



*Kissing the  
Stone*

*Cia Leah*

Red Rose™ Publishing

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*By*

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Sadness engulfed Cara Lyle's heart and soul as she walked away from her parents' graves. She missed them more than life itself, and cursed the drunk driver who'd taken them away from her.

She stopped a minute to watch the fiery sun setting in the west. The graveyard sat on a hill above a valley, and the sunset was a wondrous sight to see, with ribbons of red, pink, gold, yellow, blue, and silver splashed across the sky. It was a beautiful resting place, a little piece of heaven on earth. She sighed and started off again, stepping aside a little to avoid walking on a grave.

"Wait."

Cara swung around to see who spoke to her and back around again. No one was there. *Maybe I'm imagining things.* She took another step, and heard the voice again.

"Wait."

She spun around in full circle, again confirming she was alone. "Okay, this is creeping me out. I'm in a graveyard hearing voices." She took another step, dreading the result.

"Wait."

"Oh my God," she said, as goosebumps pebbled her skin. A shiver slithered down her spine. She stepped back two steps and looked at the headstone. It was a

dark gray, aged stone, with the name Alan Langly engraved on it and the years 1900-1930, showing the birth and death of the man interred there.

Cara shook her head and started to move away. She wanted to get home, and most of all, wanted to get out of the graveyard before darkness fell.

*“Wait!”*

This time the voice frightened her for it held desperation, anger, and a hint of pleading. She ran to her car, got inside, and started the engine. As she drove through the road leading to the exit, she had to pass by the grave. She glanced at the stone again, wondering what it was about Alan Langly—how he had died—and wondering if thinking he was calling out to her from his grave meant she was going crazy.

It was a creepy thought, but paranormal stories were everywhere; newspapers, books, the media. She always thought them to be hype for sales. Sure, she read ghost stories, and they were her favorite genre, but they were fiction.



It took only a few minutes to get to her house from the cemetery. As always, she paused and gazed at the home she'd grown up in. She felt thankful every time she saw it. The fact that her parents had everything taken care of so she didn't have to worry about anything if something happened to them showed how

responsible and loving they were. *But nothing makes up for missing them with all my heart.* She sighed and got out of the car.

Cara let herself into the house, dropped her purse on the stand by the door, and went to the kitchen. She flipped on the light switch and put on the teakettle for tea. While waiting for it to boil, she made a ham and Swiss sandwich with dill pickles and potato chips and set her dish on the table.

She rubbed her fingertips against her temples and sighed. It had been a long day at the office where she worked and she was happy she had the next two weeks for vacation. She wanted to do things around the house—cut the grass, and swim in the pool for relaxation. If her parents were still alive, she'd be going on vacation, but with their deaths, she didn't feel like it. She needed this time to re-group and figure out where to go from here.

The shrill whistle of the kettle drew her attention. She'd made her tea and sat down to eat when Sandy knocked on the sliding glass doors leading to the patio and pool in the backyard.

“Come in.”

“Hey, thought I'd drop by and see if you wanted to hang out and watch movies tonight, and pop some popcorn.”

“Sure. You hungry?”

“Yeah. That sandwich looks good. I’ll make me one and get a can of soda. You go ahead and eat.”

Cara smiled. “My home is your home.” She watched as Sandy bustled around her kitchen, completely at ease. They’d been friends since grade school. Sandy still lived with her parents, but worked at the courthouse. “Happy it’s Friday?”

“Sure am. It was a hectic week.”

“I’m happy I have the next couple weeks off.” Cara took a bite of her sandwich as her friend sat down beside her and popped the lid on her soda.

“You’re lucky. My vacation isn’t for another two months.”

“I went to the graveyard...” Cara wondered what Sandy would say when she told her what happened.

“I know it has to be so hard for you. I miss your mom and dad, too. They were like my second parents.”

“Something weird happened while I was there.”

“What?”

“I was walking by a grave and heard a man’s voice telling me to wait, but no one was there but me.”

