

A photograph of a shirtless man standing in the foreground, showing his torso and arms. He is wearing blue jeans and a black belt. In the background, a green tow truck is parked on a paved surface, with trees and foliage behind it. The scene is outdoors during the day.

# IN NEED OF A TOW

VIVIAN VINCENT

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# *In Need of a Tow*

*By Vivian Vincent*

## **Acknowledgments**

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## CHAPTER ONE

I'd reached a point in my life where I was very unhappy most of the time. My husband was the CEO of a major corporation headquartered in Michigan, so money had never been an issue with us and there was always plenty in the bank. We met in college and were married after a six-month courtship. We were happy and in love for a long time, but lately— over the last few years—the spark is gone. I'm pretty sure he's having an affair, but at this point it doesn't even bother me that much. It keeps me free to concentrate on myself and my own needs.

Living in an affluent suburb of Detroit, there's never a shortage of places to shop, so I make sure I hit all the stores in the area as often as possible. When I'm not shopping or visiting with friends I just take a drive in the country—when my car is running that is. Sure, we have other cars, but when we bought the car I currently drive, we agreed it was mine and only mine. I never wanted to drive anything else. It's a late model Mercedes we bought previously owned. It needed some work when we bought it two years ago and my husband only relies on one mechanic to work on his cars.

The mechanic's name is Al and he owns a little car repair shop on the outskirts of town. Sure there are other mechanics, Al is usually reliable, when we can get an appointment, but he refuses to hire any other mechanics, so he's always backed up. If you need work done on your car, you have to wait for him to get to it or get it towed to the next repair shop about ten miles away. Sometimes I think he takes shortcuts on his repairs to lighten his work load and speed up his productivity. I've had my car in to Al on more than one occasion for the same problem.

My husband called and informed me he'd be out of town for the next month on

business. I decided to take a little road trip to visit some old friends in northern Michigan. The day started out uneventful. I packed a few things into a suitcase and made sure everything was taken care of at the house before I left. Stewart, our butler helped me load my suitcase and cooler with ice, water and sodas into the car and assured me the house would still be standing when I got back. His daughter lived in our guest house for a short time and had many wild parties at our expense when we were away, but he assured me there would be no reason for worry this time.

\* \* \* \*

I was about fifty miles from my destination when my car died. I managed to coast off to the side of the two-lane road and noticed the *Service Engine* light was on. I flipped the switch to turn on my hazard lights and rifled through my purse for my cell phone. Unfortunately, I was in an area where cell phones were essentially paperweights so I couldn't even call the auto club for a tow to the nearest service station. I did see a small house about a quarter mile back so decided to walk there and ask if they had a phone I could use.

It was unusually hot for mid-April especially in northern Michigan. Thankfully, I dressed comfortably with a pair of loose fitting shorts, sneakers and a light blouse. I grabbed a bottle of water from the cooler then began walking back in the direction I'd just come from to find the house and hopefully call for a tow truck.

When I finally arrived at the house, a cautious woman peeked through the curtain. I told her my name and why I was there and she allowed me to come in to use her phone. I had a bit of trouble getting someone to come out there at first, but she managed to talk them into coming to help me. She explained to me Ron's Repair Shop

was the closest place and they'd been to her house before because of her son and the troubles he'd had with his cars in the past, but she always had difficulty getting them to come out because she was so far away from everything.

"Brian will be here in about a half an hour. He's the owner's son and he drives the tow truck," she said as she sat down at the table with me and we waited.

"Thanks for getting someone to come out here, I just don't know what I would've done if I couldn't have gotten a tow." I smiled and wondered why I hadn't just called AAA in the first place and avoided this whole mess. I made my call to the auto club and gave them the information they needed.

"What's a beauty like you doin' trav'lin' alone?" she asked.

"My husband is away on business for a few weeks, so I decided to go visit some friends up in Traverse City for a few days. His mechanic does the work on all our cars, but mine always seems to need the most work and always for the same things." I took a sip of the ice water she'd given me. "And thanks for the compliment; it's nice to hear once in awhile."

She smiled and we watched out the window for the tow truck to arrive. She wasn't wrong; I was still a beauty at forty-two. With shoulder length wavy brown hair and brown eyes, I worked out several days a week, so I was in really great shape. My age doesn't hinder my appearance in the least. When I wore sexy clothes, I looked good and I knew I could turn quite a few heads, but today was a conservative day, more for comfort than fashion.

"It's awfully hot for April, isn't it?" I asked as I noticed she didn't seem to be minding the heat at all, even though it was slightly stuffy in her house.

"Seems to be, but I keep the AC running pretty much from April first to October first whether I need it or not and I rarely go out."

After what seemed like longer than half an hour, the tow truck finally arrived. I gathered up my purse and thanked the woman for her hospitality then went out to meet the driver.

Brian looked to be about twenty-one years old and stood about six feet tall with smoldering green eyes and light brown hair that stopped just below his collar. He wore a black muscle shirt and tight blue jeans and from what I could tell, he was no stranger to the gym. He was muscular all over and I'm sure he drew attention wherever he went. I couldn't take my eyes off him and I felt something stir deep inside of me as he approached.

"Mrs. Hanson?" he asked, and I noticed his eyes roaming up and down my body.

"Uh—yeah—um—please, call me Katherine." I stammered as I tried to focus on the problem at hand and not this Adonis that stood before me.

"Let's go get that car of yours, huh?" He shook my hand and directed me to the passenger side of the tow truck.

My libido kicked into over drive and I suddenly felt dampness between my legs. His hand gently grazed my ass while he helped me into the truck. He then leaned across my lap as he fastened the seat belt, explaining it didn't work quite right.

*Oh please, don't move just yet.* I felt his muscular body across my legs and a hot jolt of awareness when his bare arm made contact with mine. *God he smells good!* He seemed to move in slow motion and I had the opportunity to breathe him in. My head swirled with the masculine scent of his cologne mixed with the slight hint of soap.



He walked around to the driver's side again and I had to fight hard not to stare at his every move. As he climbed into the truck, I admired the way his jeans clung to his lean legs, as if they were made specifically for him. I felt my heart race as he grabbed the clipboard on the seat between us and thought how foolish I was to think a perfect young stud like this could possibly be interested in a woman twice his age. I kept my focus straight ahead for the short drive to my car.

Before we got out he said, "AAA called and said your tow was paid for, you just need to sign a few papers, Mrs. Hans—um—Kathy." He smiled handed me the clipboard.

"Okay." I grabbed the clipboard from him hoping he didn't notice how much I was trembling. When I took the pen from him, our fingers touched and we both looked away, blushing.

"I do some work for the garage every now and then, do you want me to take a look under your hood?" he asked. As we stood beside my car, I had the opportunity to get a good look at him. He was magnificent.

"Uh—um—well—if you think you can find the problem." I tried not to think about the effect he was having on me.

"Keys," he said as he held his hand out to me.

I stood staring at him then he snapped his fingers in front of my face and whistled. "Hello? Keys. I can't get under your hood unless you unlock the car, ma'am."

I brought myself back to reality. He took the keys from my outstretched hand while I continued to stare at him.

"You can sit up in my truck if you want, it's pretty dang hot out here."

"Oh, thanks, I think that'd be great."

Had it really been so long that I've felt this way? One look at a perfect man like this had me so aroused, I wanted him to take me right then and there on the side of the road. Even though my husband Bill and I had grown apart over the years, he was still a good provider financially, but physically and emotionally, I haven't felt loved or desired in years.

With the exception of a few nights here and there, I think he was finding sex elsewhere, leaving me alone and unsatisfied. I sat and watched Brian while he tinkered with my car and found myself fantasizing about being sprawled on the hood, with Brian over me, fucking me senseless.

I was completely entranced when I heard the door of the truck open. Brian said something as he climbed back in to position it around and get it ready to tow my car. He got out and closed the door before I could respond which was a good thing because I don't think he even noticed I didn't hear a word he'd said.

As Brian secured my car, I stared straight ahead, still daydreaming about him. I couldn't help myself any longer and slipped one hand under my blouse. My nipples were hard and aching to be touched. I was shaken from my vision by the loud thunk of the flatbed securing into place.

*How can I get him to notice me?* I straightened my blouse and undid the first two buttons so there was a bit more cleavage exposed when he looked at me again.

It seemed to have worked. When he climbed back into the truck, he smiled and then looked away, blushing like a schoolboy. I could tell he liked what he saw, but that's probably as far as things would go between us.

He leaned over me again and grabbed the seatbelt to help me fasten it. I sat completely still. He was so close, I could feel his breath on my neck when he reached around me for the seat belt. My heart raced again. Oh god how I wanted him. He honked as we drove by the elderly woman's house and I sat there silently wondering if he knew what I had been thinking.

Even though it only took about twenty-five minutes to get back to Ron's Repair Shop it seemed much longer because neither of us spoke. If it hadn't been for the CB radio, the silence would have driven me crazy.

A very loud voice came over the radio. "Brian, where are you? What's your E.T.A.?"

Brian grabbed the mike off the hook on the side of the radio. "Dad, we'll be there in about ten minutes. I wanted to see if I could at least try to get the car started for her." He glanced over my way, smiled and blushed again.

"Well hurry it up. We wanna close up for the night."

"Just go, dad, I'll lock up when I get there."

"Okay, fine. Don't forget to turn off the AC like you did a couple times last week. I can't afford to be cooling this place off when there ain't nobody here." The annoyance in his father's voice lessened somewhat. There was a small sound of static, then silence.

\* \* \* \*

Ron's Repair Shop looked to be quite a large building at first glance. It had four repair bays and a large lobby. It sat on the edge of town away from everything, but not completely secluded. I figured he probably got quite a bit of business from the residents in town due to the fact the parking lot was nearly full and three of the four bays were

occupied. Off behind Ron's Repair Shop stood what looked to be a decent-sized camper.

"If you wanna wait inside, it'll just take me a minute to get your car into a bay," Brian said as he helped me out of the truck.

As I opened the door to the lobby, I felt a blast of cool air from the air conditioning inside. There were stacks of new tires all over the lobby and signs and posters for auto parts and auto racing all over the walls. I saw a coffee pot sitting on an end table to the right of the door as I walked in. I poured myself a cup of coffee then sat down to wait for Brian.

\* \* \* \*

Only a few minutes had passed before Brian walked in. He headed behind the counter, pulled out a shop invoice and started filling it out with the information from the towing invoice.

"Kathy, I need you to sign this so we can start workin' on your car first thing in the mornin'." He looked up at me and smiled. What a wonderful, warm and inviting smile he had. It lit my soul on fire.

"Okay. Thank you for all your help, Brian. I appreciate you working late to help out an old lady in distress," I said, trying to find out what he truly thought of me. My hands trembled as I approached the counter and I'd hoped again he didn't notice when I took the pen to sign the invoice.

"It's my pleasure." His smile made me blush. "And you're not that old, at least not as far as I can see." My heart fluttered and I broke eye contact with him. "I want to make sure you get everything taken care of."

"Do you have a bathroom?" I asked quietly.

He pointed over his shoulder. "Other side of the counter over there." I handed him back his pen and headed for the bathroom. I saw him out of the corner of my eye and could have sworn he was watching me.

"I'll make it quick, I know you probably want to go home."

I rushed into the bathroom, knowing he must've seen how red I'd turned from his earlier comment. I closed the bathroom door, put the lid down on the toilet and sat on it while I stared at the wall.

"What the hell am I thinking?"

His scent, his smile, those eyes, he was driving me crazy with desire. I needed relief. I lifted the lid on the toilet, dropped my shorts and panties, sat down and began to finger myself into orgasm. I touched my clit, feeling the tingle go through my entire body and pushed two fingers inside myself. I closed my eyes and let out a soft moan as I imagined Brian's hands on me.

It didn't take long before my whole body was shuddering and I let out a quick and powerful orgasm. I sat back on the toilet for a moment, thinking about what I'd just done. I felt ashamed, but relaxed. I cleaned myself up, pulled my panties and shorts back on and fixed myself in the mirror. I walked out of the bathroom and found it a bit easier to face Brian since I'd relieved myself.

"Is there a motel around here?" I was still breathless, but I hoped he didn't pick up on it.

"Yeah. There's a little roadside hotel about ten minutes from here, but I don't know the number." He looked under the counter for the local phone book, pulled it out

and handed it to me. "You can use the phone to call if you'd like."

"Thanks." I took the phone book and began looking for a place to stay.

"Rose's by the Road, how can I help you?" said the voice on the other end of the phone.

"I'm looking for a room for tonight. Do you have anything available?"

The woman on the other end told me normally they do have vacancies but due to the recent thunderstorms, there was water damage to the roof so only one room was available, but it was occupied.

"Well, thanks anyway." With a heavy sigh, I hung up the phone. "Can I call my friends up in Traverse City, Brian? They're probably worried sick about me by now. I was supposed to be there by five and it's nearing seven."

"Sure, Kathy, go ahead. I'm in no hurry to go anywhere."

It was obvious I was in no hurry to go anywhere either because I was suddenly stranded without anywhere to sleep for the night.

## CHAPTER TWO

I'd known Katie since high school, we were more sisters than friends—people often told us we looked like sisters—and it'd been almost a year since we'd seen each other because her husband, Mark, was transferred to Traverse City. The distance between us didn't allow us to spend much time together. I explained the situation to her and told her I was trying to find a place to spend the night and if all went well I should be there sometime tomorrow. We said our good-byes, I hung up the phone and began looking through the phone book for another motel when Brian came back into the lobby.

"Rose didn't have anything available?"

"No. But even if she did, I have no way to get there." I was on the verge of tears but held them back.

"Tell ya what," Brian started and smiled softly at me, "See that camper out there? Well, it's mine and I let the guys here use it once in awhile when they wanna get away for whatever reason. You can sleep there tonight." He headed out the back entrance to start setting up the camper. I wasn't given the opportunity to decline, but it seemed I didn't have any other alternatives either. I followed Brian out and offered my help.

He said it would only take a few minutes to set things up and said I could wait inside. I went back inside and watched him as he set it up. It looked like a decent sized camper, but even if it wasn't, at this point I was happy to have someplace to sleep. It'd been a long day, and after relieving myself in the bathroom earlier, I was a bit sleepy. I saw Brian had the camper completely set up after several minutes. He leaned out the door and motioned for me.

I opened the door of the camper and saw it was quite roomy. There was a small

stove, a refrigerator and a bed.

"There's no electricity hooked up to it, so you can't use any of the appliances, but we got these battery powered lights. They seem to serve their purpose pretty well." He looked at me and smiled again as he pushed the switches on a few round light fixtures fastened to the walls of the camper. "I'll leave the back entrance to the shop open if you need to use the bathroom."

The camper was roomy for one person, but with two people, it was quite cramped. I was standing in front of the refrigerator when Brian attempted to slip past me to leave me alone for the night. We were pressed against each other and I'm sure he could feel how erect my nipples were under my blouse. I could feel the bulge in his pants when his crotch brushed against my waist.

We were nearly eye to eye, he stood only a few inches taller than me, and our faces were about an inch apart. I inhaled his scent again and I couldn't help myself any longer. I leaned in and kissed him. He fit his arms around my waist and kissed me back, pulling me even closer than we already were. I felt the same jolt of awareness and a pleasant tingle ran down my spine. He lifted me enough so my feet were off the floor and carried me to the bed. Then he turned around to close the door.

"Are you sure you want this?" I asked him still slightly embarrassed for throwing myself on him.

As he caressed my cheek with one hand, he took my hands in his other and placed them on the front of his jeans over the bulge. I could feel the throbbing heat even through the denim. He looked me in the eye with a sly grin. "What do you think?"

He leaned over and kissed me again, then lowered me to the mattress. "I gotta



go lock up the shop. Wait for me?"

I sat on the edge of the bed watching Brian through the window. I wondered why such a handsome young man could be interested in a woman twice his age. I wondered if he was kidding about the way he felt. So many thoughts went through my head, but they all disappeared when he came back inside the camper.

"Now, where were we?" he asked. "Oh yeah, now I remember."

He reached out and helped me to my feet. We started kissing again and he began removing my clothes. I felt his strong hands caress my back as he reached up and gently unclasped my bra and it fell to the floor between us. I grabbed his shirt and pulled it up over his head. We kissed passionately, our tongues probing and exploring the other's mouth. I felt a desire for this man I'd never felt for another before and knew this was exactly what I'd longed for. As he removed the rest of my clothing, I could feel him kissing down my legs.

He laid me back on the bed and I felt his fingers rubbing the slick lips of my pussy. I spread my legs a bit wider to invite him in. He planted feather light kisses up my legs, and was so close to my sex, I could feel his breath coming in short spurts. He pushed one finger deep inside me, drawing out a soft moan. He flicked my clit with his tongue and continued to finger fuck me as he worked my body toward ecstasy. I felt his whole mouth close around the hard nub of my clit. He began slow torturous movements with his lips and tongue.

As the intense wave of my orgasm washed over me, I realized my fantasy was becoming reality. It didn't take long for me to climax again and Brian lapped vigorously at my spending. While I recovered from the high of my release, he started kissing up my

body, stopping at each nipple and teasing with his tongue and teeth. He kissed my neck and stopped short of kissing me on the mouth. I grabbed him and pulled him into a deep, slow, passionate kiss and felt my arousal renewed when I tasted myself on him.

I could feel his throbbing erection between us. I knew he needed relief as much as I did. I reached down and began unbuckling his belt. He stood up in front of me while I pulled his jeans down to his ankles. He kicked his shoes off and stepped out of his jeans, his hard shaft springing free and pointing straight at me. I reached out and grabbed it with both hands. I stroked his heated length slowly. He put his hands on my shoulders and let out a soft moan.

"That feels amazing."

I continued to stroke his shaft. "You haven't felt anything yet." I moved closer to him and lapped the droplets his arousal from the tip. Then I slowly swirled my tongue around the head.

"Oh god, woman!" His voice was hoarse with desire.

I closed my mouth around him and made sure he felt the same pleasure he'd given me. I reached between his legs and gently caressed his balls.

"If you keep that up, you're going to get a mouthful of come," he uttered through ragged breaths.

I felt his hands on the back of my head, helping me to take him deeper. I bit down gently while still swirling my tongue around the sensitive and that's all it took. With a handful of hair, he pushed himself deeper into my throat and exploded with a loud grunt. His whole body shook as he finally pulled his cock out of my mouth and collapsed next to me on the bed.

"That was amazing, Katherine. Where'd you learn how to do that so well?"

"Years of practice." I stood up to find a bottle of water and took a sip while I smiled wickedly at him. He lay on the bed breathing deeply and recovering from the powerful orgasm he'd just had.

"No woman has ever done that for me before. I mean, I've had a few girlfriends, but all of them were just too afraid to pleasure me like that." I smiled. I was happy to know I was the first woman to have ever given him a blow-job.

"That was amazing!" he repeated.

"You weren't so bad yourself." I apologized for climaxing so quickly when he was pleasuring me earlier.

"That's quite all right, I'm just glad I could make you come." He sat up on the bed. "But we're not done yet."

Far beyond the point of embarrassment, I walked over to him, knelt down between his legs and started kissing him again. He pulled me to my feet, turned around so my back was facing the bed and laid me down on the mattress. He kissed down my neck, sucked and nibbled on each nipple then worked his way back up to my mouth. We kissed passionately again as he positioned himself over me. I opened my legs for him with my feet on the bed, knees up in the air and my ass slightly raised.

"Are you sure?" He hesitated again while waiting for my answer. I smiled and pulled him closer, guiding his semi-erect cock into my slick hole.

He moved slowly, pulling out all the way except the head then thrusting back in. I wrapped my legs around his body and pulled him in closer to me as we slowly made love. He kissed me and nibbled on my ear, which added to my excitement. I could feel

our sweat glistened bodies slapping together and was nearing orgasm again when he slowed down and whispered into my ear.

"Where do you want me to come?"

"Inside me, Brian. Come inside me."

He began fucking me harder and faster now, both of us on the verge of another explosive orgasm. I could feel every inch of his cock as he moved his hips, trying to find the exact spot to make my entire body quake. I felt waves of pleasure building as his balls slapped against my ass. A few more deep thrusts and we both came together, his hot spunk filling me, our bodies trembling through our release.

He collapsed on top of me with his cock still being caressed by my convulsing pussy. He kissed me gently and rolled over onto the bed.

"Damn woman! That was fucking incredible!"

I struggled to catch my breath while I snuggled closer to him. "It's been so long since I've been with a man, I didn't think I'd ever feel this way again, thank you, Brian."

He turned and kissed me. "Honestly, I've never been with an older woman before. You're amazing!"

We both turned on our sides to face each other and began kissing again. He took one breast in his hand and began squeezing and gently pinching my nipple. I reached down and slowly started stroking his cock.

"Ready for more?"

As he turned onto his back, I continued stroking him. With only a few strokes, he was hard again. I straddled his hips and guided him into me and slowly began riding him. He reached up and caressed my breasts and nipples while I manipulated myself to

take him deeper. I grabbed his hands, leaned over and pinned them to the bed. I impaled myself deeper on his cock with a quick movement of my hips and brought my lips down to his while still holding his hands pinned to the bed. His whole body began to tremble when another powerful orgasm crashed through him. I let go of his hands and leaned back against his legs while my own climax brewed deep within me.

His body fell limp and I collapsed on top of him, both of us completely spent. I slid off him and nestled my back against him as he rolled to his side and pulled me closer.

He kissed my neck. "Maybe we shouldn't be so quick to get your car repaired tomorrow, huh?"

I chuckled softly and scooted even closer to him, feeling his warmth envelope me. "I do have to go visit my friends in Traverse City, but I can call and tell them there's been a change of plans and it may be another day or so before I get up there."

Having his arms around me, I felt truly loved and appreciated for the first time in years, but I knew it couldn't last, I was married after all. My husband would leave me completely broke if I divorced him now. Brian and I talked for awhile before we fell asleep in each others arms.

\* \* \* \*

I woke up in the middle of the night and Brian was still holding me. I knew this felt right and I didn't know what to do about it. *Could I live without the money in exchange for this every day? Absolutely!* But, how was I to know how Brian truly felt? Was this simply a one time thing for him? Was it only an opportunity for him to satisfy his own needs? I decided I'd ask in the morning what our night of passion meant—for both of us.

The sun was beginning to rise when he woke up. "Good morning," he said with a

tender kiss to my shoulder.

"Brian, we need to talk." I sat up in the bed and suddenly felt nervous about what I wanted to say. "Last night was amazing. I didn't know I could feel that way again, but I need to know if it was a one time thing—" I trailed off, pausing to collect my thoughts.

"Is that what you think?" He sounded slightly annoyed. "Look, Kathy, I don't just go around having sex with women who need a tow, that's not the way I am.

"I was attracted to you the minute I saw you but saw the ring on your finger and knew you were off limits. Besides, I figured you'd never be interested in a young guy like me. I wouldn't have made love to you last night if I thought this was a one time thing. Up until yesterday, I never believed in love at first sight and never believed one person could fall in love with another by just seeing them. I know now I was wrong. I was smitten with you the moment I saw you." He grabbed my hand. "I felt an attraction between us immediately and if I hadn't, I never would've offered to let you spend the night here."

"Brian, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to imply you thought of me as a one night stand, but my feelings are so confusing to me right now. I don't know what to do or what to think." I turned my face away from him briefly to wipe the tears from my eyes.

"My husband hasn't been much of a husband in the last few years and I was longing for the feeling of being loved again, I think that's what attracted me to you, I could see something in your eyes when you looked at me. Financially, I'm not hurting, but emotionally, I've been empty for years." I wiped a tear from my cheek and continued.

"Bill provides well for me when it comes to material things, but I think it's more a

marriage of convenience for him now rather than a marriage of two people who love and appreciate each other. I guess in the back of my mind I felt you were with me last night out of sympathy. I didn't care if that's all it was, I loved feeling desired again. But if I decide to go through with a divorce, my husband will leave me broke and I've been well off for so long, that honestly, it scares me."

"Is that all you're worried about? Do you forget who my dad is? Is it really just about the money?" He glared at me with a hint of anger in his beautiful green eyes.

"I know it sounds so superficial, but yes. I don't want any man to have to take care of me. I want to be able to take care of myself financially, is all. It's not that I want to stay married to Bill for his money, it's the security of never needing to worry about it."

"Well, if it makes you feel any better, I own my own house and I make extra money on the side with other repair shops in the area. I'm a pretty good mechanic. If you think it's only about the money, then maybe there isn't a future for us after all, Kathy."

"No, no, no! I don't think it's just about the money! I don't want you to have to worry about taking care of me."

"What if I want to take care of you?" The anger in his voice was apparent now. "Look, let's just drop the subject. You make your decision about your marriage when you feel comfortable and I'll be here waiting to hear what you have to say." He got out of bed and began to get dressed. "We're opening the shop soon and I gotta go get cleaned up. You can stay here as long as you need and we'll let you know when your car is ready." The coldness in his voice that made my heart sink.

"Brian! Wait! I've made my decision already!"

He turned to look at me. Seeing the look of love in his eyes was enough for me to know I'd be safe and loved with him more than I ever had been in a long time with Bill. I already knew, deep down, the money didn't matter.

"When I get back home, I'll file for divorce. I don't care anymore, he can have everything. After one night with you I know it'd hurt more to lose you than to lose the security I have with Bill."

He pulled me to him and kissed me passionately. "I fell in love with you the minute I saw you, Katherine." I felt him tremble while I began removing his clothing and pulling him back toward the bed.

