him bewildered. "I'm not marrying you for money Corby."

He stared at me. "I love you Cassie and I don't care why you are marrying me. I'm crazy in love with you and just want you to know what I have—it's yours."

He walked over to the bedroom door and flung it open while instructing the designer from the dress shop to have the dress ready for the wedding adding, "My bride will be shopping with you from time to time for casual wear at your other store. Understand, whenever she's in town, I want her to have anything she wants and to be treated like the lady she is." The designer nodded and was gone. I sat on the bed

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amazed holding the deposit slip in my hand along with the checkbook.

My mind wandered back to the night before. I thought about Steve and my body ached for him but not in the sexual sense but in the sense I needed his arms to cradle me and tell me things were going to be fine. In a weird way, since I had decided to marry Corby, I basically just wanted Steve to walk me through it and give me his blessing.

On the other side of the door, Corby too thought of Steve. He replayed what he had heard on the phone. He shook off the last cry of pleasure because it was in that moment he had decided Steve would never have the opportunity to be alone again with the woman he loved. He had decided to be silent and marry fast.

Chapter Fifteen

If I had met Corby a year earlier, I would've fell head over heels in love with him. We had a lot in common. Football, golf, living on the edge but because of my feelings for Steve, I couldn't bring myself to feel for Corby what he felt for me. I knew a million girls would love to be in my place. They would love to be lying in Corby's arms for the rest of their lives. I wanted to be lying in Steve's. Mandy wanted to be in Steve's too but in truth, she belonged with someone more like Corby. Mandy would always be too self-consumed to enjoy Steve the way I enjoyed him. She needed money and Steve didn't have the kind of money she would need to survive. I knew the Mandy and Steve relationship wouldn't last. What I didn't know was if the Corby and Cassie relationship could.

My wedding day was a whirlwind. Corby woke up after his bachelor's party with Mark with a huge hangover. Suzy had taken me out for dinner and never left my side at the craps table. I made everyone at the table money when I shot the dice but took my winnings and went to the Sports book to bet on the horses. We spent the entire evening betting on the races until finally Corby and Mark appeared to walk us back upstairs.

Once my wedding day was underway, it seemed as if we were in a race to the finish line. I didn't see Suzy very much at all because she was just breezing in and out of the room making sure everything went according to her plan. I was so caught up in doing what everyone told me to do, I couldn't

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believe the time had come for me to slip on my wedding dress. After it was on, the hairstylist touched up my hair with pieces of baby's breath and announced to the person walking into the room that I was now, "perfect." I turned around and saw before my eyes perfect. A perfect love.

Steve walked over to me and kissed me on the forehead, "Don't you dare cry, Cassie, you look gorgeous and I don't want you to mess yourself up." I managed a smile.

Mandy was right behind him. "We've all been summoned to the chapel." She looked pretty. Her dark hair was pulled back into a bun and she had on a red dress with a white shawl over her shoulders. Simple but classy, that was Mandy.

Steve's eyes never left mine as he said, "Mandy, can you give me a minute?"

She stuttered around and then managed to say, "Oh, yes, of course."

When she was gone, he hugged me while he buried his head in my neck and whispered, "Be happy." Then, he was gone.

Chapter Sixteen

The wedding march was something we agreed on as a couple. I think it was the only thing I was able to have an opinion on. I decided it was a sad march. I used to dream of my wedding day and never imagined anyone walking me down the aisle so I decided today was just the way I had envisioned it. I walked slowly toward the end. *That's a great way to think about your wedding day.* It was the end in a sense but when I say I do, I thought, it will be the beginning. *Don't look back I thought. Look ahead. Be happy.*

Steve said to be happy. Why not. I have this wonderful life ahead of me. Be happy. When I reached the minister and Corby took my hand, I decided my marriage would be a celebration of the beginning. Steve had let me go and when I said my vows, it would be time to say good-bye to our past as friends with sexual benefits.

Corby wanted us to wing our wedding vows since we were among friends and having the ceremony in Las Vegas. The chapel looked beautiful with lovely red and green candles placed throughout the chapel. My bouquet was small with delicate red and white roses and lots of greenery. Poinsettias were also in the chapel. It had a very Christmas feel to it though Valentine's Day was closer now than Christmas. Still, Corby wanted to keep the Christmas alive in our marriage ceremony because we met at Christmas.

As the ceremony began, I noticed Corby in a different light. He was handsome and had a generous heart. He

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seemed extraordinarily pleased with himself and just plain happy. He took my hands and I turned to face him. We had the standard vows and then the "winging it" came in.

Corby went first, "Cassie, you stormed into my life when I needed someone to call my own. You gave me a glimmer of hope, something to look forward to at the end of the day. You were full of life and I, needed life. You will always be at the center of my world. I love you today and I'm honored to have you as my wife."

The Officiating Minister nodded in my direction that it was now my turn. I really had no idea what I was going to say. I should've discussed this with my two new girlfriends, Mandy and Suzy but I didn't.

I cleared my throat and started, "This past Christmas," I glanced at Steve and back at Corby, Steve looked as if he was ready to dart for the door as I continued, "I fell in love, met the man I was going to marry and my life forever changed. It has been something of a fairy tale and now, I take you Corby as my husband and I am proud to be your wife."

The Minister told Corby he could kiss his bride and he wasted no time in planting one right on me. He seemed happy with what I had to say. Steve knew he had heard those very words before and he understood what they meant. He knew I had realized I loved him the day I met Corby. He fully understood what I meant by my vows, too. He knew we both had to let go.

