

# THE SHADOWS OF RHODES



GEORGINA ANTOINETTE



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*The Shadows of Rhodes, Book I*  
*The Beginning*

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*The characters in **The Shadows of Rhodes** are fictional. Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.*

## To The Reader



**The Shadows of Rhodes** was created as one book with such enormous volume that it must be issued in segments. Originally released as e-books, this print edition has been extended to include the second e-book of the series, “A Dangerous Step.” The next print edition book will be the third and fourth books in the series: *The Gods Have Smiled* and *Curiosity or Obsession*.

As one continuing story, the reader will not get all the answers to all of the questions that will come up immediately. The answers will be revealed when that part of the story is uncovered.

They say that “Patience is a virtue” and “Good things come to those who wait.” I think this can be said about *The Shadows of Rhodes*.



# Acknowledgments



Many thanks to all those who have given of their time to read my book and give comments, good or bad as they all are helpful to a writer.

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When taking on a new project or endeavor, encouragement is occasionally what one needs to continue, and for all who have provided this, I am deeply appreciative.

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~ ~



*To my parents who always said I could do whatever I set my mind to do. In their memory I dedicate this series, for their never ending love and encouragement.*

I

*The Little Picture*



## Monday



I gave up trying to defend myself and went silent. I hoped that he would just fall asleep. That didn't stop his ranting.

“You bitch! You're nothing but a slut! I could shove your face right through that wall! You don't *deserve* to do what you want! You're going to do what *I* tell you! I'm going to quit my job and it's *your* fault. Shit! Because of *you*, I've got to stay home and make sure *you* aren't screwing around! Fuck, I don't give a shit anymore!” His ranting would become physical if he thought I was ignoring him.

This is how Mark would act when he has been drinking. His temper would percolate until he exploded. He was such a contradiction. He could be the most gentle, satisfying lover, and he planted himself in my heart. But this particular night was unusual, in that his non-stop cursing and belittling went on most of the night. I lived in bone-shaking fear every time he would start drinking, so I secretly put away a small savings. It was my safety net. I kept it “just in case.” I never knew if I would be thrown out of the house, but I would have my little nest egg to at least get away from him temporarily.

We got along so well when he was sober. Even with his faults, I loved him. After so many years of his psychological warfare, the flame of love faded and we were left with friendship. More than friendship, really, but the flame of passion died a long time ago.

There was a lull in the abusive behavior and I began to feel comfortable

in making a plan for a vacation; a trip somewhere different. I made the reservations for a trip to Greece. Mark never wanted to travel outside of the USA. On the other hand, I had a fascination with other cultures, and I got excited at the prospect of travel. Then the shit hit the fan! I was accused of having a lover in this place I had never been. The verbal abuse and accusations continued for weeks. He was trying to make me so miserable that I would cancel the trip.

To placate him, I said, “alright! I’ll cancel the damn trip.” Suddenly he was smiling and things couldn’t be better, temporarily, but I got sick of the intimidation. I was at a point where I felt that I had to take this trip for no other reason than to save my sanity. I made changes to the itinerary and was determined to go. On the day before my flight, Mark found my suitcase. After his poisonous rant, he threw it outside, along with other items, then he pushed me out the door where I fell into a hedge. I called a taxi on my cell phone, picked up my belongings and put my suitcase in the cab. As we drove off, I could hear Mark yelling after me, that if I leave, “don’t ever come back.” I spent the night in the airport.

It was ten hours in coach class on United Airlines. When I arrived in Frankfurt, I spotted my friend from High School in the crowded airport lobby. It had been a long time since I’d seen her, years. It was my first international flight and I was excited to see her again.

After an awkward but happy reunion, she asked, “are you ready?”

“I guess so, lead the way,” and I followed.

“We’re catching Olympic Air to Athens at 7:50 am., so we’d better get over there and check you in. I’ve already checked my luggage,” then Morgan scooted right through the lobby.

We caught our flight due to arrive in Athens at 12:30 pm. With airline layovers and all of the time-zones I went through, actual time was lost to me in Jet-lag.

“So, did you have a big fight with ‘him’ about going on this trip?” Morgan asked.

“He told me that if I go, don’t come back.”

“That figures!”

“He thinks that if he makes a big enough stink and makes threats that I’ll just stay home.” I volunteered.

“Intimidation.”

“Exactly,” I agreed. “Every time I’m getting ready to go somewhere, he has to get me so stressed that I can’t enjoy myself. I really needed this trip to get away, and I’m so glad that you could go too!” I gave her a hug, as far as it was possible, being strapped into our seats.

“Yeah, my daughter is seeing to the place while I’m gone, and I’ve always wanted to see Greece.”

A pause ensued, as Morgan wondered if she should continue our first conversation. She didn’t really know Mark, but there were no great impressions of him either.

“Well, the sex must be pretty damned good to put up with that crap!” Her sarcasm was evident, but I knew that she always had a way of blurting things out.

“It used to be pretty damned good!”

“How long has it been?”

“I’d have to guess, but I’d say over a year.”

“It’s no wonder you’re depressed!”

“It’s more like disgusted, but, here I am, no guilt about going and if he’s moved out, fine. I’ve just about had it anyway. What’s the new son-in-law like?” I asked.

“Psssh,” she uttered.

“What is it?”

“He’s strange. When he made the arrangements for the honeymoon, he bought a prepaid, non-refundable deal, so it was Mexico or no honeymoon! At least that’s what I think.”

“Non-refundable.”

“Yep”

“Coach class.”

“Yep.”

“Cheapskate!”

“Yep!”

“How did that turn out?”

“She wasn’t happy, but rather than losing all the money, my daughter paid for changes, so at least some of the trip went well.” She gave me the look of frustration, meaning it all came out of what her daughter had earned and saved.

Before we knew it, we were in Athens. Getting off the plane, we could feel the difference in the air. Not hot exactly, nor humid, but it was new air, and exciting. Our layover time was less than an hour until we could board our connecting flight to Rhodes.

“We’d better find this airline and check in, that is if we can get our bags. We won’t have time for anything else!” Morgan grumbled as we searched for our luggage. I was beginning to imagine our bags going to Morocco! Twenty minutes later, we had located all our luggage.

We went from one end of the airport to the other, trying to locate the boarding area for our last leg of the trip. There was every other airline that we’d ever heard of except the one that we were looking for, and as we searched, we were slowly grinding down to a slower pace.

“Maybe we can ask someone!” I said.

“It’s got to be here, we must not be looking,” getting a desperate tone in her voice, she asked a desk steward who pointed in the opposite direction. We tried again, going down the row of terminal desks seeking this mysterious airline. Time was slipping by us. We should have been in our seats and ready to take off. We stopped at the flight board to see if the flight was listed, so we’d know which gate to go to. We didn’t see it listed. After another pass, I noticed a strange man staring at Morgan. When we passed him for the third time, it became obvious.

