

Chapter 1

The emotional roller coaster of divorce had ripped Miles Bremen's life apart. Even the certitude and success of his professional life, the beacon of his accomplishments, no longer filled the empty void that losing Adelia had exposed. The first couple of months he had hardly worked. Instead, he remained in the house where their marriage had begun and had played itself out. Every room haunted him with memories of their time together. Over and over again, like a broken record, he replayed the highlights of their marriage. In bed, he was consumed with her imagery and the passion that had fired their relationship. It had taken a year for the sting of Adelia's betrayal to wear off. Lately, he had begun to spend the bulk of his time in New York, where the newly remodeled apartment held no imprint from his former life or the wife that had jilted him.

Inside, the glamorous Trump Tower apartment shimmered with the incandescent light of dozens of candles reflecting off the ultra-modern sleek surfaces. Outside the floor to ceiling windows, the fairy-tale façade of the Plaza Hotel glittered. Beyond, the black expanse of Central Park and the twinkling lights of the Westside blinked in the dead of night. If you followed the trail of clothing that had been hastily discarded on the living room floor to the sounds of heavy breathing and moans that emanated from the master bedroom, you would find Miles and a woman, their bodies shiny with sweat, fully engaged in pulse-pounding sex.

The dark-haired woman was magnificent with curves and a body that could arouse any man that wasn't dead. Her nipples were hard and extended with excitement; her heavy breasts shook in response to the pounding that racked her body. She clung to Miles, who fucked her with a year's worth of pent up celibacy.

She groaned, "Oh, so good, baby, you make me feel so good. I love to feel your hard cock inside of me. Don't you?" She licked her lips. "Baby, you're the best I've ever had...ah...that's it, macho man, fuck me harder. Give me all you've got."

Miles slick with sweat; his pectorals bulging from his exertion, drilled her like a machine. If he closed his eyes just right, she could almost pass as a harder looking version of Adelia. Her heavy breasts swayed in response to his pummeling. She was young, fuckable, and hotter than hell. He had gone so long without sex that he could have rammed her all night. He had lost count

of her orgasms. They had been at it for hours, if you counted the foreplay, and he was nowhere close to ejaculation. Feeling his power, he pulled out of her.

“No,” she screamed. “Don’t stop. What are you doing?”

His eyes grew steely—he enjoyed torturing her. “Relax, baby, I’m not finished with you. I’m just changing it up with a little doggie position. You’re so hot and wet, sugar, I want to fuck you balls-to-the-walls. Besides, I want to feel that round, hard dancer’s ass of yours in my hands.”

He flipped her over. He ran his hand down the length of his cock that was wet and sticky with her honey. In the mirrored headboard, he could see her lick her lips as she watched him stroke himself. “Tell me how much you want me to fuck you. Where should I put this, Jaycee?”

“Oh, baby, I can’t wait for you to stick your dick in my pussy. I want to come all over you.”

Spoken like a true nymphomaniac—never enough, he thought. He pulled her up to her knees and grabbed her black hair, pulling her head back sadistically. Then he rammed himself into her juicy cunt, watching as her face in the mirror transformed into ecstasy. Her swollen lips parted as she gasped in animal gratification. “Oh god,” she panted. “You’re driving me wild.”

“That’s how I like it. Ah...baby, that tight little pussy of yours makes me hard as steel.”

He pushed her face down into the sheets, growling as he battered her cunt with increased speed and urgency. Losing control, her fingers tore at the sheets. He drilled her hole with powerful strokes until she screamed. “I’m coming, baby, don’t stop! Keep fucking me...oh, Jesus!”

“That’s it, baby,” he groaned, “come all over me. Let me feel that tight cunt of your’s quiver.”

He felt her body stiffen, his words and thrusts driving her over the brink as he continued to pound relentlessly against her.

“Oh, fuck yes!” She cried out, “I’m coming Miles, o-h-h-h-h...”

