



*Legacy of the
Celtic Brooch*

Seeing Double

**Johanna
Melaragno**

Seeing Double [The Legacy of tThe Celtic Brooch 5]
by Johanna Melaragno

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Contact Information: info@thewildrosepress.com

Cover Art by *RJ Morris*

The Wild Rose Press

PO Box 706

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Dedication

To my loving husband, Joe.

Chapter One

Jamie Holland stepped onto the small balcony of her Florida hotel room overlooking over the small marina lined with homes and private docks. The aqua water glistened in the sun, rippling rings appeared where fish jumped in feeding frenzies. The slight breeze carried the unmistakable scent of the ocean, and Jamie inhaled deeply, committing the smell to memory.

A low rumble from her stomach reminded Jamie she had yet to eat. Unpacking can wait, she thought, and she tore herself away from the view. So many activities beckoned, and she wasn't about to miss a bit of the excitement. She grabbed her purse and headed out the door into the humid air.

Leaving the Long Boat Key Resort, driving past the golf and tennis club, Jamie turned left toward St. Armand's Circle. The short drive took her on a bridge over an inlet of crystal clear water from the Gulf of Mexico. Every inch of the island seemed covered by buildings, whether they be hotels, houses or shops and restaurants. The most bizarre sight happened to be a Pepto Bismol pink monstrosity of a house with a matching brick wall surrounding the property.

To each his own.

Jamie found a parking spot on one of the side streets connecting to the circle. She opened the door and the humidity hit her in the face. Thank God, she'd thought to wear her hair up. The flip-flop of her sandals echoed down the quiet street. At almost five o'clock on Friday, she had expected the square to be a bit more active. Perhaps people

in Florida didn't surface for shopping or dinner until the sun went down.

She laughed to herself—they weren't vampires.

Jamie walked around the square—circle really—window-shopping. With a week of vacation ahead, she was in no hurry to spend all her shopping budget. No fear of running out of money—her diner in the heart of Cleveland's financial district brought in a more-than-comfortable income—but she hadn't become financially secure by overindulging in material things either.

One particular shop sign—the delicately carved wood boasting the name *Cherished Memories*—caught her eye, and she couldn't resist checking it out. Mostly, the store held collectibles or well-used items. Jamie found the most beautiful oak stool with scrolled legs—a perfect accent for her stone fireplace back home. She carried it to the counter and was just about to pay but a flash of silver caught her eye.

Directly under her hand, nestled among a variety of cameo pins, was a stunning brooch. "May I see that?" She kept her finger on the glass above the piece until the older woman wearing the gypsy dress complied, pulling the brooch from the case.

"Celtic in origin." Her bangled earrings swayed with each move of her head. "Made of silver and gold." She drew out her vowels as she spoke. "I picked it up at an estate sale about a year ago."

Jamie cocked her head to one side, a polite smile hovering at the corners of her mouth. "You have a most intriguing accent. May I ask where you're from?"

The shopkeeper's earrings bounced off her round cheeks with each nod of her head. "I come from Romania, thirty years ago."

"Ah. Romania. I'm not great with linguistics. I don't think I would have guessed."

The woman smiled in understanding and gestured to the brooch now in Jamie's hand. "You like?"

Jamie studied the circle of the silver brooch, with interlinking infinity symbols. Two raised gold roses decorated the left side—one at the base of the circle covering the stickpin, and the second toward the top near the head of the brooch. She sucked in a breath.

Her Grandma Nonny had one very similar—one she claimed helped her meet and marry the love of her life. Jamie didn't believe Nonny's brooch held any magical powers, but as a little girl, she'd loved to hold it and imagine meeting her true love someday. "I'll take it."

The holding case was cedar, etched with holly leaves, and under the lid the words *To Grace—All My Love, Aiden*. Like Nonny and Grandpa Henry, the previous owners must have been very much in love. Just holding the brooch brought a lump to her throat, making her long for the simplicity of her childhood. Paying for her purchases, she arranged to have her stool delivered to the hotel and walked out carrying "Nonny's" brooch in her hands.

Jamie was so engrossed in pinning the brooch to her shirt, she ran right into the wall. The sudden stop jarred her bones, and heat infused her cheeks. *God, I hope no one saw me.* She heard a snort, followed by a cough and looked up, way

up, into a smiling pair of dark brown eyes. Since when did walls have dark brown eyes?

The world tilted on its axis, and she grabbed the doorjamb to steady herself at the same time the handsome man cupped her elbows. The heat from his hands burned her tender skin. Her gaze flicked over a strong jaw line and full lips.

The urge to lean into him was strong and she briefly closed her eyes to fight against it. When she looked again, she saw a knowing grin on his tanned face. *Oh, lord, but he's sexy when he smiles.* "Sorry," she managed with a sheepish grin.

