

Chapter 13

Joel and Kristie hiked the trails between his cabin and Eagle Harbor for close to three hours. When they got back, it was well past dinner time.

"Kristie, I've got a little surprise for you. Tell you what. You take my car and drive up the Eagle Harbor Inn and get the biggest pizza they make. I've got a few things to do here to get ready."

She tilted her head and looked up at him. "What surprise? Get what ready?"

"Your surprise. Come on, I've got a couple bags I've got to get from the trunk, and then off with you."

With growing curiosity, she watched him carry the bags into the cabin. Then she headed for the restaurant. What a car this was! She'd never driven a car from the Sixties, much less a hot sports car like a Mustang. She could feel the rumble of the engine and the power under the hood.

By the time she got back, it was dark and the floodlights were on. But as she walked up to the door, she couldn't see much light coming from the inside.

Joel must have been watching for her because the door magically opened as she approached it. What she entered was a different world from the one she left forty-five minutes ago.

The room was lit entirely by candles, some of them obviously scented. The table in the dining room had been set with a white linen table cloth and a floral arrangement in the center. John Sebastian and the Lovin' Spoonful had just started their first major hit, "Do You Believe in Magic." Kristie thought back to that time she and Joel had talked about that magic in a young girl's heart and the magic of rock-n-roll. In that moment, all the wonderful, romantic memories came alive again in vivid detail--all the feelings, all the images, everything she and Joel had shared together--the Vienna hot dog stand, Johnny's barbecue, taillight park, and their first kiss. She looked over at Joel standing by the window with Lake Superior behind him. Joel. He was the magic in her heart.

"Joel, what's all this?" Her tone reflected utter amazement.

"I wanted to have a romantic setting for tonight. Sort of to celebrate, uh, everything that took place last night. While you were in the motel room this morning, I did a little shopping at Pamida. Now this isn't Chicago, and they're not exactly a head shop. Couldn't find any black-light posters, strobe lights, or other psychedelic paraphernalia, but I was hoping this might create a certain mood."

Kristie was overwhelmed. She laid the pizza on the dining room table and walked over to him. "You are so sweet!" She put her arms around him, laid her head on his chest, and hugged him.

"Hey, 'can't you hear my heart beat?'"

She pulled her head back and smiled up at him. "Does it beat like this every

time I look your way?"

"Just like in the song, Kristie. Come on, let's eat some pizza before it gets cold and all my candles burn down."

As they were walking over to the table, the next song started up, the Troggs, "Love Is All Around." The music continued as they ate and was still going strong when they went back to the living room. She sat down on the sofa to look out over Lake Superior. The temperature had dropped significantly when the sun went down, and Joel built another fire.

When he sat down, Kristie swung around to face him. "Are we going to have another torrid make-out session like when you took me to that taillight park?"

"I don't know. I thought maybe we went too far that night."

"Oh yeah? Well I didn't!"

With that, she grabbed his shoulders and pushed him down against the arm of the sofa. "This, I believe, is more like how it was done." She moved her hands down his chest, leaned forward, and kissed him passionately.

Then just as quickly she got back up and sat down very primly at the other end of the sofa.

"Come on now Joel. I'm the girl. Do I have to show you how to do everything?" she asked demurely.

Joel shook his head in humorous disbelief as he got back up and slid over next to her.

"I guess I'm a little shy by nature. But I do like holding you and kissing you."

She smiled sweetly, starting to snuggle up to him, but he stopped her.

"No, I said, 'kissing you.'" He turned her and drew her toward him. They embraced and kissed, this time a soft, tender, long kiss. When their lips parted he caressed her face and ran his fingers into her hair. She looked deeply into those stunning eyes of his. Then he leaned back, putting an arm around her. "Now we can watch the lake."

"Joel Taylor! One kiss again? That's all? I thought you knew how couples made out during the Sixties." She shook her head. "All the old moves...guys today just have no idea. What can a girl do? It's no fun if I have to tell you what to do. I guess I was just born in the wrong decade."

"Ah, Kristie, now who's teasing? Come on, put your head back down on my shoulder. Isn't that what Paul Anka wanted?"

"Yeah, I guess so," she answered in mock disappointment. But she snuggled as close as she could get, and Joel tightened his arm around her. With his other hand, he gently caressed her hair as her head pressed against his shoulder.