Her vagina pulsed and contracted with her orgasm. It felt as if his cock was swallowed up inside of her. Her cries of pleasure muffled in the sheets. She writhed beneath him as spasms shook her core. When her tremors faded into sighs, her ass relaxed in his hands and she yielded to his dominance. He slowed his hammering to a steady rhythm as he slipped in and out of her trembling hole.

This is how I like a woman to be: helpless, submissive, and vulnerable. He fucked her with short staccato thrusts enjoying the fullness of her submission. His breath was labored, he gritted his teeth, then in a final plunge, his back arching, he banged her like a jackhammer and released himself. His semen exploded from him into the condom within her. *It was almost as good as Adelia,* he convinced himself. Collapsing on top of her, he sighed with satisfaction.

Afterward, when she had gone, Miles lay nude on the sofa drinking a brandy and staring out of the windows at the city that never sleeps. *Sex with Jaycee is just what the doctor ordered,* he told himself. He liked her; she was fun and open to any suggestion he made. Sexually, she had made it clear that he could do anything to her. He planned on buying some toys; he had a suspicion that she might be up for a little BDSM. *I might as well live my sexual fantasies.*

It was at a business friend's party that he had met her. It wasn't a secret that women like her were always looking for a wealthy man to take care of them while they pursued their dream of fame and fortune. Professionally, she was an up-and-comer on Broadway and had a nice role in a new musical. There wasn't a man worth his oats that wouldn't want to fuck her. He wasn't looking for love, he needed sex and distraction. She was the perfect sex toy with a body that would give Jayne Mansfield a run for her money, plus she gave head like a whore and fucked like a sailor. He wasn't the first and he certainly wouldn't be the last. They were a perfect match.

He rubbed his eyes, wishing sleep would come. *Seeing someone is so much better than wallowing in self-pity,* he told himself. The first months after the divorce and custody hearing had been impossible. He couldn't sleep and barely ate; it was like a living death. Nothing relieved his aching for Adelia. He would have done anything to purge her from his mind, but he now knew he would never be free of her. The pain of losing her was like an angry wound that would not heal. Everywhere he looked he saw her, and everything he did was a reminder that she wasn't there. Then there was that A-hole detective. Nothing was worse than envisioning Adelia being fucked by that arrogant prick.

Taking another swig of brandy he waited for sleep to carry him away. Tomorrow Karolin would arrive with the kids for the weekend. His sister and he would take them to Central Park, the New York Zoo, and a production of Peter Pan. He was looking forward to it. The twins were everything in his life. If it weren't for them, he didn't think he could go on.

She probably's in California right now with that asshole detective. The notion of Detective Weiss fucking his ex-wife turned his stomach inside out. *Damned if I'll let my children*

cozy up with that interloper. Over my dead body will I make it easy for the woman who broke my heart and her lover.

He finished his brandy and tried to drive Adelia from his mind.

Chapter 2

Adelia arrived back to Bella Oaks, her ranch in San Ynez, eager to enjoy the home she hadn't visited in a year. She spent the day riding her grand prix horses Prince and Roxy, reviewing the breeding books with her godfather Lucas, and having an early dinner with just the two of them. Lucas was thrilled to have her home, but was disappointed that she hadn't brought the twins with her. The older man was obsessed with every detail of the children's lives. In his mind they were his grandchildren. Adelia wished that she could convince Miles to let her bring the twins to California for a visit. He would probably put up a stink, but she continued to hope that his anger at her would dissipate with time. She even imagined having a civil relationship like other divorced couples for the sake of their children, but to date, there were no signs of that happening.

