

A woman with her hair in an elaborate updo, wearing a brown Victorian-style dress with a lace collar and a pearl necklace, is seen from behind. She is looking out over a scenic landscape featuring a large blue lake, a stone castle with multiple towers, and rolling green hills under a cloudy sky.

A Time To Love

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ISBN: 978-1-63263-886-1

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

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BookLocker.com, Inc.
2018

First Edition

Chapter 1



Scotland, Summer of 1199

Her skirt was swaying in the gentle breeze. The air was cool and crisp as she stood on top of the hill looking down at the beautiful castle that he had built for her.

She could not believe how lucky she was to be married to such a wonderful man. She could see him at the back of the castle. He was training the horses that would someday accompany the men to fight in a war. Oh, how he loved those horses. How very much afraid she still was to ride them.

He turns to see her, and as she waves she starts running down the hill towards him. When she gets to him, he embraces her in a kiss that could make the earth shake.

Angi Moore

Present



Beth sits straight up in her bed. Her breathing is labored as she frantically looks around her bedroom. She begins to calm down by taking slow deep breaths. She realizes that she is having the same reoccurring dream that she has had since she was fourteen years old. The dream always took on a real feeling like she was there and was living it. Tonight though, the dream had a message in it that she could not quite figure out. Almost like she had to tell someone something or do something for someone. It was a little disturbing for her.

As she throws the covers off her she turns and gets out of bed to begin her day. She decides not to think about it anymore.

When she gets to work she sees her friend Eve sitting at her desk. She and Eve had been best friends

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for what seemed like an eternity. They met in grade school and have been joined at the hip ever since.

Eve's eyes were sparkling with mischief as she has the look of excitement on her face. Beth recognizes that familiar look and smiles. It is the look she gets when she has gossip to tell.

When Eve looks up at Beth, she frowns realizing that her night must have been a bad one since her normally straight blonde hair that was always combed, was not today. It looked like she had not combed it in several days. She looked funny and out of sorts.

"Good morning Eve. How are you today"? Beth asks in a tired voice.

"Pretty good, Beth, how are you?"

Eve looks at her and asks, "rough night?" She knows that Beth will not tell her anything until she is ready. Beth has always been a private person. She was full of mystery and had secrets that she would not tell.

"Yes, it is that dream again but I am ok now." Looking at Eve and the excitement on her face she knows that Eve is up to something.

"You look like you are busting at the seams with gossip to tell me so go ahead. I'm all ears." Beth sits down at her desk and waits for Eve to begin.

Eve smiles her saucy little smile and then tells Beth,

“We have hired a new accountant and I caught a glimpse of him today.” Eve leans in closer to Beth and whispers. “Oh my god Beth, he’s total eye candy, not that you would be interested, right?” She lifts her eyebrows and wiggles them at Beth.

Beth laughs at her and says, “I’m happy with living with my cat.” As soon as she says cat, she remembers that Mr. McGregor needs cat litter but quickly slides back into their conversation. “Thank you for worrying about me Eve, but there really isn’t a reason for you to worry so much.” Beth reaches for a piece of butterscotch candy, her favorite, that was on her desk and pops it into her mouth.

Eve looks at her and knows that she needs to leave her house more often and not be so depressed about things. “You know Beth; you really need to get out more instead of working and just going home to your fat cat. You are getting a bit boring lately. All you do when you get home is play with the cat.” She leans into Beth and gives her a stern look that only a best friend can get by with. “You need a man to play with. You know spice things up. A man will give you something to look forward to every night.” Eve thinks to herself who in the world names a cat Mr. McGregor?

Beth did not take offense at Eve’s comment. She had known Eve all her life. She was probably right. She

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WAS boring. Her last relationship was just horrible, and she could not find it in herself to be interested in anyone at all, let alone give her heart to someone. Why bother? She could not stand another heart break. She doubted she could ever trust a man again. Beth bites into her candy making a loud crunching noise. She chews it loudly knowing it irritates Eve.

Beth smiles thinking about what a great friend she has in Eve. And decides not to chew so loudly. This time anyway. They did everything together. Eve was always the one with all the boyfriends though. The boys at school were always hanging around Eve hoping she would notice them. She very seldom did.

She was easy going and loved to talk and talk and talk. She was extremely flirtatious. She was about five feet five with a slim figure and had curly black hair. Her brown eyes had a bit of silvery flecks in them. They were beautiful. It was like they always sparkled. It was usually with mischief.

