

LOSS & GAIN

At the edge of town, Chris's one-storey stone home, which he refurbished ten years previous, is nestled under the low sweeping branches of two mature oak trees, their canopy dense. Sufficient light penetrates the leafy boughs to nourish the hostas and bunchberry, with their seasonal white blossoms just below.

As the evening sun settles behind the trees, leaving enough light for Chris to entertain himself watering the ground cover in the front yard, he hears a vehicle racing up the street. Through the dim light, he spots Eos's car. "What can be so urgent?"

She abruptly stops at the front gate, jumps out, shouting, "I can't do this anymore." As she brings her fist down on the hood of her car, she continues to yell, "Chris, it's my baby, not theirs. I shouldn't have been a surrogate mom. You know, I love by baby. I want to be her mother. We have to get her back ... please, I need your help. That's my baby ... I'm her mother! Help me! I'll give them back the \$20,000. I don't care about the money; I need my baby ... please."

Chris reaches her side as she continues pleading for help. "Of course I'll help," he says, though not yet having a plan. Sensing her pain mingled with his deep desire to appease her, he adds, "We'll solve this together."

Impulsively, he passes his left arm around her back and swiftly lifts her off her feet with his right. "We'll figure a way through this together." Hearing what needed to be said, she pulls herself tightly to him with both arms around his neck, as he carries her through the front door and into his home.

Reassuring her, once more that they will deal with this together, he lays her on his bed and, without hesitation, firmly lifts her sweater over her head.

"Is this your solution? Make love to me?" she responds without resistance as she cracks a smile.

"Yes! What we should have done long ago," as his lips cover hers before she can whisper an objection. Their lovemaking is passionate for both, especially grounding for Eos. She had imagined this moment with him, but feared the strong connection she so desperately needed would fade. But when she feels his deep love and acceptance in all parts of her body, she pushes her fear aside and abandons herself wholly into the security that only true love offers.

As night moves into dawn, sensual love finds its place amidst continual ecstasy. Moments of sleep mingle with the tangle of arms, hands, and legs sliding amongst each other's bodies. An early morning orgasm secures the deal.

They know they are in love.

Then the worldly reality intercedes. There is no time for breakfast or even a cup of coffee, for Eos has an early morning meeting with her boss. Quickly, they shower, dress, and hurry to her car to find it is still running from the night before. It's frustrating, yet they laugh. Nothing could have stopped them from surrendering to the heat of the moment, even taking time to turn off the car ignition.

Alas, the tank is hovering on empty, possibly not enough fuel to make it to work. Chris grabs his truck keys from the hook on the kitchen wall and drives her into town. As she leaves the truck, he lets out a sigh, as if he misses her already, staring at her sexy wiggle as she walks up the steps toward the office building. As she opens the front door, she turns back to him with a wave and a wide, loving smile that only a satisfied woman can provide.

"She's my sweetheart! She's the One," he murmurs as he drives the truck back home. He can't get the smell of her hair, the feel of her silky skin, those cute cheekbones, wonderful hips, her changing moods, and lightness of heart out of his head, nor does he try. But it is her smile that has captured his heart. "Wow – that smile."

Little does he know her smile will be his last thought. In the midst of remembering that very special smile, an oncoming vehicle smashes into the side of his truck door, and then the door into him. As his head snaps sideways, merging with the metal frame, his last glance is the red light he just sailed through in error, then darkness.