The wedding party, small as it was, including a few of Corby's fellow teammates, Suzy, Mandy and Steve made a

fiasco of celebrating and for awhile, I was lost in the celebration. We hopped in a limo and Corby showed us all a really good time. We went to the Palms for dinner, The Mirage for gambling and ending up at all of the hot spots for dancing. I believe we danced one dance everywhere we went before hopping back in the limo and speeding off somewhere else. It was how the rich lived and Mandy whispered once, "Now, this is what I call fun and I'm jealous because all of this is now yours." Mandy and her jealousy never quite passed with me. She was so confident and sure of herself. Unlike me, I decided once more, she was so not like me. Maybe that was why Steve would one day have her for his own. Only time would tell. I decided to not think about who Steve would have and began to focus only on the fun.

Having been paraded all over Las Vegas in a wedding gown, I convinced Corby to let me run back to the Monte Carlo to change. I put on a little black dress, the one I first intended to wear on my first real date with Corby but instead ended up in my golfing attire. I liked what I saw in the mirror. For the first time, I thought I looked damn hot, curves and all.

When I made it back to the car, every man in the car was practically undressing me with his eyes. Suzy even said, "Okay, Mark. Enough. Down boy." Steve shot him a disapproving look and Corby just seemed satisfied to know that I now belonged to him. He insisted that I sit on his lap to make room for everyone but it was really so I could feel how much he already wanted me.

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By the time we made it back to The Palms, it was getting late and everyone was tipsy. We went to the Ghostbar and Steve and I finally made it to the dance floor. We were always show stoppers because we meshed just like we did in the bedroom. We warned one another not to do anything too provocative but even as we made it to the floor, I could feel his heat up against my thigh. I was very aware of him as he put both hands on my hips and began to sway as we made our way through the crowd.

Once we finally reached the dance floor, we broke out into what everyone used to call our "thing" and it was just as hot and provocative as it always was. He would grind behind me and I would twist around him and dance-down on him. We didn't care who saw us, after all, we were drunk. By the time I regained some composure; Corby was on the floor with us and cut in on Steve. By the look on his face, I could see he wasn't the happy, fun-loving Corby any more.

"Steve and Mandy are a cute couple, don't you think?" He whispered in my ear. I looked up at him as if to question where this was coming from but before I could answer, he pulled me in tight to him and said with a smile, "I bet Steve never could give you anything like this baby."

I pushed him back, "You're drunk Corby. Let's go." He followed me almost in mockery dancing behind me and rubbing up against me whenever we had to stall for a moment to wait for others to move. He was laughing and having a good time but something was odd about his look. I decided it was the alcohol.

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When we approached the table, Corby announced it was his wedding night and as everyone there could imagine and even understand, he was ready to ravage his wife. I managed a smile and we said goodnight. At the time, I didn't know that Steve and Mandy would be on a plane headed home in the morning. If I'd known, I guess it would've been very hard to say good-bye.

Once we were back in the limo, Corby instructed the driver to drive around for awhile and pressed a button and the window separating the driver from us was sealed. Corby wasted no time apologizing for his actions and explaining himself he said, "I don't know what came over me, I'm sorry." I knew what it was. I'd been told before, Steve and I were one hot couple on the dance floor and Corby saw it.

We drove around in the limo with champagne and strawberries, something I decided I really liked and once Corby was sure I was pretty toasted, he put back the sunroof and told me to stand up. I looked at him like he had lost his marbles. "I want you to see Las Vegas. Stick your head out of the sunroof. I did and it was definitely worth it. Not only did I see Las Vegas from the sunroof of the limo, but my husband pleased me in a way I never thought I would allow in a public place. I think everyone in Las Vegas probably heard me scream.

When we finished our limo ride, the driver took us back to the Monte Carlo. He looked smug and I whispered to Corby that I was sure the driver knew what we were doing in the back seat of the limousine. Corby laughed, "Baby, this is Las

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Vegas, everyone gets crazy in Vegas, he's probably seen it all in this city."

We made our way to a crowded elevator and were immediately pushed to the back. I could feel Corby's cock against my ass and for the first time since I met him was so turned on by him, I knew I would have a hard time waiting to enjoy our wedding night. After the last person was out of the elevator, I asked Corby for his jacket and he graciously gave it to me. I threw the jacket over the camera in the elevator and hit the "Stop" button and the look on Corby's face was priceless.

To say we made love in an elevator would not be correct; we simply devoured one another like two lustful consenting adults cheating on their spouses only we were in fact, married to each other. I think his wedding present in the limo just heated things up and the passion between us was very much alive as I enjoyed every inch of his cock inside of me. He moaned as I climbed all over him and used the railing to position myself in a way we both enjoyed. Corby's hands roamed and his nervous fingers told me he couldn't get enough of me. When we were through with our elevator romp, I threw the jacket over my shoulders and pushed the elevator button up. As the door opened to the top floor, several people from the hotel were standing there as if to scold us. "Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Teller, we thought something might be wrong." Corby laughed and I tossed my head back. *Mr. and Mrs. Teller, It had a very nice ring to it.*

We walked into our suite and picked up where we left off. Rose pedals were all over the bed, champagne was on ice and

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chocolates were readily available. I looked around as Corby positioned himself over me his eyes full of wanting. Yes, some would say I had been bought and paid for but since I was Mrs. Corby Teller, I might as well enjoy the ride. It looked as though it might be a fun one and after all, I was never one to turn my back on a good time.

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