“Here, you stay with the luggage, I am going to ask someone else.” Morgan went over to a steward at one of the other counters. I was glad to sit down. My feet were getting too big for my shoes after sitting in planes for so many hours, all this walking on cement, and hauling the luggage around with us was taking its toll. I had my shoes off when I noticed that strange man watching Morgan from one of the kiosks. She signaled me for a pen, but I was reluctant to leave the luggage. I had to take the chance and made a mad dash to her



and back to our luggage in my bare feet. This strange man worked his way closer to Morgan, who was still at the airline desk. As I was looking over our tickets I could see him watching her.

He was short, very thin with slick black hair, huge black eyes that seemed to bulge from his long thin face. They almost had a sunken-in look to them. He seemed sleazy and made me afraid, especially for Morgan, who had no idea of what was happening. She started to walk towards me with the most disgusted look on her face. This couldn't be good news.

"The damned airline went bankrupt! So we're stuck!"

"Oh, great! What about an alternate airline?" I asked.

"I had the guy look it up. It seems this airline is, or was an independent carrier and wasn't affiliated with any other airline!" She cursed. "The only thing I can think of is a stand-by flight."

"There must be a sea taxi or something, I can't afford another airline ticket."

"I know, me neither, this sucks. How are we going to get to Rhodes now?"

"Please pardon intrusion," a heavily accented voice came from behind us. As we turned to respond, it was that thin man that was ogling Morgan, and my heart leaped into my throat. I usually go with my gut, and this guy gave me the creeps.

"I could not help but hear of your troubles. You want Rhodes?" He asked in broken English. This shocked me that he was that intent on listening to our conversation.

"We're stuck here with no way to get to Rhodes, apparently there's no such thing as Aero Greco!" She blurted out before I could warn her about this man.

"A boat to Rhodes; come I take you." He said, in a real friendly manner. I wasn't so sure about this, especially this guy, my gut feeling was telling me to run! He seemed just a little too eager. "Where's this boat?" Morgan asked.

"Not far, I take you."

I didn't like this, but being desperate and extremely tired, we went with him to his car.

The car looked like its owner, small, narrow, with bulging eyes. Getting all of our luggage in this small car was a tight fit. This was going to be a mistake,

I just felt it! We were about to leave our fate in the hands of a stranger.

Fifteen minutes and a couple of hairpin turns later, we were at a small docking area that was used for the fishing vessels. We past the huge ferries that docked in the harbor. When I asked him about these, he told me that they would not launch with rough tides. I wondered how another boat would launch, but the ferries wouldn't. When I asked, he just said "private boat."

From what we could see in this dark area of Greece, there were old stone walkways and breakwaters that stemmed the tides. Our driver pulled out our luggage and helped us to a relic of a fishing boat. It might have been fifty feet long. Our driver went to talk to a man that seemed to be the owner of the boat and engaged in rapid animated Greek conversation.

Our driver hurried back to us and put our bags on the deck of this ship. We were helped aboard, then the little man made a "tipping of his hat" gesture to us, even though he had no hat, and left. The owner of this modest boat came aboard and flung a fishing net over our bags to secure them on the open deck. He went into the bridge cabin and got the engines going (probably the only modern convenience), then cast off from the mooring. He didn't say a word to us, but we were on our way. We found a small bench that was built outside, against the bridge cabin wall. We huddled together there for warmth. It was already 3:45 pm and getting cold in the wet air. God only knew where we'd end up!

After entering open seas the ship was thrown around the choppy water, and we were getting drenched. The wind that had picked up since we left the docks was fierce. The salty spray that it carried with it would bite the skin on our faces, no matter how hard we tried to shield ourselves from it. I heard a thumping noise but didn't pay much attention, as we tried to keep warm. There was so much noise from the surf and the droning engine that pounded on our ears. I kept hearing that rapping noise and looked up over our heads. The captain was tapping on the window, motioning for us to come into the cabin.

We made our way cautiously across the wet deck to the bridge. Inside, the wheel was on the right-hand side of the small cabin with a captain's seat attached to the wall under a small sliding window, and there was a storage

bench along the back wall of the cabin where we sat. It was nice and warm in this little cupboard. The captain reached under the shelf on the left side of the wheel and grabbed two dented enamel cups and poured a hot broth from a thermos jug, then handed them to us.

“EEEEOOO!” I heard escape from Morgan, “It stinks! It might be made from fish eyes or, something worse! Look! There’s a green thing floating in there!”

“Seaweed.” The captain uttered. Morgan sat with her mouth open, her teeth chattering from being wet and cold, not believing that this man spoke English!

The brew was hot and smelled something like a fish stew. I took a small sip, as it would be rude not to, and surprisingly, it was pretty good. It certainly warmed the blood.

“Better than Ouzo!” Our Captain said.

As we entered a calmer area of sea, the captain put the ship in a neutral gear and asked us to stand then he pulled out from this bench a large heavy wool blanket.

“Sit.” He took that huge blanket and wrapped it around our laps and tucked it in around the back so that no breeze would get underneath. “There!” He put the boat back in gear and we continued our voyage.

“How long will it take to get to Rhodes?” I asked as I wiped my nose that suddenly started to run with the warmth of the broth.

“Fourteen hours. More, maybe. Tide is not good.”

This news was more than we bargained for, as the plane would have taken only an hour! Morgan had placed her purse and the end of the blanket behind her head and leaned against the corner of the wall. She sat with eyes closed and looked so uncomfortable. I took the cup of broth from her and without opening her eyes she uttered,

“I’m in hell!”

We huddled together in a state of oblivion, only shifting enough to try to find some comfort on this hard bench. We were in near agony with the boat taking a beating from the tide and the bouncing we endured on the bench. I felt a catch between my ribs in my back. I had to stand to try to relieve the cramping. Then our Captain announced “Rodos.”

We both stood, trying to see something, and out from behind a dark mass, Rhodes slowly came into view. It was a lot darker than I thought it would be, but I didn't do much research on this destination.

"Are you sure this is Rhodes?" Morgan asked.

"Isn't Rhodes supposed to have hotels?"

"Old Rhodes Town or Rhodes City?"

"I don't know, either?"

"Oh yes, Rhodes has lots of hotels, tavernas, lots to do," he answered.

"Then where is it?"

"This *South* Rhodes, you look for *North* Rhodes."

"I knew there was more to this! Nothing else would surprise me now," Morgan moaned.

"Couldn't you take us there?" He turned, and in a kindly voice told us,

"I am sorry. No fuel for this, cannot buy until morning. I am sorry."