"Must be a pretty fascinating pin."

His voice was a smooth baritone, washing over her like a gentle breeze. "Uh, it's a brooch actually. And, yes, it *is* fascinating. But I should pay attention to where I'm walking." *And now you sound like a snob.* "Sorry, again. Excuse me."

"Wait, let me help you."

She waved him away, stealing another glance from lowered lashes. If he got any closer, he'd hear the erratic beating of her heart. "I'm fine, I don't need help."

He chuckled. "I meant, let me help with the brooch. You know..." He gestured to her shirt. "I'd hate for you to run over another innocent tourist while your attention is elsewhere."

As if my attention's not going to be diverted to your hands near my chest?

She hesitated, torn between escape and not wanting to maim another person. "Right. Okay." *Articulate much?*

Jamie placed the brooch on his waiting palm, the item looking much smaller in his strong, tan hands. Her gaze

followed every move as he secured it right over her heart.

"Th-thank you."

"My pleasure," he returned with a smile and walked away.

Snapping out of her trance, she readjusted her purse and made a hasty retreat.

Chapter Two

The following morning, Jamie carried her breakfast to the balcony. She sipped the rich, strong coffee, allowing the caffeine to course through her tired body. All night she'd tossed and turned; her dreams invaded by a pair of cocoa eyes and a sexier-than-sin smile.

Normally level headed, she was not prone to flights of fancy, and she'd never pined over a man she hadn't officially met. What difference did it make if he was six feet something with a rock-hard body, thick wavy black hair and full lips she just knew would be skilled in kissing.

Growling in frustration, she downed the last of her coffee, then strode into her room to change into her swimsuit. What she needed now was a dip in the Gulf followed by a day of lounging on the beach. After all, she hadn't left three feet of snow in Ohio just to stay in her hotel. No sir. She was taking full advantage of the resort's amenities.

Walking onto the beach, Jamie thought she had been transported to another realm. Damp fog shrouded the white sand, giving a ghostly feel to the island. She'd thought that by ten o'clock, the sun would have burned away the low clouds. Here the time was almost one o'clock and the world was still blanketed in gray mists.

One of the resort attendants appeared at her arm. "May I set up a cabana, miss?"

She smiled her thanks and followed him to a spot down by the water.

He quickly set up the cabana sunshade and beach chair. "There you go, miss. Don't worry, the fog will burn off shortly." With a brief nod, he turned on his heel and disappeared into the mist.

Jamie settled into the chair, kicking off her shoes to rest bare feet on the end of the lounge. The beach was practically empty, only two other cabanas sat in the sand, and one elderly lady strolled along the shore.

Before too long, Jamie was engrossed in a romance novel, swept away by the passion and heartache of the hero and heroine.

Damon leaned closer, his lips a breath away from Angelica's ear. "I want you."

"Oh, Damon," she sighed, reaching back to stroke his taut thigh. "Raul will be home any moment."

"Then we'll be fast."

"Look out!"

A blurred sphere flew in front of Jamie a nano-second before she was tackled.

Jamie heard a solid "Oomph!" and felt herself propelled from her lounge onto the sand.

She landed on her back under a very large, very male body, her breath whooshing through her lips. The man moved off her quickly and she pushed to a sitting position only to see stars swimming before her eyes.

"I'm really sorry. Are you okay?"

Jamie rolled her head from side to side, trying to clear the fuzziness. The world stopped spinning. A good sign. "I think

so." She looked up, ready to chastise the oaf, and her mouth dropped open in surprise. "You!"

The man from the antique shop stood, shaking sand from his shorts, and held a hand out to Jamie. "Me." Amusement laced his voice, his smile one of recognition. "We need to stop bumping into each other like this."

Jamie allowed him to help her up. "Hey, I *ran* into you. I didn't try to take your head off."

He laughed, a deep, rich sound that washed over her like the waves on the sand. A shiver of awareness ran along her spine. She couldn't remember a man's laugh ever affecting her in such a way.

"I'm Dan. Dan English."

She trailed her gaze from the top of his raven hair, down his sculpted chest dusted with black hair, to his perfectly formed legs. Physical perfection, almost too perfect. Jamie scrutinized his face, teeth and hair. *There has to be a flaw in there somewhere.* Tucked in the crease of his smile was a tiny scar—but damn if that didn't add to his appeal.

Finally, she smiled. "Hi, Dan, Dan English. I'm Jamie Holland."

"The brooch lady." His gaze skimmed her chest.

Jamie resisted the urge to cover her exposed cleavage.

"You don't have it on."

Had she lost her top in the collision? "Excuse me?" Panic flooded her voice and her arms flew up to cover her breasts.

"The brooch. You aren't wearing it."