Not that she ever spoke to Miles. A year had passed since their divorce, but the only communication they had was solely through intermediaries, nannies, secretaries, and assistants—anyone but each other. She supposed that it was better this way. She had learned to live with the loss of her marriage. The space that once upon a time had belonged to him was just an empty closet that she had accepted would remain empty. Love had nearly destroyed her, she wasn't about to make that mistake again. She didn't hate Miles or blame him. She was resigned to the fact that their love was part of the past, a memory that she carried around with her like an old photograph. *Try to remember the good things, she reminded herself, wish him well. At least he's a good father. He may not love me anymore, but he loves our children, and that's what matters. They are the physical embodiment of our passion, the last vestige of our marriage and love.*

The trip to California was a welcome break from the routine of her life. Single-motherhood of twin three-year-olds plus running a hunter/jumper sales barn were taxing and demanding. Besides, Lucas and she desperately needed to make plans for the spring season as to which studs would be bred with which dames, and which horses she would ride for the upcoming grand prix season. *At least I'm ready to compete again. I never belonged in Miles's world anyway.*

She was looking forward to embracing the peace and tranquility of this getaway to the ranch to plot and navigate her course for the future. At her farm in New Hope there never seemed to be enough time to just sit and think about her life and where it was going.

The sun hung low in the western sky. She looked forward to seeing it melt like red lava into the San Ynez Mountains when it sank. If she could, she would spend more time here, but Miles had made it clear that the children were not to leave Pennsylvania without his express permission, and that would not be forthcoming. The two parents shared joint custody and lived only a few miles apart in New Hope. Lately, however, Miles had been spending a lot more time in New York. In a show of faith, she had given her permission for the children to go there while she was away. She hoped in the future, in reciprocation, he would allow her to bring the kids west to see Lucas. *He's just being bullheaded—punishing me.*

Sipping a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon, she rocked contentedly back and forth on the porch, her senses filled with an appreciation for life's gifts. In the next few minutes David would arrive to have dinner with her. Although they spoke often on the telephone, both had avoided discussing the sparks of attraction that had ignited between them before he returned to California after the custody trial. She was still amazed by his confession of caring for her far more than she knew. He had been right about waiting, it would have been foolhardy to kick the embers and stoke the fire when three thousand miles of distance stood between them. She could hardly remember what kissing him felt like. *The truth is I won't allow myself to remember.*

The sound of the trespass alert woke her from her reverie. She could see David's car winding its way up the access road. She stood to greet him as he parked and cut the engine. The lights were on in the guesthouse, a reminder of her godfather's presence, but that didn't concern her. She was a grown woman and mother; if she wanted to entertain a man, or for that matter take a lover, she would do it with or without his permission or approval. *A year without any physical contact with any man is beginning to wear thin.*

David bounded up the steps, halting just shy of her. He searched her face and hesitated before making a move toward her.

"David," she opened her arms, welcoming him.

His muscled arms encircled her, his body pressing against her. "It's so good to see you, Adelia."

She had forgotten how strong he was or the way his chest and arms filled out the confines of his shirt. For some foolish reason, shyness overcame her. It occurred to her that she had never seen him with his shirt off, and suddenly she was overwhelmed with a desire to see just that. She

broke from his arms, giggling to herself. *Maybe not just shirtless, maybe pantless.* She blushed, relieved he couldn't read her mind.

Releasing her, he asked, "Where do you want to eat?"

Nonchalantly, she suggested, "Why should we go anywhere? If you'd like, I can whip something up?"

His eyes lit up. His pulse quickened and a yearning rose deep in his gut.

David felt his body come alive. Like a moth drawn to a flame, once more he found himself unable to shake his attraction to her. It had been that way from the first moment he had seen her. He had been the investigating detective on a case where a couple had died in a horrific car crash. It had fallen on him to be the one to tell Adelia that it was her parents that had perished on that deserted canyon road. The crash had been found to be a tragic accident. It wasn't until later that Adelia came across evidence that raised the possibility that it might have been murder. Agreeing, in a private capacity, to help her find out the truth the ongoing investigation had proven to be an unbreakable bond between them. When her marriage fell apart, it was he who had helped her weather the storm through the divorce from Miles and the custody battle for the twins.

Without realizing it, David had fallen head over heels in love with Adelia. A monogamous man by nature, once he lost his heart to her, no other woman could ever measure up. He'd actually tried to date a bit when he came home from New Hope, but had found his patience and attraction to other women limited. After a few failed attempts, he had stopped making the effort. He still hoped that somehow he and Adelia would find a way to each other. Now, one look at her had rekindled all of the old desires. *Maybe, he thought, the time is finally right.*

David sat at the kitchen table, sipping a glass of wine as he watched Adelia busily put together a meal. They chatted inconsequentially about the children, the weather, horses, and his work for the police force—anything but what they truly were feeling.

