

## A Real Love Story

By: Hazel Gay Lee © 2013

He lusted after her. She lusted after him. Isn't that the way most romantic love stories are supposed to begin? Two people passionately drawn to each other in the most primitive way with raging sexual desires fueling their lust.

Although we all desire permanent romance with such lustful passion and desire, it is not what most real love stories are made of. Once we get what we want we may not want it again. The initial attraction dies. If we make it permanent, why lust after something we already have? We change and evolve over time. Our interest and attractions change as we change. This love story is not about the initial attraction that creates all those crazy feelings of lust and passion, although it includes them too, but about the real love that remains once the crazy and temporary emotions end.

He was nothing I wanted when our paths crossed. He was older, arrogant, domineering, and quite honestly, not a nice man. He was full of greed, wealth, married, and successful. He had power and he desired more power. He ruled over those under him with tyrannical arrogance. His personal life was secondary to his desire for wealth and power. Except for financially providing for his family, he basically ignored them. He ignored anyone who he thought was inferior to him, which was the majority of the people he met and knew. He admired those with greater power and wealth than he had. He valued beauty because he learned young in life that beautiful people get more respect and attention than less attractive people. With respect and attention comes power and opportunity. So every morning he started his day at the gym and every night he ended his day at the gym. He carefully watched his weight while toning every muscle in his body to perfection. He ate healthy foods, monitored his alcohol consumption, and groomed himself with expensive care products, perfumes, and spa pampering. He dressed in only the finest clothes and drove extravagant cars as an extension of his image. He was successful and he looked, played, and flaunted every part of his success while using every part of his money and power to get everything he wanted. He used people and their weaknesses. He used opportunity that made him rich even at the cost of leaving others starving and homeless. He would have sold his own family to the devil if it would have meant god status for him. There was nothing he would not do to get what he wanted.

From the moment I met him I instantly did not like him. We were at a wedding of a mutual friend when someone introduced us to each other. What I saw was a man, no different than Hitler, who wanted to take over the environment surrounding him. He made me feel like he was doing me a favor just to touch my hand in our introduction. I knew I was nothing he wanted or liked either. I did not fit the beautiful image that he wanted his life to consist of. His wife was sitting beside him, dressed in a lavish gown and adorned with expensive jewelry. She was beautiful and a lovely extension of his superficial mentality. She was slender, athletic toned, well proportioned, and what most people would consider an elegant woman. Her behavior and mannerism was almost royal-scripted as she extended her hand and smiled at our introduction.

For reasons unknown the bride and groom had sat me at the same table where they were sitting. My first thought was that the bride, a very dear friend of mine, was punishing me for refusing her request that I be included in her bridal party. She was marrying into a wealthy family who wanted only the best for their son's wedding. I could not afford the expensive dress and accessories that her wedding party was expected to purchase and wear so I declined her offer of being one of her many bridesmaids. Why else would I be sitting next to such an arrogant couple that I had absolutely nothing in common with? What conversation could we possibly have that would be of interest to either of us? Suddenly I longed for a date. I had not brought a date with me. I had hopes of meeting my prince charming and eligible bachelor at the wedding, fall in love, and dance my way into forever happiness like Cinderella had. A fantasy, I know, but this girl has never outgrown that forever after fairytale dream of true love. The other guests at our table were more evenly matched with this couple I had just met, but not with me. They would probably enjoy their table partners. I could already predict this evening was going to be nothing but miserable with very dull conversation. Hopefully the food would be good and the dancing would make up for the remainder of the time I was forced to sit at a table filled with arrogant snobs.

My prediction was correct. The wedding was expensive and beautiful. The reception was elegant. The conversation was boring. My table guests were nothing more than rich and elite socialites who seemed to have a lot in common with each other. However, the food was delicious and the dancing was superb. As I danced my way around the room I met all the eligible bachelors my friend had promised would be there. After an hour of dancing no one special had

caught my attention and I already knew that my fairytale dream would not come true that night and I would be going home alone.

Life is so strange at times. It is so unpredictable. Just when I thought I had it all figured out, everything changed. Prince Charming did not appear and sweep me off my feet into fairytale land. I wish! Instead, my training as a nurse brought me to my knees and face to face with him. The first time our lips touched was not for a romantic kiss in the fit of lustful passion, but when I had to perform CPR to save his life. That arrogant bastard, superficially and literally because he was the child of an unwed mother, was getting my full attention as someone called 911. The paramedics were taking far too long to arrive. No one else at the reception knew CPR so I was the chosen one to jump into action when he collapsed on the dance floor. His lovely wife stood helpless and watched. He looked like the picture of perfect health, but his aging heart had enough of the iron pumping, the muscle building, the rigid work hours and stress one must endure to stay at the top of the human power chain. He wasn't that young man anymore who had been able to withstand all the pressure as he had done in the past years. He was at an age now when most people had already retired. He was in complete denial that he was getting older. He was still trying to grab the fountain of youth as if eternal life on this earth was within his grasp.

"Money and power cannot save a person from dying," I thought as I stood up to allow the paramedics to take over. His wife was sitting in a chair nearby, totally at loss to what to do. She was used to being on the arm of someone strong and powerful that demanded beauty and perfection. She was not used to seeing her husband so vulnerable on the floor while paramedics were trying to stabilize him for transport to the nearest emergency trauma center. Someone suggested she call her family. She tried to dial her phone but she couldn't. I finally dialed the number for her to ask that her family meet her at the hospital. She was a lot younger than her husband and apparently had not seen him requiring medical care before.

He was taken to the hospital where I work. After a short visit to the emergency room he was transferred to the critical care cardiac unit. A week later he was transferred to my floor as my patient. I begged my supervisor to put me on a different wing of our nursing station. He was the type of patient that I did not want to take care of. I have no patience for demanding and arrogant men or woman like him. I had already heard the nurses in the cardiac unit talking about him. He was angry that his heart had failed him. He was

beyond demanding and required their undivided attention around the clock. He slept little and wanted to continue to work from his hospital bed despite the machines, tubes, and cords that were surrounding him. He demanded a phone which was against strict hospital rules. His wife brought him one anyway. He finally got the attention of the hospital administrator who allowed him to pay extra for his own private critical care nurses to care for him. They would have quit within the first hour except the pay was double their normal hourly wage so they stayed. I was hoping that these private nurses would accompany him to my floor too.

Money can buy everything except true love, health, and life. Even friends can be bought. They may not be true friends, but it is amazing how loud money can talk. He had money and it was talking very loud for him. With his money came power which he totally enjoyed using and abusing.