"Right." Her shoulders sagged in relief. "Well, this really isn't the right outfit for a brooch," she laughed, waving her hands across her chest for emphasis.

Again his gaze scanned her cleavage. "No, there isn't much material to pin it on."

Ignoring his comment, Jamie mused, "I can't believe you recognized me."

Dan grinned. "I couldn't forget a woman as beautiful as you."

A flush invaded her cheeks. "Whatever," she scoffed, smiling nonetheless.

"You staying around here, too?"

"Long Boat Resort. How'd you know?" The idea of being stalked briefly flashed in her mind.

"You can't get on this beach without being a guest of one of the hotels."

"Are you beach patrol?" she teased, giving him an once-over.

"Hardly. I learned the hard way a few years back."

"English, you playing or socializing?"

At the stranger's voice, Jamie looked over his shoulder and, for the first time, saw three other bare-chested men, impatiently waiting for Dan.

Dan shot an apologetic smile. "I'd better run." He started toward his friends but turned back. "A bunch of us are hanging out in the square tonight. If you're interested, that is. We start at six at Cafe L'Europe."

An arched brow rose delicately, hiding the thrill racing through her. "I'll think about it."

His gaze dipped again, roaming over her bikini-clad figure. "You do that." He retrieved the football from the sand and jogged back to the game.

He looks as good going as he does coming. Suddenly, she couldn't wait for the evening to begin.

Chapter Three

Jamie closed the car door and stepped into the flow of foot traffic. The light ocean breeze ruffled her thin red skirt. Unlike during her previous visit to the circle, now the place was teeming with people.

All around couples, families, and individuals like herself enjoyed the nightlife of Long Boat Key. The brightly lit shops and restaurants added to the gay ambience. She found Cafe L'Europe and shuffled through the waiting crowd.

What am I doing here? The same question had run through her head the entire drive. Once again she ignored it.

She craned her neck, trying to spot Dan. He was nowhere to be seen. More than likely, he had issued the invitation just to be nice, not expecting her to show. Still, she couldn't help feeling a stab of disappointment.

There. He sat at the bar with several guys she thought she recognized from the beach. *Black is definitely his color.* He looked in her direction, seemingly right at her.

When he ignored her wave without even a flicker of recognition, she dropped her hand. Her stomach clenched in disappointment. Just as she thought—he hadn't expected her to show, and now he pretended not to know her.

Just as well. I didn't come to Florida for a fling.

At an ice cream shop around the corner, she stopped and treated herself to a double scoop of chocolate marshmallow in a cup. Chocolate is a sure way to boost the spirits.

With the tasty treat in hand, Jamie returned to the crowded sidewalk and toured the circle once more. No longer

in the mood to hang out in the throng of people, she returned to the hotel. She dropped her purse in her room and made her way through the main lobby to the beach.

The moment she stepped on the boardwalk, Jamie kicked off her sandals. The sand squished between her toes, tickling the sensitive skin of her feet.

"Jamie."

At the familiar deep voice, she stopped, her traitorous pulse leaping in her throat and looked around, finally spotting Dan jogging toward her from the pool area. He had changed from his black ensemble to a light-colored, button-down shirt and jean shorts. *Damn, he looks good.* "Hi. I thought you and your buddies were partying at the square tonight." *Nice, play it casual.*

He lifted one shoulder in a half shrug. "We were there for a little while but Café L'Europe was too crowded for my taste."

"I'm not too big on crowds myself." She wasn't about to give in and mention seeing him in the bar. Let him be the first to bring it up.

"Would you..." he trailed off, clearing his throat. "Would you like to go for a walk with me?"

First he blows me off, now he wants a moonlit stroll? Then again, maybe he wasn't as sure of himself as he'd tried to project earlier. She found his uncertainty intriguing. "Sure."

He kicked off his loafers and dangled them from his fingers, mimicking her action. They set across the sand to the water's edge. Except for a single sandpiper, they were alone. The whisper of the waves against the shore added to the romantic atmosphere.

The waves crashed against the sand, at times rushing over their bare feet, at others barely reaching them. The moonlight, the gentle surf, the handsome stranger—all very romantic. *Don't get carried away, Jamie. You don't even know this man*

So get to know him, the angel on her shoulder suggested.

"Where are you from?" she asked, then immediately cringed. *Why not ask for a copy of his birth certificate and social security card?*

"I live in Cleveland. You?"

Jamie's steps faltered. Disbelief warred with pleasant surprise. Could the world really be so small? "Me, too."

He sent her a sidelong glance. "Funny we had to come all the way to Florida to meet."

"I was thinking the same thing," Jamie agreed. Maybe she'd see him once they went home.

"What do you do in Cleveland?" He bent over and plucked a shell from the sand.