This was a dark night. No moon and very little reflected light from homes that were sleeping against the hills of this Southern region. Although it wasn't devoid of buildings, the early hour wasn't conducive to activity around the shoreline community. Old stone masonry greeted us as the *Atlantis* crept inward toward a wet stone buttress. After our Captain moored the *Atlantis* at this dark area, he dug out our wet luggage and put it on a small pier that jutted out from a walled inlet. We were so glad to get our land legs back, but it took a few minutes to gain equilibrium. After being aboard for a little more than sixteen hours, sitting on a hard wooden bench, anything would have felt good. The ramp our Captain laid for us to get ashore heaved with the motion of the tide, but we were finally on land and we were grateful for that.

"You go down to road, go to north to find telephone. You will be okay, is safe," he said.

We wanted to pay our Captain, but he refused our offer. We both thanked him for his kindness, and we were off into the dark night. The little road lights that we could see were far apart and didn't offer much in the way of saving us the occasional stone under our feet. As we walked, I saw no pay phones, but we had no coin for one anyway. We hoped to find a hotel or convenience store open, but neither crossed our line of vision.

"I think I'm going to break an ankle." My mouth was dry and my throat felt as though I had swallowed the salt from the sea.

We were hauling our roll-away luggage over pavement that seemed like cobblestone, and not being able to get a signal for the cell phones, we were left to walk towards the lights.

"If we ever get to civilization, I want to eat something! And I'm dying of thirst!"

"Yeah, me too! And I want to get these wet clothes off and wash the salt off my face. Look at my hair, it's all... frizzy! I look like a pom-pom!" Morgan complained. I could care less of what my caged up hair looked like, I wanted to take off these shoes! We trudged along at a snail's pace with our luggage in tow, and then we heard a distant "beep-beep." It was the unmistakable horn of a Volkswagen bug. It came roaring up behind us and came to a screeching stop right next to us.

"Taxi! You need a Taxi?"

"Yes, we do!" In disbelief, Morgan and I looked at each other.

He reached over and swung open the door.

"Get in."

The driver got out and placed our large suitcases on the top luggage rack of his car which left some room for us to sit inside. Once everything was tied down, he asked us where we were headed.

"Rhodes Marina Hotel," Morgan said.

"But this in *North* of island, too late to check in there, 4:00 am, too late! I know good Inn, I take you," he offered. "I am Dimitris! I know all of island. You sleep at Inn. I pick you up in morning. We go to hotel."

"Do you always go around in the middle of the night looking for stranded tourists?" I asked.

He glanced at me through the rear-view mirror, which was cocked at a 45-degree angle and would swing like a pendulum over each bump in the road. If I weren't so tired, I would have laughed!

"Gregorio radio for taxi. Too dark! Too late! Could not find you!"

"Gregorio?"

"Captain of boat."

“Oh, Capt. Teddy Bear.” Morgan grunted.

I couldn't take my eyes off that rear-view mirror, it was mesmerizing! It would swing, back and forth, and I think I was going into a daze as I huddled in the back seat, leaning against the side window. Our taxi driver would look into the mirror every once in a while and would catch me gazing at it. He probably thought I was staring. He had the darkest eyes. I could hardly see them as the mirror swung by, and he had a pleasant way about him. It was a nice thing that he did, coming to find us!

We checked into the Inn at 4:20 am. It wasn't small, but we were placed in the upstairs room, which looked like it was an attic at one time, converted into a dance floor, then into a bedroom. It had a huge Turkish style rug with a double bed on each side of a huge window. It overlooked the road below and the view of the sea could be glimpsed through some trees.

## Tuesday



**A**s daylight broke I had a hard time staying asleep. The room was filled with a bright golden glow. I put my head under the covers and tried again to get some more sleep.

“Oh my God! Every muscle in my body aches,” Morgan complained, and I felt the same way. So far, the pleasure of this trip has eluded us, and we had just arrived in Rhodes, with one day wasted of our short visit. “Did you know that you were coughing, all night long?”

“No, I’m sorry. I guess I should have brought a glass of water to bed. Geez! I went back to sleep, how late is it?” I asked as Morgan was rushing around in hyper-gear.

“I don’t know I’m still on German time. I hope that we have a room when we get to the hotel.”

Bedraggled as we were and late, our friendly taxi driver was downstairs having a cigar and coffee, which smelled so good. We had to leave immediately, with no time for our complimentary cup of coffee.

Dimitris drove the narrow, winding rock strewn roads like a pro. Being in the back seat again, I got the best of the bouncing on these hills and roads.

“Don’t worry, Dimitris good driver.” He said as he looked at me through the rear-view mirror as it made it’s way from left to right. I was a little more rested this morning and I was having a hard time not laughing, watching

that mirror. I had a smile on my face almost continually. Dimitris' dark eyes would smile back.

When we approached the outlying area of the city, the old buildings became dense and traffic began to slow us down. There was everything from people to a Burro in the streets, and the smell of food cooking was our introduction to Monolithos with its bare, sloping land to the sea! The beauty and the history of this place was fascinating, as Dimitris enlightened us with each monument we past!

What started out as a small island ended up a major problem in making any time on the road to our hotel. Dimitris did the best he could, but there was a lack of drivers with any clue of how to drive in traffic. It seemed like hours before we pulled up in front of the hotel in New Rhodes City. Our driver dislodged our luggage and when we paid him, he handed Morgan his cell phone number and said,

"You call, I take you." He got in his car and before he left, "you call!"

A bus boy helped us take our luggage to the desk, then rang the desk bell for the receptionist. The time was Tuesday 3:30 pm. While Morgan was seeing to the room, I found a telephone booth in the lobby and decided I'd better call Mark.

After I replaced the receiver, I heard a ruckus going on at the desk.

"...but it wasn't our fault! It's not like you weren't paid for the entire week, why can't you make an exception? The room was paid in advance!" Morgan was now yelling. I hoped it wasn't what I knew in my heart had happened.

"I am sorry Madam, when you did not arrive or call before late check-in time, your room was assigned to another party. I fully understand the circumstances, but my hands are tied. We are fully booked, so the only alternative is to refund that portion of your payment for which you are entitled."

His face was set in stone and there was no point in arguing. It was another matter to get the refund in cash. Because of the airline going bankrupt and us not having any recourse, the hotel manager finally agreed to give us cash, so that we would be able to find another place to stay. If he hadn't, we would have to find the American Embassy and see what they could do for us.



*Tuesday*

"I'm calling Dimitris." Morgan sighed. She picked up the house phone and dialed. I could hear the sound of defeat in her voice. She held out her hand to the hotel manager as she waited for the refund, with phone hanging against her ear.

"This is the vacation from hell! I'm not getting an answer." She hung up the phone and we left the hotel, baggage in tow.