We made love slowly, exploring every inch of each other, and then we fell asleep in the morning heat. When we woke next, it was around one o'clock in the afternoon. Brian panicked. He found his cell phone and saw his dad had been trying to call him all morning.

He quickly dialed the phone. "Hi, dad. No. I'm just not feeling well today, I've been in bed all morning." He paused and listened to his father speak. "Yes, Rose's place had water damage and she had no place to stay so I let her stay in my camper."

He glanced over at me. "She left her cell phone there? Well that would explain why you couldn't get a hold of her. No, I don't know if she's still in the camper or not." He took a deep breath and I thought I could hear a touch of panic in his voice.

"Actually Dad, that's not entirely true—" he hesitated. Looking over at me he smiled and told his father some of what had happened between us. "Yes, she's here now, that's where I am, weren't you listening to anything I said?"

"Well she said she was going to file for divorce once she got back home. I can



wait until her divorce is final, however long it takes. I love her.” He looked out the window to make sure no one was coming over to the camper.

“Okay. Do you have any runs you need me for?” He waited again as his father spoke. “I need to run home and get cleaned up a bit. I’ll bring Kathy back with me then she can be on her way to Traverse City. Okay. Bye, Dad.” He closed his phone and turned to me. “I need a shower and some food, how about you?”

I was already dressed and had the bed made up when he asked me. “Definitely! A shower and food would be great.”

“Well, my truck is parked behind the first bay.” He pointed to a gray pick-up. “Go wait for me, I’ll be right there. I’ll run inside and grab your cell phone for you.” Feeling slightly embarrassed, I walked quickly to his truck and waited by the passenger side for him to come out.

“Here’s your phone. You looked pretty thirsty so here’s some water, too.” He handed me my phone and the water then unlocked the passenger door for me. I looked in the bay and saw two men staring at me and smiling. I assumed one may have been Brian’s dad, but since I hadn’t met him yet, I wasn’t sure.

“Pay no attention to them, Kathy. They’re jealous because they couldn’t get such a gorgeous woman to spend the night with them.” He smiled then leaned over to kiss me.

We got to his house, grabbed lunch and a shower then he drove me back to the shop to get my car. I followed him back to his house and we made love all afternoon. He ignored his cell phone ringing and we spent the day in bed. We couldn’t seem to keep our hands off each other.

The next day, I started back on my trip. I called my friends and told them I'd be there soon and what a story I had to tell Katie. I spent four days in Traverse City and I talked to Brian every day. I stopped by his house on the way home and we made love a few more times before I went home to tell my husband I wanted a divorce.

\* \* \* \*

Driving home I felt a feeling of warmth I hadn't felt in a long time and thinking back to my first night with Brian, I knew I was making the right decision. I did love him and I know I fell for him the moment I saw him, same as he had for me.

My divorce went quickly and was uneventful. I told Bill he could have everything as long as I could keep my clothes and my car. He agreed and signed the papers. By June my divorce was final with an extra bonus of fifty-thousand dollars for repairs on my Mercedes! I called Brian with the good news and he asked when I was moving up there.

"I'm all packed and ready to go now. But I need to find a place to stay."

"You're not moving in with me? I thought that was the plan?"

My heart skipped a beat. "You're serious? You still want me to move in with you?" I couldn't hide the excitement or happiness in my voice.

"Where else would I want you to go? Kathy, I love you and I want us to be together."

I drove up to Brian's house and he was surprised to see I only had two garment bags and one suitcase to move in.

"That's it?"

"Yep! Bill agreed to my terms. I told him I only wanted my car and my clothes, he could have everything else."

"Cool."

Once we were inside, he carried me up to his room—our room—and made love to me for the first time as his woman. We fell asleep in each other's arms and I felt truly loved for the first time in a long, long time.

### CHAPTER THREE

Several weeks had gone by since my divorce and I was happier than I had been in years. Brian was a wonderful man and adapted quickly to a woman living in his house. Although we spent a lot of time in bed learning about each other physically, I realized beyond that, we didn't know much about each other. One morning at breakfast I decided I wanted to know more about the man who'd stolen my heart.

"G'morning, darlin'." Brian kissed me in greeting as he entered the kitchen, same as he did every morning. "What's for breakfast?"

"Your favorite, scrambled eggs with onions and cheese."

He filled his plate from the pan on the stove. "I knew there was a reason I loved you so much." He sat down across from me at the table.

"You know, you bring up a very good point, Brian." I had a serious look on my face.

"I do?"

"Yes. Why do we love each other? I mean really, what do we know about each other besides being great in bed?"

He looked at me with a puzzling stare then turned serious. "What are you getting at, Kathy?"

I quickly tried to change the mood. "Oh, no Brian, don't get the wrong idea, I just want to know more about you. I love you so much, yet I don't know much about you or your life before I was in it."

"Okay, you had me worried there, woman! But there really isn't much to tell. My mom died of cancer when I was nine and it's been me and my dad ever since. He's had

a few girlfriends, but nothing serious. He's always said mom was his one and only—his soul mate—and he couldn't even imagine being married to anyone else." He gave me a warm smile and my heart skipped a beat.

"He opened the garage shortly after mom died. I started learning how to fix cars and helped him out around there until he could hire some mechanics. I took shop in high school, which was pretty much inevitable, graduated with a C average then took some schooling to get certified as a mechanic so I could work full time for him. After awhile, the guy who drove the tow truck started missing a lot of time and arriving really late for his runs, so I took over that job. That's pretty much it. How about you?"

Looking at him I realized he hadn't shaved yet this morning and the shadow of beard stubble made him look even sexier than usual.

"You should grow a beard."

"What?" He rubbed his cheek. "Oh this, sorry, I haven't shaved yet this morning. But hey, don't change the subject."

"Well, what do you want to know?"

"What did you study in college?"

"Accounting!" I said without hesitation. "Yeah, boring I know, but I've always been good with numbers so I figured I could put it to good use. I did the books for Bill's company when it first started out, but once it became the huge company it is today, he hired a whole team of accountants and pretty much didn't need me anymore." I could feel the rapid beat of my heart as he continued to gaze lovingly at me. "So what else do you want to know?"

"Tell me about your family, you know, your mom and dad, any brothers and

sisters?"

His smile faded when he saw the sad look on my face.

"My parents were on vacation in New York City on nine eleven when the first plane hit the World Trade Center." I paused to take a sip of my coffee. "I'll never forget that day; watching all the destruction on television and knowing my parents were in there somewhere, but were never found." I swallowed back a lump in my throat. "I received a call that morning from them saying how beautiful everything was and then I heard the screams and the phone went dead—" I trailed off feeling tears well up in my eyes.

"I'm sorry, Kathy, I didn't mean to bring up painful memories. You don't have to tell me anymore if you don't want to." He leaned over the table, wiped the tears from my eyes and kissed my cheek softly.

"No, it's okay. I haven't talked about it in awhile. I don't really know what happened or how they didn't get to someplace safe." I heard my voice break as the tears flowed harder now. "I only know they were listed with the missing and I don't think their remains were ever found."

Brian got up and pulled me into a comforting embrace. I cried in his arms for quite some time until I composed myself and pulled away from him. He kissed me and wiped my tears. "I'm sorry, I'll never mention it again. I didn't know. I feel really bad—"

I put a finger to his lips. "It's all right, Brian. How could you have known? It's hard for me to talk about, but you wanted to know so I told you."

"I'm almost afraid to ask this now." He took a deep breath and exhaled. "Do you have any siblings?"

I kissed him again and we both sat back down. "I have one brother I haven't seen in about twenty years. He's five years younger than me and married his high school sweetheart as soon as they graduated high school. She didn't like my mother so she kept him at a distance from the family. He never argued or put up a fight. I think he lives somewhere in Minnesota or Montana or somewhere, not really sure. I figure if he can't take the time to keep in touch with his family because of her, then I don't need to take the time to contact him. I don't know if he even knows what happened to our parents."

"You're amazing!" Brian beamed.

"Why do you say that?"

"You just are. I mean I can hear the love for your brother in your voice, but there's also bitterness toward him. It's like you want to find him, but at the same time, you want him to come find you. I think it'll happen. With an amazing woman like you for a sister, how can he live with himself if he doesn't try to contact you eventually?"

"Are you gonna shave today?" I reached across the table to caress his cheek. "I think it looks sexy and you should let it grow out a bit."

He picked up his spoon, looked at his reflection, looked at me and then back at his reflection again. "Our kids are gonna look amazing; with your natural beauty on the girls and my ruggedly handsome good looks on the boys." He chuckled. I looked down at my plate and felt tears in my eyes again. "What is it? What's wrong?"

"You mentioned kids— our kids." I heard my voice breaking again while I tried to fight back more tears.

"Yeah, you're not too old to still have kids, Kathy. Lots of women have kids well into their forties." With that I began crying harder. "What did I say, now?"

"Oh it's not you, Brian. It's just—I—I can't have kids and it's not because of my age."

"I'm not really battin' a thousand today am I? First I mention your parents, now kids. No matter what I say, it upsets you. I'm such an asshole." He got up from the table and took his plate to the sink. The look of sadness on his face made my heart sink.

*Oh God, he hates me! What can I say to make him understand it's not his fault I'm so upset?*

I grabbed my plate and took it to the sink. Brian stared out the window, his hands rested on the edge of the sink. I put my plate on top of his then wrapped my arms around his waist.

"How could you have possibly known any of this, Brian? I should've known these conversations would have come up sooner or later and I didn't prepare myself. It's not your fault. I love you more than you'll ever know and I want you to know everything." I turned him to face me, taking his hands in mine.

He looked down at our hands then into my eyes and I noticed he'd been crying also. I wiped the moisture from his cheek and kissed him tenderly, then took him by the hands and led him back to the table.

"Sit down here, Brian, I want to tell you something." He took a seat in the chair beside me and I poured us each another cup of coffee, wondering exactly where to begin telling him what I wanted him to hear.

"The reason I can't have kids has nothing to do with age. I was still a virgin in college; I wanted to save myself for marriage. The guy I was dating respected that, or so I thought, until one night he showed up at my dorm drunk and really angry." I



watched Brian as he sat and kept his gaze fixed on me, listening intently.

"I told him to go home and sober up, but he had other plans. Little did I know at the time he had two friends with him. When I closed the door in his face and locked it, his friends kicked it down. My roommate had gone for the evening and he probably knew that, otherwise he wouldn't have been there. He told me I knew what he wanted and he wasn't leaving until he got it.

"I was really scared and tried to call 911, but he ripped the phone out of my hand and yanked the cord out of the wall. I screamed, pounded and scratched at the wall. He hit me and threw me to the floor, but no one came to my rescue. He continued punching me in the face, chest and stomach until I passed out. After that I don't know what happened. Next thing I remembered, I was lying across my bed, my clothes were torn and I was bleeding from my face and hands, there were bruises all over me and it felt like I'd been split in two." I paused and let Brian absorb what I'd told him.

"*Bastard!*" he said as he hit his fists on the table.

"Brian, it's all right. Please, let me finish." I could see the anger in his face. "One of the girls who lived across the hall came home and saw me. She immediately called 911 and I was taken to the hospital. The police arrived shortly afterwards to question my neighbor.

"When the police came into my hospital room I gave them the description of my ex-boyfriend and of his friends as well since I didn't know their names. All three of them confessed to raping me and eventually ended up in jail." I paused and saw Brian had his head down and he was trying to fight back tears.

"That's how I met my Bill. He was putting himself through school for a business

degree and took a job at the hospital to help pay the bills. He wasn't really supposed to visit the patients, he was just a janitor, but he visited me two or three times a day and brought me flowers, too. I'd found out shortly after the attack I was pregnant." Brian continued to stare at the table.

"Bill told me he'd support whatever decision I made regarding the baby. I'd decided to keep it, but ended up having a miscarriage. The doctors told me it was because of the trauma to my body from the rape and beatings. With further examinations and tests, they told me I'd never be able to have children.

"He was so wonderful about everything. He helped me get through my ordeal. We fell in love and married six months later. Even though we'd grown apart emotionally and physically over the last few years, a part of me will still love him for what he did for me after all that." As I finished telling my story, Brian broke down in tears. He got and pulled me into another embrace.

"I'm so sorry this happened to you. It doesn't matter to me if we never have kids, Kathy. I just want to be with you."

"All this crying has really made me sleepy, Brian, do you mind if I go lay down for a bit?"

"Take all the time you need, hon. I'll clean up here and come join you in a few minutes."

I wasn't completely asleep when I felt him slip into bed beside to me. Just sensing his body beside mine drove me wild. I rolled over and kissed him passionately while one hand found his cock and began stroking it.

"Someone's not so tired anymore, huh?"

"Make love to me, Brian."

He kissed me gently and I reached between us to guide his throbbing erection into me. We fit together so well, you'd think we were actually made for each other. As I felt his slow thrusts in and out, I pulled him close and kissed him with one hand grasping his hair and the other grasping his tight ass. I wrapped my legs around him to pull him in deeper. Caressing his back and shoulders, I could feel his body tremble beneath my touch. We took our time and enjoyed each other. I could feel my whole orgasm looming and I told him to fuck me harder.

I felt him push every inch of his cock deep inside me with deep, pounding thrusts. I clenched my muscles tighter around his cock. We both let ourselves go and had mind blowing orgasms.

"You're amazing. Every time with you is better than the last." Still trembling, he rolled off me and turned to kiss me.

He got out of bed and went into the bathroom to take a quick shower. He came out of the bathroom to get dressed and I noticed he hadn't shaved. "I think I might let it grow out for a few days," he said as he rubbed his cheek against mine. He finished dressing and kissed me good-bye for the day.

I cleaned myself up and got dressed then went downstairs and popped in a movie. Even though it was one of my favorites, I couldn't concentrate on it. My mind was on other things. It'd only been about an hour since Brian left and I found myself thinking I was starting to get into the same boring routine I was in during my last few years married to Bill. I didn't want that to happen again, so I headed out the door and drove over to Ron's Repair Shop.

Ron looked to be around my age and there was no question Brian was his son. His hair was the same color, but much shorter than his son's, combed to one side and it was starting to show some gray. He also had green eyes, but they were a darker shade. He wore glasses and always had them resting on the tip of his nose instead of higher on the bridge where they belonged.

"Hi Ron," I said as I walked in.

"Hello, Katherine." He looked over his glasses at me.

He didn't seem too happy his son was living with a woman twice his age, but he tried to be nice because he knew Brian loved me and nothing would change that. I didn't like him calling me Katherine, but I didn't correct him either. I let him do it since it was probably his way of expressing his discontent of my relationship with his son.

"Is Brian out on a run?"

"Yeah, he should be back in a few minutes. Are you having car trouble again?" His face softened a little and he smiled at me.

"No. I was bored so I thought I'd go for a drive and I just kinda ended up here."

A man entered from the door immediately to the right of Ron, not from the garage, but from what I presumed to be the office. "Your books are a mess, Ron, how do you stay in business?" he asked curtly.

"You just crunch the numbers John and let me worry about staying in business," Ron snapped back at him. John turned and headed back into the office muttering and mumbling as he walked.

"I don't know about that guy. I gave him six months to straighten out the books and they're worse now than when he started."

I saw my golden opportunity to get on Ron's good side. "You know I majored in accounting in college, Ron."

His face brightened a bit as he looked at me. "You think you can straighten things out, Katherine?"

"I can give it a shot. I'm sure I couldn't do any more harm if they're as bad as you say."

He called John out of the office and told him to go home and not come back. "All yours." He pointed over his shoulder to the office. I sat down at the desk and began looking things over. He was right, the books were a mess and it would take nothing short of a miracle to fix them.

"What's my time frame, boss?" I considered he'd just hired me as his accountant.

"Six months—and the name's still Ron." He pulled the door closed and left me to my work.

## CHAPTER FOUR

It only took about four months to get the books straightened out instead of six and by then it was late September. Brian and I were more in love and happy as ever. We got to see each other all day long and when he didn't have a run and I got a break we ran out to his camper and fucked like bunnies. I'm sure the folks around us knew what we were doing, but we didn't care. Work was getting done and there was no harm in "recharging" ourselves every now and then.

I'd actually started getting a few other people who were interested in my accounting services also, thanks to Ron's word of mouth about the "miracle" I performed on his books. Soon, I had more work than I could handle and the small office I'd set up at home was too cramped. I needed to find a more permanent place yet still close to home.

I drove through town one day and saw an old building between the diner and Rose's by the Road with a *For Sale* sign in the window. I turned into the parking lot and looked it over. Not too big, not too small, but looked perfect for what I needed. I jotted down the number and headed home. I wasted no time in dialing the number.

I spoke with a man who told me the price for the building was fifteen thousand dollars, non-negotiable. I made arrangements to buy the building with some of the money my ex-husband had given me in the divorce settlement. I called Brian with the great news and he was more excited than I was about my new venture.

Brian got home late that evening due to the weather conditions outside. It'd been snowing pretty hard for nearly three days straight. He ran upstairs to take a quick shower and change out of his work clothes. As I waited for Brian, I fixed a light dinner—

sandwiches and chips—while listening to the hockey game on the TV in the living room. I was so grateful Brian respected my love of hockey. The Detroit Red Wings were playing the Colorado Avalanche in pre-season.

The Red Wings were winning and I kept popping around the corner to watch the action. After Brian showered, he returned to the kitchen and suggested we eat in the other room so I could watch the game. Before I could answer, he set up two TV trays and came to the kitchen for the food. By the time we'd finished our dinner and gotten pretty comfortable, the Wings were way ahead and it was well into the second period. I rested my hand on Brian's thigh suggestively.

Brian turned to face me and I leaned in and kissed him. I felt his swelling erection on my palm and without breaking our kiss, he repositioned himself so we could undress each other. I reached down and started stroking his cock through his jeans while removing his belt as we continued to kiss. Before I knew it, he had my jeans off and was working on getting my panties off as he took two fingers and gently slid them inside my warm wetness.

He pulled my damp panties down to my ankles, over my feet and brought them to his face, inhaling deeply before throwing them on the floor at the end of the couch. I could smell the scent of my arousal on him when he kissed me again. He trailed kisses down my neck to my breasts. He gently nibbled and sucked each engorged nipple then worked his way down my body to claim his prize.

I threw one leg up over the back of the couch and the other over the end with my foot on the floor. Brian kissed down then up each thigh and paused when he reached my glistening pussy, now quivering with anticipation. I could feel his hot breath as he

lingered, inhaling my scent while he began to finger fuck me. He closed his mouth gently around my clit, flicking and sucking it with his lips and tongue. I felt his fingers pull out at the same time his tongue entered and fucked me into a vigorous climax. He sat up, leaned over and kissed me again.

"My turn now." I gently pushed him back on the couch, finished unzipping his jeans and pulled them to the floor.

I wanted him so much, when I pulled his boxers, they ripped completely away and I welcomed his hard cock into my hands. I stroked him slowly and watched his face as he leaned his head back and let out a soft groan. Positioning myself over him, I began licking up and down the rigid shaft and teasing the plump head with my tongue.

"You are so amazing at this!" he said breathlessly when I opened my mouth and engulfed his cock to the base.

He let out a louder groan while I began sucking up and down. I felt one of his hands cup a breast and tease my nipple. I sucked faster and deeper, and then felt the first drops of his pre-come slip down my throat. I gave his shaft a few light nibbles and he groaned through his release while his semen shot down my throat. It was so powerful this time, I was unable to swallow it all. Pulling back, some of his spending shot into the air, landing on his stomach. I leaned forward and licked the remaining trails of his come as he uttered a contented sigh and caressed my hair.

I embraced his cock and started stroking it again as I looked him in the eye. "I want you to fuck me! Fuck me hard, Brian!"

He stood, pulled me to my feet, turned me around and bent me over. My elbows rested on the couch. He started slowly at first, pushing his cock all the way in and letting



me feel his hardness deep inside. He thrust hard and deep while he reached around to pinch and pull my nipples. Although this felt amazing, it was conflicting with his rhythm and he transferred his hands from my nipples to my shoulders. Digging his fingers hard into my shoulders, he continued to pound my pussy hard and deep. He was fucking me rough and hard and I loved it. I knew even though he was being rough, he would never hurt me.

"Yeah! Fuck me harder!" I squealed as he tried his hardest to shove deeper than he ever had.

I felt myself tighten around his cock a split second before my orgasm hit. He wrapped his arms around my waist and let out a few loud grunts before he shot his hot load deep inside me. He kept pumping even after he'd emptied his cock into my pussy. I felt both of our bodies tremble. We both collapsed on the couch completely spent. The hockey game was nearly over by now. We were sitting side by side on the couch and I pulled an afghan over us.

He leaned over and kissed me. "Good game!" We both laughed as we held each other and fell asleep, satisfied in every possible way.

\* \* \* \*

The next morning we woke up and quickly headed for the showers. We both had a full day ahead of us. Brian knew he'd be unusually busy because of the weather, and I had work to do on two new clients I'd acquired. We showered together and managed a quick fuck before we started our day. After we toweled off and got dressed, we both headed downstairs to the kitchen to make breakfast.

It was a quick breakfast—cereal and toast—and we ate as we discussed our

plans for the day. Instead of sitting across from each other as we usually did, we sat right next to each other, my right leg and his left leg crossed, we just wanted to be close to each other as long as we could.

The phone rang and he got up to answer it. It was his dad telling him to hurry it up. He hung up, gave me a quick kiss and headed out the door. I cleaned off the table and headed across the kitchen to my office. The office was actually a guest bedroom, but since it was never used, we converted it. I called my two new clients and asked them if we could reschedule when the weather cleared. They both agreed.

I spent most of the day working on plans for my new office and making phone calls; arranging for contractors to begin renovations so everything would be ready for my first day of business.

\* \* \* \*

Things were really starting to pick up at my new location. It was approaching Thanksgiving and everyone wanted to get their books in order before Christmas and the New Year so they'd be ready for tax season. The building was perfect. I had more than enough room to work and I hired a couple students from the local college to help me with some of the lighter accounts so they could get the experience and it would ease up my workload a bit.

After the huge snow storm we had in September, you wouldn't know it'd ever happened if you looked outside now, most of the snow had melted. The sun was shining and it was unusually warm for late November; probably about forty degrees outside. Brian called me nearly everyday, sometimes several times a day. He hadn't had much to do since the weather improved, so he had a lot of free time on his hands. I'd set up a

special room in my new building for us, but we didn't get to use it much since now it was me who was so busy all the time. When he called me today, we didn't get to talk long, I had to hang up because someone was coming in and I hadn't recognized her. I presumed she'd be a new client. Oh how wrong I was.

"Can I help you?" I asked.

"Not really. I wanted to come in and see who stole my Brian's heart is all," she answered.

She was pushing a stroller and pulled the blanket off after she was in the building. The baby looked to be about a year old or so and had bright green eyes. My heart sank.

"Excuse me?" I asked.

"I'd heard Brian fell head over heels for some older babe, so I had to come see for myself who it was. My name is Jennifer." She approached me with an outstretched hand.

"Kathy." I shook her hand loosely and quickly. "Why did you say 'my Brian'?"

"Well, its common knowledge Brian and I were an item until you came along."

I couldn't help but stare at the baby in the stroller with those vivid green eyes.

*It couldn't be his, could it?* "I'm sorry, Jennifer. If I would've known the two of you were dating when I met him, I never would've pursued him. But he never told me anything about you—or your baby." I hoped my tone didn't give away the fact I was trying to find out more about her relationship with Brian.

"Okay, we weren't quite an item. We broke up last Thanksgiving, but he still keeps in touch. He wants to be a part of the baby's life, you know. He's trying to be a

good dad." She gave a warm smile. My heart stopped.

*A good dad?* "This baby is Brian's?"

"Yeah. Didn't he tell you?"

"No. He neglected to mention to me that he had a—a—"

"A son. His name is Adam."

"I'm at a loss for words. I mean I noticed the green eyes immediately, but I never thought—" I trailed off, feeling tears well up in my eyes.

"I'm sorry, Kathy. I didn't mean to upset you. I thought you knew. I thought he would've told you. I know you were worried he wouldn't stay with you since you couldn't have kids, but he—"

"How did you know I couldn't have kids?" I cut her off abruptly, the tone of my voice most definitely conveying my anger.

"Oh, I think I've said too much. I should go."

I was devastated. Here was a woman who'd had a son with Brian and he left her. I couldn't believe he'd told her about me, yet I knew nothing of her. There were a thousand thoughts running through my mind as I locked up and quickly headed home.

When I got home, Brian's truck wasn't in the driveway but I darted in the house calling out his name anyway. He wasn't home. I couldn't get the image of a baby with Brian's eyes out of my head. *Why didn't he tell me about him? Why did he tell her about me not being able to have kids unless it really did bother him?*

I was so angry, I ran upstairs, grabbed a suitcase and packed without thinking. I came back downstairs and went into my office and scribbled out a note to Brian.

*I'm leaving. Don't come looking for me. I hope you, Jennifer and Adam will be*

*very happy together.*

I left the note on the table then took the suitcase out to my car and tossed it in the back seat. Wiping the tears from my eyes, I fumbled with my cell phone and dialed Katie's number.

"Hello?"

"Katie, it's me. Want some company for a few days?" I did my best to hide the fact I'd been crying.

"Sure, c'mon up! I'll put some coffee on for ya. See ya when ya get here, girl!"