The private nurses did not accompany him to my floor. Instead he drove my colleagues and me crazy with his constant demands and unreasonable expectations. His wife would come and go throughout the day, but she had their young children to care for and could not stay for very long at each visit. She told him that she could not stand the smell of a hospital. There was something about a hospital that she could not tolerate, but she ran his errands and did everything else for him that the nurses could not. He finally decided he was well enough to go home despite his doctor's recommendation to remain hospitalized until all the testing was completed and the results back. It had been many years since he had seen a physician or had a physical. The doctors were running every lab and machine test on him to determine why he had a major heart attack when his lifestyle seemed basically healthy despite his age and stress. I could not wait for him to leave. Everything I did for him required more of me than I had ever given to a patient before. Nothing pleased him and the longer he was a patient the more irate he became at the nursing and hospital staff. Even the custodians could not empty the trash can correctly. He was a plague that all of us wanted to avoid.

Much to our happiness, and against his physician's orders, he signed himself out of the hospital one morning and went home. We had a party to celebrate. Even the doctors had to admit that he was the most difficult patient that they had ever encountered. He would not listen to anyone, take advice he did not agree with, or admit that he was sick. He was perfectly fine and we were inferior to his knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. I rejoiced that he was gone from my life forever but fate had a different plan in mind.

I received a phone call a few weeks later from his wife. He wanted to talk to me and asked that I come to their home. I had no idea what he wanted to talk to me about. I was surprised he even knew my name. At the hospital he only called me “nurse” like he did everyone else who was assigned to care for him. It was one of his ways of making us feel inferior to him. The only names he acknowledged were the doctors and hospital administrator because they were men of power and status and more equal to him. He treated the rest of us as servants.

I stood at his palace door and knocked. A butler answered the door, took my coat, and escorted me into a sitting room. It was a sprawling mansion that was elaborately decorated with antiques and artwork from all over the world. It fit his image perfectly. Elegant cars, fancy clothes, pampered beauty, money, power, and now this grand palace that was nothing more than a showcase of what wealth and power can buy. “This is what filthy rich must look like,” I thought as I looked around me. Wealth can become a person, but filthy rich makes a person look like a greedy sinner for possessing more than their allotment for even the extravagant wealthy.

I was escorted to his elaborate office. There he sat behind a massive hand carved mahogany desk in a room that my entire apartment could fit into. He stood up when I came in but did not extend his hand for a greeting. Instead he gestured that I sit in the chair closest to his desk. Then he sat back down without speaking word. He kept looking me over as if he was examining me to see if I was fit to be in his presence. He never smiled or acted friendly. He made me feel very uncomfortable.

“You asked to see me?” I finally said.

“I did,” he stated.

“May I ask why?” I said.

“I need a private nurse,” he finally replied after a long silence.

“I am not interested in taking the job” I told him.

“I did not ask you if you were interested in taking the job,” he harshly replied, “I told you I need a private nurse and you are the one I have chosen. You can start tomorrow.”

I stood up to leave. I was outraged at how he spoke to me! Did he think he owned me? How dare him! Did he really think money could buy me too? What an arrogant jerk! He was lucky I was at my friend’s wedding reception to save his life. Is this how he shows his gratitude? I had heard enough. I didn’t care if he needed a private nurse. I had enough of him. It was time for me to go.

I walked to the door as he sat quietly and watched me. He did not seem upset by my leaving or my rejection of his job offer. He didn't even stand up or try to stop me from going. I opened the door, glanced back, looked straight into his eyes with a stern angry stare, and walked out. I didn't even have a reply that I felt was appropriate to say. My mother would have washed my brain and mouth out with soap if she heard my thoughts and the words I wanted to tell him right then. It was better I leave and keep my personal feelings, words, and thoughts to myself than to give him the satisfaction of knowing how much he had outraged me.

The butler escorted me to the front door. He could tell I was angry. He didn't ask me anything but as he handed me my coat I told him to tell his employer that I was not interested in his job offer. I then paused at the door and told the butler to give "His Royal Highness" one last message from me.

"What might that be madam?" asked the butler with a little grin on his lips.

"Tell him that power and money can buy him the world, but it cannot buy him life, health, or me," I said. Then I added, "It cannot buy him real love, happiness, or peace either, nor the right to dictate my life and what I will or will not do!"

The next day was my day off from work. I was enjoying a hot cup of tea when someone knocked on my door. There stood his wife. She asked to come in. I was embarrassed to invite her in. My comfortable apartment is small, sparsely furnished, and a peasant dwelling compared to her mansion. However, I couldn't leave her standing at my door so I invited her in and offered her a cup of hot tea. She graciously declined. To my surprise she did not ask me to take the job as her husband's private nurse. Instead she wanted to know where I got the strength from to resist men like her husband and their demands and expectations. Why wasn't I intimidated by his power and tempted by his money? What did I have that she did not possess and how could she get it? I looked at her and marveled at what she was asking.

"Are you afraid of your husband?" I asked.

"Every day of my life I live in fear of him. You do not know what he is capable of doing," she said.

"What could he possibly do to me?" I asked her.

"Well, just this morning I heard him on the phone talking to your employer. He wants you fired. Then I heard him talking to your landlord. He

wants you evicted. He knows if you have no money or place to live that you will be forced to work for him," she replied.

"He can't do that to me!" I said in shock while feeling increasing rage within.

"Powerful men like my husband can do anything. His money can buy anything. You have no idea what kind of man you are dealing with," said his wife.

"Why does he need a private nurse?" I asked her.

"Because he is sick," she replied.

She wasn't joking either. He was sick. The tests had all came back. As it turned out his heart attack was a blessing in disguise. It had forced him to see a doctor. He would heal from his heart attack, but they had found prostate, colon, and bone cancer that probably began in his prostate. His healthy and perfect body was only a window dressing. Inside he was dying of something bigger and more powerful than he was. His money could buy the treatment and medication needed to fight but it could not heal him. His power could get him resources and into the most respected cancer treatment facilities but it could not guarantee they would be successful. He was facing a giant and this giant was determined to win.

"Why does he want me to be his private nurse?" I asked his wife.

"I don't know," she replied, "but he does. He wants no one else but you. I don't want to take care of a sick man. I want to leave. I want to take the children and leave. I just don't know how."

I don't know what it was about her that got to me, but she got to me. How could a woman live in such fear just to enjoy a lavish lifestyle? How could she take his money and jewels, adorn his side when he is strong and handsome, but abandon him when he is sick? What kind of woman would use a man for her own purpose and discard him when that purpose no longer fit her needs? Probably a woman who is married to a man just like her. He would have discarded her if she was sick, lost her beauty, and no longer met his needs. I realized at that moment that she was as cruel and superficial as her husband. She would get his money and their young children. She would find another rich and powerful man to lord over her while she pampered herself and lived like a queen just to make him look good. She wasn't afraid of her husband at all! She was here for her own selfish reasons. If I agreed to be his private nurse it would give him someone new to focus on so she could quietly slip out the door and leave. His focus was on getting well and beating his cancer. He needed someone

who understood his care and treatment to help him through his battle for wellness. She wasn't the one to do it. After she left I looked around at my humble abode and was thankful that I like the simple things of life. I have true friends who love me through richer or poorer and sickness and health. The rich and powerful can have their extravagant lifestyle of superficial beauty. I am content with what I have.