Kristie sat there through several songs watching the waves roll in and feeling quite content. But when "Crimson and Clover" by Tommy James and the Shondells started, her mood changed, and the emotional struggle that had been tormenting her off and on all day surfaced again. The slow, seductive music had its effect.

*Now the way I must show her...
My, my such a sweet thing
I wanna do everything
What a beautiful feeling
Crimson and clover
Over and over...
Crimson and clover
Over and over...*

This morning, Kristie hadn't known what she should do. But now song after song came to mind, all leading her in one direction.

*Now I need you more than ever
Let's spend the night together...
I'll satisfy your every need
And I know you will satisfy me
Let's spend the night together...*

*Don't stop cookin', it feels so good, yeah
Hey don't stop now. Hey, come on! Mony...*

*In this car,
Our love went much too far.
It was exciting as thunder...
The windshield wipers seemed to say
"Together - together - together - together"*

Back in Grant Park, Joel had been struggling with an emotional conflict that had nothing to do with losing interest in her. But now he'd resolved that conflict. Now he was going to follow his heart, and they were together again. Everything was wonderful, and she was so happy. For now. What would happen as time went on? Would his interest in her eventually start to wane and slowly die? Like those two other times she thought she'd been in love--and thought those guys had been in love with her? Even Tom had been puzzled about why she didn't have more guys interested in her. Had Roger put his finger on what had always been the problem with her? The reason guys always left her? Do guys today need to make love to remain in love with a girl?

Joel. He was hers again. She wasn't going to lose him. She just wasn't. She couldn't take another heartbreak.

*Crimson and clover
Over and over...*

But her dream...the conflict...her mind was reeling. What to do...

Crimson and clover
Over and over...

What should she do? Indecision...but the music was carrying her...her mind was floating...

Crimson and clover
Over and over.

Tommy James had stopped singing. Kristie was snuggled close to Joel, her head still on his shoulder as he held her tight. She pulled away and looked up at him. He was watching the waves as the floodlights illuminated the shoreline.

He turned to face her. "Maybe I better get you back to the motel. It's getting late. Tomorrow we can do some more hiking, if you'd like. There used to be railroads up here, you know. I can show you some of the old rail beds."

"Joel..." she began, in a voice that trembled slightly. She took his hand and removed his arm from around her shoulder and turned back to looking out into the darkness that hovered over Lake Superior beyond the floodlights.

Thinking was over. She was going to act. But at that moment she realized she couldn't, just couldn't, come right out and say she wanted him to make love to her. Nor could she try to subtly seduce him. Everything within her revolted against doing that. No, what she had to do was tell him about her fear, her dream, and the conflict that was tormenting her--open up to him just as he had finally opened up to her and shared the desperate struggle that had been raging in his mind and heart. He'd been willing to reveal the doubts and fears of his inner soul to her. She wanted to do the same. With this sudden realization, a profound feeling of closeness to Joel overwhelmed her. Their relationship had reached a new level. Soul mates.

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Joel watched intently as Kristie stared out over the water. He'd been surprised when she removed his arm that way. Something was obviously troubling her, troubling her deeply.

"Joel," she said at last, "do you think Roger could have been right?" Her voice was soft. She turned and looked into his eyes.

"What?" His brow narrowed, utterly dumbfounded. "Right about what? Kristie, what's wrong? I can see the anguish in your eyes."

She flung her arms around his neck, and he held her for a good two minutes while she cried softly on his shoulder.

Finally, she backed away and looked up at him again. "Oh, Joel, it broke my heart when you walked away in Grant Park. I don't want to lose you again," she said, as she wiped tears from her face.

Another surprise. What in the world was she thinking? He reached out and took her hand in both of his, caressing it lovingly. "Lose me again? I don't know why

you said that, but I know you're hurting. You're in agony over something. Believe me, I know the symptoms, and I know what it's like." He squeezed her hand. "What's wrong? What's hurting you?" His heart was breaking for her.

She didn't answer immediately, but finally she began, her voice weak. "I told you why Roger left me. He wanted to make love, said it was just part of the dating scene and that I was living in the past. He was going to move on and find someone who understood adult relationships between men and women today. It made me mad at the time, but now that I've...now that we're back together, I started thinking about what he said. I remembered other things too, things that happened to me in the past. Things that hurt me."

"Roger said what he did because he was trying to get you to give him sex. How could that have anything to do with losing me?"

"Well, I got this terrible thought: what if Roger was right? I don't want to lose you like I lost him."

He was beginning to understand what she was saying, and it was yet another astonishing surprise. "You think you'll lose me if we don't make love?"