“Maybe you were imagining things. You’ve been through a great deal lately. Maybe now that you have your vacation you can get some rest and relax.”

“The name on the grave was Alan Langly, born 1900 and died in 1930.”



“He was young when he died. Wonder what happened to him?”

Cara finished her sandwich and pushed her plate away. “I’ve been wondering, too.”

“So, you think the voice you heard was his?”

“Well, I was by his grave when I heard it.”

“I think you’ve read too many paranormal stories.”

Cara laughed. “Maybe. I’ll see what happens when I go back to visit Mom and Dad’s grave again tomorrow.”

“Well, go in the morning. That way you won’t be there when it’s starting to get dark.”

Cara nodded, and then stood. “Let’s go watch movies. What about some comedy ones? Something to make us laugh.”

“Sounds good.”

Cara followed Sandy into the living room, the man’s voice still echoing in her mind.



Cara tossed and turned in her sleep. She was back in the graveyard and the wind howled around her. Her nightgown clung to her body, damp from the humid night. The moon was full and cast eerie shadows of the stones throughout the resting place of the dead. The trees at the edge of the cemetery bent to the ground,

reminding her of witch's talons waiting to snag any living being into their scrawny-limbed clutches.

Fear coursed through her body, her heartbeats echoing in her ears. It was so surreal as she seemed to glide over the ground until she was in front of Alan Langly's grave. Her mind screamed for her to wake and leave this place of death, but she couldn't move.

She stared at the stone, the wind abating to glide over her in a gentle breeze, and she heard the voice again.

"Kiss the stone."

Cara willed herself to awaken. How many dreams had she had in her life where she'd willed herself out of dreams? This was one nightmare that scared her to the core of her soul. What drew her to this man's grave and not those of her parents? She'd give anything to hear their voices once again.

"Kiss the stone."

The voice called out again, demanding and strong. She tried to speak, but no words came. She felt heavy, lethargic, and didn't know what was happening. *If I do as it asks, maybe I'll get out of this nightmare and awaken in my own bed.*

Cara knelt on one knee, leaned forward, and kissed the gravestone. Its icy cold made her lips tingle. No sooner had she withdrawn than a crash of thunder rang through the air and she was suddenly swept back through the night. She

awoke with her heart slamming against her rib cage, her mouth cotton-dry, and horror enveloping her soul. *What just happened?*

She tossed back the quilt and turned on the bedside lamp. She swiped her hand through her short hair. “Damn, that was one hell of a nightmare!”

“Boy, you aren’t kidding! I thought I’d never get you to kiss that stone.”

Cara gasped and stood up. “What!” She stared at the foot of her bed where a man stood looking at her with the sexiest grin she’d ever seen. His silver eyes twinkled with mirth. His suit was gray, but not anything she’d seen worn in her day.

“Who the hell are you and what are you doing in my bedroom?”

He bowed his head, his gaze never leaving her. “Alan Langly, at your service, Miss.”

“I’m calling the police.” Cara grabbed her cell phone from her nightstand.

“I’m not going to hurt you...and what is that thing?”

As he approached her, she backed up until she hit the edge of the bed with the back of her knees. She scrambled across the bed to the other side. “Don’t you come near me! And get out of my house!”

“I’m afraid I can’t. See, when you kissed the stone, you brought me through time with you.”

“What are you jabbering about? I didn’t bring you here!”

“You kissed the stone.”

Cara’s hands shook as she held tightly to her cell phone. “That was a dream!”

“But you have that ability. Not a witch, but something. I sensed it when you walked past my grave yesterday.”

*This can't be happening! It's unreal!* Here she stood in her bedroom with a strange man who claimed to be Alan Langly. “Impossible!”

“Is it? You heard my voice when you passed by.”

“But Alan Langly is dead! Dead, dead, dead, and has been for a long time!”

“But wasn’t supposed to be. That’s where the difference is. It’s complicated. I’ll explain when you aren’t so distraught.”