"I own Holland Place Diner—"

"On Water Street. I love that place." He broke into a heart-stopping smile, his face alight with excitement.

"You're just saying that." Suspicion riddled her voice.

"No, really," he defended. "We order lunch from there all the time."

How many times had their paths crossed, but they'd never met?

Out of the corner of her eye, Jamie studied Dan. The moonlight reflected in the blue-black locks of his wavy hair. Her fingers itched to brush a wayward strand from his

forehead, to trace the strong line of his jaw. "You said you found out a few years ago about the beach access?"

She kept her focus on her feet, putting one in front of the other. If she watched where she walked, maybe she wouldn't be so tempted to touch him.

Never had she been with a man who made her feel so alive.

"My family and I have a tradition of coming here every year for vacation."

Her heart sank. "Your family?"

"My parents, brother and I." He grabbed her hand as they danced away from an incoming wave, not bothering to let go once they were 'safe'. "We started coming to Key Club resort when I was twelve. My dad's choice would be to stay in the same rooms every year, too."

His expression lit up when he talked about his family. Dan's obvious love for them gave her a warm tingly feeling.

"Looks like we got separated from land," Dan stated matter-of-factly.

"What?" Jamie looked over her shoulder. Sure enough, when the tide washed out, they were left walking along a sand bar separated from the beach by a good twenty feet. Panic swelled in her breast. "Oh, no."

"No, biggie," he responded, grinning. He took her hand and headed toward the water.

"What are you doing? I can't go in there." Her toes dug deeper in the sand. Fear gripped her so hard she was paralyzed in her spot.

"Why not?" he asked, a puzzled frown marring his features.

"Well..." She paused, chewing on her lower lip. "You could step on a sting ray, or get stung by a jelly fish, or sink to Davey Jones' locker..."

He laughed. "Doubtful. Come on, we can shuffle our feet as we go. That way, if there's anything in there, it will swim away before we reach it." He held out a hand, encouraging her. "I won't let anything bad happen."

Dan's rich husky laugh caressed her down to her toes. How could she resist? Jamie placed her hand in his, breathed deep and took off running, squealing like an adolescent girl at a boy-band concert.

Giggling and out of breath, they dropped to the sand.

Laughter gave way to silence. They stared at each other, chests heaving with each breath. Jamie felt her body sway toward Dan. She held her breath.

His hand rose to toy with a lock of her hair.

Just when she thought he would kiss her, he pulled back and stood. "Why don't I walk you back?"

Back, already? "Uh, o-okay." She rose, brushing sand from her skirt. *What just happened?*

The walk back was silent, confusingly so. Jamie had thought they were having a good time. What happened to change that? Was he remembering seeing her at the café? Had he gotten a sudden case of guilt for blowing her off?

They reached the boardwalk back to Jamie's hotel, and Dan leaned against the wooden railing.

"Thanks for walking with me." Jamie smiled, hoping her confusion and disappointment weren't apparent in her expression.

The corner of Dan's mouth lifted in a half smile. "You're welcome." Again, he toyed with the ends of her hair.

Jamie ignored the flutters of her heart at the contact. She wasn't about to fall prey to the hope of being kissed again.

He tucked a strand of hair behind her shoulder. "I enjoyed being with you tonight. I wish we were back in Ohio."

"Miss the snow, do you?" She teased.

"If we were back home, I wouldn't feel so guilty about doing this." He dipped his head and brushed his warm lips across hers.

With a sigh, she responded and leaned closer for better access. Her fingers gripped his tight biceps, partly for support and partly to keep a slight distance between them. Her 'no fling' policy would be shattered if she threw herself at Dan.

He was the first to break the kiss and rested his forehead against hers. "I wanted to do that all day."

"Then why would you feel guilty?" She searched his face, a sudden fear grabbing her chest. "Are you married?" *Yeah, like you couldn't have asked that question earlier?*

"What? No." He frowned and pushed away from the railing, breaking contact completely. "Would I have kissed you if I was?"

One shoulder lifted and she looked out at the waves. "It's been known to happen." So maybe not to her, but she wasn't so naïve to think some men didn't cheat on their wives.

"Not by me."

"I'm sorry." She soothed a hand down his forearm. "I don't know much about you other than you live in Cleveland and frequent my diner. You did say you felt guilty for kissing me."

He threaded his fingers through hers. "I'm not much for flings. Some even say I'm old-fashioned."

Jamie rubbed a thumb over his palm. "Old-fashioned, huh? So you prefer your woman barefoot and pregnant?"

Dan laughed. "Not that old fashioned. Let's just say I don't like to start something unless I'm sure I can finish it."

"Are we still talking kissing, or did you move on to home improvement projects?" She laughed at his frown. "Sorry."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. My older brother gives me a hard time about it all the time."