Her face contorted as if she was about to cry again. "Well, I just don't know anymore...I'm confused. Those things that happened in the past--I never understood why. Maybe they had something to do with what Roger said."

Joel dropped her hand and touched her cheek--a gentle, feather-light caress. "Kristie, honey, we don't need sex to keep us together." Then he paused, narrowing his eyes as he bored into hers. "You're hurting, but it's not because of Roger. No, it's because of something much deeper--because of those things in the past. What is it?"

Kristie looked back out on the lake. "It's a fear...my worst fear...goes back years...It's hard to talk about..." She was almost whispering.

"We can handle it...together...like when I told you my problem over Karen."

She nodded her head and continued, still looking through the window into the darkness. "I've...I've had boyfriends before. We'd go together for awhile, and I really got to like some of them. But then they would just seem to lose interest in me and drift away. There were two really special guys, one my senior year in high school and one in college. I was in love with them, Joel, and I was sure they loved me. With both of them I thought, this was it! I found the guy I was going to marry. It took a little longer with them, but the same thing happened. They both just lost interest and left me. I never knew why. I was devastated."

He could tell from the pain on her face that the hurt from those memories was welling up inside her, and the tears came again. After a minute or so, she continued.

"Ever since then, I've had this terrible fear--a fear that whenever I started to fall for a guy, he'd...I'd lose him, just like before."

"Then I did it too," he said. Ever since that day, Joel had felt anguish at

having hurt her. Now he felt even more miserable.

"Oh, no, Joel. That day in Grant Park, I could tell it was breaking your heart too. You said you'd like to keep seeing me but just couldn't let yourself fall in love again because of some old baggage. I believed you. That was totally different from what happened with those other guys.

"But don't you see? We're back together again. The conflict you felt inside is gone. I never knew why those two guys went looking for someone new when I thought they were in love with me. But when Roger said what he did about me, well, maybe that's been my problem all along. Maybe that's why they left me. Maybe guys today just need to make love to show their love and keep it alive, but I was living in the past, in some fairytale dream." New tears started rolling down her cheeks. "And that's why those two guys just left me for someone else. I don't want that to happen with us. I don't want a fairytale to make you...leave me." Another pause. "But yet...but yet I still have my dream, a dream about falling in love and getting married, and it's tearing me up inside. But maybe I just have to face the world as it really is." She paused, reaching out and touching his face just briefly. Her eyes also seemed to be reaching out to him...in emotional turmoil. "I'm willing, Joel..."

Joel saw the incredible irony of this situation, following so closely on the heels of his own emotional dilemma. He wanted desperately to comfort her, tell her that her dream was his dream. He looked into her eyes and smiled.

"Kristie," he said, shaking his head in utter dismay. "I'm glad I'm not the only one who draws wrong conclusions from a deep hurt in the past.

"Now let me tell you something. I've got as much red blood in me as the next guy. When I look at you, when I hold you, yeah, I sometimes think about us making love. But that's...well...that's thinking ahead...you know..." He suddenly was conscious of being very nervous. "...to maybe marriage some day."

Despite her tear-stained eyes, she tilted her head in that cute way she had and gave him an impish grin. "Is that a proposal?"

He didn't know whether he blushed or not, but he felt like he did. "Umm, no...I mean, not exactly." Trying to regain his composure, he continued.

"But I don't want to lose my train of thought. Sex isn't the only thing I think about when I touch you or hold you. Mostly it just warms me all over. You know the line from the Beatles' song--remember we heard it together that night at Johnny's Barbecue: *And when I touch you I feel happy inside*. It makes me feel close to you. It's how we show..." He felt nervous again. "...affection...to someone we like."

Her eyes brightened noticeably when he said that.

"But this conflict I feel pulling me in two different directions--how can I be sure I'm doing the right thing?" Kristie asked.

Joel softened his voice again. "I'm no psychologist, but it seems to me that the way to resolve this conflict you described is to make a decision. And I mean

here and now. Let's put that decision in terms of our music. Music expresses the soul of a culture. What part of the Sixties represents the real you? I think I know, but you've got to say it."

She looked at him with a puzzled expression. "What do you mean?"

"You and I both know that a major shift in rock-n-roll occurred around 1964 or 1965. From its beginnings in 1955 up until then, it reflected the morals of the Forties and Fifties. Then an era of protest and revolution began. Drugs and free love. The culture was changing, and that change was reflected in the music.