Down the street, there was a cute little Taverna, and I really needed some coffee. We settled at a table in the corner in the open veranda.

"Where are we sleeping tonight? I wonder what time it is?" I was going into a daze. For me, it was close to 30 hours of travel time and only five hours of sleep, plus jet-lag. I was beginning to see dots in my vision and felt like I was floating as I walked. My feet felt like they were getting numb. We were definitely paying for this trip!

"Ask the waiter if he can recommend a place to stay, okay?" I asked Morgan, who had her head resting on her hands on the table, as I counted out the Euros to pay our bill.

"Sir, sir?" She tried to flag down the waiter, but he disappeared to the back room. "Shit!"

"Sh-sh!" I tried to quiet her. "Give me Dimitris' number and I'll try calling him again." I went to the cashier, paid the bill and asked if I could use the telephone. This time, I was successful, and he would arrive in twenty minutes.

"Ah! My American beauties, Dimitris is here once again to save the damsels in distress!" Morgan still had her head on the table as Dimitris announced his arrival.

"Where the hell have you been?" She slurred in her exhaustion.

"But I am here, and you still carry these bags! Are you leaving? Already?"

"Very funny, Dimitris, very funny, please tell me you know of a place where we can go! We have no place to sleep tonight, our room was gone at the hotel and we're dying here!" I was so tired. "Can you please help us?"

He came close to the table and placed his hand on each of our shoulders, leaned over and in a kind low voice said,

"Don't worry, I take care of you. I know beautiful place, not too far, you

come now.” He picked up our luggage, we picked up our shoes and followed this sweet man out to his car.

We arrived to be greeted by a little grandmotherly type woman who spoke no English but was ready to help us in our predicament. She led us through a lush garden with pathways that curved around big trees and shrubs, to a bungalow. She switched on the light, then spoke something to Dimitris in Greek, and wagged her finger at him in a scolding manner. He bent down to kiss her on the cheek then she gave him a cuff on the back of the head! He sneaked in a peck on the cheek anyway. She was muttering in Greek as she left.

The room wasn’t huge, but it had two twin beds and a tiny bathroom. I was worried that we wouldn’t be able to afford this since it was separate from the Hotel. We could hear the sea and almost taste the salty air.

“Dimitris, I don’t know if we can afford this room.”

“Mrs. Paolos give good deal. You don’t worry. Rest! Tomorrow I come, we make arrangements with Mrs. Paolos and get rental car. You want rental car?”

“Yes, we were planning on getting one.”

Morgan plopped down on one of the beds and putting her forearm over her eyes, began to weep. Her exhaustion was getting the best of her and she was suddenly overwhelmed. Dimitris made a gesture by putting one finger to his lips and waved to indicate that he’ll return in the morning.

Dimitris would be described as a man of 6 foot tall, maybe a bit taller, large boned with large dark brown eyes, heavy black brows, high cheekbones and square jaw. A strong, muscular man who doesn’t look like he’s afraid of work. He appears to be a young looking mid-fifties or so. He impressed me as a compassionate man without pretense.

Our little bathroom was clean and functional but reminded me of one found on a train. Multi-functional, the shower curtain came around to shield the toilet and door from water, and the shower drain was in the middle of the floor. Very small!

As we settled down and changed our clothes, I got the bed closest to the window which looked out over the garden area where we entered. I opened

*Tuesday*

the window wide, to let in all the fresh ocean air.

It was 5:30 pm. Rhodes time, and since we are ten hours ahead, I thought I'd try calling home again. I went to the main lobby, which was up a terraced level from our room, and was able to change a five Euro bill for coins. I sat at the pay phone and dialed his number.

This time, I got an answer. In waking him, it was not a pleasant conversation and ended in emotional turmoil and more stress. After the days that had plagued us, I was not able to handle it well. I hung up the phone and was so angry! I went back to the bungalow, laid back on my pillow, breathing in the perfumed air from the garden, listening to the sea, and I fell asleep.

## *Wednesday*



**T**here was a note under the napkin on the tray. As I slid it out, the key to our room appeared and the note read, “call Dimitris 7 a.m.”  
“We were supposed to call Dimitris at 7 a.m.”

“We didn’t get the tray until 7:45 a.m.!” She barked.

The coffee was delicious and although I usually don’t eat in the morning, the food was good and it gave me strength to face the day. Morgan abruptly left the room. She didn’t say anything, but I figured that she would probably want to contact her daughter before we left for the day.

After twenty minutes Morgan returned. Her spirits were lifted after talking to her daughter. She also called Dimitris and found that 7 a.m. was when he left the message. He was in Faliraki and would pick us up around 9:30 am. We had some time before Dimitris would pick us up, so we thought we should take the tray back to the main hotel and do a little exploring of the grounds.

We found ourselves in a little piece of heaven called the Paradiso Hotel in Afandou. Our bungalow was one of many that were dispersed around the property. The main building, as with all of the bungalows, was an older stucco structure with a slightly Turkish flavor. The grounds were lush with trees that secluded the bungalows away from the pool and other guests. In the main building was a small lobby with maps and postcards near the check-in desk and a sweet girl behind the counter.

"I'll take that tray for you, Ma'am."

"Oh, thank you, I'd like to buy one of these maps, please, and a few postcards. Would we have to go to the post office to mail them?" I asked.

"Oh, no ma'am, we can post them for you, when the mail carrier comes and takes mail going out, so you should have them ready by 10:30 am. That's the usual time for pick up. We will just add the post amount to your bill."

"Thank you, that's nice to know. Can you also put the map and postcards on our bill?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

After walking back to our room, we laid the map out on the bed and began making notes and marking areas that we planned on visiting. There was so much to see, and it was spread out all over the island, so we needed to get organized to make the most of our time.

Dimitris was prompt, as usual. On our way to rent a car, he was giving us an idea of the driving etiquette in Rhodes. We listened and hoped that it wasn't as bad as it sounded. For all his efforts and help that he had given us, we wanted to pay him 25-Euros, and that didn't seem enough.

"No, only 8-Euros plenty."

"Please, take it, you have been so kind and we really appreciate everything you've done for us. You've been our *knight in shining armor!*" I smiled.

"Efharisto, thank you," he spoke in a most humble demeanor. "Call if I can help?"

"Yes, we will, thank you!" I said and waved him farewell.

He left us to the business of getting a rental car. It all went smoothly. They had a beautiful little convertible roadster available, but we decided to get a bigger model. A sports car is fine, but it left no room for carrying anything like luggage. We opted for a Hyundai Getz. It was roomy enough but also could scoot in and out of traffic. Finally, we were on our way! We had cameras charged, cell phones too and for what reason I brought mine, I wasn't sure, but we were excited and ready to get out on the road.