They ate in the living room in front of a roaring fire, a salad and angel hair pasta with a fresh basil tomato sauce. It was simple but satisfying. The comfort of sharing a meal together alleviated the awkwardness that time and distance had interposed between them.

When they finished the first bottle of wine, they opened a second. David poured them each another glass.

Maybe it was the wine, or maybe just the proximity to the man who had supported and believed in her when no one else did, that freed her to say, “You know, the five year anniversary of my parents’ deaths is coming up.” She stared into the crystal wine glass, turning it so that it reflected the fire’s light.

David nodded silently and waited for her to continue.

“I didn’t think I would ever get past it. People talk about it a lot...what do they call it, closure. It’s such a pathetic word, closure. I haven’t found it.”

He took her hand. “If it’s any comfort, I’m not sure that closure means that we ever forgive, or forget. When you lose a loved one so abruptly, so senselessly, I don’t think you ever get over it. It’s hard to find closure when you believe that someone has caused their death. The fact that that person was never brought to justice only makes it worse.”

“Do you think we’ll ever find out the truth?”

David paused, carefully choosing his words. “I think you have to live your life with the possibility that you may never find out.”

“But, if it’s not Miles, who could it be?”

“I think we need to broaden our focus. We still don’t know who—the rape.”

She stiffened at the mention of the blackmail photos that had been the cause of her divorce. The photos of her having sex with a stranger, a man she had no recollection of, was a mystery that she tried not to think about. She unconsciously rubbed her neck; a look of pain crossed her face. This wasn’t the direction she wanted her first evening with David to be about.

“What’s wrong with your neck?” he asked, concerned.

“I must have tweaked it on the flight. My muscles are always bunched up from riding, but this is a little more painful than usual.”

“Here, let me?” He put the wine bottle down and sat next to her on the couch. He began to rub her neck and shoulders. “Damn, woman, you’re one big knot. I can fix this, loosen you up. I probably never told you, but when I left the Yeshiva and I was trying to get into the police academy, I supported myself as a masseuse. People claimed I had miraculous hands, healer’s hands. Lay down on the carpet,” he insisted. “Let me work on your neck and back. I can make you feel good as new.”

“A massage, huh?” her face radiated amusement.

“Does everything have to have an ulterior motive? So, do you have any oil, a sheet, and a couple of towels?”

“Sounds pretty risqué,” she teased, happy to leave behind the conversation about her parents’ murders. “I’ll be back in a second.”

When she returned, she handed him the oil, sheet, and towels. He spread out the sheet and rolled the towel. “Okay, take off your shirt and lay face down.”

She tried to keep a straight face. “You want my clothes off?”

“Don’t worry, I’m a professional. You don’t think you’re the first beautiful woman I’ve ever massaged. Go on Adelia, you can trust me,” he winked, grinning.

She removed her blouse and laid face down on the sheet. He squirted some oil in his hands and began to knead her muscles. His fingers were like magic as they worked the stress and tension out of her shoulders and neck.

She groaned, “You’re unbelievable; I can’t believe you have this hidden talent. If I knew I’d have taken my clothes off long ago.”

He laughed as he applied more pressure, eliciting a deep moan from her. “Hell, if I’d have known it would have gotten you undressed, I would’ve told you years ago.”

He ignored the rush that came from touching her bare skin and hearing her moans of pleasure. His body began to heat up from his exertion. “Just stay put. I’m taking my sweater and shirt off. I’m working up a sweat rubbing those stubborn muscles of yours.”

He stood and removed his sweater and then his shirt, folding and placing them in a neat pile on the couch. His back was to her so he didn’t see her sneak a peek at him.