His wife had not lied. He had called both my employer and landlord to ask them to fire and evict me. He even offered them money, a lot of money, to do it. There is something to be said for dependability, responsibility, friendship, and loyalty. My employment record was superb and the hospital had no grounds to terminate me that the nurse's union would accept, so I kept my job. My landlady was tempted by the money, but my mother and she were best friends since childhood and she was not going to let anything, not even a lot of money, violate that friendship. How he got her name and phone number I do not know, but his money and power did not put me in the desperate and destitute situation he wanted me in to force me to do what he wanted me to do.

A couple weeks passed. I was at the nursing station at work when we saw him walking down the hallway toward us. Instantly my colleagues disappeared to do this or that, leaving me alone to deal with him. He did not look sick. He looked extremely fit and healthy. He was dressed in a designer suit and groomed to perfection. He was the last person I wanted to see.

"I want to talk to you," he said in a demanding voice.

"I don't want to talk to you," I replied. "I am not taking the job. You tried to have me fired and evicted. The nerve of you to think you own me or can buy me! I am outraged at your bold arrogance! Take your job offer and money and leave, Your Royal Highness!"

I don't know where it came from. It just rolled off my tongue. The sarcastic tone of voice when I called him, "Your Royal Highness." The lack of intimidation or fear I had for him. His superior attitude. I couldn't take another moment of him! I just wanted him to disappear forever.

He stood looking at me without a word. It was obvious that he was not used to dealing with anyone like me. I am not saying money isn't important but I wasn't going to sell my soul to the devil for it. Working for him would be equal to committing myself to hell. I couldn't think of a worse punishment or torment. I didn't tell him what I was thinking but I think he knew. He continued to just stand there. I turned my back on him to walk away when I heard him say in a

soft tone of voice, "Please." I stopped in my tracks. I knew it took everything within him to utter that word. I was surprised it was even in his vocabulary. I stood there with my back to him and mentally processed what I had just heard. Did he actually say, "Please?" Was my ears deceiving me? Was his expensive perfume causing me to hallucinate? Then I heard it again. A soft, almost desperate voice say, "Please!" I turned around and looked into his eyes. My anger was melting to curiosity.

"Why do you want me to be your private nurse?" I asked him.

"You are strong. I need you," he answered.

A man who could buy everything was telling me that he needed me. A powerful man was telling me I was strong. He couldn't buy me. He couldn't control me. He couldn't intimidate me or put fear in me. He had finally realized the limits to his money and power and I was that limit. He looked pitiful as he stood there. He was right. I am strong. I am strong enough to stand up to him.

"I will think about it," I finally said.

"Thank you," he replied before walking away.

Did he actually say "thank you? Unbelievable! He had spent over two weeks in the hospital and not one time did he say "Please" or "Thank you" to anyone. He treated us like inferior human beings who he could barely tolerate. He must be really sick to bring his pride down to ghetto level just to utter a simple "Please" and "Thank you." For the first time I saw him as human who was desperate for human kindness and compassion. I watched him walk down the hallway and leave. He did not walk like the man who walked down this same hallway a few weeks earlier. That man acted like he was shaking the filthy dust off his shoes to finally get rid of us. It was an arrogant walk of a healthy man who had just cheated death. This man walked like a man who wasn't sure what tomorrow was going to bring. I actually felt sorry for him as he walked away.

I waited a few days and I went to see him. If he wanted me to be his private nurse it was going to be on my terms, not his. If he violated my conditions then I would terminate my employment with him immediately and without notice. He was not going to treat me like he had at the hospital. He listened. He wanted to know when I could start. I had already spoken with the hospital personnel office who agreed to my leave of absence with the promise of a guaranteed position when I was ready to come back. I knew he wasn't going to live long and I needed a guaranteed permanent job and not a temporary one.

One of my conditions was that he would call me by my name, not nurse. "Abigail," I said to him, "My name is Abigail. That is what you will call me." He was not going to treat me like a servant again. I was not inferior to him. He would call me by my name and acknowledge who I was. I laid out the other conditions of my employment and one by one he agreed to my demands. I told him I would start working the next morning. The butler walked me to the door, handed me my coat, and welcomed me to the staff. He seemed very pleased I had agreed to take the job. I asked him how long he had been at this house and he just laughed and said, "For as long as I can remember." I shook my head and asked him how he had survived working for such an arrogant and rude man? He smiled without comment. I told him that he must be a saint or on a mission from heaven to have survived. I just hoped that I was able to survive being there during the end stages of my new patient's life.

His wife met me at the door the following morning. She took me to his study where they were waiting for us. The doctor went over everything he wanted in his treatment plan: his medication, chemotherapy treatment, diet, sleep and exercise schedule, and so on. Every time he interrupted the doctor he was reminded that if he wanted to be healed of his cancer and live he was going to have to listen and do what he needed to do. His wife seemed preoccupied as the doctor talked. "Two peas in a pod," I thought as I watched her behavior. I wondered if she had ever spoken the words, "Please" and "Thank you" to anyone below her status. I doubted it, but then again, I was still in shock from hearing those words from her husband. She seemed pleased that I had agreed to take the job. It would mean she had more time to do what she wanted without being bothered by him.

We quickly fell into a daily routine. They both were driving me nuts. I almost quit several times before she finally left. I remembered the day she came to see me. She told me then that she wanted to take the children and leave. She initiated an argument then promptly did exactly what she had planned to do all along. She took the children and left. There was no mention of a divorce or splitting assets. She wasn't about to lose the mansion and money she would get when he died. She told him she couldn't stay in their home any longer because it was gradually being turned into a hospital to meet his medical needs and she could not stand the smell of a hospital. She would visit him but she couldn't live in a hospital. He didn't seem surprised when she left. He missed the children at first but after only a few days the children came back and spent more time at his palace playing with the butler than they spent with him or her. She had this or

that social event to attend. Her daily spa pampering and beauty regiment was another priority. She needed someone to watch the children. Just because he was sick did not mean she was. She was overseeing his business affairs and investments too. Basically she was meeting with each executive at a high class hotel to discuss how the business was doing. When the children did visit their mother they were eager to share all the details of their life in the executive penthouse that their father owned and where she was staying. The butler and I heard more details than we wanted to know. I was reminded how wonderful it was to be an average person with a limited income and with valued morals than a beautiful woman or man with unlimited resources and absolutely no morals. I knew that if the tables were reversed he would be doing exactly what she was doing. They definitely deserved each other.

At first it looked like he was going to beat the cancer and live for a few more years, cheating death again in his lust for the fountain of youth and eternal life on earth. He kept his body looking good, exercised regularly, watched his diet, and followed his doctor's instructions. His treatment was going well. He continued to stay active in his many businesses as an overseeing owner with executives managing the day to day operations. He didn't treat the executives too badly, but the employees under them were inferior to him and he treated them as such. He should have treated his executives that way for sleeping with his wife but he looked the other way to keep everyone happy and busy, especially her. He was no fool, not blind, and obviously had his own encounters and history with dishonesty, disloyalty, and unfaithfulness.