Although we didn't know the history of every ruin that we came across, and there were hundreds, it was the feel of the place that had life. Something that you felt all around you.

One could feel the history in this ancient place, and see it in the faces of the elderly inhabitants. The ruins, and walls of long ago battles and conquests, the element of traditional beliefs, superstition, altars to gods and goddesses were still evident.

“Maybe there’s a big hunk of a man out here, just waiting for you, Morgan!” I said as we navigated the busy streets.

“Yeah, right!”

“No, really! Find a great guy like Dimitris. He’s cute and would be a lot of fun!”

“Yeah and he’s probably married...or gay! That’s what I need, a married gay guy who drives a taxi!” She laughed.

“He’s not gay!”

“How do you know, did he come on to you?”

“No, he’s a Scorpio!”

“Just because someone is a Scorpio, doesn’t mean he’s not gay, and how do you know he’s a Scorpio?” Morgan sounded a bit irritated.

“I don’t know, he feels like a Scorpio. He just gives off a radiation, know what I mean?”

“Oh, yeah.”

We were driving from one beautiful beach to another along the North East shore. I spotted an old derelict house as we were going through one of the little settlements near Old Rhodes Town. It was so out of place in its surroundings. It once was a very large home, but now it looked like one end of the building had fallen during an earthquake. There was still furniture hanging on to the crumbling floor, which had partially fallen into the room below. Curtains flying through broken shuttered windows and a gated yard overgrown with bushes and weeds, it was a sad sight. It must have been empty for a long time, yet it hadn’t been leveled, or even emptied of its contents. This seemed very strange to me. As we passed, I couldn’t stop looking at it, like it had a strange pull on me with its torn curtains waving in the breeze.

“What ‘cha lookin’ at?”

“That old pink house back there.”

“That one that’s crumbling down? Why? It’s ugly!”

“Yes, it is. I don’t know, it just made me feel sorry for it, or sad, like it was crying out. Waiting to be saved.” I didn’t know how to describe how it made me feel.

“There’s lots of houses and buildings to look at that are prettier than that one, and I’m sure that they all have a sad story to tell.”

As we approached the section of Rhodes ancient walled city, there were people and buses and shops and more people. We thought that we’d do better to park the car, and visit some of the shops and other wonders of the city on foot. We couldn’t go home without at least one ancient artifact, even if it was a reproduction art piece. I needed another pair of sunglasses and these little storefronts offered almost everything. An outdoor vendor had some unusual items, but nothing that caught my eye. When we went inside his shop, Morgan found a lovely piece of old silver. An engraved box that was etched all around. I found a few small trinkets, and then I spotted a dirt encrusted little framed photograph of a young girl, standing on some steps. It was so dirty, and the picture had bubbled and was hard to make out the features. It struck me that the picture was taken more of the house than it was of the child. *It was that house!* The abandoned house that was calling to me! It had to be fate that I found this! I had to have this photograph. I asked the vendor if she knew who this child was, but she shook her head and counted her money.

“Well, let’s get going, I want to go by the Byzantine church, if it’s not too far from here.” Morgan heaved her heavy purse over her shoulder.

I tucked the goodies that I had purchased into my bag. After an hour or so of walking we headed back to the gate, where we had to park the car.

We drove down a narrow stone street that had tall old buildings on both sides. It was so rustic and claustrophobic. As we came out into an open sunny area, we could see that we had only one way out, which was an old style arched tunnel that had an old building on top of it. It was quite beautiful in its quirkiness. Not named on our map, we had no idea of where this narrow one-way alley would lead.

When we finally came out, it opened up into a large quadrant that lead out of the main gate, through the ancient wall, and we were on the coast again.

We found a little fish fry establishment with outdoor tables and thought we had better eat.

While we were waiting to be served in this small noisy patio, I took my little photograph out of my bag and wiped away some of the dust and smudges from the glass. It seemed that the photo focused more on the house. The scrolling iron gate that covered the entry was interesting, but nothing spectacular. The girl was about six years old, and her clothes seemed to look almost like a uniform.

“Can I see that?” Morgan asked. “Why did you buy this? It’s not very...”

“I know, it’s a sorry picture, isn’t it? I wonder who she is? Do you see anything written on the back? A name?” I asked as Morgan turned it over.

“There’s something written on it, but I can’t make it out, written in pencil. It looks like 1958,” she said as she pointed to the print when she handed it back to me. “It might have something under the backing if you take it apart.”

“I don’t think I should take it apart here, it’s pretty filthy.” As we were being served, I asked the waitress, “Do you know if this little girl still lives in this area?” I handed her the photo.

“No, I do not know her.” She handed it back to me. She walked off without a word. We started to eat and the food was really good! I was hungrier than I thought.

“Um, I think the waitress is talking about us, she keeps looking over here and pointing,” Morgan observed.

I turned to look. Then when she noticed that I was looking back at her, she and her boss disappeared into the back of the kitchen.

When we left the eatery, I don’t think that we knew where we were going, as we just got in and drove. The island had so much to offer that as long as we knew the difference between North and South, there would always be something new to see without getting lost.

We had been to so many little villages and walked down so many alleys and streets, that I was longing to stop at a lonely section of the beach and let my feet feel the sand escaping beneath them as the water went back out to sea. It seemed that the Southeastern shores were pretty populated, one resort after another.



“Let’s go to the West side of the island. Saturday we can take a picnic and make a day of it,” Morgan suggested.

“That sounds good.” The plan was set for Saturday. We’ll see some new sites there, and it may be a long day, but one that I’m sure will not be a waste of time.

We wanted to find the Byzantine church. There were many, but one on the map had to be a large one, and we wanted to find it. If the map was right, we needed to double back, which would almost take us by our mysterious house. The area we would pass was close to both the church and the old Turkish Graveyard. It wasn’t on a list of things to see, but from an artistic standpoint, the headstones and crypt markers might be quite interesting. The thought of getting back to the neighborhood of that wreckage of a house excited me.

“Geez! We’re gonna get killed!” Morgan screamed! Since I was driving, the sound of a frightened passenger scared me to a screeching halt. I could see the man in the car behind us in the rear-view mirror, cursing and waving his hands in the air.

“Dimitris wasn’t kidding when he said, ‘if you’re first, go first quickly.’ Now I know what he means!” I darted out into the intersection, blaring the horn and hoping for the best. With a swerve to miss an old gray Yugo that pattered out in front of us, we were past the worst of it and finding ourselves at the harbor.

With rattled nerves, we made our way from Aristotelous Street to Sokratous Street of Rhodes Old Town. We were ready to find the Grand Master’s Palace but we were going to have to come back to this magnificent jewel of historical preservation on another day, when we can see it properly. It was getting late and the Grand Master’s was ready to close for the day. Morgan was slowing to a crawl also, so I asked her how she felt about “calling it a day?”