Cara inched her way to the door, ran out into the hall, and down the stairs. He followed at a leisurely pace as she checked the windows and doors, including the patio doors leading to the pool.

“I didn’t break in. You brought me here from the graveyard when you kissed the stone.”

She opened her mouth, and then snapped it shut, at a loss as what to do or think. She thought of her mother, who always said a cup of tea soothed nerves and made everything seem better. *It sure couldn't hurt.* She switched on the overhead light, put the kettle on to boil, and got out the chamomile tea. She needed to calm

down. She watched the man pull out a chair and sit down. *If he were a ghost, he would have sunk through it. Right?* “Freaking impossible!”

“What’s that?”

Cara ignored him. She really didn’t feel any threat from the man, and there was no sign of breaking and entering. She was trying to absorb the past few hours. She glanced at the clock. It was three in the morning. She’d gone to bed when Sandy left at twelve. *Was I in the dream for all that time?* The kettle whistled and she made her tea and made him one, too. She set his cup on the edge of the table, too nervous and cautious to get too close, and still clutched the cell phone in her left hand, not taking any chances.

She got her tea and went to the table, and flopped into the chair across the other side of the table from him. He was glancing around at the room with a frown on his face.

“What?” she asked, stirring a couple teaspoons of sugar into her tea from the sugar bowl.

“I’ve watched things change, from the clothes people wear to the cars throughout the time I was in suspension from the grave.”

“Suspension?”

“Yes. I was suspended in time. I wasn’t supposed to die, and when it isn’t your time, you are kind of stuck.”

“In time?”

“Yes.”

“But you are buried.”

“Yes.”

Cara shook her head. “I must be crazy to be sitting here thinking I’m talking to a ghost.”

“I’m not a ghost.” He slid his hand across the table. “Touch me.”

Cara shrank back in her chair. “I don’t think so, buddy,” she said, but he grabbed her hand. She screamed and tried to jump up, but his hold was tight, though not enough to hurt her. His skin felt warm and real. She tried to pull free.

“Let go!”

“As you wish. But now you know that I am not a ghost. I am as real as you are.”

“This can’t be. You were buried, just like my mother and father!”

“I’m sorry for your loss.”

Cara took a deep breath as hope bubbled inside her. “I’ve got to get to the cemetery!” She jumped up to go get dressed.

“They’re gone, Cara. They aren’t coming back. There isn’t anything you can do. It was their time.”

“But... If you are here and it wasn’t your time, then it wasn’t my parents either. They were killed by a drunk driver.”

“It was their time.”

Cara sat back down in the chair and blinked back the tears that welled in her eyes. “I don’t understand.”

“They went through the light. There is no coming back when that happens. I’m sorry.”

“How do you know that?”

“I’ve seen it happen more times than I can count. There were times I prayed to go through the light, to get out of the prison I was in.

“When they buried Jack Clark in the lot beside me, he told me he was going into the light this time because the time was right. He’d tried three times before. He said the last time he was suspended in time, a pretty woman had placed flowers on his grave and kissed his stone, and he’d been set free. This time, he’d died a natural death.”

“You can talk to each other when you’re dead or suspended?”

“It’s not like talking. It’s more like impressions of words. There’s a buzzing of sorts, but you can communicate.”

“I don’t believe this,” Cara said, getting up and making another cup of tea. “You want another?”

“I’d really like something to eat, too, if you don’t mind. I haven’t tasted food in seventy-nine years.”

Cara shook her head, went to the fridge, and grabbed a frozen pizza. She set the oven temperature and waited for it to heat. “You know, I must be crazy to even be here with you and not calling the police.”

“I mean you no harm. I’m having a hard time believing I am out of suspension. It feels good to breathe again, to feel my heart beating, and to drink tea. I’d have liked coffee better, but the tea is nice, too.”