It was only about an hour drive to Katie's and it gave me plenty of time to think. *Had Brian really been seeing Jennifer behind my back this whole time? Has he slept with her again? Why didn't he tell me about Adam? Why did he tell her about me not being able to have kids? What the hell else did he tell her about me? What else hasn't he told me about himself?*

I pulled up into Katie's driveway and dried my eyes again before getting out of the car. Her husband Mark came out to greet me and grabbed my suitcase from the back seat.

"Good to see you, Kathy," he said as he kissed my cheek.

"Nice to see you too, Mark." I was still trying to hide the evidence I'd been crying.

"Katie's excited you're here. How long you stayin'?"

"I don't know. I just needed to get away."

He gave me a curious glance when he saw the look on my face then turned his eyes toward the house. When I got to the door I saw Katie's smiling face and my whole world came crashing down. I began to sob as I hugged her and she walked me to the

living room.

"What the hell is wrong? What did that asshole do to you?"

"I—he—I love him so much—he—" I couldn't get the words out. I started crying harder into her shoulder.

Mark took my suitcase to the guest room and tried to stay out of the way because he knew I needed a serious talk with Katie. He was a good guy and I felt myself wishing at this point I had a guy like him. I actually did have a guy like him, but he's not the guy I thought he was.

"Calm down, sweetie, catch your breath and tell me what happened," Katie said trying to soothe me. I took the tissue she offered me and dried my face and proceeded to tell her about Jennifer and Adam.

"He knows I can't have kids and he never told me about Adam." I tried not to break down again. "He also told her about me not being able to have kids."

"He probably didn't want to hurt you, Kathy. Brian's a good guy and I know he loves you. Maybe it was hard for him to try to tell you about Adam." I knew she was trying to reassure me my life wasn't falling apart as I thought it was. "Maybe he needed someone to talk to, and that's why he told her."

"We promised each other we'd always be honest. Don't you remember that line in the movie 'Little Black Book'?" I asked her. She shook her head. "Omission is betrayal. Not telling someone something important or life-altering is the same thing as lying. Didn't he think I could handle it? I know he had a life before he met me. I just wish he would've told me and I didn't have to find out like this. I would've understood if he'd told me himself. I can't look him in the eye or trust him ever again. If there's no trust, there's

no relationship." I started crying again. "I'm wondering what else he hasn't told me."

Katie's phone rang. I knew it was Brian by the look on her face when she answered it.

"You can tell him I'm here," I whispered.

"Yes, she's here." Katie gave me a glance and I could tell she was hoping I'd take the phone from her.

"Tell him it's over and I'm not coming home." I hoped he'd hear me as opposed to her having to tell him.

"Did you hear that?" she asked him. She hung up the phone. "He hung up. I guess he heard you."

I began crying harder again as she hugged me tight and let me cry in her arms. We ended up talking for nearly an hour before Mark came into the room and asked who was hungry.

"I am," we answered together and giggled.

"I'm makin' dinner so if you ladies don't want me hearin' what you're sayin' I suggest you take it to the den." He grinned as he reached in the freezer and pulled out some chicken.

We took Mark's advice and talked for another hour before we heard a knock at the front door.

"Mark, get that will ya!" Katie shouted.

Another knock.

She shouted louder. "*Mark! Answer the door!* Well, where the hell did he go? I'll be right back."

Katie and Brian had never met face to face, he was usually working when I got a chance to visit her, which was a lot more often since we lived closer to each other now, but they knew each other through pictures and phone calls. He'd mentioned a few times we looked like we were sisters, but I was more beautiful. She always told me Brian and I looked good together, no matter what anyone else said.

"What are you doin' here, Brian?" I heard her ask him through the open door of the den. I could hear his voice, but I couldn't hear what he was saying.

"You don't take direction very well, do ya? I thought she said not to come lookin' for her."

"Yeah, well she doesn't wanna see you right now, buddy. You got some serious ass-kissing to do. Right now, you need to go home and let her cool off." Katie's voice was gruff. She knew Brian loved me and I loved him, but he was the last person I wanted to see at the moment. I needed time to gather my thoughts and let the events of the day sink in.

"Yeah, I'll tell her. Now get outta here before I get my husband after ya."

Brian said something else to Katie.

"Yes, I'll give it to her, now go!" I heard the door close, and then she came back into the den holding an envelope. "He's pretty tore up, ya know."

"I don't give a shit. He kept secrets from me. He told people things about me he shouldn't have. It's gonna take a long time for me to forgive him."

"He asked me to give you this." She held the envelope out to me.

"Read it to me," I said pushing it back to her.

"Are you sure?"



"Yes. I know I'll start crying and won't be able to finish it. Please read it to me?"

"Okay." She sounded uncertain, but she opened the envelope and pulled out the letter. She read a few lines silently before she began reading out loud.

*"My dearest Katherine,*

*I'm so sorry I hurt you, that was never my intention. I wanted so many times to tell you about Adam, but I couldn't. I'd remember back to the day you told me about what happened to you in college and I didn't want to open old wounds for you again. I said I was okay with the fact we would never have kids and I meant it from the bottom of my heart.*

*Physically, we may not be able to have children, but there's always adoption. However, that's not why I am with you. I am with you because I love you. I can't say it enough. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you with all my heart and soul. I've never felt more complete than I have when you're with me. When we're apart, even if it's only for a few hours, there's an emptiness inside me only you can fill. I've felt that way about you since the day we met and I believe it was fate that made us give in to our desires. I fell hard for you, and I fall in love with you more every single day. My body aches for you when we cannot be together and share our passion.*

*I broke up with Jennifer a long time ago. I only stayed in touch with her because of Adam. We broke up because she betrayed me as your husband betrayed you. After she had Adam, we got engaged. The day before we were to be married, she told me she'd slept with my best friend. Not just once, but several times over the course of our two-year courtship. I was unsure for a long time if Adam was even mine, despite his vivid green eyes, but a paternity test eased my concerns.*

*It was one of the hardest things I'd ever gone through and I felt as if my heart had been drained and I'd never be able to love again. Then I met you and knew I was wrong. I felt alive for the first time in my life and each day I look into your loving eyes, I see my life, my heart, my soul. I hope in time you'll be able to forgive me and trust me again. I make you this promise here and now: I'll never keep any more secrets from you. I feel as if I've lost my soul because you're not here. Take all the time you need to sort out your feelings. I'll wait for as long as it takes.*

*With all the love in my heart,*

*Brian"*

I was crying again and so was Katie. She was barely able to finish reading his letter but when she did, she handed it to me. I dried my eyes and read it again and again. *What am I doing? Am I willing to throw away the best thing in my life for one little secret?* I knew it wasn't over between us, but we still needed to talk. I know he loved me and he wanted to keep me from being hurt. I looked up at Katie and she bent over and comforted me.

"Do whatcha gotta do."

"I'll stay here tonight and go home in the morning. Brian and I still have a lot of things to talk about before I forgive him." I pulled her into a fierce hug. "Thanks for being here for me, girl." I forced a smile through my tears.

Mark called us for dinner and we all sat silently and ate. All I could think about was the beautiful heartfelt letter Brian had written to me. I kept telling myself he loved me. I knew it was true and the more I thought about it the more I knew I felt exactly the same way about him as he did about me. He was my heart and my soul. I loved him

more intensely and more completely than I thought I could love someone. I needed to forgive him, but I needed to hear his voice, I needed to see his face. We finished our dinner and I headed for the guest room feeling exhausted from all the crying. I fell asleep almost instantly and I dreamed of Brian and the first night we spent together.

## CHAPTER FIVE

I woke up sometime during the night to use the bathroom and I could hear Katie moaning softly. I knew what she and Mark were doing and I felt an ache for Brian clear to my core. I knew we had a lot to talk about before I was ready to forgive him, but I wanted to go to him right now. I looked at the clock on the nightstand and it read one fifteen.

*What the hell?* I found a long t-shirt and pulled it on.

I found my slippers and my coat and made my way to my car. I drove quickly to get home to Brian. I removed my coat and draped it over the banister once I was inside then made my way upstairs to the room we'd shared for the past six months. I wanted Brian now more than I ever have and as I entered the bedroom, I saw him sleeping on his back with his hands tucked behind the pillow. I walked over to the bed and pulled back the sheets and began stroking his cock. He shifted a bit and let out a sigh.

"Katherine," he said breathlessly but seemed to be still sleeping. My heart always skipped a beat when he called me Katherine.

He didn't seem to wake up as I continued to stroke him slowly. I lifted my shirt, positioned my hips over his cock and lowered myself down onto him. My pussy was wet and it lubricated his cock as I slowly glided up and down his shaft. I leaned back against his legs and took him in deeper. I placed his hands on my hips and felt his grip tighten. I leaned over and kissed him.

"Stay with me," he whispered.

I started to cry and finished what I had gone there for. We both reached orgasm and he let out a deep grunt. As I got off of him, he seized my hand in an effort to get me

to stay. I pulled my hand from his and raced out of the room, grabbed my coat and left. I whimpered as I drove back to Katie's. When I got back to her house, I headed into the guest room, but sleep was hopeless. I lay awake thinking about Brian and what I'd done. After awhile, I walked out to the kitchen and sat down at the table and cried. The sun was beginning to rise.

"G'mornin' Kath," Mark said as he crossed the kitchen to the refrigerator wearing just a t-shirt and boxers. I looked up at him and forced a smile.

He looked a little worn out and I quietly chuckled to myself. *I guess Katie's still got the touch, too.*

Katie wasn't far behind. She smiled at me and knew something was up. "You went to him last night, didn't you?" she asked in an almost motherly kind of way seeing I'd been crying.

I nodded as I stared blankly out the window. Mark had gone back to their room because he knew we wanted to talk again. "I basically raped him. I went to him, got what I wanted out of him and left. I'm no better than those guys in college. I couldn't help it. I heard you and Mark last night and I wanted Brian so bad I couldn't control myself."

"What you did was *not* rape," Katie said sternly. "I'd bet he responded to your presence by pulling you closer. I'd also bet that he didn't consider it rape either. I don't *ever* want to hear you talk like that again! You're way better than those monsters who beat and raped you in college." I could hear annoyance in her voice.

Just then there was a knock at the door. We both had a good idea who it was. I looked at Katie with tears in my eyes as she walked to the door.

"Brian. You're here awful early," she said.

"Where is she?" He looked over her shoulder.

"She's still—" Katie started, but I interrupted her.

"I'm right here." I placed my hand on Katie's shoulder to let her know it was okay, I was ready to talk to him. If it was possible for a man to look radiant, at that moment, he did. He smiled and the morning sunlight made his green eyes sparkle and dance.

My heart raced at the sight of him and I wanted him so badly, but I resisted. "We need to talk."

"Can we talk about this at home?" He rubbed his hands together to keep them warm.

"No. Here is just fine." His brow furrowed, but he got the point from the tone of my voice.

"Why did you leave our bed last night, Kathy? I wanted to hold you and you left."

"I never should've gone there. It just makes this harder to deal with." I blinked a few times to fight back the tears.

"Kathy, I love you with all my heart and soul. We'll work this out. Didn't Katie give you my letter?" He shot a look over my shoulder to Katie still standing in the background listening.

"How can we work anything out when I can't trust you anymore, Brian?"

"Can I come in? It's really cold out here."

Katie gave me a nod and headed back to the kitchen. I took him by the hand and led him into the den. The guest room was off the den, and while I wanted to take him straight to bed, I didn't. I was crying but dried my eyes before I turned to face him.

"Yes. Katie gave me your note. It was beautiful, but there are still the issues of honesty and trust between us. These are two of the most important things in a relationship to me." I made a point not to sit down next to him just yet. "I do love you, Brian. Probably more than you'll know, but I don't trust you right now."

"You *can* trust me Kathy." I saw him fighting back tears. "I'm sorry for hurting you. I'm sorry for deceiving you and I'm ready to spend the rest of my life making it up to you. I want you to trust me again. I want to see the look of longing in your eyes when you look at me."

I wanted him even more now, but again I resisted and I kept my gaze fixed on the floor so he couldn't see what was really in my heart. "You have a son. You need to focus on his needs. He needs his father. I don't want to get in the way."

"He's fine with his mother right now. I'm part of his life. He knows I am his daddy. Stop changing the subject." He sounded annoyed and angry. "Did you read my letter, I mean truly *read* it?"

"About a hundred times." I could no longer contain my tears. "That's what makes what I am about to tell you so difficult." He looked at me blankly. "I've uprooted myself from the only secure life I'd ever known. I came here to be with you and start a new life. I'm on the right track for the first time since I graduated college. My life is here now. I've got a blossoming business and I've made new friends. I have enough money saved now to find a home of my own—" I trailed off and swallowed hard. "I think that's what I need to do."

"You can't be serious."

"I am serious, Brian. You need to make things right with Jennifer for Adam's

sake. I think it'll be best if I find a place of my own to live and give you your space. Your son needs you. Jennifer needs you."

"Are you listening to yourself right now? I don't need space, I need *you*! Yes, Adam needs me, but you can't look me in the eye and tell me you don't want me in your life anymore. I'm sorry I never told you about him and I'm sorry I told Jennifer about you not being able to have kids.

"She doesn't know why, she only knows you can't. I'm very angry with her for doing what she did. I told her she'd meet you when the time was right and she took it upon herself to meet you without my knowledge. I need to make things right with you before I deal with her."

"Make amends with Jennifer. Be with your son. They need you more than I do." I felt an ache in my heart. I refused to make eye contact with him because I knew if I did, he would see I did need him, but I didn't want to get in the way of him and his son.

We talked for a few more hours and when he'd said all that he wanted to say, and everything I wanted to hear, I was ready to forgive him. Deep down I was ready long before he came to Katie's, but I needed to hear his words. There was a knock on the door and I heard Katie's voice on the other side.

"Everything okay in there? You two have been in there a long time."

I walked to the door, opened it and smiled. "Things are better than they were a few hours ago." I gave her a quick hug. "Can you give us a while longer?" She gave me a wink and pulled the door closed.

I turned to Brian. "I want you in my bed."

He smiled, picked me up and carried me into the guest room. He was so gentle—



even more so than our first night together—and I could feel the love and passion in his touch and in his kiss.

*I know I made the right decision*, I thought as we slowly and passionately made love like it was our first time together.

## CHAPTER SIX

Things were going great again for a while after our "snag" in November. We celebrated Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year together and we grew increasingly more attracted and in love every single day.

Brian was bonding with Adam and I was getting along pretty good at being the doting "stepmother." We were together and happy and when the two of us had some alone time together, we spent most of it in bed. We couldn't get enough of each other.

Everything was perfect again. My accounting practice was thriving, I hired two new full time accountants and Ron gave Brian more responsibility at the shop. We learned to cherish our alone time and took advantage of it as often as possible. Then the other shoe dropped.

Brian came home one evening looking as if his whole world had just come crashing down. It hadn't—yet. Apparently Jennifer had lost her apartment and had to move in with her parents since she couldn't afford another place of her own.

She'd been living with them for about a month when her dad got a promotion at his job and sprung news on the family they were moving to Texas.

Brian was devastated. He told Jennifer she could stay here with Adam as long as she wanted, but she told him she wanted to go to Texas. She was tired of the Michigan winters and wanted a warmer climate; this was a perfect opportunity for her.

"We can visit them as often as you want," I told him as I hugged him tight.

"It's more than that, Kathy. I was just starting to make real breakthroughs with Adam. We were bonding as father and son and now this." He fought to hold back his tears. "I don't want to lose him, but I don't know what else I can do." A look of happiness

suddenly came over his face as he hugged me. "Marry me and we can move to Texas, too."

"You're kidding, right?"

"No. This would be great. A complete fresh start for us! I want you to be my wife."

"I don't want to get married again. I'm happy with the way things are, and what fresh start? A fresh start for you maybe. I've already had my fresh start, Brian. My life is here, I can't uproot myself again. I'm at a point in my life where I'm content and now you want me to turn things upside down? What about my business? I can't close up and leave all those people hanging." I was angry, but I also didn't realize how selfish I was being.

"What the hell has gotten into you?" he asked with an angry tone I'd never heard from him before. "We don't have to get married. I thought that's what you wanted. I thought you supported my decisions as far as Adam was concerned." The look in his eyes frightened me.

"Don't look at me like that. I do support you Brian, you know I do, but this is a big decision and I'm not ready to move again." Now it was my turn to fight back tears.

"Maybe I should just go by myself then. Obviously if your life is here, it's not with me so it shouldn't matter to you either way whether I'm here or not." His words cut through me like a sword.

"How can you possibly believe that, Brian? I love you! I wouldn't have divorced Bill and moved in with you if I didn't want to spend the rest of my life with you. I just don't want to get married again and I don't want to move to Texas. We have plenty of money saved between us; we can fly out there every weekend if that's what you want."

"*Weekends aren't enough for me!*" he shouted and I backed away from him. "I want Adam in my life *every day*, not just a couple days a week!"

I walked away from him and went to our room. I fell to the bed and began sobbing. I was losing the one person in my life who meant everything to me and it was all because of my selfishness.

I didn't want to move to Texas, but if it meant being with Brian, I would have to do it or lose him forever. I heard him walk into the room and felt him sit on the bed next to me.

"I'm sorry I shouted, I didn't mean to scare you." He caressed my back. "I don't know what I'd do if I lost you. You and Adam are my life right now. I don't know what I'm going to do." I could tell he was fighting back tears again.

I rolled over and sat up on the bed. I kissed him gently on the lips and pulled him into a tight embrace. "You do what you need to do, Brian. If you want to go to Texas, we can have a long distance relationship. I'm just not ready to move again."

"Are you sure about this?"

"Yes. I don't want to stand in the way of you and your son." I cried into his shoulder. "I know we love each other. I can fly out to see you on the weekends."

He pulled away, took my face in his hands and kissed me. "You're the most wonderful woman in the world, but I can't do it. I can't move to Texas and leave you here alone. Weekends with you aren't enough for me, same as weekends with Adam aren't enough."

I looked him straight in the eye. "Fine, then let's make this a clean break. I won't let you *not* go to Texas because of me. That will make your decision easier."

"You're kidding right?" The smile left his face. He could tell from the look on my face I wasn't kidding.

"When are you leaving?" My voice was emotionless. Inside, my heart was breaking, but I couldn't let him know.

He stood up and turned to leave then paused. "Why are you doing this?"

"Because I love you. I don't want to be selfish. I was acting selfish downstairs, thinking only of myself and not you. This is what's best for both of us. You need to find a woman closer to your own age, Brian. My beauty won't last forever and I don't want to put you through that." I held back the tears and broke eye contact with him.

"You know it's going to happen. There's twenty plus years between us, and as much as you say you love me now, that'll change in time. Adam needs you in his life, I'll only be in the way. I can't give you more children, either. I know you say it doesn't bother you now, but I don't want you to regret not finding someone who can give you another child."

"I can catch the next flight out tomorrow." He looked defeated. "I wish you'd reconsider—"

"Reconsider what? You know this is right, my life is here, and your life is with Adam. Let's make our last night together memorable." I caressed his cheek. He pulled me to him and we kissed passionately.

I could feel restraint in his body as I pulled him closer. "Make love to me, Brian," I whispered into his ear.

Without further hesitation or restraint, he began removing my clothes and laid me back on the bed. I grabbed at his belt as he kissed down my neck to my breasts. He

stopped long enough to take his own shirt off. I gently kissed each of his nipples, making his whole body tremble under my touch. Taking his scent deep into my lungs and savoring every touch, I felt him caress my legs and kiss down my thighs.

I helped him remove his jeans before I pulled him down to me. I tangled my fingers in his hair and kissed him hard. I felt his cock inside me, thrusting deep and both our bodies moved in unison. As he held himself up on his hands, I could see he'd been crying again. I closed my eyes, wrapped my arms and legs around him and pulled him in closer while I caressed his back and shoulders. I could feel his passion and his heat as we made love.

I tightened myself around him and we both exploded with deep orgasms. He collapsed to the bed breathless. He kissed me then got up and went to the bathroom to clean himself up and I followed. I reached over to turn on the shower. As he stood looking at me through the mirror with tears in his eyes, I motioned for him to come to me.

We both stepped into the shower and made love again. We got out, toweled off and got into bed where we fell asleep in each others' arms. The next morning I woke to Brian packing.

"Need any help?"

"No. I'm about done. I gotta leave for the airport in about half an hour. I'm picking up my dad on the way and giving him my truck to use as long as he wants it." His voice was shaky with emotion.

"I'll make you some breakfast before you go."

Brian set his suitcases by the door, walked to the table and sat down. He stared

emotionless at the table.

"It's your favorite: scrambled eggs with cheese and onions." I put a plate down in front of him and gently caressed his hair.

"I'm gonna miss this, no one makes this as good as you." He forced a smile and started eating. We sat silently while he finished his breakfast then took our plates to the sink.

He poured himself some more coffee and offered to refill mine. I put my hand over my cup and watched him stare blankly at the coffee pot as he sipped his coffee.

It was that moment it dawned on me he wouldn't be home tonight, or tomorrow night or any night ever again. I jumped out of my chair, threw my arms around him and hugged him for what seemed like an eternity. He broke our embrace and kissed my cheek as he turned to leave.

"Have a safe trip. I love you." I knew it probably wasn't the best thing to say since I'd forced him out of my life.

He turned, smiled and blew me a kiss. As he grabbed his suitcases, I saw him wipe another tear from his eye. He opened the door and was gone.

\* \* \* \*

I moved out of Brian's house two weeks after he left even though both he and Ron had told me I could stay there as long as I wanted. I couldn't do it. Everything in the house reminded me of him. The lingering scent of his cologne in the air made it hard to stay. I found a small apartment right up the street from my office and moved in there.

Ron had started dating Rose from Rose's by the Road so I saw him on occasion when he came to visit her or take her to lunch at the diner. I'd ask him about Brian, but

he was always pretty vague. I guess he was happy we were no longer together.

I'd drive by Brian's house everyday hoping I'd see his truck in the driveway and this was all simply a horrible dream. Ron had moved the camper from his place to Brian's. Every time I saw it I began to cry as I remembered our first night together and all the times we snuck away in the afternoons when I was still doing Ron's books.

"I've gotta stop doing this to myself. Brian's gone and it's my fault," I said aloud as I drove past.

\* \* \* \*

When Brian left in January, a part of me died. Even now, almost nine months later, I still cry myself to sleep every night thinking of him and hating myself for forcing him out of my life.

I was working late one night and realized I hadn't eaten anything yet, so I closed up and went over to the diner. I sat at a booth in the corner when the waitress came over with coffee.

"How's things t'night, ma'am?"

"Fine, thanks." I didn't recognize her and thought she must be new.

"My name's Marlene. I'll be by in a few minutes to take your order." She smiled then handed me a menu.

"Just coffee for now, please."

Ron and Rose came in after Marlene retreated to the kitchen. Rose waved, but Ron kind of gave me half a smile as they walked to the opposite end of the diner and took their seats. Rose kept looking over at me and smiling softly. I knew she could sense something was wrong. She leaned over, said something to Ron then got up and



walked over to me.

Rose was around my age. Her face looked tired and you could tell she'd lived a hard life. She was still beautiful, though, with long red hair. It started showing traces of gray, but I think it made her more beautiful. She always died it to get the gray out. She was slightly overweight, but carried it well.

Her husband left her about ten years ago for a younger woman and I always wondered what she thought of my relationship with Brian.

"Want some company?" she asked.

"I'm not very good company these days, Rose, but you're more than welcome to sit with me if you'd like." I glanced up at her and forced a smile.

"Don't pay any attention to Ron." She took a seat across from me then placed her hands on mine. "He's an old stick-in-the-mud. He told me he really does like you. He also told me he thought you and Brian were good together. He knows how much you loved each other and how happy you were, he's just sad for the two of you is all, he really doesn't know what to say."

"I know, he's only being the protective father, I'm used to it." I felt tears well up in my eyes again. I motioned for Marlene and ordered a grilled cheese sandwich. Rose ordered some fries.

"I'm sorry, did I say something wrong?"

"No. I just really miss him, you know?"

Rose nodded and gave me a sympathetic smile.

"Actually, I don't miss him—I crave him. I crave the smell of his cologne. I crave the smell of his skin after he's gotten out of the shower. I crave his smile and the way

his eyes would sparkle when he laughed. I crave the sound of his voice.”

"If you're that crazy over him, why haven't you called him?"

"Oh, I've tried, believe me. I've left voice messages, I've sent him text messages, and I even called him on his birthday last month and left him a message. He doesn't answer. I tried again today and his number is no longer in service, so I don't even have that now." I couldn't hold back the tears any longer, they fell freely now.

Rose slid into the booth beside me. We hugged and she let me cry on her shoulder for what seemed like forever. When I finally stopped, I'd noticed Ron had left and we were the only two left in the diner. It was nearly dark.

We talked for about an hour before the waitress came over and told us they were closing but we could stay as long as we'd like, we just couldn't order anything else. Rose said goodbye and I paid for our food then walked home. It was a warm night and the sky was filled with stars. I got back to my apartment, lay down on the couch and cried myself to sleep. I dreamed about Brian, same as I'd done every night since he left.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

I woke up the next morning, got a quick shower and headed to the office. It was an unusually slow day so I'd sent everyone else home. As I walked back to my desk after seeing the last client to the door, the phone rang.

"Hanson Accounting. Can I help you?"

"Kathy?" said the voice on the other end.

"Jennifer?"

"Yeah! It's good to hear your voice."

"You too. How's life in Texas treatin' you?"

"Oh pretty good. We've settled in pretty well and I got a job at the local supermarket here." She probably knew I was waiting for her to tell me about Brian. "I can't believe it's been almost nine months since we got here. It was hot here even in January. Now that's it's the end of August it's scorching. I love it! No snow!" There was no mistaking the happy tone in her voice. There was an uncomfortably long pause before I spoke.