“Finally! I thought you’d never poop out.”

When we got home to the Paradiso, our shoes went flying in all directions and we each fell back on our beds.

“We haven’t had any dinner yet, but I’m not even hungry,” I commented.

“It’s too early to go to sleep,” Morgan chirped with enthusiasm.

“I know, I’m just going to rest a minute, shower and see what happens next.”

I didn't realize how tired I was.

## Saturday



**D**imitris was to pick us up at the Paradiso at 7:30 am. We ordered a picnic basket so that it would be ready when Dimitris got here. Our letters were mailed, our batteries were charged and my little photograph was secure in my purse.

With a knock at the door, he announced himself.

“Hell-o, your knight in armor has arrived,” and then he knocked again. We were ready to go.

“Hi Dimitris, how are you?” I asked.

“I am having a wonderful day.” He smiled as he took the picnic basket.

“This treat is on us today, Dimitris, so put the basket in *our* car,” Morgan commanded.

“But you don’t like my driving?” He asked.

“You are better at this than we are, so you drive!” I handed him the keys.

We piled into the car and told Dimitris that we wanted to see some of the other side of the island, and maybe he could point out some of the interesting sites. He beamed with a big smile and put the key into the ignition.

“Okay, we go!” Dimitris started with the Byzantines, the Romans, Turks and continued with a special narration as he pointed out ruin after ruin. We cut across the island to a church in Kalopetra. We didn’t realize that it would take us so long to travel by car across the breadth of the island when we made our plans. The winding roads were occasionally blocked with traffic and

then an accident. Our day was slipping away from us bit, by bit, and being a Saturday, the traffic was stalled.

“This is ridiculous! Is there any way to pass this truck?” I moaned from the back seat.

“No, not here, but soon we turn out for him, you see.” Dimitris was sure. I could see his eyes smiling at me through the rear-view mirror. He had a sparkle in his eyes that seemed to convey happiness, laughter. Although he could speak English pretty well, he did make better use of the language when he could use his hands. He was an animated talker, and keeping his attention on the road did have a direct influence on his communication. The truck did finally have the courtesy to “turn out,” and let us pass him.

“You see? We go now,” Dimitris said.

“Let’s see if we can find a place for our picnic, I’m starving,” Morgan barked.

“There is good place up road. We turn after crossing bridge. You like stream? Most beautiful place.”

“Then, let’s get there already!” Morgan snapped.

We had a wonderful picnic, the stream and dense trees were soothing and restful, except that the ground was so littered with stones. The thick blanket beneath us kept the meal clean and gave us a chance to stretch out our legs, but it wasn’t enough to get very comfortable. With the lull in the conversation and the meal all but finished, I took the opportunity to ask Dimitris some questions. I couldn’t believe how nervous I was about talking to him about this!

“We were shopping in a little place in Old Rhodes, and I found a curious old photo.” I began as I dug into my purse. “I’d like to know more about it. We saw the house where this was taken. Do you think we can find out who owned the old house, or maybe if the people who lived there are still in Rhodes?”

“It is possible, a home on this old island sometimes will go on to family, from father to daughter, or son if no daughter. Traditions are kept in Rhodes, as with all of Hellas.”

I took the picture from my bag and carefully removed the scarf that I had wrapped it in, and handed it to Dimitris. When he took hold of the photo, he

was looking at me but his thumb and forefinger held onto my hand. When I looked up at his dark eyes, a jolt hit me and I instinctively gasped and pulled back my hand.

“We drove right by that place the other day, what a mess it is,” Morgan said as she fiddled with her camera.

“This house,” Dimitris’ voice dropped to a most solemn tone, “why you search for these people?”

“The old house was so sad! When I found the picture, I don’t know, I guess I thought that if I could find out something about the little girl, maybe the house wouldn’t fascinate me so. I know it’s crazy, it’s just a strange feeling I have when I see it.”

“This is not a happy place. Damaged, you see, some say by Dáimônes Epialtês. It would be wise to stay away,” he said, with his big brown eyes looking worried.

“What does that mean? They think the devil destroyed the house?” Morgan asked.

“Not devil, Dáimônes. In the old belief it is said that the god of nightmares will fall on those who live out cast. Uh,” Dimitris hesitated, “without God,” he continued, “such beliefs are old fairy tale, but some still believe, deep inside.”

“What was it you called it? Epialt...” I asked.

“Epialtês,” he corrected. “Dáimônes Epialtês more like human person, or god with human trait. Dáimônes, like gods of human weakness, god of temptation, god of mischief, this... god of nightmare is Dáimônes Epialtês.” Dimitris’ hands were motioning, putting each god in it’s own place.

“What would cause a Dáimônes Epialtês to fall on this house? I mean, is it something that they *did*, was it the house itself or the land, maybe?” I asked.

“Uh,” he hunched his shoulders up to his ears and let out a sigh, “don’t believe this superstition. Just gossip.”

“Do you know who this child is?” I pointed to the sad face held in his hands. When I got close enough to point to the child in the picture, Dimitris looked at me. I turned and looked into his eyes, and another jolt of electricity went through me. I silently gasped, as I could smell his cologne.

“I was child then, but I think she lived only with mother,” he said as he

turned back to the photo. "Once was in Karpathos, saw painting at gallery. It was this little girl. She was at the arches, Street of the Knights in Ancient Rhodes. I remember it with clear eye. Brother Stefano had fascination of those pictures in the window, so dark, lonely, haunting, but beautiful."

"I wonder if there are any records on the ownership of the house, I mean, if it's still there, then there must be land deeds somewhere." I thought aloud. "This picture isn't really *that* old, fifty years isn't old, maybe someone would remember if we asked."

"Remember in the Cafe? The reaction you got when you showed it to the waitress?" Morgan recalled.

"What is this Cafe?" Dimitris asked, referring to our encounter with the waitress.

After relating the episode and the other odd things surrounding this photo, Dimitris took the scarf from my hand and gently wrapped the photo.

"Maybe better to leave alone." He handed it back to me.

"What is it about this picture that no one wants to talk about? It's like a big secret that everyone knows." I said with frustration.

"I tell you what I know." He stood in contemplation. He began to pace, and tap his fingers together, as though in deep thought. "I tell you what I know, but remember talk of the people; not always true. Old tales become part of story."

"Superstition." Morgan said.

"Yes." He cleared his throat. "The young mother come here with daughter, on vacation. She was artist and made many things. She decide to stay. Not leave Rhodes. She stay in big old house, stay to live here."

"How long ago was this?" Morgan asked.

"It was in year, let me think, 1956 or 1957, somewhere in that time. I was very young but Stefano knows better, he will remember photo and girl. The lady was only with little girl."