"There's another piece of information to add to the puzzle. You've got an older brother, live in Cleveland, know where I work and have values. Not bad for one night's work." The breeze swirled about them, invading her senses with Dan's spicy aftershave.

He swung their joined hands between them. "Speaking of my brother. I'd better get back to the hotel. The four of us are supposed to go out deep sea fishing, and Dad'll want to leave early tomorrow morning."

Disappointment flooded through her, but she hid it behind a smile. "That sounds like fun. Be careful. I'd hate for the fish to pull you overboard."

"You'd miss me, huh?"

"Who would I run into—literally—if you weren't around?"

He chuckled and dropped another kiss on her lips.

This time, she wasn't letting him go so easily. She wound her fingers through his raven hair, bringing him closer. This man's lips were addictive.

With a last tug on his lower lip, she pulled back, allowing them much-needed air. "I guess this is good night."

Dan traced a finger over the bridge of her nose. "Good night, but not good bye. I'd like to see you again, if you'd let me."

Her lips turned up in a slow smile. "I'd let you."

"How about dinner night after next?" He peered at her face in the dim moonlight. "We won't be back until late tomorrow, otherwise I'd grab you for the entire day tomorrow."

"Dinner sounds great." At least, she knew he'd acknowledge her existence when they met again.

"I'll pick you up at seven?"

Jamie looked forward to a date with Dan, but she didn't want to be left sitting at home waiting. "How 'bout I meet you there instead?"

Dan's brow wrinkled in a frown. "That doesn't make it much of a date."

"Sure, it does. You just won't be stuck driving me home either."

"I get it." He crossed his arms over an expansive chest. "You're afraid if you ride with me, you'll be more tempted to molest me after dinner."

Jamie barked out a laugh. "Something like that."

"Fine." Dan sighed in mock resignation. "I'll *meet* you at Café Le'Europe at seven night after tomorrow."

Her lips curved in a grin. "Seven it is."

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One final kiss and he was gone, jogging across the beach toward his hotel.

Jamie stood on the boardwalk, arms wrapped around her waist and grinning like a fool.

Chapter Four

The storm raged outside, loud claps of thunder boomed followed by brilliant jolts of lightning expressed the fury of Mother Nature. Jamie leaned her head against the glass door, watching the wind whip the palm trees, bending them almost in half.

No way could she hang out on the beach in this type of weather. Still dressed in baggy sleep pants and a tank top, Jamie dropped to the couch and propped her feet on the coffee table.

Was Dan out in this mess? Hopefully, he had enough sense not to go out on the boat. If not, surely the crew would have known better than to take passengers into in the craziness of the storm.

She missed seeing his smile, hearing his laugh. She missed him.

The thought gave her pause. She missed him? They had only been apart a few hours, and she didn't know him all that much. Yet, every time she closed her eyes, she saw so vividly his warm chocolate eyes, smelled his spicy cologne, sending her hormones raging like the storm outside.

Her head dropped to the back of the couch, and her gaze scanned the spacious hotel room. She supposed she could get up and make a hot, healthy breakfast, maybe a pot of coffee. Then again, donuts from the previous morning called from the kitchen counter.

Jamie berated herself for moping around without Dan. She'd never been one of those women who needed a man to

feel worthwhile, and she wasn't about to start now. She shuffled to the kitchen. The meager supplies in the refrigerator held no appeal, so she settled for making a pot of coffee and snagged a chocolate-covered donut from the container on the counter.

A steaming mug in hand, Jamie moved back to the couch, the perfect place to watch the storm. The brooch, nestled in its box and sitting in the middle of the table, caught her gaze. After getting home the previous night, she'd sat there holding the piece of jewelry, daydreaming of Dan and remembering Nonny's stories. She'd forgotten to put it back in the bathroom in her makeup case when she finally went to sleep.

She set down her mug and retrieved the brooch. The pad of her thumb grazed over the raised rose design on the side. What was her family doing at that moment? Did they miss her? Though they all lived in the Cleveland area, they were busy with their lives, and only saw each other about once a month. She felt a twinge of homesickness.

They'd love Dan. Five minutes after meeting him, her mother would have their wedding planned and children named.

Whoa! You're introducing him to your family already? Slow down, Jamie. You don't even know if you'll see him once you leave the island.

With an impatient hand, she replaced the brooch on the table. *You have to stop thinking about him*

Right.

Once again, she pushed off the couch and headed to the closet, ready to choose the day's clothes. She showered,

hoping the water would wash Dan out of her head, even if only for a moment. No such luck.

Dressed in shorts and a t-shirt, Jamie stepped to the glass door, chewing on her thumbnail as she gazed at the worsening storm. There was no way she was going out, not now.