Beth was always a bit jealous of Eve's eyes since hers were only blue, you know just plain blue. She did not think there was anything exciting about them. Eve and Beth would laugh about her eyes because she wanted blue eyes and Beth wanted green eyes, she really loved green. Beth was short, reaching about five

feet. She told everyone that she was five feet two. She would laugh at herself about adding the two inches. It reminded her of “man measurements” that men always exaggerate with. Men, such funny creatures she thought.

Beth hears her boss Jack, talking to someone in the hallway and then perks up when she hears her name. Her boss approaches her and says,

“Beth, I would like for you to meet Derrick McMillan. He is going to be working here with us now and I would like for you to be his personal secretary and help him with anything that is needed.” Jack looks at Beth and then says to her with a worried look on his face, “Beth are you OK? You look like you did not sleep well. In fact, you look like umm well just bad.” Beth looks up at Jack and with a sigh replies, “Yes, of course Jack. You are correct I did not sleep well at all.” Beth then turns to shake Derrick’s hand and when she looks up she sees the sexiest man she has ever seen in her life. She caught her breath and all she could do was nod. Derrick smiles, quirks his eyebrow and held out his hand to shake hers. “Beth, I really look forward to working with you.” She is speechless as she shakes his hand and she could feel butterflies in her stomach as he walks away. When Beth finally composed herself, Eve

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started laughing. There is nothing like your best friend being there to help you out of an awkward situation.

Eve reclines in her chair with a big grin on her face and says to Beth, “See I told you so. I have never seen you act like that around a man. It’s even funnier since you didn’t comb your hair today and your eyes are red and swollen.” Eve was still laughing.

Embarrassed, she walks down the hall to the women’s bath room and ran a brush through her hair. Beth grumbled when she looked in the mirror, Eve was right she did look frightful. She placed her forehead against the mirror and she thought to herself, “of all the days to look like I was run over by a truck.”

Derrick, on the other hand, did look good. He was probably about 6’2”. His hair was cut just above the collar and it was dark with a dash of silver in it. It was apparent that he spent time at the gym. You could see his muscles bulging through his shirt. Beth had to wipe the perspiration off her forehead from thinking about his muscles and the way he lifted the one brow. It was kind of sexy. He also had piercing blue eyes that were so intense Beth felt she could get lost just by looking into them. Why couldn’t I have had that color blue for my eyes she wondered? Why do guys always get the good features? Sometimes life just isn’t fair. Beth stood looking at herself trying to lift her brow. It just didn’t

seem to work or look sexy on her. She took a deep breath and gave up. It was time to come out of her hiding in the restroom.

When Beth comes out of the restroom she heads to her office, she overhears Derrick and Eve laughing. They stopped when she walks in. With a little twinge of jealousy, Beth smiles at them and Derrick says, “Beth I was told that you were the go to girl in this office and I promise not to work you too hard, but there will be some late nights if that is OK with you?”

Beth could not seem to make her mouth move, so Eve answers for her.

“Of course, she will work whatever nights she is needed. She doesn’t go anywhere or do anything. She goes home to a fat cat. She has no life of her own, so her time is your time.” She says with a wicked grin. Derrick then turns to look at Beth and once again all she could do was nod. Derrick smiles at her and says, “Well that is great Beth. I cannot wait to spend more time with you. Maybe you will be brave enough to talk to me by then. I promise I won’t bite. Well unless you want me to.” He wiggles his eyebrows at her. Eve laughs hard at this and Beth turns red.

Derrick turns and heads back to his office, Eve is still laughing at Beth and says, “This is going to be very

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interesting, for me anyway.” Beth just sticks her tongue out at Eve. Eve ignores her and puts her arm around Beth’s shoulders and says, “Admit it Beth you were just a little jealous of me talking to Derrick. I could see it in your eyes. I have known you too long so don’t lie to me, Beth. There is no reason to be since all I was doing was telling him things about you. I did talk you up a little and told him you were usually groomed better on most days. Really Beth, you couldn’t find time to comb your hair? I have told you numerous times that you never know when Mr. Right will come walking around the corner. You should always look your best regardless of what kind of night you had.” Eve says patting her perfect hair. For the rest of the day Eve playfully teases her.

When Beth gets home she does her usual routine. She feeds Mr. McGregor, takes out the trash and washes her coffee cup from that morning. She is trying not to think of Derrick’s blue eyes and hard body or the fact that all she wanted to do was run her fingers through his hair. She finishes her chores and then heads to bed with Derrick still on her mind as she finally drifts off to sleep.