"The music from the Sixties is part of both of us, Kristie. But which half of Sixties rock-n-roll really represents your core values, your heart and soul? I know the answer for me. Sure, I love psychedelic rock--White Rabbit, Itchycoo Park, and all those songs. But does that mean I do LSD? No. I just enjoy the music, and it reflects a fascinating period of our culture. The same goes for free love. It's not me. I line up with the Beach Boys, *Wouldn't it be nice if we were older/Then we wouldn't have to wait so long/We could be married/And then we'd be happy/Then there wouldn't be a single thing we couldn't do.*"

She was looking at him intently, obviously hanging on every word.

"You want to know something, Joel?" she asked softly. "For a few minutes there with Roger when we were eating at The Ambassador in Houghton, I...well, I sort of got carried away with my imagination. The thought of making love suddenly seemed so exciting. But then that same song came to mind. The lyrics were saying that some things should wait until I'm married."

"And that's exactly what I believe."

A thought suddenly flashed into his mind. He wanted to tell her something, to share something very personal with her. But he wanted to be subtle. Reaching out, he touched her face gently with his fingertips.

"Karen believed that too," he said softly. "Do you understand what I'm telling you, Kristie?"

She smiled and nodded her head.

"Okay, now then, tell me this: what song best describes your romantic ideal, what you really want, this dream you have?"

"'Then He Kissed Me,' she answered without a moment's hesitation. "It's always been my favorite, what I always wanted to have happen to me. My dream."

"Well, then, that's your decision--which side of 1965 you really belong to. And you made that decision a long time ago. Don't change it now. Don't throw away your dream.

"Now I want you to think about another song: Merrilee Rush, Kristie, remember her? The whole song drips with sadness, emptiness."

The thought of that song and of it happening to Kristie made his own eyes

misty. He looked deeply into hers, trying to touch her soul.

"An 'angel of the morning'? Is that what you want to be? A 'victim of the night'? Well, it's not going to happen...not if I'm the guy," he added softly.

"And there another aspect to this whole issue. Do you remember that other line in 'Angel of the Morning'? *'If morning's echo says we've sinned/Well, it was what I wanted now.'* It's sin, Kristie. God designed sex for marriage, and it's sin outside of marriage."

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Kristie stared at him, astonished at what he had just said. Deep down, she'd always believed that Joel shared her dream about falling in love and then getting married. But her longstanding fear and the conflict she'd felt over Roger's comments had thrown her into a state of utter confusion. No, more than that: into a state of desperation. She had begun to doubt her own dream--and to wonder whether any guy today really shared it.

But what was the alternative to her dream? Joel had seen it clearly when he brought up that heartbreaking song. A vision of that girl in the song, an angel of the morning, suddenly filled her thoughts, and the pathos of the song overwhelmed her emotions.

*There'll be no strings to bind your hands,
Not if my love can't can't bind your heart.*

*If morning's echo says we've sinned,
Well, it was what I wanted now.*

*Just call me Angel of the morning,
Just touch my cheek before you leave me.
Then slowly turn away,
I won't beg you to stay.*

Yes, she could feel what it would be like--what it would feel like to give herself completely to the guy she loved, and said he loved her, only to find out that her love didn't bind his heart at all. The pain. The hurt. The despair.

But then another thought began taking form: yes, she had made that decision a long time ago, just like Joel said. And it was a decision that needed to be made outside of a relationship and not based on any relationship. Emotions when in love were just too slippery and uncertain. No matter how much she was in love, or how much she believed some guy was in love with her, that decision must stand and not be adjusted to fit new circumstances, whether good or bad. That's what Joel was telling her: you don't change now--you don't throw away your dream. And you do what is right.

Another song came to mind, also sung by a girl.

*Is this a lasting treasure
Or just a moment's pleasure?
Can I believe the magic of your sighs?*

Will you still love me tomorrow?

But Joel's poignant declaration that she would never be an angel of the morning renewed her spirit, renewed her belief in her dream--and the right course that love should take. Joel believed in her dream. It was his dream too. Suddenly, confusion was becoming clarity.

He was speaking again, and she refocused her attention on him.

"Kristie, you mean the world to me." He stretched out his arms and pulled her close again. "You don't need to give up your dream for me. We're living it right now. Let's see...how does your dream song go? He asked her to dance and walked her home that night. Then he kissed her. Check: I asked you out, and then I kissed you. Each time we saw each other, we couldn't wait to see each other again. Okay, that's already taken place too. Next, you wanted to let me know that I was more than a friend. You didn't know just what to do, so you whispered, 'I'm willing to make love to you.' Oops, no, that's not what she says in the song, is it? What does she say?"