Adelia suppressed a giggle as she realized that she had gotten her wish from earlier in the evening. Seeing David without his shirt was like being granted a wish, she couldn’t help but stare. *His body is gorgeous—he is gorgeous. Why didn’t I ever notice that before?* She took in

the breadth of his shoulders, his rippled arms, each muscle perfectly delineated, and his broad back that tapered to his trim waistline. *And those auburn curls, I'd love to run my fingers through them. If the back looks this good, what might the front look like?* she pondered.

When he turned she hid her face, she didn't want to be caught spying on him.

He returned to the carpet and again began to work her muscles. "You know I should really start at the top of your head and work every inch of you." He straddled her without applying his body weight so that he could more evenly distribute his strength over her.

"Really, is that what you did for all of your clients, massage every inch of them?"

"Well, maybe not every inch *of them*—but every inch of you, I think I could handle."

"Oh, that feels so good—actually that every inch part sounds interesting." She thought about what it would feel like to be made love to by him. Feeling his strong hands massage her body was turning her on. *We're both adults, and we're both free and single, and it's so long since anyone has touched me. Why shouldn't I have a lover.* The cons were endless and easy to list, but there was no way she wanted to think about them. While she contemplated the possibilities, he suddenly moved his hands a lot lower and she felt herself shiver.

For a moment she stiffened. His fingers were massaging her butt cheeks through her jeans, and she could feel it deep inside of her core. *O-h-h-h, I hope he doesn't realize what he's doing to me.* She felt like putty in his hands as her body succumbed and went limp.

"Do you want me to stop?" he breathed.

"Are you kidding me? No, it feels heavenly." She inhaled deeply as she allowed herself to sink into the soothing pleasure of his hands rubbing up and down her back..

"If you keep moaning like that I might not be responsible for what happens."

"I'm only moaning because it feels so good."

Encouraged by her words he brushed his lips against her neck and kissed her dragging his tongue across her pulse point. "You know, this could get out of hand."

"Let it." The heat of his mouth made her melt.

He unhooked her bra and pulled down her straps. First, he kneaded her shoulders and then his strong hands wrapped around her until they were cupping her ample breasts. He pressed his chest into her back, his lips continuing to kiss her until she could feel their warmth in her ears. He whispered huskily, "I want you so much, Adelia, but I'll stop if you want me to. At least, I'll try."

She turned beneath him until she was lying on her back. She flung her bra away as she held his gaze, their eyes reflecting the fire's light. "If you stop I'll kill you."

He lowered his eyes to her breasts where her areolas had blushed red with excitement, it took his breath away—"You're so beautiful, baby, so fucking beautiful."

She saw the hardened outline of his cock protruding from his jeans, pulsing with sexual tension. She would not break the magical spell of what was happening between them with superfluous words. Reaching up, she trailed her fingers across his muscled chest, caressing him.

His eyes closed as he focused on the sensations that spread from her touch to his loins. When he opened them, they burned with fire. Lifting her into his arms, their naked torsos pressed together, he held her as if he held her heart in his hands. Trembling, his lips sought hers, his tongue demanding her to respond.

The kiss told her everything she needed to know. There would be no turning back. She wanted him—all of him.

He laid her back on the carpet and poured some oil on his hands. "I haven't massaged the front of you." His voice was hoarse with longing. He began to massage her stomach and her breasts with the oil. His powerful hands were gentle yet firm and she swooned, arcing into them. Unable to resist, he lay on top of her so that she could feel what she had done to him.

Through his jeans, his rock hard cock throbbed against her pubic bone. He kissed her, their tongues dancing together, tangled with desire. Overcome, she fingered his curls and wrapped her legs around his waist, pressing her sex against him.

A deep guttural groan arose from him. Pulling away, he rolled onto his back, his breath ragged and his heart palpitating. Every part of him seized, aching for her.

She straddled him and slowly as he watched, mesmerized, she undid the button on his jeans, and then ever so slowly she unzipped them. She stood, his eyes feverishly following her as she slipped out of her jeans and lace panties. The vision of her naked reminded him of Botticelli's painting of Venus rising from the sea. He watched as she pulled on his trouser legs and slipped his jeans off. His penis pressed, bent and swollen against his briefs. She removed his shorts, and his cock jumped up stiff and engorged.