"How's Brian?"

"Oh he's doing well. He misses you a lot though, I can tell. He's got a picture of you from last year and I see him looking at it all the time with tears in his eyes. I told him to give you a call, but he's being stubborn. He said something about you wanting this and he just wants you to be happy."

"Is he working?" I tried not to sound happy about Brian missing me as much as I missed him.

"Oh yeah, he found a job almost as soon as he got down here. Still drivin' a tow

truck, but at least he's not workin' for his dad. He seems to like it. He gets to work on the cars sometimes, too, so it helps him fill in time on the slow days. I can't remember the name of the place—Freeman something or other, I think is what it is. It's only about twenty minutes from where we live and we're just a stone's throw from Dallas.” There was a bit of a southern drawl in her voice I hadn't noticed before.

I swallowed hard and forced the next words past my lips. "Is he seeing anyone?"

"No. I don't think so. If he is, he doesn't talk about it. I don't think he's over you yet, Kathy. Maybe he won't ever get over you."

"I don't know why I asked you, Jennifer; it's none of my business." I quickly changed the subject. "How's Adam?"

"Oh he's great. He asked about you the other day. I don't think he really knows what's going on yet. He'll be two next week!"

I thought to myself Adam was way smarter than an average two year old and I already knew he got his good looks from his daddy. "I miss him, too."

"Well, my mom's waitin' on us. We're goin' shoppin' for some new clothes for Adam. Tell everyone I said hi!"

"Yeah, take care of yourself Jennifer. Tell everyone I said hello, too. Tell Brian I lo—" I stopped myself before I could say what I really wanted to. "Well, just tell him I miss him."

"Okay, Kathy. Talk to you soon" The line went silent then I heard a dial tone.

I hung up the phone and stared at it. *Could she have been giving me the hint to call him?*

I picked up the phone and dialed information. "City and State please," the voice

on the other end said.

"I'm not actually sure. I think its Dallas, Texas. The number for Freeman Auto Repair."

"I have no listing in Dallas for that name, but I do have a similar listing in Mesquite, Texas, would you like that number?"

"Yes, please. Thanks." I listened to the recorded message and jotted the number down on my calendar. I hung up and dialed the number.

"Freeman Auto Salvage, can I help ya?" asked the voice on the other end.

"Hi. I was wondering if you had a Brian Anterra working there?"

"Nope. No one works here by that name, but you might wanna try Freeman Towing and Repair, I think they got a guy named Brian who works there."

"Thanks for your time. Sorry to bother you." I hung up the phone while jotting down the number the man had given me.

My hands were shaking as I dialed the second number. "Freeman Towing, can I help you?" asked the voice on the other end of the line.

"Hi. I was wondering if you had a Brian Anterra working there?"

"Yeah, but he's out on a run right now. Can I take a message?"

"No, I can call back later, thanks." *Okay, so now what genius?* I picked up the phone again and called one of the accountants I'd hired. "Bob! How's it going?"

"Good Kathy, what's wrong?"

"For the first time in a long time, nothing's wrong, Bob. I need to talk to you. Can you come back to the office?"

"Sure, give me about fifteen minutes."

"See you in a few."

Bob was a few years older than me, and his age showed. He was balding, had a slight belly and looked tired all the time. His wife, Margaret, was a lawyer and they'd been together since junior high. They had a son, Jake, who was right around Brian's age, had been in and out of college over the last couple years and was married to his high school sweetheart.

"I hope you don't mind I didn't change." He walked in wearing a Hawaiian shirt, shorts and sandals. "We were just sittin' down for a barbecue with Jake and his wife." He pulled up the chair on the other side of the desk and sat down.

"No, that's fine Bob. How's Jake doing by the way? Is he still planning on going to Vegas in October?"

"Yeah, but Margaret and I don't want him to. What's on your mind, boss?"

"I need to take a leave of absence and I need someone here who I can count on to run things."

"Everything all right? You aren't sick are ya?"

"No. No. I need to—well—um—" I paused and he gave me a puzzled look. "The truth of the matter is, Bob, it's an indefinite leave of absence. I'm going to Texas to find Brian."

"I was wonderin' how long it would take you to chase after him." The grin Bob gave me made me blush. "You two were meant to be together, Kathy and I can't believe you let him go."

"I can't either and I'm beginning to believe it was the biggest mistake of my life. So how about it, will you help me out? Take over running things here, Bob, please."

You're the only one I'd trust."

"What are you still doin' here?" He asked the question as if I should've been gone as soon as he got there.

I hugged him, grabbed my purse and ran out the door. "Thanks Bob! I'll call you!"

I made a quick run to my apartment and packed a few things. I drove to the airport and bought a ticket for the next plane to Dallas. I asked the airline ticket clerk where the car rental counter was, headed over to it and asked them to call ahead and reserve a rental car for me.

\* \* \* \*

As I sat waiting to board the plane, I thought to myself exactly what I would say to Brian when I saw him again. Sure, it'd only been nine months since I last saw him, but it felt like a lifetime. I slept for most of the flight and when I got to the gate in Dallas, I went directly to the rental counter.

"Ms. Hanson?" the man behind the counter asked.

"Yes, that's me." I was surprised he knew who I was.

"We've got a couple cars to choose from, just follow me." I grabbed my purse and suitcase and followed him behind the counter and out the back door. "We only had a Honda Civic or a Ford Taurus left. Wasn't sure which one you wanted."

"The Taurus is fine."

"We've got your information already, so you're all set. Enjoy your vacation."

I got into the car; put the suitcase in the back, set my purse on the passenger seat and called the number for Freeman's Towing to get their address. I pulled out a map and figured out how to get there from where I was.

\* \* \* \*

There was a small motel up the road from Freeman's. I pulled in there, went inside and registered for a room. Now that I knew where Brian worked, I had to figure out how to approach him.

I drove by Freeman's every single day for a week. I felt like a school girl who would ride her bike up and down the street where the boy she had a crush on lived. When I drove past one day, I saw the tow truck parked in front of the building. I pulled into the gas station across the street and parked. I kept my eyes fixed on Freeman's, thinking about my next move.

*What the hell am I doing? He's probably got himself another girlfriend and has forgotten all about me. I'm just gonna make a fool of myself.*

I saw a guy I thought looked like Brian inside. A white car pulled up in the parking lot and out popped Jennifer. She walked around to the back door of the car, opened it and got Adam out of his car seat.

Brian came outside to greet them; hugged Jennifer then picked Adam up and swung him around before cradling him in his arms like a newborn. He kissed Adam's forehead and put him back down. Adam immediately clung to his leg. They looked so happy together. I'm glad he got to be with his son.

Brian looked amazing. His hair was longer now, a little past his shoulders and it looked as though he hadn't shaved in a few days. I'd always thought he looked so sexy with a shadow of stubble. It drove me crazy.

I sat and wondered how I should approach him. *Should I just go over there and talk to him?* Then it hit me. I knew exactly what I could do.



I drove down the road a bit, came to an old, dusty dirt road and turned onto it. I drove for a few minutes, pulled off to the side of the road and turned off the engine. I could feel my heart race as I opened my cell phone and dialed Freeman Towing.

"Freeman Towing, how can I help ya?" the voice asked. It was Brian.

I didn't say anything at first, and took in the sound of his voice.

"Freeman Towing," he repeated.

"I think I'm out of gas." I finally spoke and attempted to disguise my voice. "I need a tow to the nearest gas station."

"Where ya at, ma'am?"

"I'm not sure. I just drove by there a few minutes ago and noticed I was running low on gas, I turned off on a dirt road and I was gonna turn around to go to the gas station across the street from your place when it stalled and I couldn't get it started again."

"Well, there isn't anyone here right now. Can ya hang tight for about twenty minutes?"

*For you, I'd wait an eternity.* "Yeah, I can wait. Is the tow truck driver out on another run?"

"Well, no, I'm the tow truck driver, but the other guys stepped out for lunch and I can't come get ya 'til they get back, ma'am."

It was so good to hear his voice, I almost forgot to disguise mine when I spoke again. "That's fine. I can wait. I'm not goin' anywhere."

"Okay. See you in about twenty minutes."

I sat and waited, planning on what I was going to do when he got here and how

I'd approach him. When I saw the tow truck approaching, my heart raced even faster.

He pulled up in front of me and looked down at what I'm assuming was his clipboard. I snuck out of the car when he wasn't looking and ducked down next to his truck on the passenger side. He got out and approached my rental car and saw there was no one in it.

"Ma'am?" he said looking around.

*Oh no! I left my purse on the seat! I hope he doesn't recognize it!* I watched him approach the car and peek inside.

He grabbed his phone off his belt and dialed. "Yeah, I'm here, but there's no one in the car. I wrote down where she said she was. Is this the only dirt road around here?" He paused while he listened to the person on the other end of the line.

"There's nothing out here and it's an odd place to breakdown. Well, I'll wait a couple more minutes." He closed his phone then looked around and nearly saw me, but I ducked down again.

"Ma'am? I'm here from Freeman Towing." He continued looking around while I remained perfectly still, crouched down beside his truck. "Oh well, I guess she decided to walk to the gas station." He turned and began walking back to his truck.

I moved around the back of his truck and put myself directly behind him. "Please, call me Katherine."

He froze in his tracks but didn't turn around. I took a few steps closer to him. When he turned around we were inches from each other. His green eyes sparkled and the smile on his face told me I'd made the right decision. He started to speak and I put a finger to his lips.

"I was wrong. My life isn't in Michigan. My life, my heart, my soul—is with you."  
My tears fell freely while I pulled him into a tight embrace. It felt so good to hold him again.

He broke our embrace, brushed the hair from my eyes and kissed me. "Took you long enough."

## CHAPTER EIGHT

I held on tight to Brian, content I'd found him, taking in his scent I've craved for all these months. I felt so comfortable in his arms, I never wanted to let go.

After we hugged for what seemed like forever, Brian took a step back, looked at me with his vivid green eyes and I could feel my heart still racing. He's always had that effect on me.

"How did you find me?" he asked then leaned over and kissed me.

"Now, don't be mad at her, Brian, but Jennifer called me. She told me about her job at the supermarket and said she'd always see you looking at a picture of me with tears in your eyes. She told me the name of the place where you worked."

"Jennifer's a good person. She wants me to be happy and I think she knew how much I missed you."

"It was pretty obvious I missed you, too. I cried myself to sleep every night because I couldn't forgive myself for making you leave." I slowly turned to walk back to my rental car. "I tried to call you and left messages, but you never answered."

"My cell phone wasn't working for a long time; I had to get a new one. I never got anything from you, if I had, I definitely would've called you back." He grabbed my hand before I could get out of reach. I wanted to call you, but I figured this was what you wanted and you'd moved on with your life. Where do you think you're going?"

"Back to the motel, I need to pack up. Now that I know where you are, I have to go get things in order back home."

"What things?"

"Do you forget I have an accounting practice to run, Brian? I left Bob in charge,

but there are things I need to take care of."

"You're not staying?"

I turned to him and put a hand on his cheek. "Dear, sweet, Brian. Of course I want to stay, but I have some loose ends to tie up in Michigan first. My car is still at the airport and I have to make arrangements to either sell it or drive it down here."

"That's a relief. I thought I'd have to kidnap you." A devilish grin crossed his face.

"I wouldn't put up a fight if you did. But really, this should only take a few days and I'll be back in your arms for good. I just needed to know there was still hope for us."

"There was never any doubt in my mind. I knew sooner or later one of us would've given in. We need each other too much to have let it end the way it did."

As I stood at the opened door of the rental car, he approached me and we kissed. It felt so good to feel his body against me again and it was hard to concentrate on what I needed to do. I wanted to rip off his clothes and take him right there.

I felt his hands around my waist as he started pulling up my blouse. I had to pull away even though that's exactly what I didn't want to do. He pulled me closer.

"We—can't—do—this—now," I said breathlessly between kisses.

"I want you, Katherine. I've never wanted you more." He started kissing my neck and nibbling my ear.

I felt his hardness between us and the familiar raging desire which was always close to the surface whenever he touched me. I longed to feel his body against mine again. It was getting increasingly more difficult to focus my attention on anything but making love to him again.

"You're—um—job—we—can't—" I was finding it difficult to form coherent

thoughts or sentences. "*Brian!*" I shouted and forced myself to push him away.

"You've denied me for almost a year, Katherine. How did you think I'd react when I saw you again?" He pulled me to him again and started kissing my neck. God he was driving me crazy. His lips on my skin set my body on fire.

I felt him pull me in closer and he whispered in my ear. "I want you."

I finally gave in to him as we pulled away from the open door of my car. He took me by the hand and led me to his truck. We walked around to the passenger side, he opened the door and lifted me up to the seat with my feet hanging over the side facing him.

"Brian, we can't. Not here," I said as he began kissing me while he ran his hands under my skirt and found my panties. He pulled them over my feet and dropped them to the floor of the truck.

"Now, Katherine! I want you now!" He continued caressing my legs and pressing his body closer. I finally gave up the fight, knowing this was exactly what I'd been longing for over the last nine months.

He pulled open my blouse and pulled my bra down to expose my breasts. He started kissing and sucking on each nipple as I reached down and started undoing his jeans. He let them fall below his hips. His cock was hard and ready.

I opened my legs and invited him into me for the first time in almost a year. He felt so good inside me. I ran my fingers through his hair and kissed his neck while I took in the scent of him.

He pumped in and out of me in quick, hard strokes. I felt his body tremble with every thrust. I scooted forward a bit to take him in deeper and I was no longer on the

seat. I felt his strong arms wrap around me to hold me up. He thrust deep and hit the spot he knew always brought me to the height of pleasure.

I wrapped my arms around his neck and held him tight while my wet pussy lubricated his cock. God how I wanted this. I felt his whole body tighten and I knew he was ready to come. He held me tighter against him. We both felt each other's bodies quake and tremble.

I felt my own body shudder while he emptied himself inside me, and then I felt our bodies go limp. We held each other as we tried to catch our breath. He pulled back and kissed me then sat me back down on the seat.

"Thank you." He sounded breathless. He leaned in and kissed me again. "I've waited nine months for that."

"I have too, and it was worth the wait." He reached behind the seat for a towel so we could clean up a bit.

I cleaned myself up with the towel, put my panties back on, pulled my skirt down and fixed the rest of my clothes while he zipped up his jeans and helped me out of the truck. My knees were weak and I had to hold on to him to get my balance. He kissed me softly again and asked where I was staying.

"At the little motel up the road from here. You've got a job to get back to and I have things to take care of back in Michigan. I'm sorry, Brian. I'm so sorry I forced you out of my life. I realize now it was probably the stupidest thing I've ever done."

"I should have fought harder. I only wanted to make you happy, and I thought this was what you wanted, that's why I didn't fight." He pulled me to him again and I could hear his voice breaking. "I was miserable without you. I thought I'd lost you forever and I

blamed myself for not fighting harder."

I pulled away from him again and looked into his deep green eyes, "None of this was your fault. I pushed you away. I forced to you come here so you could be with your son."

I asked him if he could get away for a while. He called Freeman's and told them he had some errands to run. He followed me back to the motel and parked next to my car right in front of my room.

When I got out of my car, he'd already gotten out of his truck and was standing there waiting for me. As usual, we couldn't keep our hands off each other. I put the key in the door and we went into the room. We barely got the door closed and we were both well on our way to being completely naked in each other's arms again.

As he kissed me, we fell back on the bed, my fingers tangled in his hair and his arms around my waist. He was lying back on the bed while I continued to kiss him with his cock growing harder between us.

I turned myself around so my hips straddled his face and I slowly started licking and teasing the head of his cock. I felt his hands near the lips of my wet pussy as he gently slid two fingers deep inside me. I closed my mouth around his erect shaft and began sucking.

His hips moved up to push his cock deeper into my mouth and I could already feel drops of his pre-come coat my tongue and glide down my throat. My whole body shook when I felt his tongue probe in and out of my quivering pussy. I got up on my knees and positioned myself over his cock with my back still facing him.

Slowly he guided himself inside me. I could feel his hands on my hips pulling me



down onto him. I felt his lips on my neck as I ground deeper on his cock. He reached around me and caressed my breasts. I gyrated my hips around on his cock, finding the perfect spot, the one which always sent me over the edge.

As the movements increased, the intensity of our love making did also. I felt my pussy convulse with the beginnings of another powerful orgasm. He pulled my hips down even further, holding on to me while his whole body stiffened and he released his seed deep inside me. I could feel the heat from our bodies as we slowly recovered.

I rolled off him and onto the bed, my body still quivering. He turned on his side and pulled me to him, still breathless himself. We savored being in each other's arms again, knowing I eventually had to go back to Michigan, even if it was only temporary. He finally caught his breath and spoke.

"How long will you be gone, Katherine?"

"Just a few days. I'll call you when I'm on my way back."

"I'm gonna call you every half hour until you're back in my arms."

He rose to his feet then helped me to mine and led me to the bathroom. We showered together, but didn't make love. We enjoyed each other's bodies while the warm water and soap seemed to wash away all the time passed between us. I loved him more now than I ever had before. We talked a bit while we showered, in between kissing and exploring each other.

Brian had asked if I had a problem with him living with Jennifer's parents while he looked for his own place and I told him it was fine. He could do he needed to do to be with Adam.

Jennifer's dad had an apartment built over the garage and Brian stayed there so

he could be close to Adam. I told him as long as Jennifer kept her hands off him, I didn't have a problem with him living there. He assured me the only hands he wanted on him were mine.

He dressed then helped me pack my suitcase and loaded it into my car. Before heading back to Freeman's he grabbed me once again for a tender, passionate, lingering kiss, making my knees weak.

Brian turned and got into his truck, but before he pulled away he waved goodbye while holding a pair of my favorite panties. "These will be under my pillow until you're back in my arms again, sweetheart. I love you!"

"I love you too."

I slid into the driver's seat and drove to the airport thinking about Brian and how much I loved him and thinking about what I needed to do to tie up loose ends in Michigan to be with the man I loved.

\* \* \* \*

I returned the car keys to the rental counter then headed over to the ticket counter. Feeling relaxed and happy, I hadn't realized I was just staring blankly at the wall when a voice broke my daydream.

"Did you enjoy your stay in Texas, ma'am?" a woman asked with a thick southern accent as she took my ticket from me to verify my flight.

"Yes, and I'll be back, my heart is here."

After the clerk took care of my ticket, I found a seat and waited to board the plane. I felt content and happy for the first time in almost nine months.

I was crazy to think I could live without Brian but I was glad he'd forgiven me and

I was ready to spend my life with him. As long as we were together, I didn't care where we lived. I needed my heart and my soul back. He was the only one who could give it to me.

As the plane took off, I closed my eyes and pictured Brian in the parking lot holding my favorite pair of lace panties and I dozed off.

\* \* \* \*

Arriving back in Michigan mid-afternoon, I was anxious to get started on getting things squared away so I could return to Brian. I dropped off my suitcase and immediately headed for the office. I heard my cell phone ringing in my purse as I opened the door. I looked at the caller ID but didn't recognize the number. The area code told me it was Brian.

"Hi sweetheart."

"Hello, beautiful, how was your flight?"

"It was fine. I got home about an hour ago."

"I know. I called Bob and he said your car was parked in front of your apartment."

I walked around my desk and set my purse down on the chair. I went to the back and looked for Bob. No one was here. I came back to my desk, took my purse off the seat and sat down.

"Why didn't you stay at my house?"

"I couldn't do it, Brian. Everything there reminded me of you. I'd get up in the morning and smell the faint scent of your cologne. I'd hear sounds at night and think it was you for a brief moment until reality set in again and I realized you weren't coming home. It drove me crazy. I hated myself for making you leave and it hurt too much to

stay there."

"I guess I can understand that. I don't think I'd have been able to stay there either if the situation were reversed."

"I'd love nothing more than to talk to you for the rest of the day, Brian, but I'm at the office now and no one's here. I gotta figure out what's going on around here. Can I call you later?"

"Absolutely! The number came up on your caller ID, right?"

"Yes and as soon as we hang up, I am storing it back at speed dial one where it belongs. Love you."

"Love you too, Kathy. Talk soon."

Bob came back into the office carrying a container and a drink from the diner. He smiled when he saw me, walked over to his desk and set the box down then took a drink from his cup and set it down next to the container. He sat down at his desk, put his feet up and his hands behind his head and continued to smile at me.

"Where'd everybody go?"

"It was a slow day so I let everyone go home."

"But you left and just left the door unlocked, Bob."

"Yeah, like there's a lot of crime in this town."

I gave him a small smirk at the note of sarcasm in his voice. I knew he was waiting for me to tell him about my trip to Texas. The phone rang and he started to get it, but I picked up the phone on my desk before he could turn to answer the one on his.

"Hanson Accounting. Can I help you?"

"Kathy? You're back?" It was Jim, the owner of the diner.

"Yeah, Jim, I got back an hour ago or so. What can I do for you?"

"Well, Bob just left and I was callin' to let him know he left his keys here."

"Okay, I'll let him know, Jim. Is that all?"

"Yeah, that's it. Glad you're back. Talk to you later."

I turned around and saw Bob had put his feet down. He was eating what looked like a chili dog and fries while he watched me out of the corner of his eye. I told him he left his keys at the diner. He muttered something about getting them later. I know it was killing him I wasn't telling him about what happened in Texas, but it looked as though this was one battle he was determined to win. He kept smiling at me.

"What, Bob? What are you smiling at?"

"Oh nothing." He wiped his mouth and hands and took a drink of his soda.

"You're waiting for me to tell you about Texas, aren't you?"

"Well, I did talk to Brian but he was pretty vague about things."

"Honestly, Bob, there isn't much to tell." I paused and felt the blush rise in my cheeks with the recollection of what exactly had happened in Texas. "On second thought, there is. I tracked Brian down and we talked for a bit. I apologized to him for pushing him away and told him I had to come back here to get some things straightened out." *Well, okay we did a bit more than talk, but you don't need to know that!*

"What things?" he asked with a confused look on his face.

"Well, my business for one, Bob. I said I trusted you and I meant it. I need you to take over my business because I'm moving to Texas to be with Brian. I didn't want to leave you hanging. We're heading into the busy season again and I figured you could use the help."

"I'm not worried about it, Kath'. I'll take care of it when the time comes. I already have a couple students from the college coming in a couple days a week to do some light work so they can get experience."

"You and I think so much alike, Bob. I used to do the same thing before I hired you and Phil—" I stopped and looked around again. "Where is Phil anyway? Did you send him home?"

"Yeah, I told you it was slow today so I sent everyone home. Phil probably headed straight for the golf course."

"Okay, I guess I under estimated you, Bob. Would you have any objections to me having paperwork drawn up to transfer ownership of this place to you?"

"Hell yes!"

"Why?"

"Because this is *your* business, Kathy. I'd be happy to run it for as long as you need me. Hell, even make me your business partner, but don't sign sole ownership over to me. You worked too hard to get this off the ground and I refuse to let you just give it up."

I briefly thought about what he said and knew he was right. "All right. I like that idea. I think you'd make a great business partner. Do you think Margaret can help me get some co-ownership papers together or whatever it is that we need to get this done?"

"Let me give her a call."

"While you're doing that, I have some other things to tend to. I'll try to be back before you go home, but if I'm not, then I'll see you in the morning."

## CHAPTER NINE

I stopped by Rose's to talk with her for a few minutes and thanked her for sitting with me that night at the diner. I needed to let it all out and she was so patient with me. I told her what I'd planned to do with my accounting business and she agreed Bob would make a great partner. She told me she was falling for Ron, but it seemed every time she thought she'd gotten through one wall with him, she'd find another. I told her to keep at it, if anyone could get through, she could. We hugged then I headed over to Ron's to tell him about my trip to Texas.

"Katherine?" I heard a voice say from behind me as I walked into Ron's. I turned around to see who it was. Ron was standing there smiling at me.

"Hi Ron. Good to see you. How're things?"

"Brian said you came looking for him." He headed around the counter.

"Yeah." My eyes focused on everything but him.

"C'mere. I wanna talk to you." He turned and walked into his office, motioning me to follow him.

Ron had a look on his face I'd never seen. It wasn't anger or resentment as I'd seen before. I couldn't place what he was feeling and it made me nervous.

"Sit down, please." He pulled his chair up to the desk and motioned for me to sit in the chair opposite him. I was concerned because of the look on his face and immediately bad thoughts flooded my mind.

"Has something happened to Brian since we last spoke on the phone?"

"Oh my god, no. Is that what you thought when I called you in here? Relax Katherine, it's nothing like that at all."

"Oh, thank god!" I said and breathed a huge sigh of relief.

"I know you've felt I never accepted you as part of Brian's life—"

"I never thought—" I interrupted him before he could continue. He held his hand up to silence me.

"Just let me say this, Katherine. I know you've felt I never accepted you as part of Brian's life, but that's not true. I saw how happy you made him and honestly, I was jealous I couldn't find the same kind of happiness again. I will admit, I did have a problem with the age difference at first, but seeing how happy the two of you were, it didn't seem to matter to you so I figured if you were okay with it then so was I."

I felt tears in my eyes. "I love Brian more than life itself, I just wanted your acceptance—" I trailed off as I heard my voice breaking.

"I know you love him, Katherine and he loves you. I wanted to clear the air between us, but that's not why I asked you in here," he said. "Brian called me earlier and said you wanted to possibly sell your car." He had a serious look on his face. I looked at him with a confusion but didn't say anything. "I know someone who'd like to buy it."