Kristie felt her face flush, but she quoted the song faithfully: "*I didn't know just what to do/So I whispered, I love you.*" She waited, embarrassed, nervous, hoping.

"And I said that I loved you too, and then I kissed you."

Did she hear him right?

He was nodding his head. "Yeah, I've fallen in love with you, Kristie. If you didn't already know it, I'm telling you now. Just like Freddie Garrity. And now I'm going to kiss you."

For years, she'd wondered if she would ever hear those words again, and now she was hearing them from Joel, this fantastic guy who stole her heart the moment she met him. She was so happy, she melted into his arms as they kissed...the most wonderful kiss she ever had. *He kissed me in a way that I've never been kissed before/Kissed me in a way that I want to be kissed forever more.* His kiss said I love you.

"You know what the next line is. Are you going to give me all the love that you have?"

"All the love that I have, Joel."

"Well, then, I guess the next step in the song puts the ball back in my court. My parents are dead, so I can't take you home to meet my mom and my dad. But my Aunt Grace and Uncle Tony are like parents to me. When we get back to Chicago, that'll be our first date. You'll make Aunt Grace one very happy lady."

"Aunt Grace!" She pulled away and sat up straight, full of life again. "I had forgotten about that! Who's Aunt Grace? Last night you said she was praying. What did you mean?"

"Aunt Grace is my mother's sister. She's a very devout Christian lady. She

and Tony are also Italians, but she said she'd pray for us even though you're not."

"You told her about me?"

"What, you think I'm smart enough all on my own to figure out how much I screwed up and how much I needed you? When I was in the throes of my own conflict, I wanted wisdom far beyond my own, so a few weeks after Grant Park, I had dinner with Aunt Grace and Uncle Tony and told them all about you. The whole story. Everything. Aunt Grace was not happy with what I'd done to you. She showed me that it was time to let go. To let go of the past, to let go of Karen. When I left them that night, Aunt Grace promised to pray that we'd get back together."

Kristie felt ecstatic. "I can't wait to meet them. Without them, I wouldn't have gotten you back, would I?"

"The odds were against it. The odds were against it even with them. How could I possibly run across you by accident up here? And anyway, I thought you'd fallen for some new guy. But odds are often irrelevant when Aunt Grace prays."

Again Kristie turned to watch Lake Superior. Then she said, "Two nights and two emotional conflicts resolved." Turning back and looking into his gorgeous eyes, she smiled. "You know, just now was the second time you've called me 'honey'? I liked it."

"Well, maybe if I get to like you, I might do it again."

She scowled. "I should have expected that! And how long will I have to wait for it?"

"Oh, I don't know. But anyway, I think what we've accomplished these last two nights calls for some more kissing. And we'll just see who knows how to make out!"

He took her shoulders and pushed her down on the sofa. Taking her hands in his and pinning them over her head against the armrest, he leaned over and kissed her. Then he slid his lips gently over her face and finally to her neck and kissed her several more times. Her eyes closed as she sighed softly and felt the passion build within her. After releasing her, he cupped his hands around her sides and slowly worked them down to the bottom of her sweatshirt. He pulled it up to her waist and looked at her tight leggings as they hugged her every curve. Kristie followed his eyes as he did that. For a moment, her heart racing, she thought he was going to pull her shirt all the way up. But he didn't.

"I was right," he said.

"Right about what?" she asked in a soft, dreamy voice, anticipating something blissfully romantic.

"You are hippy."

"Joel Taylor, get off of me! I am not hippy! My hips measure 34 inches. I told you that. When are you going to get it into that thick head of yours that 34 is *not* hippy? And to think I was actually going to let you make love to me! Now you're not even going to get a goodnight kiss!"

"Oh, you think not?" He got up, then grabbed her hand, pulling her up too. In one continuous motion, he swept her into his arms. She started to resist but then surrendered to his embrace and kiss. When they finally drew apart, she caught her breath and let out a long sigh.

He just smiled and said, "Come on. I'll drive you back to the motel."

She looked over at the sofa, and her heart skipped a beat at the memory of what she thought he was going to do just now. Then, turning to Joel and cocking her head with a wry grin, she added softly, "I guess you did know how they made out in the Sixties."

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