"Wow!" she exclaimed. Every muscle in his body flexed when she ran her hand down from the sensitive tip to the base, fondling his balls.

“Oh god, Adelia...I’ve never wanted anyone so much,” he breathed. “When you touch me, I feel like I’m going to explode.”

Enjoying the power she yielded over him, she lay on top of him with every part of her body one with him. She pressed her lips to his ear. “David, your cock is so beautiful. Make love to me. I didn’t know how much I wanted you until now.”

It was as if she had freed him. He rolled her over. “I’m falling apart, I’ve dreamed of this for so long. A million times I’ve wanted to kiss you, to tell you how I feel about you.” His fingers brushed across her clitoris, igniting her. Inserting his finger into her he groaned, “You’re on fire, baby, hot, wet, and ready.”

She gasped, “I’m on fire for you, David. Show me you’re on fire for me.” She threaded her fingers through his curls, pulling his mouth to hers. They melted into one another.

He had never known another woman like her. He could take no more. Spreading her thighs apart, his cock pressed against her fountainhead, he prodded her with his staff. He paused, seeing her discomfort. “You’re tight, baby, I don’t want to hurt you.”

A breathless plea escaped her lips, “Keep going, David—it’s just been so long since anyone’s loved me...really...ah...it feels so right. Fill me with your beautiful cock.”

With deliberation, holding his breath, inch by inch, he sank in until the walls of her core surrounded him. He pumped steadily, opening her until she had taken all of him deep within her.

“Oh,” she sighed. “No one has loved me in...I didn’t know if I could—” She bit her lips barely breathing as she held herself still so she could feel every delicious movement from him.

He was on his elbows watching every nuance that crossed her face as he slowly rocked her with deep, penetrating thrusts. With each plunge, he took a little more possession of her. “Feel my love, baby. Feel how good we can be.”

“Oh, David, I’d forgotten what it’s like to be loved, to have a man want me.” Her words and breath were stolen from her by a particularly penetrating plunge.

He kissed her as he continued to rock. “I want you Adelia, I have from the beginning.”

Each time he sank within her she felt the friction on her vaginal lips and her clitoris bursting with stimulation. She wrapped her legs around his waist; he groaned as she drew him deeper within her. She could feel herself begin to climb to the top of the mountain.

Seeing her pupils dilate and hearing her moans of pleasure, he increased his rhythm.

“Oh, yes, yes...” She dug her fingers into his back, which was slick from his efforts. In ecstasy she felt herself launch across the sky like a shooting star, her vagina clenching in spasms of delight.

He fucked her faster and deeper, increasing her tremors.

Every part of her body arched into him as she shuddered uncontrollably in climax. In and out, he fucked her until her tremors ceased, and she relaxed in complete satiation. She ran her hands over his muscled back. “Hmm...” she sighed.

Watching and feeling her passion rain upon him, left him dizzy. It had taken all of his control not to come with her. Seeing her pleased from his love made the blood in his veins surge, ringing in his ears. His lips sought hers and his tongue reached deep inside of her. With renewed vigor, his cock drove emphatically into her, searching for his own release. He felt her reignite—she panted as she began to respond, her back bowing, her pelvis rising to meet his thrusts. His hands curved around her ass, holding her as he dove deeper, slapping against her in a rhythmic tempo that made her clit quiver.

“Oh, Adelia,” he moaned. “Come with me, baby.” Now, his need for her was insistent, and it inflamed her. She could feel the heat of him buried within her womb. She cried out as her orgasm swept through her, “Oh, David...now...now.”

“Yes, baby,” he roared, stiffening as his ejaculation exploded within her, their juices mingling like two rivers. He buried his lips in her neck, collapsing into her, undulating with release as he spilled his semen into her.