I wouldn't let him treat me the way he treated the employees below his executives. Once in a while he would slip back and start making me feel inferior, but I put my foot down each time it happened and reminded him of my employment terms. I told him that if he wanted that I leave then for him to continue to treat me as such and I would walk out the door. He would stop every time and changed his attitude toward me. I never heard him say "Please" or "Thank you" again. I noticed he treated the butler much like he treated me. The butler must have put his foot down at one time like I had to get the respected treatment I demanded from him.

I liked the butler. He looked a few years older than me. He was patient and professional. He was a very private man that never discussed his personal life. I assumed he was married because he wore a wedding band, although I never saw a woman visit him or him mention a wife. He seemed to have a similar work schedule as mine. He was always there when I was. He never

mentioned children but our employer's children loved him and he was good with them, so I assumed he had children too. I wanted to get to know him and the rest of the house staff better but my patient wanted my undivided attention from the moment I arrived each day to the moment I left, leaving little time for interaction with anyone except him. I saw the cook when his food was served. I saw the maid when his bedding needed changed. I saw the housekeeper working throughout the house. I saw the gardener as I came and went from his palace. Occasionally we would briefly talk to each other in passing, or I would see them talking to each other, but mostly my day consisted of him. He was so demanding that by the time the butler handed me my coat and said goodnight I just wanted to go home and sleep.

Months passed and gradually his health began to fail. His cancer was in remission for a short time but then it came back with vengeance. By this time I seldom saw his wife. The children were living with their father now and occasionally visiting their mother. Everyone in the house took care of them. I didn't mind. They were young but good mannered and polite children. They made him smile. I wondered what would become of them when he died. It didn't seem like their mother wanted them. She was too busy just taking care of her own needs and desires. I never had children so I had no idea what kind of mother I would be someday but I was sure I would be a better mother than her. Her beauty and social life was her priority. He wasn't much of a father either. They made him smile but he never played with them. He didn't talk to them like they were important either. For the most part, he ignored them. The person who took care of them mostly was the butler. He would play with them. He would talk to them. He probably learned how to do that from his own children. He seemed a natural when it came to being a father. The children absolutely adored him. When I mentioned this to the butler one day he shook his head and simply said, "They need me." It reminded me of the day their father had visited the hospital and said that I was strong and he needed me. I told the butler it was nice to be needed.

The months continued to vanish away and he was gradually getting worse. He was now confined to his bed for the majority of the day and night. His doctor kept his pain subdued while keeping him mentally alert. I saw him ask the butler to make some business calls for him when he could not do it. His children visited his room every day now. His wife would come to visit him and the children about once a month. He never asked for her or about her. I couldn't understand their crazy marriage. I swore if I ever marry it will be for love and

not money. I will spend every minute I can with my mate. I never want a marriage like they have. I deserve to be loved. I want to be loved. I want a man I can respect and appreciate. I do not want a man who is so lustful for money, power, and beauty that I am just a pretty extension of his perfect and superficial image. I want a man who treats me as an equal. What they have is nothing I want. The more I dealt with both of them the more I am convinced that they both sold their soul to the devil to get what they have and to treat people like they do. They are arrogant snobs who gave up happiness and love for the almighty dollar and the power it creates. Someday I will marry, have a family, and have everything I want. I would rather have nothing than to settle for anything less than what I want and deserve. I owe it to them for reminding me to appreciate that day when it finally arrives. Some people envy the rich and powerful, but not me. After interacting with them on such a personal level I know they have nothing worth envying. He is not a nice person. She is not a nice person. It took everything within me just to tolerate them. I am a professional nurse. I act like a professional nurse even at times I do not feel like it. Dealing with them brought out the worst in me, but I was determined to stay professional. Amazingly, I began to see the best in me coming out of the ashes of my worst.

The children were spending a rare day with their mother on the day he died. His doctor was there. I was there. His doctor called for the butler to be there too. The butler and I stood on one side of his bed and the doctor on the other. I was holding my patient's hand. The butler put his own hand on my patient's forehead and began softly finger combing his hair. They were looking at each other with a tender and loving smile on each of their faces. They never spoke a word to each other but their eyes were saying goodbye. It was the first time I saw love in my patient's eyes. I could tell the butler was very moved at that moment. He had worked for him for a long time. He had tolerated a lot. My heart went out to him. Just the year I had been his private nurse made it difficult for me to stand there. I couldn't imagine how it would feel if I had a history of many years taking care of him. Except for not having the opportunity to say goodbye, there is nothing sadder than watching a person say goodbye with their eyes or words and then take their final breath. I looked at the butler. I wondered what would happen now to the children if there was no reason for him to stay. He had already told me that he would not work for her. He did not like her. He wanted nothing to do with her once my patient was gone. Everybody's life was changing at that moment.

I don't know what made me do it or even why I did it. Before he closed his eyes and took his final breath I bent down and kissed him on the lips. A soft and tender kiss. It was the second time our lips had touched. The first time I was giving him CPR on the day we met. It was not a romantic kiss in the fit of lustful passion. It was a tender and sweet goodbye kiss to a man who had spent his entire life surrounded by beautiful women. And now he had come to the end of his life and the last person to kiss him was an average woman of no special beauty. Maybe that is why I did it. I am not sure what my motivation or motive was but I just had this overwhelming urge to bend down and kiss him so I did. He then closed his eyes and died. We stood there for what seemed like eternity. Tears began to roll from my eyes. I looked over at the doctor. He stood quietly with his head bowed. I looked at the butler. Tears were streaming down his cheek. It was over. He was gone. All of his wealth and power had not been able to save him. His beautiful wife was not there to see him go. His last kiss should have come from her but instead it came from an average looking nurse who didn't care if he was rich, poor, powerful, or weak. I was glad his young children were not there to see him die. I want them to remember him alive and smiling.

I had met him a little over a year ago. The one who loved him the most was the butler. He had known him the longest. He was the right person to be there when he took his final breathe to wherever he was going. I was glad I was not God at that moment. It would be a nightmare for any judge to judge him, and especially the almighty one who knows everything about us, even to our hidden secrets and thoughts. He also knows our sins that we think are hidden or forgotten that everyone seems to recall or gossip about once we are gone. For his sake I was glad we have such a merciful God to stand before.

Are you disappointed? At the beginning of this story did you think I was going to fall madly in love with him and you were waiting for it to happen? It could have been an amazing love story where he gets well, has a near death transformation experience, changes his ways, leaves his wife, divorces her, and marries me. That happy ever after fairytale love that I was looking for on the day we met. It could have been a lustful, passionate, and forbidden love affair where he stays with his wife and my heart is broken. I would then have to decide how I was going to fit into his life with his children and her included. Either way someone would get hurt and my story would end up a tragedy. I hate tragedies. They make me cry.