Restless, Jamie plunked down on the couch with a sigh and turned on the television. She flipped through the channels, pausing on *Lifetime*. The movie, a romantic comedy, kept Jamie's interest until the heroine's love interest appeared. He resembled Dan—well, he had dark hair and eyes—and when he kissed the heroine, Jamie once again thought of their kisses the night before.

"Fine, I get it. I've only known the guy a few days and I'm obsessed." She flung out her arm, smacking the decorative pillow, and rolled her eyes heavenward. "Thanks. Thanks a lot." She snapped off the TV and tossed the remote on the coffee table, hitting the brooch and knocking it out of the box to the floor.

She picked it up and secured it to her shirt. "I keep throwing things at you and I'll lose you."

The cell phone sounded in her purse. "Yay, someone to save my sanity. Hello?"

"Hey, Jay," her sister, Carrie, chirped.

"Hi there. Thank God, you called."

"What's wrong?" Carrie instantly switched to over-protective, big sister mode.

"Other than being bored and restless, nothing."

"Honey, you're at a beachfront resort. Get your butt out in the sun and relax."

"Haven't checked the Weather Channel lately, have you?" Jamie said with a laugh. "Right now, the downpour is torrential. No sun, therefore, no going out on the beach."

"Well, that sucks."

"Tell me about it." She settled back in the cushions and propped her sock-clad feet on the table. "What are my handsome nephews up to?"

Carrie sighed.

Jamie could picture her rolling her eyes.

"Driving me insane. I swear, if Christopher keeps jumping off every high surface in the house, I'll have to buy stock in the hospital."

"Still thinks he's Superman, huh?" Jamie smiled at the mental picture of her eight-year-old, tow-headed nephew and his jumps.

"Yesterday, he wanted to see if he could fly. He jumped off the roof of the garage with Caleb cheering him on."

Jamie gasped. Her eight-year-old twin nephews were energy personified and constantly trying the patience of their parents. Of course, with Aunt Jamie they were perfect angels. "Oh, no."

"Oh yes. Broke his arm. We spent six hours in the emergency room."

"That's horrible. Poor baby."

"At least, he's agreed to stop trying to fly for a while." Carrie huffed.

Jamie knew her sister had probably been scared out of her mind.

"So, tell me what's been happening the last few days."

I met a man, and now I can't stop thinking about him. I want you to meet him, but don't want to start planning the wedding yet. If she told Carrie about Dan, her mother would know in a matter of minutes, and soon the whole family would be calling for the juicy details of the torrid love affair.

"Oh, you know. I'm shopping, eating, soaking up the sun."

"Uh-huh."

Crap! She's got that 'I know what you aren't telling me' tone. "Other than today, the weather's been beautiful." *Keep talking, maybe she won't push it.*

"What's his name?"

"I don't know what you're talking about." *Don't say a word, Jamie, she'll see through the lie.*

"Let me guess. His name's something like Günter. He's six feet with billowing blonde hair and bulging biceps."

"No-oo," Jamie protested, her nose crinkled. "He's six feet two, with black hair and bulging biceps."

"So his name *is* Günter," Carrie laughed.

"Smarty pants." Unable to help herself, Jamie joined in the laughter. Her sister knew her too well.

"Come on, Jay. Give me details. Let me live vicariously through your flings."

"I do not have flings." She sniffed and straightened on the couch. "I'm not that type of girl. Dan's a nice guy, and we've only seen each other a few times. I'd hardly call him a fling."

"But his smile makes your heart flutter, your palms sweaty. He says your name and you swoon."

Jamie chortled. "You've read too many romance novels, Car." *Although, I do swoon when he says my name. Better not let that fact be known.*

She glanced out the window. "Hey, the rain stopped. I haven't eaten and I'm heading out to get some food." When had that happened?

The parking lot was blissfully empty, leaving her the prime pick of spots. She stepped around the puddles, picking her way into the store. She pushed a shopping cart up and down the aisles, searching for anything that looked appetizing. A container of roasted almonds and a package of cookies later, Jamie rounded the corner to the produce aisle and skidded to a stop.

Dan stood about ten feet away, examining tomatoes.

Her pulse leaped into overdrive. He was safe, he hadn't drowned at sea. She drew a deep breath and approached. "Hey, stranger."

He turned, a confused but polite smile on his handsome face. "Uh, hi."

"Did you go on your fishing trip?" She drank in the sight of him, standing so tall, his posture tight. His eyes were more guarded than she remembered, and he looked everywhere but directly at her. Something was off.

"No, but, how'd you ... oh, maybe you mean Dan." His gaze flickered over her, the corner of his lips turning up briefly.

"Hey, English, we're late."

He tossed a wave over her shoulder to the person who called. "I'm sorry, I've got to catch up with my friends. Would you excuse me?" He dropped the tomato in his cart and walked away.