“I’ll make a pot of coffee.” She got the coffee filters, placed one in the coffeemaker, filled the carafe with water, and poured it in. She turned it on as Alan walked over to stare at it.

“What is that?”

“The coffeemaker.”

“And this?”

“The fridge.”

“What’s that?”

“For keeping the food cold.” She opened it and showed him, watching as he touched a gallon of milk.

“That’s cold. Almost as cold...”



His voice trailed off, and she drew his attention to the stove. “This is the stove. Just turn on the button and the burners heat up. You can adjust the temperature with the buttons.”

“So many new things to see and learn about. I don’t know how or where to begin.”

“That’s an understatement if I ever heard one.” She shook her head.

“Will you help me?”

“Do what?” She stared at him in amazement, wondering what he thought she could do for him. She was at a loss herself.

“Well, I need a place to stay until I get my bearings and figure out what to do and where to go from here.”

“You can’t stay in my house!” She balked at the thought of living under the same roof with a stranger.

“Are you married?”

“No, but I don’t know you. I’m not even sure you are who you say you are!”

“Okay, I guess I am going to have to prove to you once and for all that you brought me back from the dead.”

“And just how do you expect to do that? You grabbed my hand and held it, you sat in the chair, and said you are as normal as I am.”

“All but for one thing.”

“What is that?” she asked, unwrapping the pizza and placing it on the baking stone in the oven. She set the timer, and turned to look at him.

“After I eat, we can go to the graveyard.”

“Oh, no,” she said, shaking her finger at him. “You are not getting me back in that grave yard in the middle of the night!”

“Then we can go in the morning. It’ll be dawn before long.”

“And just what do you want me to see there?”

“My grave is no longer there.”

“What?”

“It’s gone. Ceased to exist.”

Cara shook her head and leaned back against the counter. She was beginning to feel a migraine coming on. “Oh for goodness sakes! A grave just cannot up and disappear out of the ground. I’m not stupid.”

“No, you aren’t. You just can’t believe what I’m telling you, and I don’t blame you. If someone had told me the same thing when I was alive, I’d have laughed in his or her face. Yet, I’ve lived it—” He paused. “Well, I’ve been there, done that, and don’t want to do it again for a very long time.”

She jumped when the timer rang, grabbed the potholder off the counter, and took the pizza out of the oven. She cut it into slices and put half on his plate and half on hers. It was comfort food and right now, she needed comfort food.

“Eat,” she said, setting his before him and sitting down in her chair across from him. “I hope I don’t see that pizza sliding down your esophagus and into your stomach.”

“My what?”

“Oh, never mind. It was an attempt at a joke.” She watched him start eating and her stomach flip-flopped at the sight. His silver eyes drifted shut slowly and his tongue flicked across his sensuous lips before he groaned huskily in pleasure.

“Oh, hell,” she said, lowering her eyes.

*What am I doing thinking he’s the sexiest man I’ve seen in a long time and why am I suddenly attracted to him?* She concentrated on her pizza, but found it difficult not to watch him. All she needed to do was fall in love with a dead man. *No, she reminded herself, make that fall in love with a man raised from the dead.*



Cara drove to the cemetery, trying to ignore Alan sitting next to her, filling out her father’s jeans and black tee shirt in all the right places. *For a walking dead man, he sure does have a sexy body.*

“Pitiful,” she said, turning into the graveyard.

“What did you say?”

“Nothing.” She parked the car and got out. She walked over to where his grave was supposed to be, but it was gone just like he said. “Maybe I have the wrong place.”

“I told you it was gone.”

She shook her head and walked over to her parents’ graves, bowed her head, and said a short prayer. “I miss you, Mom and Dad.”

She turned and walked back to where Alan stood. “I don’t know what to think, but I don’t want to come back here for a few days. I need to relax and work out some things.”

“Sure. That’s fine. I’m beholden to you for getting me out of there.”

She strode to the car and waited until her got inside. “What the hell am I going to do with you?”

“Anything you’d like.”