I will keep my word though. I promise. This is not the end of this story but rather the beginning of another one. How did I say it in the beginning? Oh yes, I

remember now. It seems so long ago since this story began. I said it was a love story, but this love story is not about the initial attraction that creates all those crazy feelings of lust and passion, although it includes them too, but about the real love that remains once the crazy and temporary emotions end.

You will not be disappointed. It wasn't love at first sight with an instant Cinderella ending, but it was pretty amazing. When it did happen the passion and animal lust was all over us. It happened a couple months before he died. I had just covered him and told him goodnight. It had been a really rough day. I started to leave his room when he grabbed my hand and said, "I am dying but you don't have to." I asked him what he meant. He was being real for the first time since we met. He said that he came from an unwed mother who had nothing to a powerful man that people feared who had everything. What good was everything now? He couldn't even use or enjoy it. He wasn't even proud of the person he had become. "Water under the bridge," he said, "just water under the bridge." He was too sick and old to change now. He had even asked God to forgive him but that hadn't given him much peace either. He would be remembered for who he was and he was not proud of that. He said that he was "One of those people no one forgets and everyone doesn't want to remember." He was like Hitler. His deeds on this earth were so awful that when his name is uttered it will be forever spoken with disgust. Too late to change now, but not too late for me. He told me to "Stop long enough to touch a miracle." He had hoped for a miracle of healing but he did not get one because he didn't deserve it. He said that I deserved one because I had a good heart. "Look around," he said, "just look around." He then closed his eyes and fell to sleep.

I was puzzled by his words and what they meant. How can I stop long enough to touch a miracle? What miracle? He was dying but I didn't have to? What crazy things to say. I don't know how he will be remembered. We each have our own memories depending on who we are. To his children he will be remembered as their father. Except for an occasional visit and his financial support, I think his wife had already forgotten him and will never look back to remember anything. To me he was my patient. To all who worked for him he was our paycheck. We don't usually remember our paychecks once they are no longer there. He was not a nice person, but Hitler status, well that was pretty extreme, even for him. However, it didn't surprise me that he compared himself to Hitler. I even compared him to Hitler the first time I met him. He always saw himself as very powerful and a tyrant for getting what he wanted. It would seem only fair he would compare himself to someone like him, even if he hadn't

crossed the line to the murderous, bloody, and hateful extreme Hitler did. He was a cruel man people feared that had power and money that he used and abused. Maybe that is what he meant when he placed himself in the same category with Hitler. I don't know if his name will forever be spoken with disgust, but I think he was more afraid of being totally forgotten than being remembered in a negative or positive way. Its water under the bridge now, just water under the bridge.

Apparently the butler left right after I did every day. He was getting his coat to leave when I walked toward the door. I usually was gone by now but my patient had detained me to talk so I was running late. When the butler saw me he got my coat too. As we walked out the door I told him what he had said to me and ask the butler if he knew what he meant by his words? The butler thought for a moment and said, "I'll have to think about it and it is too cold to stand outside here and think. Perhaps if you are not in a hurry we can go to the diner nearby where it is warm, have dinner, and discussed it further." I had no one to go home to so I accepted his offer. It was our first time to talk outside our employer's mansion. Maybe, just maybe, he would open up and not be so secretive about his private life so I could learn more about him.

Well, you probably have guessed it by now. I did not learn anything about his private life or what our employer meant by his words to me. We first talked about the weather and how cold it was. Then we talked about what was going to happen to the children once their father was gone. He told me that he did not like her. He would not work for her. He said that he had watched her from the time they married. She was a cruel and greedy woman. She wanted children immediately to trap him so he would never get rid of her. At that time she did not think about getting rid of him, but she had since his heart attack. She was beautiful. She wanted a handsome and strong man by her side, not a sick one. She even joking asked the butler how to get rid of him but the butler had not answered her. He never told our employer about her comment. He was sick and the last thing he needed to worry about was a wife who no longer wanted him. He would be there to watch out for his employer and make sure she did not harm him. That is why he was glad I took the job. Between his doctor, the butler, and I we could protect him from her. He felt sorry for the children. She was not a good mother. He would leave once my patient was gone. I felt sorry for the children because they were really going to miss him. He would miss them too. They were so attached to each other. He said that he was glad she

had moved out and stopped coming to visit. He was also glad she finally left the children with their father so he could enjoy them before he died.

We talked about this and that but nothing personal. We laughed and forgot the time. I could not remember the last time I had so much fun just talking to someone. My social life had been put on hold since working for him. He wore me out every day. It was nice to have someone to talk with that was not my patient. We finally said our goodbyes and went our separate ways.

I was just getting ready to crawl into bed when someone knocked on my door. I looked out the peep hole to see the butler standing there. I knew the moment I saw him that my patient had died or something had happened to his children. I braced myself for the bad news and opened the door.

What happened next happened so fast I hardly know where to begin. No one had died, the children were fine, and I was in the arms of the butler kissing him passionately. It was crazy kissing, lustful kissing, sexual and stimulating kissing. I couldn't stop kissing him. I couldn't keep my hands off of him nor could he keep his hands off of me. Every lustful desire, every passionate thought, every sexual fantasy was being awakened inside of us. I could feel his hands going up and down my body as he pressed himself firmly against me. I found myself lifting his shirt and running my hands and fingers down his bare back as I was kissing him. He felt so firm, strong, and masculine. The kissing was getting hotter and hotter. The sexual desires were causing sweat to roll down us while we pressed our bodies tightly together. I felt like I couldn't take another breath. I was being suffocated by desire. I looked into his eyes for what seemed like eternity while he looked into mine. I don't know who started it or how it happened and I didn't care. We were like two wild and passionate sexual beasts that just could not get enough of each other. Our animal instincts, passion, and desires were awakened and alive. The lust, the touching, the kissing, it all was causing us to get dizzy with desire. What was I doing? I didn't know anything about this man. Was he married? Did he have children? What would happen to us if we continued only to find out later it was a mistake? We had to work together. I was breaking my own rule of never getting involved with a co-worker. I couldn't help it. There was nothing I wanted more at that moment than him. I could taste him, smell him, feel him, touch him, and hear him breathing heavier as our kissing became more passionate. I loved the way his tongue was playing with my tongue as he sucked on it, tickled it, separated my lips and penetrated my mouth as deep as he could with it. I loved the way our tongues went back and forth inside each other's mouth. I was kissing him back

the same way he was kissing me, playful and luscious, a perfect foreplay of what our bodies was wanting to do next. Was it us or the room that was spinning? I wanted to stop and ask him a question but I could not keep my lips away from his. He took his hands over the bodice of my night shirt and was feeling my breast through the lace. He played with my nipples as he continued to cup my lace covered breast in his hands before hugging me tightly against him and lifting my top to rub my bare back like I had done to him. I was ready for bed when I opened the door so there were no bra straps or hooks to undo. My body was clothed with only the lacy silk top, matching baby-doll bottom, and my panties. He was fully dressed but it didn't stop us from exploring what was waiting for us underneath the pieces of fabric and lace. I could feel his hardness against me and my wetness within me.