"O-okay." She stared after his retreating figure, thoroughly confused. Maybe he was just upset he didn't get to go fishing. She wasn't about to chase after him. But she was determined to get to the bottom of the mystery that was Dan.

One way or another.

Chapter Five

Determined not to let Dan's mood from the previous day bother her, Jamie put it out of her mind and decided to spend some time on the water herself.

Sail boats, speed boats, paddle and fishing, all bobbed in the waves calling anyone who could be tempted to take them out for a day of play.

Larry's Moonlight Marina is the name, renting boats is our game. The cheesy slogan hung on the wall behind the cash register.

While the guy behind the counter, with a surfer-dude style and attitude, tried to talk her into taking a sail boat for a spin, she stood firm in her choice of paddleboat. She may have spent her whole life on the shores of Lake Erie, but she wasn't an experienced boater by any means.

She toyed with the brooch as Surfer Guy droned on about the proper way to peddle, anxious to be on her way.

"You realize you can't go out in the ocean with a *paddle* boat, right?"

Jamie cocked her head to the side, frowning at the surfer. "Really? I had hoped to cruise around the entire Gulf."

"Whatever, lady," Surfer Boy scoffed and swept his arm in a half circle. "Just stick to the inside of the yellow buoys."

She took the rental agreement, tucked it into her beach bag and walked out to the dock. The paddleboat was painted maroon, like all the others, with seating capacity for two and a small hole for drinks.

Holding her arms out for balance, Jamie stepped gingerly into the boat. It dipped under her weight, pitching her off balance so she fell forward into the back of the seat with a thud. She ended up with her face pressed against the headrest, butt sticking up and straight out.

"Now there's a gorgeous sight."

Jamie craned her neck and looked over the top of her rear end.

Dan smiled down, his arms crossed over his chest. He looked casual, yet still sexy, in a red t-shirt and jean shorts.

His eat-you-up smile made her forget his snub from the day before. "Glad you're enjoying the view." She struggled to turn and found her seat.

"Immensely," he replied with a wicked grin, then flicked his chin toward the boat. "Would you like company? A body can get tired doing all that paddling."

Jamie tapped her toes against the pedals and chewed her lower lip. Should she say anything about his attitude at the grocery store? But one look into his warm brown eyes and her resolve to spend the day alone went overboard.

"Company sounds good." She patted the plastic passenger seat then dropped her brows into a mock frown. "But I'm driving."

He climbed down, setting the boat rocking once more.

Jamie couldn't tear her gaze from the tight butt that swung in front of her face.

With a wide grin, he dropped down beside her. "Let's put this baby in motion."

Once the tether was let loose from the dock, they paddled out of the inlet into open waters.

"I'm actually glad we ran into each other," Dan said, turning toward her.

"Oh?" Jamie felt his stare and squirmed in her seat. The intensity unnerved her for reasons she couldn't explain. *He doesn't want to see me again.*

"The last time we were together, you said you'd have dinner with me tonight. And I wanted to ask if you were still free. I made reservations just in case."

Her head snapped in his direction. *Dinner? Had he said dinner?* "You really still want to have dinner with me?"

A confused look crossed his handsome face. "Well, yeah. I wouldn't have mentioned it otherwise."

"But I thought..." *Just say yes and worry about reasons later.*

"You thought what?"

The man was certainly a puzzle. She shook her head. "Never mind." She smiled and linked her fingers through his. "Dinner sounds great."

For a while, they maneuvered around the bay, at times just floating, bobbing in the wake of other vessels. She enjoyed being with someone and not feeling the need to make conversation.

"Were you stuck inside all day yesterday?" Dan asked, trailing his fingers in the waves.

"For awhile. But I actually enjoyed it. Thunderstorms are relaxing. And my sister called so that helped pass time."

"Oh yeah?"

She dipped her head, attempting to hide a smile. "My nephew tried to fly and broke his arm two days ago. My sister spent all day with him in the Emergency room. But once she got over the fright, she was not a happy camper."

Dan's eyes grew round. "He attempted to fly? You mean—" He flapped his arms at his sides.

Jamie bobbed her chin, laughing. "He jumped from the garage roof." She wiped a tear from her eye. "It's funny now. I definitely wouldn't be laughing if he'd gotten seriously hurt. I'm always amazed how invincible children think they are."

"You and your family are close then?"

"We are."

Dan laced their fingers together. "Nice to know."

His grasp gave Jamie's heart a jolt. They sat in silence, connected physically and mentally, enjoying each other's presence, watching as the fiery sun slipped into the placid water.

Jamie and Dan sighed simultaneously. They looked at each other and broke into laughter.

"Boy, are we sappy," Jamie teased, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. "I guess we should get back if we want to make our dinner reservation, huh?"