"Ron, I don't know. I was thinking of driving back to Texas—"

"Now Katherine, you and I both know even though your car is running better than it ever has, it probably wouldn't make the trip." He looked over his glasses at me and I was wondering exactly where he was going with this conversation.

"Um—okay—" I didn't know quite what to say. "So who wants to buy it?" I asked as I finally collected my thoughts.



"I do."

"You?"

"Yeah. It's a great car considering, and I need another car if I intend on getting married." The smile on his face warmed my heart.

"Married?" I tried to hide the surprise in my voice, but failed miserably.

"Yeah. Rose and I have been dating for awhile now and she's the only woman I've felt truly connected with since my wife died. I don't want to lose her. We only have one car between us right now and I'd like for her to have her own car instead of having someone else to rely on all the time. I mean there's Brian's truck, but we've pretty much turned that into the work truck here, so she needs a car."

I got up and hugged him. "I'm so happy for you, Ron. Have you asked her yet?" I asked him, not telling him I'd spoken with her earlier.

"No, I plan to at dinner tonight. Everything's all arranged." He pulled a ring box out of his desk drawer and handed it to me.

The ring had one small diamond in the center and on either side of the diamond were smaller diamonds in kind of a swirl pattern and of them were on a band that looked more bronze than gold. I looked at the ring closer. The diamonds were formed in such a way that they looked like a rose.

"She's going to love it." I smiled and handed the box back to him.

"Don't tell Brian. I want to tell him myself. Now about your car—"

"It's yours!"

"Not so fast, you still need it while you're here, right?"

"Well yeah, I suppose I do."

"Before you go back to Texas, have the title ready and sign it over to me. I'll give you ten thousand cash for it."

"Ten thousand? The car's not worth that, Ron, I can't accept that from you—"

"I won't give you a penny less. C'mon Katherine, it's a Mercedes."

"Fine, but put the money Brian's account. If you don't, I'll give it to him anyway."

We talked for a few more minutes and I asked him if he'd be able to give me a ride to the airport when I was ready. He told me it wouldn't be a problem. I left his office and realized it was nearing seven p.m. and I hadn't eaten dinner yet. I stopped for a quick bite at the diner then went back to my apartment. As I got settled, my cell phone rang again.

"Hello, my beautiful woman!"

"Hi sweetheart. How's it going?"

"Not well."

"Why's that?"

"Because you're there and I'm here. I want you here, Katherine." He knew I loved when he called me Katherine. I could feel my heart flutter.

"I'll be there in a few days, love."

"Okay, I waited nine months for you, I guess I can stand a few more days. I know it's early, but I wanna go spend some time with Adam before he goes to bed, so I was callin' to say g'night and sweet dreams now."

"My dreams are always sweet because you're in every one of them. Sweet dreams to you, too, Brian. Love you."

"Love you more!" Then the line went silent.

\* \* \* \*

Margaret came to the office the next day with the papers Bob and I needed to sign. I was surprised but happy she'd gotten the papers ready so quickly. She told me she knew I was anxious to get things settled here so I could get back to Brian. Bob came in from the back, kissed her on the cheek then sat down at his desk. She handed me the papers first, I read them over, signed them, and then handed them to Bob.

"So that's it?"

"Yes. It's all done. Well, I still have to file the paperwork to make it legal, but when I do, you and Bob will officially be business partners."

\* \* \* \*

It took a few days for things to get straightened out even though Margaret had filed the paperwork quickly. I wanted to make sure Bob and Phil didn't need any help before I left. I said my good-byes to them and went home to pack. I called Ron and told him I was ready to go to the airport. Gary, the guy who drove the tow truck for him now, looked me all up and down then winked as he dropped Ron off in front of my apartment building.

He looked like he was around Ron's age, maybe a few years older, with dark brown hair and gray eyes. He was attractive, but I didn't like the way he looked at me, it gave me chills. I simply brushed him off. I handed Ron the title to my Mercedes and the keys. He handed me a receipt to show me he'd deposited the money for the car into Brian's account like I'd requested and we headed for the airport.

"Thanks for doing this for me, Ron. Now I have nothing to be worried about and I can focus on getting back to Brian."

"Not a problem, Katherine. It helps me out, too. Rose is anxious for us to get married and she's absolutely going to love her wedding present from me." He rubbed the steering wheel. "I'm glad you and Brian were able to work things out." I could sense the hesitation in his voice.

"Look, Ron, I know you were never crazy about the idea of your son with a woman old enough to be his mother, but I can assure you, I love him with all my heart and soul and I'm never letting him get away from me again."

"I know, Katherine. It's like I said, I think I was jealous of him being so happy and I wanted the same for myself. I know you love him and you'd never do anything to get in the way of his son. I think you did the right thing by going to find him. I've never seen him happier than he was when the two of you were together. I'm glad he has you in his life again. I'm hoping you can forgive my behavior towards you." He glanced over at me and gave me a warm smile.

"Of course I can, Ron. I never wanted to come between you and Brian. I know you were just being the protective father."

"Friends?" He reached his hand out to me.

"Friends." I shook his hand and smiled.

We got to the airport and I went to the counter to check my bags while Ron found two seats together. While waiting for the announcement to board the flight to Dallas, Ron and I talked about Brian, Rose and Adam. I tried to give him my full attention, but my heart raced and all I could think about was spending tonight—every night—with Brian again. My flight was announced, Ron gave me a warm hug and we said our good-byes.

\* \* \* \*

Brian picked me up at the airport in Dallas and we couldn't get back to his place fast enough. Once again, we barely had the door closed and we were completely naked, exploring each other, like we were learning all over again. We made love for about an hour, got out of bed, took a shower then headed right back to bed. He was so gentle and so loving, I could feel it in every kiss and every caress. He lit my whole body on fire with his touch.

*It should be a sin to feel this good.*

It was as though no time had passed between us. Our bodies fit together perfectly. I felt every inch of him as he moved his hips and found the spot he knew always drove my body into frenzy. He kissed my neck and I breathed his scent in deep. That scent, that feeling, that touch—all I'd craved so long were finally back. But I still craved him. I wanted more of him.

I wrapped my legs around him and pulled him even deeper into me. I felt our bodies slapping together and ran my hands down his back. My pussy contracted on his cock and I felt his whole body stiffen. We both experienced the most powerful orgasms we'd ever felt. We reached our peak together.

He collapsed on top of me completely out of breath. He rolled over onto the bed and his body was still shaking. He let out a content sigh I hadn't heard in a long, long time then lay motionless except for the most passionate kiss on my lips.

"It just gets better and better with you."

I was speechless. Our love making had never been that intense! Not even after we were away from each other for nine months. My head was still swirling in a haze of

ecstasy. I scooted in closer to him and he put an around me. I rested my head on his chest and could hear his heart beating. It was so calming, I started to doze off. I probably slept for an hour before I felt Brian kissing my cheek and gently rubbing my shoulder to try and wake me up.

"Kathy?"

"What time is it?" I asked groggily as I rolled over to see he had already gotten dressed.

"It's around two."

I got myself up out of bed, kissed him then headed to the bathroom. I took a quick shower and got dressed. When I came out, he had lunch waiting for us.

"Hungry?" He put two plates with sandwiches and chips down on a small table in the corner of the room.

"Starving!" I walked over and sat down at the table.

"I told Adam you were coming and he's so excited to see you." He pulled his chair closer to mine.

"I missed him, too. I can't wait to see him; I bet he's gotten big!"

We talked some more while we finished eating. Whenever we had Adam when we were back in Michigan, Brian would usually go alone to pick him up and bring him back to the house so I never had the opportunity to meet Jennifer's parents. Brian told me they knew about me, but didn't know I was closer to their age than his and don't be hurt or offended if they look surprised when I meet them. I told him I'd be okay with it; I was used to people's reactions by now. We cleaned up our lunch dishes and headed over to the main house.

"Hello?" Brian shouted as he walked into the house.

"Brian, we're in here," Jennifer answered from another room.

The house looked cozy for a family of four. We entered through the side door off the kitchen. As we walked through the kitchen, I'd noticed it was beautifully decorated with a country motif. There was a large stove and refrigerator on one side of the room with a huge table in the middle. We walked through the kitchen to the family room where we saw Jennifer, Adam and Jennifer's parents. There were two sofas, a recliner and two end tables arranged around the room. One whole wall had shelves filled with DVDs and a large screen TV in the center.

*Nice set up!* I thought as we entered the family room.

"*Ca-tee! Ca-tee! Ca-tee!*" Adam squealed when he saw me and jumped into my outstretched arms.

"Oh, I missed you, Adam!" I scooped him up into my arms and hugged him.

I put him down, turned to Brian and he smiled adoringly at the both of us. Jennifer's parents were staring at me and although I said I'd be okay with their reaction to my age, it still made me nervous. Before Brian could introduce me, I walked up to Jennifer's dad first and introduced myself.

"Hi, I'm Kathy." I reached out to shake his hand.

"Gordon." He shook my hand. "And this is my wife, Ann." He turned to Jennifer's mother.

"Pleased to meet you, Kathy." She reached out to shake my hand.

They both looked to be around my age. Gordon had short blond hair and blue eyes. He had a well trimmed beard and mustache and he looked to be quite fit. Ann was

an older version of Jennifer with the same blond hair and brown eyes. When she stood up to meet me, she was a few inches shorter than me. Brian and Gordon towered over her.

"Adam's been talkin' 'bout you all day," Jennifer said as she hugged me.

"Have you had lunch?" Ann asked as she headed for the kitchen.

"Yeah, we just ate," Brian said.

"Well c'mon into the kitchen anyway, Kathy. Let's get to know you a bit." Ann motioned me to follow her.

I left Brian to be with Adam and followed Ann into the kitchen. She started pulling lunch meats and cheeses out of the refrigerator and arranged them on a platter. I walked over to offer my help.

"No, I'm good, thanks. Have a seat."

"Look, Ann, I know—"

She interrupted. "Annie, please." Her friendly smile put me at ease.

"Okay, Annie. I know there's a big age difference between me and Brian, but I love him and I promised him I'd never get in the way of his son."

"What are you talking about?"

"You and Gordon seemed kinda surprised when you met me and I thought—"

"Oh, don't worry 'bout him. I think you and Brian look good together. Does he make you happy?"

"Happier than I've ever been in my life."

"Do you make him happy?"

"He says I do. I hope I make him happy."



"Then that's all that matters."

We spent the whole afternoon with Jennifer and her family. When it was time for us to leave, Adam clung to my leg and started crying.

"No go, Ca—tee," he said.

I picked him up and hugged him. "I'm staying with your daddy, Adam, so we'll see lots of each other again." I brushed his hair back then kissed his forehead and his crying calmed a bit.

"She'll be back tomorrow, honey," Jennifer said as she took him from me.

Brian and I headed back up to his apartment. We made love all night long. The passion between us had intensified and we fit together better than we ever had before. We were back in each other's lives and more in love than we'd ever been.

## CHAPTER TEN

I spent a lot of time with Adam while Brian was working and Annie had even gotten me involved in selling Avon. It kept the boredom away and gave me someone to talk to instead of sitting around all day. We'd finished early one day and I wanted to surprise Brian and take him out to lunch.

"Hey, Nick," I said as I walked into Freeman's.

"Hi, Kathy."

"I didn't see the tow truck outside, is Brian out on a run?"

"Yeah, but he should be back any minute if you wanna wait for him."

"Okay." I took a seat in the lobby and flipped through a magazine.

Two girls walked into the shop and approached the counter. They looked to be about eighteen or so and both had long blond hair. They both wore bright colored sundresses and walked with confidence they could turn heads quite easily.

"What can I do for you ladies?" Nick asked them as they approached the counter.

"Well, my car broke down a couple miles up the road and I had to call my sister to come get me," one of the girls said.

"Yeah, I don't know why she just didn't call for a tow," the other girl said.

"Whatever. Anyway, do you guys have a towing service or something? I need my car towed and this was the closest place to where it's at." The first girl flipped her hair and smiled seductively at Nick.

"Yeah, but our driver's out on another run right now. If you want to give me your info, he can get you taken care of when he gets back," Nick told them, ignoring the girls' attempts to flirt.

While the first girl was giving her information to Nick, the other girl had come and sat down a few chairs over from me. She glanced at me with a smile. A few minutes later, Brian pulled up outside and the girl who was sitting near me began staring at him as he got out of the truck and walked toward the building. She got up, walked over to her sister and nudged her.

"Look at the tow truck driver," I heard her whisper to her sister.

Her sister turned around and fixated her stare at Brian as he walked in. He didn't see me sitting there as he approached the counter. I sat and watched the girls, now both looking him all up and down, same as I had the first day we met.

"Oh my God, he's gorgeous!" the first sister said not seeming to care who heard her.

As Brian went behind the counter, Nick leaned over and said something to him. He looked up and saw me sitting in the lobby. He ran around the counter and I got up to meet him halfway. He completely ignored the two girls staring at him. I threw my arms around him and kissed him hard. I felt his hands caressing my ass. Both the sisters looked at each other then looked at me in total shock.

"Whatcha doin' here, sweetheart?" he asked.

"Annie and I were done with our stuff early so I thought I'd surprise you and take you out to lunch."

"Great! I'm starving!"

"Not so fast, Romeo. These girls need a tow." Nick pointed to the sisters standing there with shocked looks on their faces.

"I can wait." I walked back to my seat with a little extra sway in my hips.

"Okay, I shouldn't be too long. Love you," Brian said as he headed out the door.

"Love you, too." The sisters looked back at me. I simply smiled.

It'd only been about fifteen minutes when I heard Brian's voice behind me.

"Ready to go, beautiful?"

"Yep!" I walked over, kissed him again and noticed the sisters taking seats in the lobby.

We left Freeman's with our arms around each other and I could see the girls sitting in the lobby. I couldn't quite tell the looks on their faces—perhaps it was astonishment, perhaps jealousy—but I didn't care either. We sat in the car for a few minutes and I couldn't keep my hands off him. He looked so damn good today. He looked good everyday, but today there was something about him that made me want to fuck him right there in the car in front of where he works.

He told me he was in the mood for Mexican, so we found a little Mexican place up the road from Freeman's. After we were seated, I excused myself to go use the restroom. I did what I needed to do and as I was walking out of the stall, I heard Brian's voice. He'd snuck into the restroom. He raised a finger to his lips in a shushing gesture, pushed me gently back into the stall and turned me around so my back was against the door. He reached up my skirt and pulled my panties down. We kissed while I found his belt and pulled his jeans down to his knees. We fucked hard and quick. He pulled himself together and walked out of the stall. I heard water running as he cleaned himself up.

I pulled up my panties and straightened out my clothes a bit. When I heard the door of the restroom open, I left the stall. I saw an elderly woman standing there looking

at me with a look of disgust on her face. I gave her a quick smile, walked to the sink, cleaned myself up then went back to our table. We gazed at each other and smiled, our legs entwined under the table.

We talked over lunch and he told me his dad had called him asking him to be best man at the wedding. Ron and Rose decided the wedding date would be May fifth. They'd even invited Jennifer and her family to come. He was nervous about being best man. I told him his dad would help him through it. After lunch, I drove Brian back to work then went home.

Rose called me later that day and asked if I'd be her maid of honor. I accepted and asked if she needed any help with planning the wedding. She said it was going to be a small ceremony, only close friends and family and they were having it at Brian's house since his was the only yard big enough and neither of them wanted a big church wedding.

\* \* \* \*

As each month passed, I found myself actually missing the snow and cold weather, but managed to adjust. I'd go with Brian on weekend trips to northern Texas to show Adam the snow when it was cold enough. It got closer and closer to May and Brian was increasingly nervous. I tried to calm him down, but nothing seemed to work. Finally, May was here and it was time for us to head back to Michigan to help set up for the wedding. I told Brian to try to put things in the back of his mind and focus on his dad's happiness.

On the flight from Dallas, we sat close, enjoying each other's company. I dozed off and my hand slipped off the arm rest into Brian's lap. I woke up to see it there and

blushed a bit, feeling his burgeoning erection through his jeans. I rubbed it gently and gave him a smile. The fasten seat belt sign was off, so I got up and walked to the bathroom. I turned around and saw Brian watching which stall I went into. A few moments later I heard a knock on the door and I let him in.

As we started kissing, he pulled my dress up over my head and dropped it to the floor. He sat me up on the sink and pulled my panties off and dropped them to the floor. I felt him stick two fingers inside my wet, tingling pussy. I wrapped my arms around him and kissed him deeply. I reached down, started undoing his jeans and felt them drop to his knees. He pushed me back against the mirror while sliding his hard cock perfectly inside my waiting pussy. He pumped hard and I heard him grunt when I slid forward to take him deeper. It was uncomfortable fucking him like this, but I didn't care. I had his cock inside me and wasn't about to give that up.

He wrapped his arms around me and his whole body was stiff as he shot his load deep inside me. I climaxed with him. He paused for a minute with his cock still inside my pussy. We both trembled while we tried to catch our breath. He backed up so I could get down off the sink then cleaned himself up.

I pulled my panties back on, grabbed my dress and put it on before he opened the door. He left, I cleaned myself up and walked out of the stall a few minutes later. One of the flight attendants had seen both of us coming out of the bathroom and shook her head in disgust. I went back to my seat, put my head on Brian's shoulder and fell asleep for the rest of the flight.

\* \* \* \*

When we got back to Michigan, we headed straight to Brian's house where Ron

and Rose were waiting for us. Brian and Ron took off while Rose and I talked about how she wanted things for the wedding. She showed me the guest list and asked me if I could think of anyone else to invite at the last minute. I told her I didn't know of anyone and it looked like everything was covered. I headed over to my office, got updates from Bob and Phil, and then headed back to Brian's to wait for him. He came home a few hours later, looking sad and disappointed.

"What's wrong?" I asked him.

"Well, my dad asked me when you and I were gonna get married."

"Oh, Brian, I'm sorry. I thought you told him I didn't want to get married again."

"Yeah, I did, but he keeps hoping." His look of sadness turned to frustration.

"Why won't you marry me, Kathy?"

"It isn't you, Brian. I'm just not ready. What's wrong with things the way they are?"

"Nothing, I guess, I just love you so much and I want everyone to know it."

"Well, if everyone doesn't know that by now, then we haven't been trying hard enough."

"I won't mention it again." A smile spread across his face. "As long as we're together, that's all that matters."

\* \* \* \*

Finally, the big day was here. Rose was more nervous than Ron, but I managed to get her to calm down a bit. The yard looked beautiful. We had an open platform set up in the middle of the yard with chairs all the way around it. There were folded tables leaning against the fence at one end of the yard to be set up later for the reception. The

weather was perfect. Not a cloud in the sky and around seventy degrees with a gentle breeze.

Brian took care of things with his dad while I tended to Rose. She didn't have a glamorous wedding dress, just a simple white silk sleeveless dress with a veil. She looked beautiful. She chose several different shades of blue as her colors. My dress was a navy blue sleeveless dress with a small bow in the back.

As the guests began to arrive, some of the guys from Ron's shop ushered them to their seats. I saw Gary, the guy who drives the tow truck, leading Jim from the diner and his wife to their seats. He glanced over at me and winked. It gave me chills again, but I brushed it off and continued the final touches on the wedding platform.

The ceremony went off without incident as we knew it would and I found myself growing increasingly annoyed when Gary kept staring at me. I said something to Brian about him and he told me not to worry. Everyone went inside while we set up for the reception. I'd noticed Gary had made it a point to be every place I was while we were setting things up. I finally approached him and told him to leave me alone. I thought he'd gotten the hint when he went inside to join the others, but when I looked up, he was watching me through the window. I brushed it off again and continued to help set up for the reception.

It was early evening by the time the party got started. Ron and Rose got in their first dance as husband and wife to *I Swear* by John Michael Montgomery. I thought it was the perfect song for the two of them. Every slow song played after that found Brian and I on the dance floor, holding each other close, swaying to the music. I took his scent in deep and held him tight while we moved around the floor, seemingly floating on air.



When it came time for the tossing of the bouquet, I tried to stay clear, but Rose had other plans as she lobbed it right toward me. I moved aside to let one of the other women catch it and Rose looked at me as if to tell me she wanted a "do over."

Then it was time for Ron to toss the garter. The men gathered around as Ron removed the garter, turned around and flung it over his head. Brian caught it, to hoots and hollers from the onlookers, and twirled it around on his finger. He gave me a smile as he put it into his pocket. The woman who caught the bouquet leaned over and told me it was okay if either of us would be uncomfortable putting the garter on her.

The party lasted well into late evening and Brian and I would sneak away every now and then to get in a few private moments. He made his best man's speech and it brought tears to my eyes. When I looked over at Ron and Rose as Brian gave his speech, I saw they were crying, also. The night was going perfectly and I was surprised when I found myself not wanting it to end. I danced with Brian all night long, feeling content just to be with him, no matter where it was.

Things were starting to wind down at the reception and I'd noticed Brian was sitting with Jennifer and Adam. I took the opportunity to head up to our room and lay down for a few minutes to rest. It'd been a long day and I hadn't slowed down since early this morning. I laid on my right side facing the window. It was open and I could hear the music from the reception outside. A cool breeze blew in the window, the curtains rustled and it gave me a chill. I reached for the afghan at the foot of the bed and pulled it over me and drifted off to sleep.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

I woke a short time later to the sensation of someone caressing my nipple. I thought it was Brian and I rolled over on my back to kiss him. When I opened my eyes, I saw it was Gary. I quickly tried to get off the bed, but he grabbed my hair and pulled me back down.

"I'm gonna get me some of this." He grabbed my breasts and squeezed hard then ran one hand under my dress and pulled my panties off.

I struggled to get out from under him. He straddled me and held me down to the bed. I pushed and hit at him trying to get free. I heard the music stop outside so I started screaming for Brian. He put his hand over my mouth to squelch my cries, but I bit down hard and he pulled it back.

*"Brian! Brian! Help me! Brie-aan!!!"* I screamed toward the open window hoping he'd hear me before the music started again. I struggled to reach the phone on the nightstand, but I couldn't, I wasn't close enough.

"You bitch!" Gary's fist hit the right side of my face hard and I felt a stinging sensation under my eye.

He pulled off his shoes, threw them on the floor, removed one sweaty sock and shoved it in my mouth. "That oughta keep you quiet." He looked pleased with himself for being so creative. I gagged from the taste of his sock in my mouth.

As I continued to struggle to try and work my way loose, he straddled me again, pinning my hips between his legs, making it impossible for me to move the lower half of my body. He leaned over and started kissing my neck. I kept trying to get out from under him, but it was useless. He eventually released his hold on my shoulders and

started removing his jacket and shirt.

I started to wiggle out from underneath while he was still removing his shirt. I kicked my legs wildly, working myself free while pulling the sock from my mouth. He lost his balance and fell to his side onto the bed and I attempted an escape. He rolled over in one swift movement with his feet landing on the floor. He stood, took a few steps and put himself between me and the door.

He grabbed my waist and pulled me to him. I raised my knee hard and hit him square between the legs. He released his grip on my waist and fell to his knees, holding his crotch, still blocking my only way out. I ran to the window and started screaming for help, but he followed, grabbing me by the hair and putting one hand tightly over my mouth. He put his other arm around my waist, lifted me off my feet and walked over to the bed, my legs kicking in all directions.

I heard Gordon's voice in the hallway and started grunting as loud as I could. While Gary threw me on the bed, I kicked at the nightstand, knocking the lamp and the phone to the floor. I kicked at him to keep him away but he grabbed my legs and held them down to the bed. His hand slipped off my mouth in the struggle and I started screaming for help. He hit me across the jaw causing my head to fling to the side as Gordon came running into the room. Annie was right behind him.

"Go get Brian. *Now!*" He struggled to hold on to Gary. Annie raced out of the room calling out for Brian. She returned a few minutes later with Brian right behind her.

"You son of a bitch!" Brian yelled as he rushed into the room and pulled Gary by his hair away from Gordon.

He started hitting him in the face and threw him against the wall. Gary

reciprocated the punches, causing Brian to stagger a few steps back. Gary lunged at me as I got off the bed, grabbed hold of my foot and pulled me back down to the mattress. Brian grabbed him by his hair again and pulled him away from me. As I broke free, I fell onto the floor, hitting my head on the leg of the nightstand.

Ron and Rose had entered the room by this time and Brian had Gary on the floor, punching him repeatedly. Ron and Gordon both had to pull him away. While all this was going on Annie had gone downstairs to call the police. They arrived a short while later and restrained both Brian and Gary. Gordon explained to the officers what had happened and they released Brian. He walked over to me, picked me up gently and sat down on the bed, cradling me in his arms while I floated in and out of consciousness. I held him as tight as I could while I cried into his chest.

The police escorted Gary out of the house in handcuffs and had called for an ambulance for me. I felt a stinging sensation on the right side of my face and my head was pounding from where I hit it while they wheeled me out of the house, Brian holding my hand.

"Brian," I said breathlessly. I could feel my jaw throbbing from where Gary had hit me.

"I'm here, baby, I'm here." He had tears in his eyes.

"I—I'm—" I said trying to force sound past my lips. "I'm—sorry—I ruined—the wedding—I'm sorry—" I managed to utter as they put me into the back of the ambulance.

"Shhh, baby, don't speak, everything's gonna be all right." He continued to whisper soothing words and gently kissed my cheek.

"This is *not* your fault, Katherine," I heard Ron say before door of the ambulance closed.