By this point we were drunk with lustful desire. Our bodies were on fire, ready to do whatever we needed to do to satisfy whatever we wanted satisfied. We were too drunk to be rational or try to understand what was happening that was fueling such uncontrollable cravings within us. "Stop," my mind kept yelling at me, "stop. You don't know this man." That was the problem, I did know him. I had great respect for him and I trusted him. I knew he was an honorable man and kind. I knew I had thought about him too but didn't act upon my thoughts prior to now. It was quite apparent that he had shared my thoughts and desires also. I knew he would not be in my arms if he didn't feel something for me. I had watched him work, play with our employer's children, and be kind and gentle to those around him. I did know him and what I knew of him I loved. What I didn't know was what I needed to know the most, was he married, and if not, then why was he wearing a wedding ring? I kept telling myself that I cannot do this with a married man, I just can't no matter how much I want to. The strong woman inside of me had melted, totally liquefied, within his arms. I felt like I had been drugged with impatient desire, hot, ready, and willing, but I had to know if he was married.

The words just slipped out of me in a whispered, "Are you married?" He stopped rubbing my back. He was holding me in a tight embrace against him. He got really still. "What if I am?" he whispered back. I knew from the way he said it, that tone in his whisper, that he was saying "yes" to my question. Suddenly I felt like a child in a candy store who was about to steal a delicious piece of sweet and sour candy. Oh, the temptation! How could we stop now or I resist this sweet treat that had tart consequences? How could I partake of such a delicacy when I knew I would have to taste the bitterness later? No, I couldn't. I

couldn't do that. This was not me. I could not borrow or steal something that wasn't mine, even if I didn't know her nor her know me. I was not a thief. Somewhere inside of my melted body there had to be the strength to say "no." I didn't want to. I really did not want to. I didn't know if I could stop. How can I say "no" when every part of my being except that soft tiny whispering voice was saying, "yes, yes, yes!" There is nothing hotter than forbidden passion and nothing harder to resist.

How I found the strength to push away from him is beyond me. I pushed back as he tried to pull me closer. "Don't," he whispered, "Please don't." I let go of him, took my arms from around him, and pushed back. I looked into his eyes. They were begging me to not stop. He was holding me tighter. He tried to kiss me but I turned my head. I just couldn't do this to him, to his wife, to me. "You have to go," I softly whispered, "I'm sorry but you have to go." He slowly took his arms from around me. I couldn't tell what his eyes were saying as they continued to look into mine. My heart was breaking. It was beating fast. I could feel his heart racing as his chest moved away from mine. "I'm sorry," I told him again, "I'm so sorry but I am not like those people we work for who live in that palace. I can't make love to somebody else's husband. I can't hurt people like that. I am not them. I just can't do this. Please go."

He stood there looking into my eyes. A soft grin crossed his lips. He tenderly brushed back my hair out of my eyes. "Are you sure?" he softly whispered. "Yes, I am sure," I whispered back. He then turned around and walked toward the door. That soft tiny whispering voice was telling me to let him go. Everything else within me was telling him to stay. He got to the door, turned around, and softly said again, "Are you sure you want me to go?" I stood there fighting my desires and that whispering voice that was telling me to do what was right. This was my last chance. I tried to squeeze out the word, "Stay," but I couldn't. I wanted to cry. Tears began rolling down my cheek as I whispered back "yes, I'm sure." He had no idea how hard it was for me to let him go.

He stopped at the door, his back to me, and reached his hand out to open it. Instead, he locked it. I had closed the door when I invited him in but apparently I had forgot to lock it. I stood there wondering what he was doing. He then slowly turned around and said, "You asked me if I'm married. The answer is no." My breath left me at that moment. What? He was right, he had not answered my question. I had answered it for him.

"Then why are you wearing a ring?" I asked him

**“It is my father’s wedding band from my mother,” he replied, “I got it a few years ago from my father. He wore it until he remarried after my mother death. I have my mother’s wedding ring too. I am saving it for the woman I am going to marry. It is a good omen. My father said they were very much in love. She was a beautiful strong woman. He never loved anyone like he loved her. I wear it to remind me of her and the kind of woman I want as my wife.”**

**“You really are not married?” I asked.**

**“No, I have never been married. I have no wife, but I want one. I have no children, but I want some,” he said, “I have wanted to hold and kiss you from the day we met. That was the day you told me to tell my employer that you did not want the job, that money could not buy you, and then you called him, ‘Your Royal Highness.’ I knew then you were the woman for me. I have longed for this day, dreamed of it, and now it is here.”**

**“Why didn’t you tell me that you were not married when I asked you?” I said, “You said, ‘what if I am,’ making me think you were?”**

**“I don’t know,” he replied as a very sweet, playful, and mischievous grin crossed his lips, “I just wanted to know what you would say or do. Now I know. My wife to be is a beautiful strong woman who will be very faithful to me and do what is right even in the most tempting circumstances. I know because that is what she did tonight.”**

**I didn’t know whether to curse him or kiss him right then. He had made me feel deep lustful passion and desire, then terrible pain as I asked him to leave, and now he was calling me his wife to be! I was in shock. I didn’t know what to think or say. I told you this love story was pretty amazing. We stood there looking at each other before we both burst into laughter. The sexual tension and desires had eased up for the moment although I knew not for long. I had feelings for him but I never acted on them out of fear of being an idiot and pouring my heart out to someone who didn’t want me or was already taken. This was crazy. This whole night was insanity at its highest level.**

**“You really want to marry me?” I asked again with a smile across my face.**

**“Absolutely!” he replied, “you are the only woman for me.”**

**With the sexual tension and lustful passion temporarily eased up by our laughter, I would like to say that I resisted temptation and acted morally by asking him to wait until our wedding night to finish what we had started earlier, but that would be a lie. It did not take long to add more fuel to the already burning fire within us. The sexual kissing, the holding, the passionate hugs, and touching were all back without any restraint. Yes, we sinned that night and**

committed fornication in the name of uncontrollable lust. I took him to my bed and we passionately continue what we had begun earlier, but this time without fabric or lace between us. His naked body was against mine as we caressed, kissed, touched, explored, sucked, and penetrated each other's entire body. He made me feel like a luscious piece of passion fruit that he was in no hurry to devour while enjoying every little nibble. I couldn't get enough of him. His smell, taste, and groans were exotic pleasure to me as I devoured every piece of his body with every piece of mine.