With his gaze locked to hers, Dan raised her hand to his lips, kissing the back of her fingers. "If we must. It's been nice just hanging out."

As they paddled back to the dock she thought, after watching the sun set with a gorgeous man, could the evening get any better?

* * * *

One last time Jamie checked her appearance. She fluffed her long blonde hair and smoothed the black dress. She reached down to the counter for the brooch, the one item she would always equate with Dan from this point forward. Her hand came up empty.

She searched through her purse, and then the room, with no luck. Her mind flashed to that afternoon. She'd had the brooch in the boat rental shop, had it when she climbed into the paddleboat, but didn't remember having it after she slipped.

Her expression dropped. She hoped it hadn't fallen into the water. *I'll check with the rental place in the morning.* Although she didn't hold out much hope it would be recovered, she had so wanted to take it home to show Nonny.

* * * *

Anxious to see him again, she arrived in St. Armand's Circle fifteen minutes early and parked her car a short distance away.

The air was humid, cooled by a slight breeze off the ocean. Jamie took her time strolling along the crowded sidewalk, her mind replaying the wonderful afternoon with Dan.

Speak of the devil, Jamie thought, spying a familiar figure walking toward her.

Only he wasn't alone.

Dan stopped in front of a bar and laughed with the three guys from the football game several days ago.

She walked up and stood beside him. His green button shirt brought out tiny gold flecks in his otherwise brown eyes. "Hey." She smiled politely to the others in the group.

Dan frowned down. "Hi." His warm brown eyes weren't so warm as he turned his back.

Jamie couldn't help notice the absence of the scar by his mouth.

Dr. Jekyll and My. Hyde anyone? What was his game? Every other time she saw him, he was a different personality. *This had to stop.*

"May I speak with you for a moment?" she asked, taking hold of his arm and dragged him away from his buddies. Her irritation made it impossible to care if she was embarrassing him or not.

"Geez, lady, are you stalking me?" Dan's expression registered a mixture of amusement, annoyance and confusion as he wrenched his arm from her grasp.

"Stalking you?" Had she found the one mental case on the island? He'd seemed so normal this afternoon. "You want to tell me what's going on? One minute you can't keep your hands off me, the next you act as if you don't know me."

"I don't—"

"If you don't want to get involved, just tell me. It's not like I came here looking for a fling." She threw her hands up to emphasize her frustration.

"I would hope you don't think I'm a fling," a voice interjected from over her shoulder.

Dan broke into a huge grin. "Hey, little brother."

Jamie turned at the intrusion, her mouth worked up and down trying to get out a coherent sentence. *Good merciful heavens!* "There are two of you." With hands jammed onto hips, she looked back and forth between the identical men. She studied the newcomer. "Who are you?"

"It's me. Dan? You know the same guy you've been with the past few days?"

Her eyes narrowed, and she searched his face. There! Nestled in the crease of his smile was the scar. She turned back to the imposter. "Well then, who are you?"

"Eric English, the elder of the English twins." He let go of his defenses and smiled.

"Yeah, by three minutes," the other twin snorted.

Jamie walked over until her toes were touching Dan's shoes. "How do I know you're really my Dan?"

He tilted his head to the side and looked directly into her eyes. "Two reasons. One, I know who you are and he doesn't. Two—" He placed his hands on either side of her head, capturing her lips with his.

When they surfaced for air, she breathed, "Wow." Her head was still reeling over the fact that Dan's brother was actually his *twin*. It all made perfect sense now. "So back to the whole twin thing. I knew you had a brother, but you didn't say he was a twin."

"You never asked."

She turned back to Eric. "And every time I saw you and thought you were pretending not to know me?"

Eric lifted his shoulders innocently. "Because I really didn't know you."

Jamie cocked her head to the side. Her heart fluttered, uncertainty warred in her head. She looked from Dan to Eric and back again. Why hadn't she noticed before? One look at Dan and her heart raced like a speedboat cutting through the waves. Eric had no effect on her heart whatsoever. "I can't believe I couldn't tell you apart."

Dan brushed the pad of his thumb across her cheek. "By the time we get back to Cleveland, you'll be so familiar with me, you won't ever mix us up again."

"You live in Cleveland, too? Small world, huh, Dan?" Eric chimed in. From a stern look from his brother he threw up his hands. "Yeah, yeah, yeah. I've got someplace to be." He winked at Jamie. "Nice meeting you."

Jamie turned her attention back to Dan. The thought of continuing a relationship with Dan thrilled her. Did they have a future back in Cleveland? She hoped so. "Will we really keep seeing each other when we get home?"

"Count on it," he responded right before sealing the promise with a kiss.

Maybe Nonny had been right about the brooch all along. Jamie could say the brooch brought her to Dan. Even if she didn't have the jewelry to take home, she'd have something even better ... Dan.

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