\* \* \* \*

Brian sat at my bedside the entire time I was in the hospital, jumping at the slightest movement from me. He called Katie and she showed up at the hospital a few hours after I was admitted. I was groggy from the medication I was given, but managed to at least tell her hello and we talked for a few minutes. She told Brian to go get himself some food while she stayed with me and by the time he got back, I'd dozed off again. I could still hear Brian and Katie as they talked, just beyond the curtain.

"How could I let this happen, Katie?" he asked and I heard his voice breaking. "She told me he'd been watching her all evening and it made her uneasy. I brushed it off. What an asshole I am."

"None of this is your fault or hers. I wish the two of you would stop blaming yourselves."

"I'm the man. I'm supposed to protect her. Some protector I am, huh? He better never show his face around here again. I'll kill him with my bare hands." The tone of his voice changed from sadness to anger.

"Brian, pull yourself together. Kathy needs you right now. The last thing you want or she needs is for you to go to jail. Let the police handle it."

"How can anyone do this?"

"I don't know. There are a lot of disturbed people in this world. Love her, be there for her and don't do anything stupid. She blames herself for this and you need to convince her it wasn't her fault."

I opened my eyes and watched them. Brian looked like he'd been crying and Katie reached out to wipe a tear from his eye. They hugged for what seemed like an unusually long time and I saw Katie run her hands through Brian's hair. She pulled back blushing while looking at Brian, leaned in and kissed him. Brian pulled away immediately, but Katie grabbed his shirt and pulled him closer. I felt anger brewing inside me, but I contained it. He put his arms around her waist briefly, and then pulled away when he realized what he was doing.

*Why are they doing this to me?* "Brian," I said and he broke their kiss.

He turned and walked over to my bedside, his face was flush. "Everything okay, sweetheart?" He briefly glanced back at Katie with a guilty look on his face. I couldn't tell if he knew I saw them or not.

"Yeah, everything's fine, I just want you to sit with me for a while." I shot Katie a look that would've made the devil himself drop dead.

"I'm gonna go see if I can get you something to eat." Katie turned to leave after seeing the look in my eyes. I think she knew I saw them.

"I'm not hungry. I want the two of you to stay with me for a while. I'm scared." I pretended I didn't see what'd happened.

The tension in the room was so thick you could cut it with a knife. Neither Katie nor Brian would make eye contact with each other. Katie's cell phone rang and she walked out of the room to answer it. I asked Brian to go home to try and get some sleep, but he refused. Katie came back into the room, told us it was Mark on the phone and she had to leave. She hugged me good-bye and glanced Brian's way as she left, trying to stifle the guilty look on her face. I put the incident in the back of my mind for the time

being. I was far too weak to deal with either one of them.

\* \* \* \*

I was discharged a few days later. After we got home, Brian and I went upstairs to pack. I still felt weak, so he did most of the packing while I sat in a chair in the corner of the room. The phone rang and he walked around the bed to answer it.

"Hello? Oh. Hi, Rose. Yeah, she's here. We're leaving today. She just wants to get back to Texas and try to put this behind her." He glanced over at me with a worried look on his face.

"I wanna talk to her." I got up and walked toward him. He handed me the phone and walked back to the other side of the bed to continue packing.

"I'm sorry I ruined your wedding, Rose."

"*You* didn't ruin my wedding, Kathy. It was that bastard Gary."

"If I hadn't come up to rest for a few minutes, this wouldn't have happened, so I blame myself. I was your maid of honor, it was selfish of me to think of myself on *your* wedding day."

"*Stop it!*" she shouted. "*This is not your fault! You're the victim!*"

"I saw him watching me all day and I should have known better." The tears fell freely now and I ignored anything else Rose had said.

Brian came back around the bed and took the phone from me when he saw how upset I was getting. He talked to Rose a bit longer and I went back to the chair. He said good-bye, hung up the phone and walked over to me.

"Why are you blaming yourself for this?"

As I stood up, he put his arms around me but I pushed him away. I remembered

back to a few days earlier when I saw him and Katie kissing and I felt the anger welling up inside me again.

"Don't touch me!" I turned to see the tears in his eyes.

"You know I'd never hurt you, Kathy. Why are you pushing me away?"

"This is going to take awhile to get over, Brian. I'm not ready for physical contact yet." I saw it was killing him he couldn't hold me, but I couldn't get the vision of him and Katie out of my head. "Why did you kiss Katie?"

"Sh—she kissed me." He broke eye contact. "I don't know why she did it. We were talking about what'd happened to you. I was upset and she gave me a hug, then she kissed me."

"You responded to her kiss, I saw you Brian. I saw you with your arms around her, same as you do with me. How could you do this to me at a time when I needed you most? Both of you! My best friend and my boyfriend." I took a few more steps away from him. "You might as well have just fucked her right there in the next bed. It looked like you were really enjoying yourself."

"I don't—it—it wasn't what you think, Kathy," he stammered as he continued to look down at the floor.

"What was it then?"

"I don't know. I really don't. There's nothing going on between us. She threw herself at me and I shouldn't have kissed her back. You called out to me at the same time I pulled away from her. It's not her I want, it's you. Please forgive me, Kathy. It'll never happen again. I love you, not her." He tried to hug me but I pushed him away again.



"I don't want to talk about this anymore. Just take me home."

\* \* \* \*

I slept for most of the flight and Brian kept his arm around me the entire time. I guess he figured I couldn't push him away while I was sleeping. I didn't want to deal with the issue. I knew it wasn't his fault and I trusted him when he said there was nothing going on between them, but I still needed to deal with her. I felt safe with him despite what else had happened.

We got back to Texas and I immediately went to bed. I was exhausted and all I wanted to do was sleep. Brian was amazing. He jumped out of his chair every time I got up, wanting to wait on me hand-and-foot. He kept his distance from me because he thought that's what would be best, but I knew it was killing him. He didn't even get into bed with me at night. He pulled a chair beside the bed and slept there, holding my hand while we slept.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

A few months had passed since the wedding and things were starting to get back to normal. I'd forgiven Brian for his one indiscretion with Katie. We got a call from Michigan State Police and they told us Gary's bond had been denied for a second time. I was relieved he couldn't try to come after me again, but still felt insecure whenever I left the house alone and I was always looking over my shoulder.

I had nightmares about that horrible night, same as I did when I was in college and even with Brian here to hold me, I still felt vulnerable. I knew he loved me and he would never hurt me, but I still wouldn't make love to him. My body ached for him as I'm sure his did for me, but I wasn't ready. Brian came home from work one day looking happier than I'd seen him in awhile. He ran in the door, grabbed me and kissed me.

"What's gotten into you?"

"We're getting our own place!"

"What? How?"

"Nick moved to Colorado a few weeks ago and he called me today and told me we can live in his house. He said we can move in tomorrow if we want!"

"Just like that?"

We both walked to the table and sat down.

"Yeah. His house is paid off; all we gotta pay is utilities."

"He doesn't want rent?" This sounded too good to be true.

"No. He said it'd be sitting there unoccupied anyway so why not put it to good use."

"Okay, I get that, but what happens when he comes back to visit or whatever."

Will he kick us out? Is this definite or will we eventually end up back here?" I watched the look of excitement creep out of his face.

"Why are you being so negative about this, Kathy?"

"How many times are we going to move, Brian?"

"Ya know what? Just never mind. Forget I mentioned it," he said angrily. "I'll call Nick and tell him we aren't takin' the house." He got up and walked toward the bed.

"Now you're just being silly, Brian. I didn't mean I didn't want to move, I only wanted to know if this was going to be a more permanent thing or if we'll be moving again in another few months. It seems as soon as we get settled in one place, we're moving again." I walked over to the bed and sat down next to him. He got up from the bed and took a few steps away. It was as if he didn't want to be in the same space with me.

"No. We were happy in Michigan. I told you I didn't want to move to Texas but you pushed me away, remember? No one told you that you had to come here, Kathy." He didn't turn to face me. His words hit me like an anvil.

"You knew it was the best thing for you and Adam. Why are you bringing this up again? We're together and happy." I was crying now. "Isn't that what matters?" I wiped the tears from my eyes, refusing to let him see how much he'd hurt me.

"Apparently, it doesn't matter to you." He walked back to the table and sat down, still refusing to face me. "If it did matter to you, then you'd have no problem moving into Nick's house with me." He paused to collect his thoughts. "And you'd have no problem with us getting married either." I watched as he turned his head and wiped his tears away.

"I can't do this!" I got up and found my purse.

"Do what?"

"I can't sit here and let you think I don't love you. I can't sit here and hold you back from the things you want. I knew this would happen. I'll go back to Michigan and resume my life there." I fought back more tears as I looked for my suitcase.

"Wait. What are you doing?" he asked as he saw me starting to pack my suitcase.

"What's it look like I'm doing?" Now I was the one who was refusing to look at him. "We've had this conversation before, Brian. I don't want to get married again. You obviously do since you keep bringing it up. I can't give you a happy life with a house full of kids."

"You *are* giving me a happy life! I want us to have our own place and not rely on anyone else. Is that so much to ask?"

"I'm not giving you a happy life, Brian. I'm holding you back from everything you want."

"So, that's it then? You're just leaving?"

"Yeah, that's pretty much it. You deserve a woman who can give you all the things I can't. We haven't made love in three months now and I know that's gotta be killing you. I see how you look at Adam. I can see it in your eyes you want more kids. I can't give them to you. You deserve better than me, Brian."

"Will you stop?" He walked over to me and took the clothes out of my hands. "Do you think I would've stuck around this long if I wanted more kids? Do you think I would've held your hand every single night since that bastard Gary tried to rape you if I

didn't want to spend the rest of my life with you? Do you honestly believe any of those things you just said to me?" He reached out to hold me. "I don't care if we never have kids, Kathy. How many times do I have to say that?"

"Why do you keep bringing up marriage, then?" I pulled away and wiped the tears from my eyes.

"I keep hoping one day you'll change your mind is all. I don't want to force you to do anything you don't want and I'm sorry I brought it up the way I did." He kissed my forehead. "And as far as not making love in three months, I understand you needed time to heal. I'll wait as long as it takes. I love you."

I knew Brian hated living over Gordon's garage and he wanted a place of his own close by so he could still spend time with Adam. He wanted Nick's house and I was being selfish again. He put his arm around me and we walked over to the bed and sat down.

"Call Nick. Tell him you want the house."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. Call him. I don't care where we live as long as we're together, Brian. I was being selfish again. I pushed you away once because of my selfishness and it killed me. I won't do that again. I don't want to lose you."

He went to the phone and called Nick while I unpacked my suitcase. I watched him as he spoke on the phone and I longed to feel him again. I decided I was ready, I wanted him in our bed. I couldn't stand not having him anymore.

As he hung up the phone, I flung myself at him and started kissing him. I ran my fingers through his hair and pulled him across the room to the bed. I turned him around

with his back to the bed while we were still kissing and he pulled me down to the mattress with him. I felt the heat from his body as I pulled his shirt off. He stopped, held my face gently in his hands and looked at me.

"Are you sure you're ready for this, Katherine?"

"Yes, Brian. I want you. I want you now."

He sat up and undressed me, then pulled me back down with him. I positioned myself over him, my knees straddling his face. My hips gyrated with his every movement and I could feel his breath on my wet pussy lips then he plunged his tongue in as deep as it could go. A tingling sensation flooded my entire body as he continued to lick and suck on my clit.

I felt him stop as he brought me to the edge of climax and I reached back and started undoing his jeans. I moved down to position myself between his legs and finished getting his jeans off. His rigid cock was pointing straight at me. I closed my whole mouth around his shaft. I felt it get even harder between my lips. He put his hands on the back of my head and he let out a deep grunt when I teased the head with my tongue. I reached down with one hand and caressed his balls. I brought him to the brink of orgasm, released his cock from my mouth, straddled him, and brought my hips down slowly.

He guided his throbbing cock into my willing pussy. I felt his entire body shudder when I pushed myself deeper onto him. I put my hands on his shoulders, pulled him to me and kissed him. I felt his body against mine and his arms draped around my waist. I could feel his pace quicken and knew he was getting closer to orgasm, then he'd slow down again, trying to make the sensation last. He hit the spot he knew made my whole

body quiver. His pace quickened again then our eyes locked briefly. After a few seconds he closed his eyes and let himself go.

He grunted loud while he emptied himself inside me. I shouted his name as I let myself go and came around his cock still buried inside me. I collapsed on top of him, completely breathless. As the tremors slowed in our bodies, I rolled on to the bed. I turned to kiss him, got up and went into the bathroom to clean myself up. I had to pause for a moment, my knees were weak and trembling.

When I returned, he was still lying on the bed, eyes closed, his breathing still staggered. I lay on the bed next to him, he turned to his side and pulled me against him. He kissed my neck before getting up to clean himself off, also trying to get his balance as he walked. I dozed off waiting for him to return, but soon felt him get back into bed beside me. He put his arm around my waist. I nestled myself closer to him and we slept until morning.

\* \* \* \*

"You wore me out, woman!"

"Yeah, and to think, we only did it once."

"But we had to wait three months, so we had all that pent up passion." He tickled me, causing me to move closer to him.

"Don't get me started again, Brian. We've got a lot to do today." I giggled while trying to get away from his playful teasing.

Since Nick told Brian we could move in immediately, we started packing. Gordon told us we could have all the furniture from the room over the garage. Jennifer took Adam out to the backyard to keep him out of the way. Annie and I talked while Gordon

and Brian loaded the furniture into a small rented moving van. She brought me a glass of iced tea then sat down at the table next to me.

"I know it's none of my business, Kathy—"

"What?"

"I overheard you and Brian last night when you were arguing. I didn't mean to. I was out in the garden watering the plants and your window was open."

"Yeah, we need to shout quieter. I'm sorry you heard us." I blushed, wondering she'd heard us making love.

"Like I said, I know it's none of my business, but why don't you want to get married again?"

"I was married kind of young, maybe a year or so younger than Brian when I first met him." I took a sip of my tea and glanced over at Annie. She looked ready to listen.

"I met my ex-husband, Bill, when I was in the hospital after my ex-boyfriend and two of his buddies had raped and beaten me. I ended up pregnant, but had a miscarriage as a result of the rape. The doctors told me I could never have children. Bill supported me and helped me get through everything. We fell in love and were married six months later." I paused and looked at her, she had tears in her eyes.

"Bill told me for a long time he was okay with the fact I could never have children, same as Brian tells me. I found out about five years ago he was having an affair. At that point, I figured he'd probably already had kids with another woman. I ended up closing myself off emotionally." I reached into my purse and handed her a tissue.

"I see the way Brian looks at Adam. I can see it in his eyes he wants more kids. If we were to get married, it'd be a lifetime commitment. I wouldn't want to put him through



that if he met a woman he could have kids with. If we aren't married, it makes it easier for me to walk away and easier for him to move on with his life." I finished my explanation and wiped the tears from my eyes.

"Sounds kinda selfish to me."

"Really? How so?"

"A marriage is about give and take, Kathy. Sure, you can't give Brian kids physically, but there's always adoption."

"Brian has said that before, but I don't know if anyone would give a couple like us a child. We're not married and the age difference—"

"It still sounds selfish. You'd be two loving, caring parents. Brian already has Adam, and since you're with Brian—well, you get the idea."

"I get it."

"There is something you can give him which would mean more to him than a child could."

"Huh?"

"You can give him your heart and your soul, Kathy. He loves you so much, I can see it when he looks at you and I can hear it when he talks about you. Marriage isn't only about having kids, ya know." She put her hand on mine.

"He already has my heart and soul, Annie."

"Do you honestly think he'd have stuck around this long if he wanted you to give him a child?"

"He asked me exactly the same thing last night."

"I know, I heard you, remember? He had a valid point. I don't think he would've

stuck with you this long if he expected you to give him a child. He has Adam and he's content. They've bonded as father and son."

"Exactly how much did you hear, Annie?" I blushed again and still wondered if she heard us making love.

"I heard you arguing about marriage and having kids. I felt uncomfortable, so I went into the house. Now don't change the subject. If Brian wanted more kids, then he wouldn't still be with you. When you find a man who wants to make a lifetime commitment to you, don't let him go."

"So what are you getting at, Annie?"

"Do I gotta spell it out for ya, girl?"

"No, I don't suppose you do." I finished the rest of my tea.

Brian and Gordon finished loading up the van and we were ready to move into Nick's house. Gordon said he'd follow and help us move the furniture into the house. He waited, somewhat impatiently, for us to say our good-byes. Annie grabbed Brian's arm as he was leaving and told him she wanted to talk to him for a minute.

"Be right there," he told me when I walked to the door.

"Sit down here for a minute, Brian." Annie pulled out a chair for him.

"What's up, Ann?"

"Ask her again." She smiled and glanced over at the door and saw me standing there listening, out of Brian's line of sight. I smiled back at her.

"Ask who what again?"

"Ask Kathy to marry you again. I'd bet she says yes this time."

"No, I don't think so, she—"

"Just ask her, ya goof!" She was almost shouting while poking him in the arm.

"Okay, but she'll tell me no again and it'll start another fight." He stood up to leave. "We gotta get going, Gordon's waiting on us, Ann. Thanks for everything, really."

"Promise me you'll ask her?" She held his hand before he could leave.

"I promise. I'll ask her again," he said as he hugged her good-bye.

\* \* \* \*

Nick's house was perfect. As soon as you walked in, the living room was to the left and beyond that the dining room. There was a door between the dining room and kitchen. The kitchen led into the family room and off that were two bedrooms and a bathroom. There was sliding door in the family room which led out to a huge backyard with a small gazebo in one corner. There were trees all around the yard.

As Gordon and Brian unloaded the van, Jennifer and I sat down and talked. She'd left Adam with Annie. She started probing me about the same things her mother did, asking me why I don't want to get married again and why it always ends in a fight when Brian asks me. I told her the same things I'd told Annie. She had basically the same responses. She told me I was crazy if I let him get away again. The more we talked about it, the less convincing she needed to do.

*What is this, a tag team?*

Between the two of them, I was finding it increasingly difficult to find reasons not to marry Brian. I decided if he asked me again, I'd say yes. I did want to spend the rest of my life with him and if he truly wanted to make it official, who am I to stand in his way?

Gordon and Brian finished up then Jennifer and Gordon said their good-byes

leaving me and Brian alone in our new house—well, new to us. "Have a nice talk with Annie?" I asked him with a devilish smirk on my face.

"Um—what? I don't know what you're talkin' about, she just wanted to thank me for being such a good dad to Adam."

"Okay, if that's all it was." I pulled him closer to me. "Take me to bed."

He picked me up and carried me to our bedroom. We made love for the first time in our new house. We showered, got back into bed and fell asleep into each other's arms. I awoke the next morning before the alarm sounded and began to seduce Brian beneath the covers. I touched his cock gently, causing him to stir and roll on his back. He was still sleeping, yet his body was responding to every touch, every stroke of my tongue and every warm breath upon his stiffening shaft. He was smiling broadly, but eyes still remained closed. He opened his eyes when I engulfed the head of his cock with my eager pussy then we both just let ourselves go, our orgasms hitting us so hard, the whole bed shook.

"Damn baby. Can you wake me like that every morning?" Brian hugged me close and kissed me again before heading for the shower.

I lay breathless in the bed while he took his shower, floating in and out of sleep. He came out into the bedroom, kissed my cheek and finished getting ready for work. I forced myself up out of bed, my knees still trembling, took a shower and got dressed. I headed over to Annie's and we talked about our respective partners. She asked when I thought Brian would ask me to marry him again and I told her I wasn't sure.

"You haven't told him about the conversation we had did you?"

"Not a word. I think he just needed a little coaxing. I think he'll ask you again, but

I don't know when."

I drove home thinking about Katie and how I would deal with her. A few months had passed since I saw her kissing Brian and I hadn't heard from her. I was no longer angry with either of them, but rather hurt she hadn't called me to explain herself. I decided to give her a call.

"Hello?" Mark answered after the second ring.

"Hi Mark. It's Kathy. Is Katie around?"

"Yeah, she's here. Did you two have a fight or something? She's been moping around the house for months."

"Well, kind of and we really need to talk, Mark. Can you get her, please?" I knew he probably wasn't aware of what'd happened between Katie and Brian.

"Sure, hang on." I heard him set the phone down and call for Katie. "It's Kathy," he said in the background.

"Hello?" she said quietly.

"Katie, we need to talk."

"I know." I could hear she was already crying.

"What the hell were you doing throwing yourself on Brian when I needed the two of you the most? Does our friendship mean so little to you? You know how much I love Brian and I'd been through a horrific night. I thought it was all a horrible dream, but after I saw the look on your faces, I knew it wasn't. How the hell could you have done that to me?"

"Kathy, I'm so sorry. I don't know what came over me. I was hugging Brian because he was feeling so bad about not being there to protect you and he felt so good

in my arms, I couldn't control myself. Mark and I hadn't been getting along and I missed the intimacy between us. I got caught up in the moment. It was probably the stupidest thing I've ever done and I'll never forgive myself for hurting you." She cried harder now. "I promise you, there's nothing going on between Brian and me. It was completely my fault; please don't blame him for it."

"I know there's nothing going on between the two of you, Katie. I just don't understand why you haven't called me since it happened. I thought you and I could talk to each other about anything, even something like this. We've been friends way too long to let something like this destroy our friendship. It hurt seeing the two of you kissing and I wish you would've come clean that night. I love you both with all my heart and I can't blame you for losing control around Brian, that's how he and I ended up together. But for you to not call and talk this out for over three months, it really hurts. It made me think you wanted it to happen and you didn't care about my feelings at all."

"I'm sorry I hurt you, Kathy. I don't know what else to say. I'll apologize as many times as I have to until you forgive me. I don't know why I didn't call you or why we didn't get things out in the open that night. I was scared of what your reaction would be and after I saw the look on your face, I figured it'd be best to give you time to cool down and you'd call me when you were ready."

"And I did."

"Can you forgive me?"

"I forgave Brian so I can forgive you also, and I trust the two of you when you say there's nothing going on between you."

"Thank you."

"Now, about that husband of yours."

"We're working on it. We're seeing a marriage counselor twice a week."

"Good, because the two of you have too much history to throw it away. I gotta go. We moved into a new house and I need to get some things taken care of around here."

"You got a house? Where?"

"Not too far from where we were. I'm still not familiar with the area. I think we're only about ten minutes from Dallas. It's a great house, lots of space and a huge backyard. We're renting it from a friend of Brian's. Well, not really renting it, he told Brian we didn't have to pay him rent. He's letting us stay here as long as we want."

"That's great! Now all you have to do is get married!"

"I'm working on it, believe it or not."

"Really? Has he asked you?"

"Yeah, but the last time ended up in an argument. I am hoping he does again soon. You'll be the first to know, after me, of course."

"I'm so happy for you! You deserve this!"

"Okay, I really gotta go now, Katie. I've got a ton of things to do around here."

"So, are we good?"

"Yes, we're good. Love ya, girl!"

"Love you, too!"

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A few weeks had passed and I spent every day helping Annie with Avon and spending time with Adam. I'd occasionally head over to Freeman's to take Brian out to lunch or we'd head home for a quick fuck before he had to go back to work. Everything was perfect again.

It was the end of another busy day and Annie seemed more excited and happier than usual all day, especially on the ride back to her house. I couldn't help myself, I had to find out what was going on. As I began to ask, she interrupted and blurted out she'd spoken to Brian a few days ago and he was asking her help about engagement rings.

I wanted to drill her about the details of their conversation, but before I could ask she went silent, covered her mouth.

"Oops, I wasn't supposed to say anything."

I helped Annie carry in the undelivered orders and supplies, said goodbye, then headed home. About half way home, my cell phone rang. My caller ID revealed it was Brian.

"Hi sweetheart."

"Hello, beautiful. Where are you?"

"I just left Annie's. What's up?"

"Are you heading home?"

"Yeah, why?"

"I've got a surprise for you when you get here. Hurry home! Love you!" He hung up before I could say anything more.

I pulled into the driveway and nearly ran into the house. Brian met me at the



door, kissed me passionately then told me to close my eyes.

"What's all this about?" I asked as he walked behind me, his hands over my eyes.

"Just walk to the bedroom." He remained behind me with his hands over my eyes. We got to the bedroom and I felt Brian move away from me then heard the door close. I turned to look at Brian and he was wearing khaki pants, a pale blue shirt and a dark blue tie.

"You look hot!"

"Get yourself more beautiful than you already are, then come into the kitchen." He backed out of the room.

I found my sexiest outfit and put it on. It was a simple black sleeveless dress which stopped just about mid-thigh. I pulled my hair out of the ponytail and brushed it out, letting the waves fall past my shoulders and down my back. I dabbed some perfume on my neck and touched up my make up.

I opened the door of the bedroom and noticed there weren't lights on in the rest of the house except for the faint glow I saw coming from the kitchen. As I walked into the kitchen, I saw Brian standing next to the table. There were two wine glasses on the table and two candles in the middle, flickering softly. Shadows of flames danced upon the walls.

"You look absolutely stunning!" he said as he walked over to me.

He held out his arm and led me to the table. He pulled my chair out and I sat down. He lingered at my neck, placed a soft kiss there, and then sat down next to me.

He'd cooked a large pot of spaghetti, sliced some bread and made a salad. I

gazed lovingly at him as he poured us both a glass of wine. He reached for the salad, put some on my plate, and then reached for the spaghetti. I reached for a slice of bread and placed it on the smaller plate to the side.

"Okay. What's all this for?"