I asked God to forgive us, for we had sinned, but it was more than lust that was fueling our union. The mutual respect, love, and trust we had for each other was stimulating passion that was creating such sexual pleasure and tension that we couldn't help ourselves. His body was no longer his own and my body was not mine to withhold from him. We did more than give in to passion in a fit of lust. We held our own marriage ceremony and consummated our union upon my bed without a legal document giving us permission to do so. We gave our hearts, bodies, souls, and future to each other and God was there as our sole witness to our unity and vows. Instead of feeling like a sinner, I felt like a bride who was forgiven because God knew it was real love that would last our lifetime. We were not alone. It was my Heavenly Father who was there with us to give me away to this man.

As we explored each other I gave him every part of me and he gave me every part of him. Our history, secrets, desires, bodies, dreams, thoughts, and everything that makes us who we are. I knew that this was real love because I was giving him the power to destroy me, humiliate me, and break me into a million pieces. I opened my very soul to him and gave him my inner thoughts, insecurities, past experiences, needs, dark hidden secrets, and fantasies. I gave him me. I gave him power to destroy me because I knew he would not use that power to hurt me in any way. Isn't that what true love is, giving someone we connect and bond with the power to destroy us but having the faith and trust in them that they would never use that power against us or to hurt us, but rather to protect us? I couldn't hold back. I gave him everything I had. I was in love. So was he. He was giving me the power to destroy him too. This must be true love because I would never destroy him. I would never use that power to hurt him in any way. I would destroy me before I would destroy him. I trusted him completely and I knew he trusted me equally in return.

His name is Christopher. I want you to know his name. Abigail loves Christopher. Christopher loves Abigail. I will never forget every detail of his face

when I looked into his eyes and told him that I loved him for the first time. It was somewhere in the middle of all that crazy passion when I said it. That intense intimacy we shared! It lasted for only a few moments but I will never forget it. He knew those words came from deep within my heart and soul and I meant them. I did mean them. I love him. I will always love him. Nothing can take my love for him out of my heart and soul. I can still see his lips moving when he said to me, "I love you too. I feel the same way about you in my heart." I knew he meant every word he said. Those words came from deep inside his heart and soul. I could see it in his eyes. He loves me. He always will. Somehow we connected and bonded for life. I don't know how, but we did. We are permanently embedded in each other's heart. God forbid, but even if we never saw each other again it would not change anything between us. Our love can never be dismissed or forgotten. It is ours and ours alone. A real love story that is deeper than physical desire and goes beyond any act of passion and lust. Mutual need, honesty, trust, and respect for each other caused our love story to happen, leaving us with the rarest and purest type of divine love that humans can feel.

Christopher was named after his father. His mother gave birth to him, named him after her beloved husband, and then died from post-childbirth complications. He does not remember his mother. He only remembers the step mothers that came later. He has pictures of her though. She was beautiful. He said that his grandmother had named his father Christopher after the great explore, Christopher Columbus. She had great dreams and hopes for her son. She said that he would be powerful and pursue greatness and adventures like Columbus who fearlessly traveled the oceans, proved the earth was round and not flat, and discovered a new world. I asked him if his grandmother's dreams and hopes for her son actually came true. He laughed and said, "In some ways. He is one of a kind, that's for sure!" I asked about his father and him. He said that his father wasn't much of a father. When he was old enough he left home and went out to support himself. He could not please his father no matter how much he tried. He even thought at one time that his father blamed him for his mother's death. He was glad he left home when he did. Years later he had reconciled with his father but their relationship was nothing that either one of them wanted to discuss. As an adult he was still trying to build a relationship with him. He visited with him, but never even spent the night at his father's house. I told him that I wanted to meet his father someday and he promised that I would. I asked him if he had siblings. He said he had younger ones by a

step-mother. I asked him if I would ever meet his siblings and he promised that I would.

I told him that I was named after one of King David's wives from the Hebrew Bible. She believed in God and did a heroic thing that caused King David to marry her. I told him about my parents and siblings and the closeness we shared. My childhood was different from his. It was not always a happy childhood, but we loved each other and was still close as adults. We always forgave each other no matter what the circumstances were. I wanted him to meet my family and he promised that he would.

Before Christopher left the next morning we agreed that it would be best if we did not mention our union to our employer or anyone else working or living in his house. We would keep our romance a secret for now. He was sick and the last thing he needed to worry about was two crazy love birds flying off and abandoning him in the final chapter of his life. We had stayed up all night talking. We were planning our future while learning about each other's past. We agreed that we would not announce our relationship until after his death. I would return to the hospital where my job was still waiting for me. He would find another place of employment in a different field of work so we could have quality and quantity time together. We wanted to be together as much as possible. We wanted to fill our lives and home with children. I knew he would be a wonderful father after watching him play with our employer's children. I was anxious to see what kind of a mother I was going to be.

I told you that you would not be disappointed. Lustful and passionate romance is a part of this love story, but rare and divine love is what our love story is about. Our story had begun. His story was ending. We were in no hurry and both of us were willing to wait until his story was over. That was two months ago. We had made passionate love many times in both of our modest apartments since. Now we were standing at his bedside and we watched him go. Was our tears a mixture of sadness and joy? Maybe and maybe not. All I know is that we both were crying. The sadness filling his room was genuine. It would have pleased him to see real tears being shed for him.

If we thought his money and power was a curse to him while he lived, it was nothing compared to what happened when his death was announced. Everyone he knew came out of the woodwork. They all had a claim for something he owned. Even his ex-wives showed up hoping to get more from his estate. I do not know how many ex-wives he had but more than his share and it was outrageous what they were wanting. His current wife was the most

ridiculous of them all. She had signed a pre-nuptial agreement and she wanted it declared illegal. She used her children to try and claim total ownership of all her husband's money, investments, and possessions. The reading of the will had not happened yet and no one knew what was in the will except for his attorney. I only knew about this fiasco because of Christopher. I had no reason to return to his palace after his death so I went back to work at the hospital. Christopher had agreed to stay on as the butler just long enough for the estate to be settled and the will to be read. I was busy planning for our upcoming wedding. Christopher had met my family by now. They really liked him and he liked them. I hadn't met his family yet, but he promised me that I would soon. I was extremely happy. I was in love, planning a simple elegant wedding, and looking forward to the future with great expectations.

Again, life can change at the drop of a hat. No one could have predicted what happened next. I received a letter from his attorney asking that I attend the reading of the will. Apparently he had left me something. I didn't want his money like the vultures in his life that were just as greedy and selfish as he was. That was the only type of people he seemed to surround himself with, greedy and beautiful people. None of those people cared about him, not even his wife who would probably end up with the bulk of his estate despite their pre-nuptial agreement. She gave birth to his only children, giving her a golden ticket to his fortune.