"How did she live? I mean, unless she was independently wealthy, how did she make money enough to support a child? She'd have to sell a bunch of paintings to be able to stay here," Morgan figured.

"She had many arts in gallery and she also made clothes, did mending for

laundry in the old town.”

“I wish I could do that with my paintings; live here and paint!” I wished openly.

“Maybe she was a published artist, you know how strange some of them are, like the guy that cut off his ear. What was all that about? Maybe she had a studio in that big old house,” Morgan guessed.

“I’ll bet she did. It’s big enough!” I agreed.

“I will ask Stefano, my brother, he was in school then, he would know more,” Dimitris volunteered.

“Really? Wow! You would do that for me? This is so cool! I really don’t know how to thank you for this.” This was getting exciting.

“Not to change the subject, but, if we are going to drive to the coast today, shouldn’t we get going? Geesh!” Morgan spewed.

Morgan was right, we wasted a lot of time in traffic, had made many stops before lunch and we still had to drive out of the mountains.

Before we left the picnic Dimitris called his brother to see when he would be able to give us some time. It would be a few days, Dimitris would let us know.

We finished packing up the blanket and got back on the road. We made it out of the mountains and glimpsed a most beautiful site of the ocean. I was so preoccupied by the prospect of finding out what Dimitris’ brother knew, that I surely missed the oration of the sites on the downhill drive to the ocean. By the time we were off of the mountain, it was almost dark. It has taken an entire day, and we’ve only just gotten to the West coast. We should have waited for a weekday, maybe there wouldn’t have been so much traffic. Dimitris did show us many sites that we hadn’t planned on seeing, so the time was well spent. It wasn’t as though we had driven straight through without stopping for so many interesting and beautiful sights.

We hadn’t planned on taking another day to see the West coast, but we found that it would be worth the extra time, and we didn’t want to rush. This was the trip that Morgan and I will always remember and talk about until we’re in our dotage, so we wanted to enjoy it and see as much as possible. It was also nice that Dimitris had the time to spend with us, so we wanted to

take advantage of his generosity while he was available.

During our time together I was able to connect a few of the dots in our saga of the photo and made a few notes:

It began in 1957 or so;

Mother and daughter (no sign of a husband)

Daughter went to school in Rhodes district (parochial?)

Mother was artist, possibly professional

Superstitions - Dáimônes Epialtês.

It was fascinating to me. I wasn't sure if I was more interested in learning more about the ownership of the house and what happened to it, or finding out more about this mother and child. It really got me curious to find out what all the *fuss* was about with this little picture, and *that* was more intriguing than the rest of it.

By the end of the day, we found ourselves in Kefala. I don't think it was luck, but a turn of events that allowed us another unexpected surprise that Dimitris lead us into. The ocean on this side of the island seemed deeper blue with, or especially because of the clouds.

There was barely the remnants of solar glow on the ocean horizon, and the breeze was beginning to chill us. We decided to try to find a room for the night, instead of tackling the winding roads, even though Dimitris knew them well. We would have missed too many sights.

"Maybe there's room at the Aurora, that we just passed. But I can't get my cell to work. We really need to get new Sim cards and get these things unlocked," Morgan sighed.

Dimitris took out his cell phone, and although we couldn't understand a word, we gathered that the conversation was about lodging.

"We go to the Mariner's. We eat, we drink, we take rest? Then we go," was Dimitris' plan.

It sounded good to me, as the back seat of this car was getting very uncomfortable after so many hours.

We found the Mariner's Inn to be a fisherman's paradise. Rustic but cozy, the walls and ceiling had every conceivable relic ever found that had to do with fishing and the fishing industry.



There was a big stone fireplace on one side of the room, and booths around the perimeter. It was very warm and inviting. Dimitris and I ordered beer, then he tapped his bottle against our glasses before he drank. Although there wasn't much of a menu, the fish stew was the best I had tasted. The hot food and cold drink relaxed us, but the thought of getting back into the car was like taking bitter medicine. Like it or not, it was something we'd have to do.

"I hope that we'll be back to the Paradiso sometime soon, I'm running out of clothes!" Morgan complained.

"Yeah, I know, I didn't think it would take this long to get around the island. It didn't look to be that big of an island when we got here," I said.

"Rhodes not big, seems big. Many, many sites, many cars, too many tourists and too slow to hurry."

"So, what's the plan?" Morgan asked. "I've got to re-charge my batteries pretty soon."

"Tomorrow we see Paradiso by mid-morning hour. We hurry tomorrow."

"Did you say 'hurry'?" I didn't believe what I just heard. We were headed for the most populated side of the island, where all of the beach resorts were, tourists and locals alike. I could just picture in my mind all of the traffic and crowds, that we tried so hard to avoid. And it's the weekend!

Although we were tired from our day of site seeing, I didn't want any coffee to get in the way of sleeping. I was really getting a taste for Greek coffee too, but one small cup of it would keep me up all night. I was surprised to see Morgan getting a taste for it, as she usually didn't indulge that much in coffee. We stopped along our way at the local computer warehouse store and purchased our chips for our cell phones. Now at least we can call home.

"Where are we going to camp tonight?" Morgan blurted out in a sarcastic tone as we walked to the car. I could tell that she was tired and needed to rest.

"The Athena." Dimitris closed Morgan's door to the car. As the lights from the city were fading from behind us, we seemed to be driving further from town.

"Where is this place, anyway? I thought..." Morgan got interrupted.

"We are here." Dimitris announced. I couldn't see anything, it was very dark.

“Come; there is Athena,” he said, carrying the gear that we had with us. We followed and found a small yacht that shined white in the dark harbor.

“Oooo, what is this?” I asked in amazement.

“Athena.” Dimitris answered. “You see, have nice cabin, you sleep well.”

We were really not expecting anything like this! We were shown to a fairly large cabin. It must have been the Captains quarters, with a huge king size bed, a real bathroom with a shower and we even had our own refrigerator. We needed to get some sleep, but Morgan headed right for the shower. I thought I’d get the grand tour.

I went to where I heard voices. The Galley was down the corridor where I found Dimitris.

“Come in.” Dimitris stood and gave me his seat in the booth at the corner of the small room. “Helena, this is my young brother Andreas. Miss Helena, one of my American beauties.”

“Welcome aboard the Athena, Helena! I hope you will find the cabin comfortable.”

“Yes, thank you, it’s so kind of you to offer us a place to sleep.”

“Would you like something to eat, or maybe a drink? We’re having beer.”

“Beer sounds good, thanks!”

Dimitris got a beer for me, and I moved over so that he could sit. He tapped his bottle to mine, before I drank.

“Salud!” I said. Suddenly the heavens opened with all these Greek and Italian toasts. It was funny, and it made me more at ease.