"Nothing! Can't I fix a romantic dinner for my woman?" His green eyes sparkled and danced in the soft candlelight.

"You're the most wonderful man in the world!" I leaned in to kiss him.

We sat silently and ate, staring into each other's eyes and drinking in the moment. My heart raced, knowing where this night was leading. I could see myself married to him and I was an idiot to think he'd ever leave me because I couldn't have children. When I looked into his eyes, I knew no matter what, we'd be together forever.

We finished our meal and he took our plates to the sink. He had a strange look on his face as he walked back into the bedroom and told me he'd be right back. I cleared the rest of the dishes off the table and poured us both another glass of wine while I waited for him to return.

He came back out and had his hands behind his back. I had a pretty good idea what he had behind his back thanks to Annie, but I played along not wanting to ruin the moment. He quickly slipped something into his left pocket and sat back down at the table. He held up his glass to make a toast.

"To you, my love, the most beautiful woman in the world. You're my heart and my soul. I promise we'll never be apart again." He clinked his glass to mine. I felt tears in my eyes as I slowly took a sip of my wine.

It was my turn to make a toast. "To you, my love, the most kind, caring, warm,

loving, considerate, gorgeous, gracious man in the world. You're my heart and my soul."  
We clinked our glasses again and drank.

He stood, took me by the hand and helped me to my feet. We walked hand-in-hand toward the back entrance and he flipped the switch on the wall. I couldn't believe my eyes. The trees, the fence, the small gazebo, everything in the backyard was covered in sparkling white lights. The illumination in the yard highlighted a path of red and ivory rose petals. I wondered when he'd found the time to do this without me noticing.

He led me along the curving path to the gazebo and sat me down on one of the benches. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a box then got down on one knee. My heart raced when he took my hand in his and looked deep into my eyes.

"Katherine Marie Hanson, I've never felt more complete than when I'm with you. I want us to be joined forever as husband and wife. Will you marry me?" He held my gaze while he opened the ring box.

Without hesitation, I said yes. He put the ring on my finger and kissed me. Cradled in his arms, he carried me to our room. Slowly and seductively we removed each other's clothing and we made mad passionate love for hours. I woke up during the night feeling his arms around me. I held out my hand to look at the ring with tears of joy in my eyes.

It was a simple but elegant ring and the diamond in the center looked as though it was shaped like a heart. There were smaller diamonds encircling it and even in the moonlight, they sparkled and danced. My future husband kissed me on the neck and I nestled closer to him. As I fell asleep in his arms it felt as if I were sleeping on a cloud.

\* \* \* \*

The next day we discussed when we should get married. He said he didn't want to wait any longer than we had to and I agreed. We called our friends and told them the good news and when Brian called Ron, he had a sad look on his face when he hung up the phone.

"What's wrong?"

"Dad's so happy for us he wants to pay for the wedding and the honeymoon." A huge smile crept across his face.

"Both?"

"Yep! He said it's not every day his only son gets married and he wants a big shindig."

"Are we getting married here or in Michigan?"

"If it's okay with you, I don't want a big church wedding. Our yard here is plenty big enough, bigger than the house in Michigan. I think we should have it here."

I agreed with him. We set the date for October first which didn't give us much time to prepare. Annie was anxious to help with the arrangements. I called Katie and Rose and asked them to both be my matrons of honor. We called caterers, florists and DJ's. We had about six weeks to pull everything together. Brian and I didn't get a lot of alone time. No matter, we'd be alone plenty after we were married.

I found the perfect dress, it was white with a short train and a sheer nylon jacket. The back swooped low and the jacket, although sheer, did a good job to conceal areas not needed to be seen by everyone. It had sequins all over and sparkled as I moved. The sequins had a slight greenish tint to them and when they sparkled, they reminded

me of Brian's eyes.

Rose called Annie and they asked Brian for Katie's number so they could call her to help plan a surprise bridal shower for me. I didn't have a bridal shower before Bill and I got married, so Katie was anxious to help make things perfect. I went over to Annie's house one day and as I walked in, I overheard Annie on the phone talking about it. When she hung up, she turned around and was startled to see me standing there.

"How much did you hear?"

"I heard enough. Now spill."

"We wanted it to be a surprise, Kathy! You weren't supposed to know! We got Katie's number from Brian and called her. She'll be out a few days before the wedding. It's going to be the five of us, nothing fancy."

I walked over and hugged her. "Thanks for thinking of me, Annie. None of you have to do anything for me, really. Helping with the arrangements is more than you should've ever done. Planning this shower with Katie, it's too much."

"Katie told me you'd never had a bridal shower, so we wanted to do something special. Like I said, it's only going to be the five of us. You, Me, Jennifer, Rose and Katie. We're having it here."

"I don't know what to say. I've got some of the best friends in the world!"

I headed back home to tell Brian and he was sitting at the kitchen table staring out the window. He looked as if he wanted to tell me something but didn't know how to say it.

"What's wrong?"

"Dad wants to throw a bachelor party for me." He didn't look at me, instead he

kept staring out the window.

"Really? When?"

"A few days before the wedding. I told him I didn't want one, but he insisted. He said I gotta have one."

"So why not have one?" I put my hand on his chin and turned him to face me. "I trust you. Every guy needs a bachelor party before he gets married. If your dad wants to do this for you, I say go for it."

"Well, he said something about hiring a stripper." He shifted nervously in the chair and broke eye contact with me.

"A stripper? Really? That's interesting. Are you gonna let him?"

"No. I told him the only person I want to see stripping is you. He got mad and hung up."

"That's sweet, Brian, but why don't you let your dad do this for you if it's what he wants? Annie, Rose and Katie are planning a bridal shower for me, which I'm not supposed to know about, so why don't you go out with the guys? It sounds like it'll be fun."

"I know, Annie and Rose called me asking for Katie's number and they told me why. You're okay with it if I have a bachelor party?" He had a hopeful look in his eyes when he looked at me.

"Yes, I am. I trust you, Brian. Call your dad and tell him you'll let him throw a bachelor party for you."

As Brian got up to make the call, the phone rang. It was Gordon. He told Brian he had four tickets to go see the Texas Rangers a few days before the wedding and asked

Brian if he wanted to go. Brian asked him if he could invite Ron and Mark, Gordon told him he could. He called his dad and they made arrangements for the game. Ron told Brian if he wanted, they could make the baseball game his bachelor party. Brian agreed.

\* \* \* \*

Everyone arrived a few days before the wedding for the bridal shower/baseball game/bachelor party, and when Katie got here, we hugged for a long time. She cried into my shoulder, but I reassured her I'd forgiven her. Ron helped Brian find a tuxedo before the guys headed for the game and the girls headed to Annie's house for my bridal shower.

Annie, Jennifer Rose and Katie all chipped in and bought some sexy lingerie for me to wear on my honeymoon. Brian went to the game with Gordon, Mark and Ron and came home a bit tipsy.

I modeled the lingerie for Brian, even though I was supposed to save it for the honeymoon. He said I looked beautiful and when I went into the bathroom to change, he'd fallen asleep—more like passed out—right in the middle of the bed. I came out of the bathroom and got into bed next to him. He moved over a bit to let me in and I felt his arm go around my waist. I snuggled closer to him and we drifted off to sleep.

\* \* \* \*

The big day had finally arrived. I chose all different shades of blues and greens for my colors. Katie and Rose picked the perfect dresses to compliment each other and the decor of the wedding. Ron and Gordon stood up for Brian and Adam was the ring bearer. He was so adorable in his little tux, it brought a tear to my eye watching him

practice in the backyard before the ceremony.

The weather was perfect. The temperature was a comfortable seventy-five degrees with very few clouds in the sky. The caterers were busy setting things up for the reception while Katie helped me finish getting ready and Rose made last minute tweaks to the decorations on the gazebo which was to serve as our altar.

Everything was set and it was time for the big march. I was nervous and couldn't stop shaking. Katie's husband, Mark had agreed to walk me down the aisle and we stood inside the door waiting to hear our cue. As the music started, we watched the rest of the wedding party make their way up the aisle. Then the wedding march began.

I was in a haze while we walked slowly down the aisle. All I could see was Brian with the biggest smile on his face. The look of love in his eyes made my heart race even faster than it already was. As I approached, he held out his arm, I took it and we took a few steps up to the altar. We turned to face each other and the pastor went through the normal routine wedding stuff and we said our "I do's" but Brian and I had written our own wedding vows. When the pastor gave his go ahead, I recited mine first:

"Brian Adam Anterra, you're the best thing that's ever happened to me. My life was empty and unfulfilled before I met you. You taught me how to love and be loved. Now I have more love in my heart than I ever thought possible. When I look into your eyes, I see my soul. You're my life, my heart, my soul. I'll love you for all eternity." I couldn't stop the tears from welling up in my eyes. Then it was Brian's turn.

"Katherine Marie Hanson, you are my life, my heart, my soul. I was never truly alive until I met you. I've never felt more loved than I have when I'm with you. I can't remember my life before you were in it and I don't ever want to have to imagine it



without you. You're my best friend and my lover. I'll love you for all eternity." He reached out and wiped the tears from my eyes.

"By the power vested in me by the state of Texas, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride." The pastor smiled at both of us and watched as Brian pulled me to him and we shared a slow, lingering kiss, our first as husband and wife. We then turned to the onlookers and the pastor announced us for the first time as Mr. and Mrs. Brian Anterra. Hoots and hollers rolled through the crowd as we walked down the aisle and headed back into the house.

Our guests partied well into the evening while Katie and Mark kept things orderly. Katie had asked us if she could pick the song Brian and I would dance our first dance to as husband and wife. She told us she had one in mind perfect for the two of us. We agreed to let her pick the song. As we headed to the dance floor, *From This Moment* by Shania Twain & Brian White started playing. Brian pulled me close and kissed my neck. While we danced, Brian sang along with the song in my ear and I felt tears in my eyes.

I glanced over at Katie and mouthed, "Thank you." She smiled and winked. It was the perfect song and every word of it was exactly how Brian and I felt about each other.

Things seemed to move in slow motion as we danced and saw others finally coming onto the dance floor. Brian pulled back and kissed me with happy tears in his eyes. Shortly after our first dance, Ron and Rose supervised the tossing of the bouquet and garter.

When we weren't dancing, we mingled with our guests. Then I danced with Ron and Brian danced with Rose. We switched partners and Brian and I held each other

tight while we floated around the dance floor, unaware of anyone else around us. As the evening progressed, many of our guests said their good-byes and things were beginning to wind down.

Jennifer took Adam home. Annie, Gordon, Katie and Mark got our bedroom ready for our first night together as husband and wife. They sprayed the room with jasmine and vanilla and placed lit candles all around. Brian and I were still dancing when he pulled me into him and kissed me.

"Let's get out of here," he whispered into my ear. I motioned to Ron and Rose and told them we were heading inside. They started getting the party wrapped up while Brian and I said our good-byes to the remainder of the guests then headed into the house.

He carried me through the kitchen to our bedroom, laid me down gently on the bed and turned to close and lock the door. He was already removing his jacket, tie and shirt when he returned to the bed. He leaned in to kiss me. I pulled him to me and rubbed my hands on his chest, gently caressing each nipple. I felt his body tremble under my touch.

He gently removed my dress, kissing every inch of my body when more and more skin was revealed. He laid my dress gently over the chair in the corner, walked back over to me and continued to kiss up and down my entire body. I could feel familiar desire wash over me. I longed to feel him inside me for the first time as my husband. He slowly penetrated me and, as always, found the perfect spot, sending my whole body into ecstasy.

As he slowly thrust in and out, I could feel my body tremble from the touch of his

lips to my skin. We made love slowly, enjoying our first coupling as husband and wife. We reached our threshold and both our bodies stiffened when we reached climax together. I pulled him to me and kissed him again. I could feel his body still trembling from his release.

He collapsed onto the bed and let out a heavy sigh. We lay on our sides and he pulled me against him where we fell asleep in each other's arms.

When we woke the next morning, it was the beginning of our new life together. I rolled over and he kissed me.

"My wife."

"My husband."

As we drifted off to sleep again, I felt more at peace than I ever had in my life. Brian is and always will be my life, my heart, my soul—my husband.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

We waited a few days before leaving for our honeymoon in Hawaii. Brian had to make sure his shifts at Freeman's were covered. We spent two weeks in Hawaii, only leaving the room a few times to do a bit of sight-seeing or take a dip in the hotel pool. Ron planned the most extravagant honeymoon for us. We began our trip with a visit to the northeast coast of the main island. It was quite wet and rained often.

We shared a slow, passionate kiss outside our hotel in the gently falling rain. "Dad probably made reservations here knowing we wouldn't be leaving the hotel room much anyway," Brian said with a chuckle.

After our visit to the main island, we visited Lanai, one of the smaller islands. We stayed a few days at the Four Seasons resort which was a large place, but we didn't see many visitors there.

A week into our trip, we visited the tropical island paradise of Oahu. The scenery wasn't as breathtaking as we'd imagined because of all the buildings, but we did manage to get to do some sight-seeing in downtown Honolulu, visiting some of the historic buildings there.

The last leg of our honeymoon was spent on the island of Kauai. When we arrived, we were informed this island was one of the rainiest, but during our stay, the weather cooperated nicely.

After a day of sight-seeing, we spent the rest of the evening on the beach, swimming and splashing around. Brian set up our new video camera near our beach chairs and left it recording for a bit while we romped and splashed in the water off shore. He took me by the hand and led me back to our beach chairs. He pulled me close and

kissed me, a kiss so electrifying, it felt as if my feet weren't even touching the ground.

As Brian broke our kiss, he looked into the camera with his arms around me and shouted for the whole world to hear, "I love this woman!"

We hugged then I turned toward the camera and whispered seductively, "I love this man!" My whispering always got Brian going. I nibbled on his ear while we hugged.

He turned off the camera then we sat down in our chairs enjoying the view of another spectacular sunset. After everyone had left the beach, Brian leaned in, kissed me and whispered in my ear.

"I want you now. Let's make love right here on the beach."

I got out of my beach chair, took our towels and laid them out on the sand. I took his hand and together we sat side by side on the towels then I leaned in and kissed him, my fingers entwined through his hair. I lay back on the towels and Brian moved with me, neither of us breaking our kiss. We made love slowly beneath the blanket of stars in the night sky, feeling a gentle breeze blow across us from the water.

\* \* \* \*

Our honeymoon was amazing and the first thing Brian did after we arrived home was call his dad to thank him and Rose. Exhausted from all the traveling, we decided to leave the unpacking for morning and cuddled in our bed, falling sound asleep in each other's arms.

Brian had taken the following Monday after our return off work to stay home and help me unpack and visit with Adam, giving him all the souvenirs we had gotten for him. Tuesday, when Brian returned to work, his boss at Freeman's had told him the county was looking for a new tow truck driver and asked him if he'd be interested. Brian took

the job without hesitation, knowing it was more money and a more secure job with great benefits and perks. One perk was being on call and getting paid for it, regardless if he was called out for a run or not. It allowed him to be home more often and spend more quality time with Adam and with me.

About a month had passed since Brian got his new job and I realized I was long overdue for my yearly physical. I made an appointment one morning and Brian dropped me off before he went to work.

"I'm workin' late t'night, sweetheart. I'll call when I'm on my way home." He put the car in park and turned to face me. "Love you."

"Love you too, baby." I leaned in for a quick kiss before I attempted to get out of the car. Brian pulled me close and took the kiss deeper. I smiled against his lips, knowing he'd be late for work if one of us didn't break it off.

"You're gonna be late for work, sweetheart," I said, reluctantly pulling away from him. Brian agreed and wished me well for my appointment, holding my hand as I got out of the car. "Brian, you've gotta get to work." I pulled my hand free and blew him a kiss before I closed the door.

\* \* \* \*

The doctor went over the results of my physical and gave me a clean bill of health, as I knew he would. I called Annie to come pick me up. We drove back to my house and chatted with the radio playing quietly in the background. I told her I was feeling tired and wanted to take a quick nap when we got back to my house, but I couldn't because I had work to do. She told me she'd stay to help if I wanted. While we continued chatting, we heard a news bulletin break in over the music. Annie reached out

and turned up the volume.

*Dallas County Road Commission reports a fatal accident on northbound Interstate 635, just north of Lake June Road. Details are sketchy at this point. All we know is it was a multi vehicle accident and the interstate will be closed indefinitely for police investigation. Vehicles involved were a tow truck for Dallas County, a loaded semi truck and several cars. As more information is available, we'll bring it to you live. Now back to the music.*

My heart sank. I immediately grabbed my cell phone and dialed Brian. One ring. Two rings. Three rings. Four. "Hi, this is Brian. You know what to do," Brian's voice said on his voice mail.

"Brian! Call me as soon as you get this! I need to know you're all right. I just heard about an accident on the freeway. Please call me!" My hands shook as I closed my cell phone. I called Brian's work and they told me he was out on a run. Annie tried to calm me down, assuring me it wasn't Brian, even though she herself wasn't so sure.

We pulled into the driveway, I ran into the house, and immediately turned on the news. It was a little after twelve p.m. and the noon news had already started. I sat and waited to hear anything more about the accident. Annie sat next to me, both of us glued to the screen. She got up to call Gordon, and then sat back down next to me, holding my hand while I trembled uncontrollably, watching the screen and listening intently.

*We've got more reports coming in about the horrendous multi vehicle accident which closed Interstate 635. According to witnesses, a semi traveling in the center lane had to swerve to avoid a collision with a vehicle that appeared to be out of control. The semi missed the swerving vehicle, but sideswiped a Dallas County tow truck in the*

*process, causing it to lose control and spin several times. The tow truck was hit by several oncoming vehicles before it came to rest in the far left lane. The driver of the semi was uninjured, but the driver of the tow truck and several other motorists were pronounced dead at the scene. Police have not released the names of the victims at this time, pending notification of their families. Stay tuned to this station for more on this breaking story. Back to you in the studio.*

We watched as the cameras showed the wreckage. The semi was jackknifed in the center lane and was totally surrounded by smashed vehicles and a few roll-overs. The cameras panned toward the tow truck and it was totally demolished. You could see where the rescuers had to use the jaws-of-life to get to the driver. It was a horrifying scene.

After the story aired, Annie and I sat there staring blankly at the TV. I had to know if it was Brian! I called his dispatcher again.

"This is Brian Anterra's wife again. Is he back yet?" There was a disturbingly long pause on the other end of the line. "Are you there?"

"Yes, I'm here. You heard about the accident on the interstate?"

"Yes. I need to know if it was Brian driving the tow truck!"

Another painfully long pause.

"Yes ma'am."

I dropped the phone and fell into Annie's arms, sobbing hysterically. "Brian! No, no, no, this can't be happening!"

My life was over. I'd lost Brian forever. Annie leaned over, picked up the phone and dialed Gordon, informing him of what'd happened and asking him to contact Ron



and Rose. She helped me to my feet and walked me to the bedroom where I fell to the bed, still sobbing uncontrollably. I cried myself to sleep and woke during the night, not realizing where I was. I reached behind me and felt the empty spot in the bed. Images of the horrible accident raced through my mind and I began to cry again.

"Brian!" I cried into my pillow. "Why did you leave me? What will I ever do without you?"

\* \* \* \*

Ron and Rose flew out to Texas the day after Brian died. The two of them, along with Annie and Gordon, helped pack up Brian's personal effects. I was of no help in any of this. All I could do is stare out the window in disbelief. When Ron had suggested donating Brian's clothes to the local Salvation Army, I nodded in agreement. As Rose pulled his clothes out of the closet and placed them on the bed to remove the hangers, I saw the shirt Brian wore the night he proposed.

I jumped out of my chair. "No one is taking this shirt!"

I returned to my chair, my knees pulled to my chest with his shirt clenched tightly in my hands, the collar just brushing my nose. I inhaled deeply and could still smell Brian's scent on the shirt, even though it'd been laundered. I looked at our wedding picture on the nightstand, picked it up, held it close to my chest along with the shirt and sobbed again.

I felt a hand on my shoulder as I cried into Brian's shirt. I lifted my head, looked around, but no one was in the room. I sat up when I heard sounds coming from the bathroom. I got up, walked over to the bathroom, no one was there. I called out to Rose and she answered from the kitchen. I asked her where everyone was. She told me they

were packing the boxes of clothes into their rental car.

There was another noise, this time from the corner of the room near the chair. I pivoted quickly, no one was there. I sat down on the bed, still clenching Brian's shirt tightly, our wedding photo face down beside me on the bed.

I heard a familiar voice whisper my name from behind and felt another hand on my shoulder. Without thinking and everything still in a haze, I called out.

"Brian?" Looking around again, I saw no one. I lay back on the bed, drifting off to sleep.

When I woke a few hours later, the room was dark. I got out of bed, fumbled for the light on the nightstand and walked toward the door. When I opened the door, the house was dark, except a faint glow coming from the kitchen.

*"Brian!"*

I ran into the kitchen, thinking he'd cooked us another romantic dinner. The light in the kitchen was only the moonlight shining in the windows from outside. I flopped down into a chair, crying again.

I began talking out loud. "What to you want for breakfast tomorrow?" I stared blankly at the chair he always sat in, feeling warmth against my leg as if he were sitting next to me.

I heard his voice echo through my head with his typical response. "You!"

\* \* \* \*

After a few days, I felt as if I was losing my mind. I'd lay in bed at night, not able to sleep and I'd feel Brian's arm around my waist or his breath on my neck as he slept close. I'd reach behind me only to find nothing again.

I cried everyday, feeling and emptiness and a deep ache deep within me. I didn't know what to do without Brian in my life. This was different than when I'd pushed him away to be with Adam when we were still living in Michigan. I knew I'd never see him again, except in my dreams.

Ron told me I could make all the decisions as far as Brian's funeral arrangements. I wanted him taken back to Michigan to be buried next to his mother. At the funeral home, I knelt in front of Brian's casket, caressed his cheek, holding a photo he'd taken of Adam and me at the park last summer, and placed it in his hand as tears dripped from my chin onto the satin lining his casket.

Katie, Annie and Rose did their best to comfort me, but they knew nothing would help, I'd lost my soul. I walked over to Adam and hugged him tight while he sat with Jennifer. Ron wouldn't even walk up to Brian's casket; he stood a few feet away, crying. Rose held him tightly as they wept together.

After the funeral and burial, I called Nick and told him he could have his house back, I couldn't stay there any longer, it was too difficult. I moved back to Michigan a few weeks after the funeral. I found an apartment near where I had lived before. I visited Brian's grave everyday, spending many tear-filled hours there, talking to him.

"You promised we'd never be apart again, Brian," I sobbed at his headstone.

\* \* \* \*

Almost two months had passed since Brian's death. I still wear the shirt I took from our house in Texas when I sleep. I still cried myself to sleep every single night. I watched our wedding video every day and recalled out loud our wedding vows to each other as we recited them in the video.

In between crying and watching the video, I spent a lot of time staring out the window. I seemed to have developed a touch of the flu also, I felt nauseous and weak. I was in another emotionless trance when my cell phone rang. I walked over to the kitchen, took the phone out of my purse and answered it.

"Hello?"

"Mrs. Anterra?" the voice on the other end asked.

"Speaking."

"This is Kimberly from Dr. Tyler's office." Kimberly was one of the nurses at the doctor's office in Mesquite the day I got my physical, the last day I saw Brian alive.

"Oh. Hello Kimberly. What can I do for you?"

"Dr. Tyler wanted me to call you—" she started. "I'm sorry to hear about your husband."

"Thank you. Why did Dr. Tyler want you to call?"

"He was going over the results of your physical again and noticed something he didn't see the first time. He wanted me to call you about it."

*Oh good, more devastating news! Perfect!* "Huh?" was all I could manage to say.

"Well, he knows you're back in Michigan now, Mrs. Anterra, so visiting the office wouldn't be possible, but—"

"Just get to it already! Give me the bad news and be done with it!"

"On the contrary, Mrs. Anterra, it's good news!"

"My husband is dead. My heart is drained. I have nothing left of my life. Nothing is good news."

"Your husband is gone, but his spirit will live on. You have plenty left of your life."

"Look, Kimberly. I don't really need any of this spiritual afterlife bullshit right now.  
Just spit it out!"

"You're pregnant!" she exclaimed.

I fainted.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I must have hit my head hard when I fainted, because things didn't seem right. Everything was fuzzy and I felt as if I were in a daze, almost like I'd been drugged.

"What's happening here?" I wondered to myself, but loud enough for someone to hear me.

A woman in white came to me, asked me if I knew my name and told me she'd be right back then left again. I still couldn't tell where I was but everything was a bright white color. I was groggy and my head was spinning. I kept hearing the words "*You're pregnant*" echoing through my head.

The woman in white came back into my room a short time later. "You hit your head pretty hard, Mrs. Anterra. Thankfully your husband found you and brought you here."

"My husband? That's impossible! He died in a car accident! What kind of sick joke is this? Where the hell am I?" I was angry and confused.

"It's no joke, Mrs. Anterra. Your husband is waiting right outside." She pointed toward the hallway. "He's been right by your side since the EMS brought you in a few days ago. He didn't want to leave, but once you showed signs of waking up, we convinced him to go get some food and also to try and get some sleep. He refused to leave any longer than he had to, so he went to the cafeteria but returned a few minutes later with a bag of chips and a drink. He didn't even want to be away from your side long enough to eat downstairs. You're a very lucky woman to have a man who loves you so much, Mrs. Anterra. We nurses don't see that very often in our line of work."

"If my husband is waiting outside, then go get him and bring him in here!"

"Okay."