He had requested a private memorial service with only his children, wife, doctor, attorney, and the employees who worked at his mansion to attend, so that is what he got. Christopher and I shook our heads in disbelief as his widow turned on the tears over losing her beloved husband. Our tears were genuine. He had grown on me and I actually realized that I was going to miss him. Perhaps that is why I felt such an overwhelming urge to bend down and kiss him before he died. In my own crazy way I had learned to love him. I knew Christopher loved him. How else could he have survived all those years working for him if he hadn't? The cook, housekeeper, gardener, and maid had been hired shortly before I was. They cried too. I watched as Christopher comforted the children who were also crying. It was a sad funeral, but not for the reasons he had told me. He said that he was one of those people who no one forgets and everyone doesn't want to remember. He was wrong. Our tears flowed because we cared about him and would miss him. After all, he was the reason that Christopher and I met. How could we ever forget him? He would have been

pleased to see everyone crying. His wife may have shed tears but she couldn't wait for the funeral to end to get her claws into his belongs and estate.

Settling his estate and the reading of the will was the most ridiculous thing I have ever witnessed. The room was full of people with others standing in the hallway trying to crowd in. Executives who managed his companies were wanting the companies now. They had slept with his wife in hopes that would get their foot in the door. Even paperboys and delivery people swore under oath that he had promised them a small fortune. Obvious they did not know him. Employees from his many business thought they deserved something for putting up with him. It took several days to hear all the outrageous claims that were being filed against his estate. I was fed up with the greed. I told his attorney that I was leaving and to call me when the actual reading of the will took place, and only then because he said I had to be there.

The reading of the will finally happened. He honored the pre-nuptial agreement he had with his wife, but gave her nothing more, which definitely did not make her happy. He left the cook, housekeeper, maid, and gardener \$100,000.00 each. He left his doctor his valuable gun collection because he liked to hunt. He left his attorney his antique car collection because he would appreciate, enjoy, and keep them to use instead of selling them. He left me a sealed envelope that I was to open and read when alone. I had no idea what was in it. He left everything else to his children. His wife was delighted. She was the guardian of the children. However, for some crazy reason he left the majority of his estate to his oldest child with instructions to be generous with the younger children. His wife was ecstatic. Her oldest child was easy to manipulate and control. He was still young enough for her to get as much as she could before he became an adult. Then the reading of the will was over.

I sit there in total disbelief. He had left nothing to his devoted butler who had served him for many years. Absolutely nothing! I looked at Christopher and saw tears rolling down his cheek. My heart felt nothing but pain for him. How could that greedy superficial arrogant bastard do that to the only person who loved and served him the most? Life isn't fair but this was beyond insulting and cruel. It wasn't the money Christopher desired or deserved, it was the recognition that he mattered, that he was someone important enough to acknowledge and appreciate. I didn't want to open my envelope now. I didn't care what he left me or what was inside of it. By ignoring Christopher in his will I wanted nothing to do with his estate and elaborate possessions or money. I only wanted to comfort Christopher as the tears continued to roll down his

cheek. How could he do that to someone I love? I felt nothing but hate for him at that moment. I totally hated him.

We walked out the door in silence. When alone I turned to Christopher and tried to console him. He asked me what was in my envelope. I told him I didn't care and had no intentions of opening it. Except for meeting Christopher I was sorry I ever met or worked for that arrogant snob. Christopher wanted me to open the envelope. He wanted to know what was in it. Reluctantly I tore it open for Christopher. Was this one of his cruel jokes for my standing up to him and not letting him control or buy me? Inside the envelope was a small card that simply said, "Stop long enough to touch a miracle. I leave you a miracle."

I didn't know what to say or think. Christopher was the only miracle that I had in my life, and except for him employing us, he had nothing to do with Christopher and I being together. I believe in fate. Christopher and I were meant to be. We would have found each other with or without his employment. He didn't even know about Christopher and me. If there was a miracle that he was giving me I had no clue to what it was. I looked up to see Christopher smiling at me. The tears were still rolling down his cheek. He softly asked, "Do you believe in miracles?" It almost looked like he was happy and shedding tears of joy instead of sorrow. I was confused. "Of course I believe in miracles!" I replied. Why wasn't he angry like I was? What was going on here that I did not understand?

Well, to make a long story short, I will just get to the point. Christopher was the butler because he wanted to be the butler. He served him because he wanted to serve him. He did not expect anything from him in return so he was not disappointment or angry like I was. He was honored and acknowledged as trustworthy, important, and valuable, but not in the way I expected. He had the privilege of working for him, getting to know him, and playing with his children. That was enough for Christopher. Even so he gave Christopher more than that. Even Christopher was amazed to how much he gave him. "He must have really loved me to give me so much," said Christopher. I just looked at Christopher in disbelief. Had he forgotten what a difficult, arrogant task master he was? He had worked hard for him. He deserved more than just the privilege of working for him, getting to know him, and taking care of his children. Look what he gave to others. He hadn't even given Christopher an envelope with same crazy message in it like he gave to me, and I only worked for him a year. I looked at Christopher being so modest and humble about all of this and said, "You deserve better. You deserved something." Christopher thought for a moment

and replied back, "You are right. Instead of something though, I got everything." I shook my head at Christopher. Sweet Christopher. I am so lucky I have him.

"You know he left the majority of his estate to his oldest child with instructions to be generous with the younger children," Christopher said.

"I know, I heard the will being read," I replied back, "At least the children will be taken care of if their mother doesn't bleed them dry before they get control of their inheritance.

"Well, I was his butler," Christopher continued, "And I am his oldest child."

What! Christopher smiled at me as I stood there in disbelief. Was he joking? His father and he had decided years ago to keep this a secret while they built the relationship they did not have when Christopher was younger. He agreed to be his butler so they could be close and interact with each other without anyone knowing. Can you imagine what his wife is going to say when she finds out? No one knew, not even her. No wonder Christopher was so attentive to her children, they were the only sibling he had. He told me that he had kept his promise to me that I would meet his father and younger siblings. I was speechless and in shock.

Now speaking of me, as it turned out his father had chosen me to be his private nurse because he knew his son would need a strong and caring woman, like Christopher's mother, to stand up to his wife and help raise his younger children. He saw my strength when I was taking care of him in the hospital before he found out that he was sick. He needed to give his son and me enough time to build mutual respect and trust for each other so we could fall in love. He knew all about our romance because Christopher had told him, but he did not want me to know he knew because he needed to be sure my love for his son was genuine. That is why he finally stopped fighting the evitable and accepted his demise. He kept the fight up until the miracle of love happened. When it happened he was ready to go. He died a happy man. I was so glad I had given him that kiss. I saved his life and in return he saved mine.

This is the whole story. I am Cinderella. I make passionate love to the sexiest prince ever to grace this earth. I proudly wear his mother's wedding ring. He proudly wears his father's. The rings are a good omen from a real love affair of the past. We now have a legal document to prove we are married. His wife gave up the children when keeping them no longer benefitted her. She disappeared from their lives. She disappeared from our lives. We are so thankful she is gone. The children are ours now. I was right, I am a better

**mother than she will ever be. I am enjoying every moment I spend with her children as their mother. Christopher is a wonderful father, or should I say half-brother, because he won't actually be a father until spring.**

**The End**