She turned to look at him, catching the suggestive wink and grin he threw at her. “You are impossible!”

“I have been told that before by young ladies.”

“I’ll just bet you have.” She started the car and drove out of the graveyard.

“You know, I can get a job and find a place to live after I earn some money.”

“How are you going to do that?”

“Just get one somewhere.”

“You have to have a driver’s license, birth certificate, and social security number.”

“Oh. Social what?”

“Yeah, exactly!”

She drove into the driveway and switched off the ignition. “Like I said before, what the hell am I going to do with you or about you? How are we going to get those things for you?”

“I could work for you for room and board. Cut the grass or anything you need done around the house. I’m good with my hands.”

Cara shivered at the thought. “Heaven forbid!”

“Happy I’m still here, thank you very much!”

She shook her head and laughed. “Well, you have a sense of humor.” She sighed. “Do you swim?”

“If I remember how.”

“Good, because that is what we are going to do right now. I’ll show you my parents’ room. My father’s clothes are still there. Since you are about the same size, I see no reason why you can’t have them, since you don’t have any. I was going to give them to Good Will, but you are in need of clothes and shoes. You can choose the ones you want, and move them to the guest bedroom on the first floor.”

“Thank you.”

“Let’s go.”



Three weeks passed and Cara found herself falling in love with Alan more and more with each day. He was a kind and gentle man, fun to be with, and when he’d kissed her last night, she about melted at his feet. She could still feel his lips as they caressed hers, his arms holding her gently, and hear the groan deep in his throat when she kissed him back. The heat in her cheeks told her she was blushing, and she was happy he was outside instead of in the room with her to see reaction to the memory. She pulled herself to the present when Sandy knocked on the patio door.

“Hey, come on in.”

“Every time I see that man, he looks sexier than the time before,” Sandy said, walking over to sit at the table.

“I know.”

“Well, I have solved your problem with his ID. Here.” She slid an envelope across the table.

Cara sat down and opened it. “How in the world did you do this? And is it legal?”

“Well, yeah, sort of.”

“Sandy...”

“I won’t tell you how or where I got them, but they will do the job. I had a friend once who needed help that way.”

“Who?”

“Never you mind, but you’ll meet him soon.”

Cara laughed as Alan walked in.

“Hi,” he said, striding over to sit in the chair beside her.

“Sandy has brought your identification. You’re all set.”

“Really?”

Sandy grinned. “Yep, and if you two don’t mind, I’ve got a date.”

Cara got up and walked to door with her. She hugged her friend. “Thank you.”

“Don’t let him get away.”

Cara sat down beside Alan. “I suppose you’ll be leaving now. You have some money, clothes, and your identification.”

“Do you want me to leave?”

She stared into his silver eyes with their long black lashes, and the forlorn look on his face more touching than a lost puppy. It was a sin for a man to have lashes like that, or such sensuous lips. She reached out and traced his mouth with her fingertip. “I don’t want you to go,” she whispered, as he sucked her finger into his mouth and flicked his tongue over her fingertip.

He took her hand and placed a kiss in the palm of her hand. “I don’t want to go, either. I’ve fallen in love with you, Cara, and want to spend the rest of my life with you.”

She threw herself into his arms and hugged him tight. “Oh, Alan, I love you, and I want you to stay, but you have to promise me you aren’t going anywhere until we are old and gray together.”

“No suspension for either one of us. You have to promise never to kiss another headstone, no matter what!”

“I promise!” She laughed, and his lips captured hers in a fiery kiss that promised a love destined from the start.

*The End*



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Author Bio:

Cia Leah is a multi-published author with more than a hundred books to her credit, written in a variety of genres. Her favorite genre to read and write are historical western romances. She successfully completed the Writer's Digest Short Story Course and a creative writing course. She's been published in her local newspapers. She is a member of Romance Divas and highly recommends it and the wealth of knowledge provided on the site.

Cia Leah is a two-time cancer survivor and stresses the importance of check-ups.

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