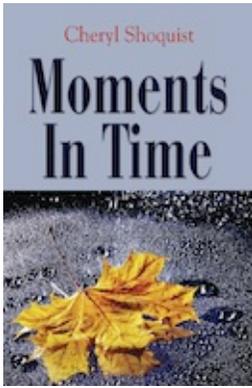


Cheryl Shoquist

Moments In Time





Seperated by forces beyond their own control, two people bound by love are forced to live their lives apart, not knowing what happened to each other, always looking over their shoulders for the approaching enemy that seperated them, and spending every moment wishing they would find each other but knowing that if they did it would risk the life on the one they love.

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First Edition

Chapter One

She shivered when she saw him. Confidence shot right out of his eyes. Bravery and courage mirrored each step that he took. He was a force to be reckoned with and he knew it. His mannerisms depicted a soldier, a warrior on a quest. Fear and weakness were not an option. Black boots with silver adornments rattled ever so slightly when he walked. His unbuttoned duster flapped revealing underneath a Tee shirt tucked into dark blue jeans, and a leather belt with an engraved buckle with an insignia of some sort. Under it all was a six foot two inch two hundred pound body of pure chiseled muscle.

She wasn't sure at that moment if she was impressed or terrified as his steps brought him quickly near her. His glare seemed to penetrate through her like a laser beam with one task, not of destruction but of reading her inner thoughts. In a few quick moments, he seemed to know her Achilles heel. He had the control, the power to overwhelm her, using herself against her. Feeling vulnerable and weak, she caught her breath as he stood in front of her. Frozen in time, she could only move her eyes. She blinked. He must have read her feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty. He raised his hand to her and all she could do was close her eyes, squinting as she waited for the crushing blow that was sure to come. Maybe a blow so heavy she would never feel another. Her heart raced with a thumping sound that he must have heard. It seemed to echo out of her chest.

A moment later, she felt softness against her cheek. At first it felt like the flutter of a breeze and then she could feel his hand and fingers caressing her cheek. When she opened her eyes they met his. He had light blue, hypnotic eyes that seemed to draw her into him. His hard eyes were softened by his touch on her skin as waves of sandy blonde hair blew across his face. He no longer resembled a warrior approaching battle, but a man touching a woman, feeling her skin in his hand and looking deeply into her eyes as they cried out for more.

“Do not be afraid”. He said softly.

She began to breathe again and as she inhaled, an aroma tantalized her. It was his aura. It was not a scent of sweat or cologne. It was a natural fragrance of raw nature, man and leather. It was intoxicating and she breathed in deeply.

He said something that angered her and made her feel like prey. She came to her senses and pushed him away from her and then she leaned in on him with a vengeance. He smiled as though it was a game allowing her to take momentary control and dominate him. Maybe it was a test to see what she was made of. She would never show it all here, not the right time or arena. She pulled away suddenly without a word and turned to walk away. He grabbed her arm, swung her around to face him and pulled her to him and for a moment there was an awkward silence. He grinned slyly and then let go. He was just letting her know that he had regained control. As she turned and started to walk away, she stopped and walked back over to him one more time and starred at him with a slight almost grin. She turned and then walked away. She had to let him know, that even though he may have thought that this was a game of cat and mouse. She was not the mouse. She wanted him to see that this was way less animalistic. It was a dance of sorts. The question was, who would lead and who would follow in this dance and whose toes would get stepped on in the process.

She could feel eyes on her as she left the room. She tried very hard to act nonchalant and unaffected. She had succeeded but when she turned the corner out of sight, she collapsed against the wall breathing heavily. What in the hell was that? She wondered. Who was that? She stood there for a moment trying to catch her breath always listening for footsteps to follow her. After a couple of moments she regained her composure, and then moved on and slinked away quietly.

Vince had watched her walk out the door. He was paralyzed to stop her. Charlie had witnessed their encounter. She had them both mesmerized when she left and as soon as she was gone, he approached Vince.

“Who was that”? Charlie asked.

“I don’t know”. Vince responded.

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“You don’t know”? “You two acted like you knew each other”. “You two looked like you were in the middle of a mating ritual”. Charlie said.

“You know what”? “I think we were”. He said with a chuckle. He was a little stumped with their encounter and was unsure of its meaning but he was definitely fascinated by her.

That man for the rest of the day haunted her. It was almost as though she was in a trance. She replayed each step of their meeting over and over again in her head. She revisited the feelings that enveloped her when he touched her cheek and that hypnotic look in his eyes. He was sooooo sexy and so virile, and the aura that she smelled when she was face to face with him was breathtaking. She couldn’t forget it even if she wanted to. She wondered if she would ever see him again. She knew that she wanted to. She didn’t even get his name. He never got hers. What was he doing there? She wondered, but most importantly, would they ever dance again?

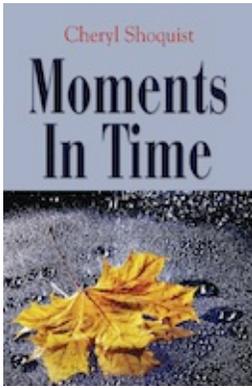
It was the year 2010 in Santa Barbara, California. Shawnelle Sheppard had been on the job for many years. Vince Antwonetti was an investigator with the Department of Missing Persons. Shawnelle Sheppard was a criminal psychologist who was called on to help the police and the FBI on different cases in which her expertise was required in determining the actions and motivations behind the criminal mind. She was called upon so many times and enjoyed the field and decided to make it be her career focus. She was beginning to claim recognition for her work and had been instrumental in helping the police and FBI solve many of their cases. This area paid more and she had a lighter caseload compared to the commitment of holding down an office and seeing an array of patients come through her door for counseling on a daily basis. She found this area much more intriguing and her purpose more fulfilling.

She had been called in to analyze a case of a missing woman and her daughter. There was quite a bit of damage to the surrounding area where the police had found clues and uncovered their bodies from a shallow grave where a tree was planted on top of them with the intent to hide the burial site, thus hoping that the certainty there would be only that of a landscaping issue and a newly planted tree and nothing

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more. However, the experience of the detectives led to a thorough search of the area and pulling up the newly planted tree resulted in finding the bodies that they were in search of. Now all they had to do was to build a case, and find the criminal behind this ferocious crime and let justice prevail.

Shawnelle had been summoned there for her expert opinion and had finished her investigation of the area and was leaving to file a report on her findings when she ran into Vince.



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