

Bringing herself back to the present moment, Kristina noticed the coffee machine had finished brewing. She poured the hot brew into two Montreal Canadiens mugs. Over the years, her uncle had collected so many hockey mugs. Every Canadian team, she remembered with a smile. She had helped him, buying the ones missing from his collection and sending them to him as a birthday or Christmas gift. As she walked into the living room with the cups in her hands, warmth surrounded her. Matt had busied himself with building a small fire in the fireplace. She took a moment to stare at his wide shoulders, his sleek neck. Her fingers itched to touch him. Bloody hell! Before she lost herself in her wanton thoughts, Kristina shook her head and stepped forward. "Here you go."

He stood with a smile on his handsome face. "Thanks." He took the mug from her hand. "Is your uncle home?"

She shook her head, feeling the lasting touch of his fingers on her hand. "He's on a date with Nancy."

His gaze locked with hers, causing a stirring within her depths. The pounding in her chest started anew. Before he could pull her in, Kristina took a step back. She chewed on her bottom lip, hoping to regain her wits. She lost her will to resist Matt with every second in his presence.

"I'm glad you're home."

His words surprised her. *Did he miss me as much as I have missed him?* "I'm happy to be home."

She sat beside him on the sofa and glanced at his square jaw line, his cute button nose. The light of the fire danced on his face and softened his features. She lifted a hand to hide the smile curling on her lips. None of her dreams of Matt Logan over the years compared to this moment. He sat so close that she could feel his body heat. She inhaled his scent. His presence comforted her. She laid her head back and closed her eyes.

Her whole body stilled when his fingers inched up her arm and reached her cheek. She saw Matt staring at her with an intense gaze. Her hand itched to touch his face. As if her fingers had a mind of their own, the tip of her thumb brushed his lips. His hot breath caused her whole body to blaze anew. Her head screamed at her to pull away, but she desired Matt unlike any other man.

In the dim light of the fireplace, his lips trailed a path from the corner of her mouth down to her ear. A muffled whimper escaped her throat. Desire clouded her thoughts. But she could no longer turn back. For a quick moment, she stared at his handsome face. Why had she ever left Elk Creek? When she left town, a part of her had stayed with Matt. They had lost touch, but she had never forgotten him. How could she? He was the only boy who had played with her when she moved into town, and he spent most of his free time with her. He never minded her shyness or that she wasn't from Elk Creek. The other kids bugged her, but Matt always defended her when some laughed at her English accent.

“Kiss me,” she whispered against his ear.

Matt smiled and captured her lips in a slow exploration. She had waited for so long for this moment. Reality surpassed her imagination. She cupped his clean-shaven face and tilted her head to one side in order to give him full access to her mouth. He tasted of mint, coffee, and something masculine. Stars danced behind her closed lids. She moved her legs and straddled him. Her fingers unbuttoned his shirt and found a soft cotton T-shirt underneath. Hunger clouded her head.

“If we don't stop now, I may never want to stop,” he murmured against her lips. He pressed a kiss against her forehead and added, “Please forgive me, Krissy.”

Matt gently moved her aside and stood without saying another word.

Unshed tears stung as she watched Matt leave in a hurry. Willing herself not to cry, she screamed, letting out the frustration. Once again Matt Logan left her without words and he left her wanting more. His lips left their mark. His touch still burned on her skin. She shook her head and thanked the heavens above nothing more had happened. Her heart remained intact. For now.

* * * *

Matt sat in his cold truck.

Kristina's sweet perfume lingered on his trembling fingers. Vanilla. His favorite ice cream flavor. He wanted so much to taste her lips again. He cursed under his breath. No woman had ever affected him so much. Not even his wife had caused his whole body to react every time they touched or kissed. Deep down, he always knew something was

missing between Deborah and him in all their years of marriage. A certain connection he had only found with Kristina, no matter how many women he had kissed. But he still loved his wife despite the divorce papers she had sent him.

Images of Kristina's soft, feminine curves under his fingers and the hurt in her emerald orbs bounced in his head. Raking a hand through his hair, he tried his best to regain control of his body. Blood stayed in his groin. He desired Kristina so much. He couldn't think straight. How had she managed to affect him so much in such a short moment? She was his childhood friend, for God's sake, he reminded himself; the same girl he had known growing up.

Before he started the engine of his truck, he glanced once more at the house. Why did he think she'd come out running and beg him to come back inside? He chuckled at the crazy idea. Besides, he was technically still a married man. And if Jasper returned home and knew he had kissed Kristina, her uncle would kick his butt. He would defend himself against the old man, but he would never defy his hockey coach. Since the day Kristina left town, Jasper barely spoke to him except during games and hockey practices. He had told Matt never to talk to his niece or contact her. Matt never understood his reasons why, but he had kept his promise to this day. Yet having Kristina back in town after all this time, looking more beautiful than he remembered, made him wonder how in God's name he'd stay away from her.

Matt pulled out of the snowy driveway and drove down the empty street. He never thought he'd see Kristina Scott again, not after all this time had passed since she had left town. Ten long years had passed since he had seen her. Until the moment he saw her at the bar, he hadn't realized how much he had missed her. He wanted to turn back his truck and take her in his arms. He wanted to hold her all night, no longer caring what her uncle said all those years ago.

Dammit! He couldn't kiss her or touch her again. He wasn't ready to get involved with her or any woman for that matter. His divorce wasn't final yet. He was still waiting for Deborah to sign the papers, but he wasn't ready for her to leave him.

Kristina's pretty face popped into his head as Matt turned into his driveway. He touched his lips and smiled. The memory of her mouth covering his and her body pressed against him burned in his mind. A raw need for Kristina gnawed at him. But how could

he give in to his desire for her when he still loved his wife? Confusion distressed him. He hoped after a good night's sleep, he would get clear answers to his questions.