They lay together in bliss satiated. He kissed the throbbing vein in her temple, tasting the heat that emanated from her, loving her. They fell asleep wrapped together, listening to the wood crackle and hiss as it turned to embers in the hearth.

In the morning, she woke with a start, her heart beating in panic. The same old nightmare of being pursued and running without direction had intruded, startling her from sleep. David, his arms wrapped securely around her, slept in tranquility. She turned toward him, observing his dark curled eyelashes and the stubble that had appeared overnight on his face. His peaceful repose calmed her and she smiled, remembering the passion of the previous night. *Definitely no*

regrets, she admitted. Careful not to wake him, she eased out of his arms, dreaming of a hot shower.

As she dressed in riding clothes, she could smell the aroma of sizzling bacon and eggs. She followed the scent to the kitchen and found David humming to himself as he cooked. Looking up, he said, “Hey, beautiful, good morning. All that delicious sex really stoked my appetite, I made us breakfast. Come and sit down.”

“It smells great.” She sat and spread a napkin over her lap. “Thanks for the massage last night, it really helped.”

His eyes twinkled. “Yeah, I can’t wait to give you another one.” He brought two plates piled with eggs and bacon, and set one before her. Sitting across from her, he watched her, waiting for some mention of what had transpired between them.

She was ravenous, ignoring his blatant stare. She knew she should say something about last night, but a slight discomfort, a fear, was building inside of her. They had crossed the lines of friendship, and the light of day cast a harsher light on what had occurred between them. “Yum,” was all she managed between bites.

He shrugged, smiling, and dove into the food.

Once they were done, she gathered the plates and took them to the sink with the rest of the dishes from last night. As she rinsed them, she felt his arms encircle her and his lips on her neck. He whispered, “Adelia, I think we need to talk—about us.”

She turned in his arms, facing him. His closeness disconcerted her, and when he bent to kiss her lips, her body responded of its own accord. She knew if he continued to kiss her like this it would end with her pulling him into the bedroom. When they finally came up for air, she broke from his arms and put a few feet between them.

“David, you’re right, we do need to talk, but I think I should go first.”

He smiled and gestured. “Ladies first.”

“Last night was... it was wonderful, just what the doctor ordered. You know how much your friendship means to me, how much I care for you. I wouldn’t have my children if it weren’t for you. You’ve been right all along. Nothing about the murder investigation will ever bring me peace. But, as much as it tears me up, this search for the truth, I know—my parents—the car crash—it was no accident. Deep in my heart, I know it. If it wasn’t Miles, then who? David, we still have a case to solve. I’m afraid that what happened between us last night might confuse

things. Besides, I don't think I'm ready for a relationship. I was so burned by my marriage to Miles—I trusted him with my heart and soul. I know that what I'm saying isn't making sense—“ Her eyes were pleading for him to understand.

David felt his gut constricting. “What are you saying, Adelia? You want us to pretend that last night never happened? Is that what you want?”

“No, what I want is for us to enjoy each other—when it happens, it happens. I just can't make any commitments.”

“Ah, I see. You want a friend with benefits. Someone to satisfy your needs with no strings attached.”

“David, it's not like that and you know it.”

“Wrong, Adelia. What I know is that I'm in love with you. I can't do this, I can't play some childish pretend game of hiding my feelings. You and I have two entirely different visions of what happened between us last night. I saw it as the beginning of something and you saw it...I don't know what the hell you saw it as.” He stormed through the back door, slamming it behind him.

She ran after him, opening the door, calling, “David, please don't leave like this.”

He opened his car door and turned to her, his eyes burning with fury. “Be sure to call me, Mrs. Bremen, next time you're in town. I'll be happy to offer my stud services. I'm pretty sure I can fill the bill, but let's not bullshit ourselves with when it happens, it happens. Why don't you just call and make an appointment and it'll be my pleasure to fuck away your anxieties.”

She stood helpless, her eyes brimming with tears; his words scalded, leaving her filled with shame. The wheels of his Dodge Charger spun and kicked up the gravel as he tore down the access road in a cloud of dust.