Brian walked in shortly after the nurse left and I sat there staring at him, my heart racing. He walked over to me with a worried look on his face. He leaned in and I grabbed him and pulled him in for a kiss.

"Oh my god! Brian! You're here! You're alive!" I cried into his shoulder as I hugged him.

"Of course I'm alive, sweetheart!" He broke our embrace. "What's wrong? You're shakin' like a leaf!" He wiped the tears from my eyes and kissed me softly.

"Are you really here?"

"Yes, it's me. I'm really here. You look like you've seen a ghost, Kathy. What's wrong?"

I pulled him to me and hugged him tightly again. He was really alive! His arms were around me! I took a deep breath, filling my nostrils with his scent. I didn't want to let him go.

"Kathy, you're trembling. Will you tell me what's wrong? Did you have a bad dream or something?"

"Yes, Brian. I had the most horrible dream. It was so real. You got in an accident."

"An accident? What accident?"

"I dreamt there was a horrible accident on the interstate and you were in it. It was so real Brian. I watched the news and the wreck was awful, there were smashed cars everywhere, your tow truck was completely demolished." I tried and failed to control the trembling in my voice. "The report on the news said the driver of the tow truck and

several other drivers died in the accident. I called your dispatcher and he told me you were the one driving the tow truck involved in the accident!"

"None of that happened, Kathy. I'm right here. I forgot I'd told Eric I'd loan him my cordless drill so I came home to pick it up. I saw you on the floor by the kitchen table. You were unconscious. Then I saw a phone message Annie had left for you to call Dr. Tyler. I called 911 and had you taken to the ER."

"I'm still confused here, Brian. Last thing I remember was Annie picking me up from the doctor's office. We heard about this accident on the interstate, went home and saw it on the news."

"Annie said you were really tired when she dropped you off so she helped you clean up a few things around the house then you went into the bedroom to lie down. She said when she left about an hour later, you were still sleeping."

"I remember Annie picking me up. I was tired and had mentioned to her I wanted to take a nap after I got home." I thought back to what'd happened that day. "It's coming back to me now. After Annie left, Dr. Tyler's nurse called again and told me the doctor had missed something on my physical he didn't notice earlier when I was there. She told me I was pregnant and I needed to schedule an appointment. That's the last thing I remember until I woke up here."

"You must have fainted after you heard the news you were pregnant. You hit your head." Brian was fighting back his own tears now. "You were in a coma for a few days. That's when you must have had the dream about me being killed in an accident."

My head was throbbing. I rang for the nurse while Brian sat on the edge of my bed, holding my hand. I squeezed his hand tight. It really was only a dream. He was



right here beside me.

"Can I get something for my headache?" I asked the nurse as she walked into the room.

"Sure, be right back."

"I'm pregnant! We're gonna have a baby!" I hugged him tight, briefly oblivious to my pounding headache.

"I'm gonna be a daddy again!" He broke our embrace and kissed me.

The nurse returned a few minutes later with medication for my headache. "This is going to make you sleepy, but it'll help ease the pain of your headache."

"Does he have to leave?"

"No. He can stay as long as he wants. Dr. Tyler will be here soon to check on you, Mrs. Anterra."

"Mrs. Anterra?" I heard as Dr. Tyler entered my room a few minutes later. "How are you feeling?"

"Other than a splitting headache, I'm feeling great!"

"Well, you're doing fine. You should be able to go home tomorrow." He looked at my chart. "I'm referring you to an excellent obstetrician who can help you with your pregnancy." He handed me a piece of paper with a name and number on it. "Call her and schedule an appointment as soon as possible."

"One question before you go, doctor."

"Yes?"

"How far along am I?"

"Eight weeks."

"Thanks doc," Brian said as Dr. Tyler shook both our hands then turned to leave.

"Yes. Thank you."

"My baby's havin' a baby!" Brian exclaimed.

I drifted off to sleep again, dreaming of Brian holding our new baby girl, kissing her forehead and looking up adoringly at me.

\* \* \* \*

*"She's the most beautiful girl in the world. Next to her mother of course!" he beamed.*

*"We've gotta think of a name for her eventually, Brian. We can't call her bubble face forever, you know."*

*"I know, but she's got the cutest bubbly cheeks!" he said, smiling brightly. "Have you thought of any names yet?"*

*"Actually, I have. I think we should name her after her daddy and I want to name her after your mother, too."*

*"We can't name a girl Brian."*

*"How about Briana Maureen?"*

*He looked up at me with such happiness in his eyes, it made my heart race.*

*"Briana Maureen! That's perfect! I love it! Briana Maureen Anterra. I love you my baby girl." He whispered words of love to his new daughter while cradled her in his arms.*

\* \* \* \*

I was discharged the next day, still feeling groggy from the medication. Brian called Annie and asked if she could take care of me while he was at work. She agreed

and showed up before Brian left for work every morning, then left when he got home. I wasn't used to having all this attention, but if it made Brian feel better, I wasn't about to argue.

About a week later, Brian came home early one afternoon, we had lunch and he called the obstetrician for me to schedule my first appointment. We headed over to Annie's and spent the rest of the day with Adam and told him he's gonna have a baby brother or sister soon. By the time we got home, it was approaching late evening. I went into the bedroom to get out of my clothes. I pulled the shirt Brian wore the night he proposed out of the closet and put it on, remembering my awful dream again. I let out a happy sigh knowing it was only a dream.

We fixed a quick dinner and I sat there gazing at Brian, happy he was alive. I leaned in and hugged him tight.

"Thank you!"

"For what?"

"For being here next to me. For being alive!"

"That dream really got to you, huh?"

"Yes, Brian. I told you how real it felt. Weeks had passed. Actually, months had passed. I watched our wedding video every day, I cried myself to sleep every night. I had moved back to Michigan because I couldn't stand living here anymore. I heard your voice around me, felt your presence in the bed with me at night, but you weren't really there. It felt like it was really happening."

"But it didn't happen, Kathy. I'm right here with you. I don't plan on going anywhere."

"You're damn right you're not going anywhere. I'm not letting you go ever again."

I held him close and breathed in his scent.

"You look so sexy wearing my shirt, but you look even sexier without it."

He got up, took my hand and led me into the bedroom. He pulled me to him for a slow, heated, passionate kiss. He removed the shirt I was wearing and let it fall to the floor at our feet. He laid me back on the bed, still kissing me and caressing my entire body with his hands. He kissed down my body, stopping at each nipple and gently encircling them with his tongue, working my body into enflamed ecstasy. I felt his stiff shaft between us and reached down to start undoing his jeans. He took my hands away, putting them over my head and holding them there while he kissed me again.

"I want you in me, Brian."

"Patience, my love." He continued his determined pleasuring of my body.

He held my hands above my head with one hand while his other hand found my panties and gently pulled them off and tossed them aside. He kissed my thighs, causing me to open my legs wider for him. He let go of my hands as he worked his way down each thigh, kissing and running his tongue gently over my skin.

He brought his lips to my drenched opening, teasing my engorged clit with his tongue. My hips rose to meet him and caused his tongue to graze down my slit and slide into my waiting hole.

"Mmmmm, Brian."

"You taste so sweet, Katherine."

I thrashed about, closing my legs on his head while his talented tongue continued to plunge into me. I felt my toes curl when my climax worked its way through my body,

then I fell limp, trying to catch my breath. He got to his feet, stood at the foot of the bed and began removing his jeans. I sat up, scooted toward to the edge of the bed to help him, but he gently pushed my hands away again.

"Patience, Katherine. Let me do this for you."

He dropped his jeans, pulled down his boxers, pulled his shoes off with his toes and stepped out of them. He took a few steps forward, pushed me back to the mattress and started kissing me again. I felt his rock hard shaft between us when he positioned himself over me. I opened my legs and he fit himself inside me with ease, moving his hips in deep, powerful thrusts. He kissed my neck and nibbled my ear while our bodies gyrated together, making the sensation last as long as possible

Brian put his hands behind me, found my shoulders and pushed himself deeper into me. I felt our bodies tense as we both had overwhelming orgasms. He collapsed on top of me, breathless. I wrapped my arms around him, holding him tight while his cock still throbbed inside me.

He slowly rolled onto the mattress. He kissed me then let out a satisfied sigh. I snuggled in close to him, my head resting on his chest, hearing the rapid beat of his heart.

"I love you, Brian."

"I love you too, Katherine."

He wrapped his arm around me and we both drifted off to a content sleep.

We both woke up a few hours later, completely famished. He showered first, then me. We got our robes on, headed out to the kitchen and made a quick snack. We ate in silence while we enjoyed simply being close to each other. He got up to turn on the TV

in the kitchen then kissed my cheek as he sat back down. We went back to bed a short time later, exhausted.

I woke up a few hours before the alarm was set to go off, briefly unaware of where I was. I reached behind me and Brian wasn't there. I shot bolt upright out of bed in a panic, thinking my dream wasn't a dream after all. I rubbed my eyes and looked around the room. I saw a faint light coming from the bathroom then I heard Brian's voice.

"Everything okay, sweetheart?" he asked when he crawled back into bed.

"Everything's perfect!" I cuddled in close to him, my arm across his chest.

\* \* \* \*

I had to wait about a week before my first appointment with the obstetrician. While I waited, I went to the library and checked out some books on child birth. Since I'd never had a child before, I wanted to prepare myself. Brian read through the books with me. He wanted to learn as much as he could also. He never got to be a part of Adam's life until several months after he was born. He didn't help Jennifer with anything even though he wanted to so I guess it was his way of making up for it.

We arrived a bit early for my appointment and we sat in the waiting room listening for my name to be called. When they finally did call my name, the nurse told me to bring my husband with me. I got a surprised look when Brian got up and followed me through the door. The nurse instructed me to strip down and put on one of those oh so fashionable, closes but doesn't close in the back hospital gowns, then get up on the table. Brian helped, of course, taking every opportunity to tickle and tease me while I tried to get ready for the doctor.

"Stop! Be serious about this, Brian!"

He tried his best to stifle his smile, reached out and tickled me again before he sat down in the chair at the end of the table, his hand resting on my knee while I sat on the end of the table, facing him.

I heard someone's voice outside the room, the door opened and in walked the doctor.

"Mrs. Anterra, I'm Dr. Meadows," she said with an outstretched hand.

"Call me Kathy, please." I shook her hand and turned to Brian. "This is my husband, Brian."

She reached out to shake his hand, looked him all up and down, then glanced back at me and grinned.

"Nice to meet you both. I see here you're forty-four, Kathy."

"Yes. I just turned forty-four a few weeks ago. Is that a problem?"

"Not a problem at all. I don't get many women in their forties who are pregnant, that's all."

"I didn't think I could get pregnant."

I explained to her what'd happened to me in college and I told her about what my doctor's had said over the years. She gave me a thorough examination, told me to get dressed and meet her in her office down the hall.

Brian and I sat nervously waiting for her. He held my hand tight as I looked around the room. After about twenty minutes, she came to join us. She told me because of my age and what'd happened to me in college, I was a very high risk pregnancy. I had to schedule weekly appointments with her to make sure things were progressing

normally.

She prescribed vitamins and a strict diet. Much to the surprise of both Brian and me, she recommended we keep an active sex life until about six weeks before my due date. Any longer could induce early labor. The last thing she told us before we left her office was my due date—July fourteenth, Brian's birthday!



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Brian went to quite a few appointments with me, learning all he could about how to take care of me and how to make sure we had a healthy, normal child. He was so excited to be a daddy again. When Dr. Meadows told us we were having a girl, he went out and bought everything he could find to put in the nursery. He even came to the baby shower and sat right beside me the entire time. I had a few bumps in the road during my pregnancy, but for the most part, it was uneventful. I followed every instruction the doctor gave me, and Brian helped when he could.

I decided to take the natural childbirth route and Brian called around to find the best Lamaze classes in the area. He never missed a single class and our instructor told him he was the best out of all the daddies, so my delivery should be a breeze.

\* \* \* \*

The doctor was right on the mark about my due date. As Brian and I sat down to dinner on his birthday, my water broke. He ran into the bedroom, grabbed the suitcase we already had packed and helped me to the car. He didn't miss a beat, I guess he'd been going over things in his mind for when this day finally arrived.

I was only in labor for about four hours. My doctor told me it was because Brian and I had kept an active sex life, just as she recommended. Shortly after the birth of our beautiful, healthy baby girl, I began to doze off and I overheard Brian calling his dad then Annie and Katie to tell them the news.

I must have slept for quite some time because when I opened my eyes again, I saw Brian tying off the last of the dozen or so balloons he'd bought, beside a dozen long stemmed red roses in a crystal vase with a card attached.

The card read: *For the two most beautiful girls in my life, I love you both with all my heart!*

"Surprise!" He leaned over to kiss me.

"Daddy's been busy decorating!"

"Have you thought of any names yet?"

"Funny you should mention that, Brian. I had a dream about you and our little girl."

"When?"

"The last night I was in the hospital after I fainted. I dreamt you were cradling her in your arms, rocking gently with her. When you asked me what I wanted to name her, I told you I wanted to name her after you and after your mother."

"We can't name a girl Brian."

"That's exactly what you told me in the dream! How weird is this?"

"So what name did you decide on in the dream?"

"Briana Maureen!"

"That's perfect!"

"You said that in the dream, too."

The nurse brought Briana in for a feeding, but she didn't seem to be hungry at the moment. She looked at Brian, wide eyed and smiling. The nurse took her from me and placed her in Brian's arms, explaining to him how to hold her, even though he already knew. I saw a tear in Brian's eye as he rocked her in his arms gently. After a few minutes, she fell asleep, cuddling in closer to Brian's chest.

"Daddy loves his beautiful baby girl," he whispered, then kissed her forehead and

handed her back to the nurse.

I stayed in the hospital a few days because Dr. Meadows wanted to make sure everything was normal before discharging me. We took Briana home and Brian spent the day with her.

\* \* \* \*

October first was here before we knew it and we hadn't even made plans for our anniversary. Annie came by and told us she'd take Briana for the night so we could have some alone time to celebrate. It was difficult to let her go, even for a few hours, but Brian and I hadn't had any time alone since Briana was born. We didn't mind, we loved being with her, but we agreed with Annie, we needed at least one night to ourselves. It may be the last we get for awhile.

Brian packed Briana's diaper bag for Annie and we took turns hugging and kissing our new baby girl, telling her goodnight. Annie assured us everything would be fine. Brian walked her out to the car and helped Annie secure Briana in the car seat. He watched as she pulled away, pausing after she had driven out of sight.

"She's only going to be gone a few hours, honey," I told him from the doorway.

"I know. I miss her already."

"Do you want to call Annie and have her bring Briana back?"

"No. This is the first time since she was born we've been without her, it's weird, is all." He kissed my cheek as he walked back inside.

"I miss her already, too."

"Okay, so how do you wanna celebrate our anniversary?"

"I haven't even thought about it, Brian. What do you want to do?"

"I want to skip dinner and take my wife straight to bed!"

"Lead the way, love."

Brian took me by the hand and led me into our bedroom. I was caught completely off guard when I entered the room and saw candles lit all around and smelled the light scent of jasmine and vanilla in the air, same as on our wedding night.

"When did you do all this?"

"Earlier today. Why do you think I've been trying so hard to keep you out of here all day? Annie lit the candles before she left while we were saying goodnight to Briana."

"I love you, Brian." I pulled him in for a deep, slow kiss.

He sat down on the bed next to me, breaking our kiss only for a moment to get himself comfortable. He pulled me to him again and we fell to the bed, kissing passionately.

He started removing my shirt, but I gently pushed his hands away. I got to my feet while he lay on his back watching me. I pulled my shirt up over my head, removed my bra, shorts and shoes and stood in front of him wearing only my panties. He sat up, pulled me closer and tried to remove my panties. I pulled away from him again, removed them and waved them in front of his face.

"Patience, my love. It's my turn."

I pulled his shirt up over his head, pushed him gently back on the bed and kissed him deeply, holding his hands above his head with his shirt. I got to my feet again, leaving his hands above his head, tangled in his shirt. I knelt down in front of him and began removing his jeans and shoes. I pulled his boxers off, tossed them aside and scooted in closer to him. I could feel his raging erection between us while I kissed up his

stomach to his chest. I encircled each nipple with my tongue and he let out a soft moan. We scooted up further on the bed and I felt his legs behind me, gently holding me between them with his feet on the bed. I pulled his shirt off his arms and tossed it aside. He put his hands on my face and pulled me in for a slow, rapturous kiss while I positioned my hips over him.

I lowered myself onto him, feeling his throbbing cock drive deep inside me. Our bodies moved in unison. He sat up, wrapped his arms around my waist and pushed me down further, his cock completely engulfed by willing pussy. I leaned into him then kissed his neck and nibbled his ear while he pushed deeper inside me. I felt our bodies tense when we reached climax.

He fell back to the bed and I collapsed on top of him, our bodies still shuddering. He kept his arms around me and kissed my neck softly while we recovered. I rolled onto the mattress, eyes closed, still breathless.

"Happy Anniversary, Katherine. I love you."

"Happy Anniversary, Brian. I love you too."

We fell asleep and woke a few hours later to our phone ringing. It was Annie asking if we were ready for her to bring Briana home.

"We can't wait a second longer!" Brian said. "Bring her home now!"

He helped me to my feet and we grabbed a quick shower together before Annie came back with Briana. "We didn't get to do much for our anniversary," I said while we got dressed.

"We did plenty." He pulled me closer for one last passionate kiss. We heard a knock on the door and he pulled away and went to answer it.

"We missed you!" Brian cradled Briana in his arms. She cooed and smiled up at him.

"Was she any trouble?" I asked Annie.

"Not at all. She slept most of the time. I managed to get a really great picture of Adam holding her. You will of course get a few copies when they're ready."

"Thanks Annie. We needed a few hours alone." I held Brian's arm while he cradled Briana.

"Happy Anniversary," she said as she turned to leave.

"Thanks," we replied together.

\* \* \* \*

Christmas arrived and Brian had bought so many things for Briana, there wasn't any room under the tree for our gifts to each other. We knew she couldn't open all of them and some of the gifts were more for us than her, but she had so much fun when Brian sat down with her between his legs, both of them ripping into all the gifts like it was the first time they'd ever experienced Christmas. Well, for Briana it was her first Christmas, Brian wanted to make it special.

He sat with her for hours, playing with Briana and all the toys he'd bought for her. He fell asleep on the couch with Briana sleeping on his chest, his arm gently around her. They looked so adorable, of course I had to snap off about a hundred pictures.

We had a quiet evening at home on New Year's Eve. Brian was so tired from playing with Briana again, he didn't even make it to midnight. I let him sleep on the couch, took Briana to the nursery, headed to our bedroom and slept across the bed.

## EPILOGUE

A few weeks into the new year, Brian came home excited about something, but he wouldn't tell me what. He sat and played with Briana for about an hour after dinner, we put her to bed and I finally asked him what he came home so excited about.

"It's not something I can tell you. It's something I have to show you."

"What?"

"Call Ann and ask if she can come over and keep an eye on Briana for awhile."

He got up and went into the bedroom. I called Annie and she rushed over, worried something was wrong.

"Nothing's wrong. Brian told me to call you and have you keep an eye on Briana for awhile. He wants to show me something."

"What does he want to show you?"

"Your guess is as good as mine, Annie. I have no clue."

"Ready to go?" Brian asked after he returned from the bedroom.

"Go where?"

"To see what I want to show you. We'll be back in about an hour, Ann."

He nearly pulled my arm out of the socket in his rush out the door. When we got in the car, Brian told me to close my eyes and keep them closed until he said I could open them. Having no clue what I was in for, I was reluctant, but I obliged after a little coercing from him. We drove for about ten minutes and I felt the car come to a stop with the engine still running.

"Are your eyes still closed?"

"Yes, they're closed. What's this all about?"

I felt Brian's hands on my shoulders, turning me to the right. "Okay. Open your eyes!"

When I opened my eyes, I saw we were in the parking lot of an old auto repair shop. It looked like it hadn't been occupied in years. Right above what looked like the main entrance was a bright blue neon sign that read *Anterra Auto Repair*.

"Brian! This is wonderful!"

"I got a sweet deal on the place. The sign just arrived today. I wanted to keep it a surprise, so Eric agreed to take delivery of it. We came here after work to put it up." He was trembling with excitement when he pulled me in for a kiss.

"You don't have to drive a tow truck anymore!"

"Baby, I own the tow truck now!"

"When do you open for business?"

"I've got guys coming in tomorrow to fix the place up. I got a few estimates and the guy who gave me the best offer said if things go well, I can be open in about two weeks. The place isn't in as bad of shape as it looks."

"That's perfect! Now you can call all the shots!"

"I know. I've wanted to buy this place for awhile now. I've been adding to the money my dad gave you for your Mercedes and I called the realtors about it last week. It was a done deal when I told them I had the cash to pay for it outright."

"Will you have any problems finding mechanics?"

"Nope. Already got a couple guys in mind. I'll need a business manager, too."

"Oh really? Who did you have in mind for that?" There was a teasing tone in my voice.



"Who do you think, woman?" He tickled me playfully.

"Oh, I don't know. Some woman you picked up off the street."

"You forgot to mention it's the same woman I fell madly in love with, married and had a baby with."

"I guess my perk is I get to sleep with the boss and no one will think anything of it."

"I'm even gonna have a separate room added onto the place so we have like a mini nursery for Briana. That way we don't have to hire a sitter and we can spend as much time with her as we want."

"Sounds perfect, Brian!"

"It is perfect. My life is perfect. I have you, I have our beautiful baby girl, now I have my own business. I couldn't ask for anything else."

"My life is perfect, too. I love you and Briana with all my heart. I'm so happy you can do this, Brian. We finally get our happily ever after!"

"I got my happily ever after the day I met you, Katherine. Everything else is a bonus!"

"Let's go home."

He nodded then pulled out of the parking lot and drove us home.

I have my husband, I have my child. Life doesn't get any better than this.

*The End*

## *ABOUT VIVIAN VINCENT*

Ms. Vincent was born and came of age in Michigan. She has lived in several towns, but remained a resident of her home state, working in a local assembly plant for the past 14 years.

Though her work in erotic fiction only started in the past couple of years, Vivian has always been a writer through works of poetry, blogging, fiction and as far back as the high school newspaper. Writing is in her blood. She holds a distinction in the erotic fiction world of being one of the authors who remains single. Her style comes from the passion, hunger and variety of always calling the shots on her own.

If you enjoyed IN NEED OF A TOW, you might also enjoy:



## [THE MECHANIC](#)

By Vivian Vincent

**Alexis owns an auto repair shop and Vince is her star mechanic. She's hopelessly in love with him and finally gets her chance at happiness when Vince breaks up with his long-time girlfriend and stays late for work one evening.**

**But once Monday morning rolls around, Vince gets a call from his ex and Alexis is suddenly torn between doing the right thing by just letting him go, or letting her heart decide what to do.**

*Warning: This title contains graphic language and sex.*

Excerpt From [THE MECHANIC](#):

Alexis had always gotten surprise looks from customers when they saw that she was actually the owner of Perry's Auto Repair. She was never much to conform to what a woman should do—she'd worked on cars practically her whole life and it was a dream

of hers to eventually end up owning her own repair shop. Her dad started teaching her about cars when she was ten and she loved it so much, she even helped her brothers whenever their cars broke down.

She took shop in high school and went on to get a job at the local car dealership, getting in the required two years of schooling in order to maintain the job. After her parents died, she'd moved from Chicago to Detroit. She had some friends who lived near Detroit, and they let her stay until she got on her feet. Once the settlement of her parents' estate was final, she took her share of her inheritance and opened her own repair shop at the age of thirty-five, fulfilling the dream she'd had since high school. Earning trust and loyalty from her customers, her business thrived within just a few months, requiring her to hire a couple more mechanics to help ease the workload.

Her best mechanic, Vince, had literally stumbled into her place. He was walking past her shop one day on a cold, snowy morning, slipped on a patch of ice right into her arms as she was coming out to sprinkle rock salt on the sidewalk, almost knocking her down to the cement. He saw the help wanted sign in the window, discovering his destination. When Vince found out she was the owner, he apologized profusely, hoping it wouldn't ruin his chances of finally landing a job after months of searching. It didn't of course—she hired him practically on the spot, instantly smitten.

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## **JUST RIGHT**

By Vivian Vincent

**In this retelling of the popular fairytale Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Locke Golding is fresh out of high school when she meets sexy museum security guard, Seth Beare.**

**He takes her out for coffee then they head back to his fishing cabin where things really begin to heat up between the two of them.**

**The morning after their passionate lovemaking, Seth turns cold. Locke feels rejected and confides in Seth's brothers, twins Andrew and Michael. Little does Locke know that the brothers—all three—share their women...**

*Warning: This title contains graphic language and group sex.*



## **LEAVE A MESSAGE**

By Vivian Vincent

**Sabrina and Rick have been friends as well as neighbors for a few years now. Each has feelings for the other but won't openly admit it. When Rick takes advantage of a sleeping Sabrina, she throws him out of her apartment and out of her life.**

**Then Sabrina encounters her ex-boyfriend at the bar, but before she goes, she calls Rick so they can go some place quiet to talk. Sabrina's ex follows her out of the bar when she tries to get away from him and tries to force himself on her. Rick shows up to save the day, but in the process, he's gravely injured.**

**Nursing an amnesiac Rick back to health, Sabrina does everything in her power to get Rick to remember their friendship and tell him, once and for all, how she really feels.**

*Warning: This title contains graphic language and sex.*