“Andreas, you have no idea of what a life saver your brother has been for us. If it weren’t for him, we would probably still be hauling our luggage down the road on foot!” I tapped Dimitris’ arm in a thankful gesture.

“Come, let’s go sit on the patio deck where it’s more comfortable,” Andreas suggested.

We moved to the deck, where the cushioned sofa was so much more comfortable. Andreas and Dimitris lit up cigars and were talking about how their brother had fallen into a mold they were making, of an artifact foundation. Apparently, this brother manages to blunder into all kinds of predicaments. It sounded funny. I thought that this other brother would be

very interesting to meet.

Dimitris got me another bottle of beer and tapped his bottle to mine again.

“A toast?” I asked as he sat next to me.

“To keep away bad spirits, so nothing harms you. You are curious lady. You want to know things, is good.”

“If you’ll excuse me, I will return in a few minutes,” Andreas announced.

“I see you wear ring, but not here with husband. Why you not with husband?” I was a little startled by the question. Dimitris was very direct, but not rude.

“I don’t have a good time with him. He makes me *not* have a good time.”

“Why you with this man, Helena?”

“I don’t know anymore.”

“What you like to do?”

“What do you mean?”

“What you do with time, work? What?”

“I used to do a lot of things, draw, paint, but I haven’t been inspired enough to do it for a long time,” I said. He took my hand and looked at my palm and my fingers and said in a soft voice,

“These hands have talent in them. You must not waste this talent.”

“No one has ever said it like that.”

“If you do not use talents, they will be taken away.” He was holding my fingers out across his palm.

“I try to keep busy, I’m just not very organized.” I was getting a little self-conscious at this point.

“You are too modest, shy,” he said.

“I’ve come to a place with so much beauty! It’s inspired me, so I’m sure I’ll paint something when I get home.” I was hoping to get this conversation off of me.

“You paint here, always inspired.”

“Yes, I wish I could.” I just smiled.

“Tomorrow, I show you most beautiful place. You will not go home then.”

“I’d love to see something *that* beautiful.”

“Beautiful is everywhere. One only needs to see.” Dimitris said softly,

looking at me with those big dark eyes.

“Dimitris, are you flirting with me?” I asked with a smile.

“Well, I do not do good job of it,” he said with a shy, boyish smile.

“I don’t know about that!” We laughed a little, nervously. He got us another beer and we tapped our bottles together. We leaned back against the sofa and I felt the cold against my back, giving me a chill.

“Oooo, I’m getting cold out here.”

Dimitris stood up, turned and held out his hand to me. I took his hand as he helped me up off of the couch, then he kissed my hand.

“Come, we go back inside.” We went into the galley and Dimitris ran his hands up and down my arms to warm me. “Does it help?” He asked.

“Yeah, it does.” I started laughing.

“Good! You come sit with Dimi, I keep you warm.”

We sat in the booth in the galley, with his arm around my shoulder. His body heat did warm me. His cologne was another thing!

“May I ask you something?” I nervously cleared my throat.

“Yes, of course.”

“Is your cologne called ‘Jade East’?”

He looked at me with a slight smile and finally said,

“Yes. Does it bother you?”

“God, no, I love it, it....” I caught my words in mid air.

“It?.. what?” He leaned closer to me to look into my eyes. “What?”

“I wasn’t going to say it, but it, I mean, it reminds me of when I was a teenager. It brings back a lot of memories.” I was turning red with my near slip of the tongue.

There was a long pause. He looked straight ahead, smiled and I felt like time had stopped. He took a drink of his beer, very slowly, still looking ahead. Finally he said,

“Is good,” then he looked at me.

“Okay, okay, you’re embarrassing me now, so don’t look at me.”

“You are very unusual lady.”

“What do you mean?”

“You say your truth and embarrass over it, I like.”

“Now you’re teasing me!”

“Sit back and relax. I will not bite you.” He coaxed me to settle back against the booth.

“Oh, this is comfortable, but I really should be going to bed.”

“You so tired. Yes, it was long day.”

“I’m not used to this kind of beer either, it’s a lot more potent than what I am used to. I’m afraid I’m getting a little drunk,” I admitted.

“Then you get no more beer,” he pulled my bottle to the middle of the table. “I give you water.” When he got out of the booth to get the water, I was suddenly cold. I was getting goose bumps on my arms as the breeze whipped around my neck. I felt a tightening in my chest and began to cough.

“You drink water.”

“Is there any aspirin?”

“Yes, up here there’s...here it is!” He handed me the bottle. “You have headache?”

“Not yet, but I will.”

“You take *now*?”

“Yes, it helps to *not* get a bad one when I wake up.”

“I try too.” We both took some aspirin to head off the inevitable morning after headache.

“You are very smart.”

“Thank you.” His cologne was hypnotizing me and I knew it was time I headed for bed. I was getting these waves of intoxicating excitement, and I knew it wasn’t the beer. “I think I’d better go to bed, it’s late.”

Dimitris slid out of the booth and held out his hand for me to take as I got out.

“Ooo, it’s harder to keep balance on a boat after a few beers.” I grabbed on to the table as I stood, not wanting to trip. I took my water and Dimitris held me by the waist to walk me to the cabin.

“I don’t really need help.” It felt good to have a man’s arms around me, after such a long time.

“There, you are okay?” He asked at the door of the cabin.

“I am doing good, I think,” I said with a nervous little laugh. “I want you to

know that I don't drink with men I don't know. You've just been so sweet to us, thank you."

He kissed my hand and bid "good night."

I crept into the cabin, trying not to wake Morgan, but she wasn't there! I didn't want to hunt her down, so I undressed and went to bed. I was trying to get to sleep, but the thought of Dimitris kept coming into my mind, and made me smile.

"Dimitris! Come here," Andreas called.

When he entered the forward lounge, the TV was on and Morgan was sitting next to Andreas.

"You didn't tell me we had *two* American beauties on board!" Andreas exclaimed.

"Yes! Two! Miss Morgana, this is Andreas."

"Yeah, we met." She said with a smile.

"I am off to my bed, good night."

Morgan and Andreas were laughing and talking, watching the television.

"I should go to bed too, it's late." Morgan said to Andreas.

"But you're leaving me to watch this by myself? Very well, I'll walk with you."

"That's okay, I know where I'm going."

"No, I'll see that you get there safely." They said their "good night" and Morgan came into the cabin.

"Where were you?"

"I met Andreas when I was looking for you!"

"Isn't he cute? He's a lively one."

"He ain't bad, I tell ya!"

"When I smell Jade East, I am back in high school. That's the kind of memory that never leaves you; the smell of that cologne! It'll always be my weakness."

"You're married, remember?"

"Yeah, well, I don't really want to remember. Not right now."

"All the guys used to wear it back then. I'm surprised that Dimitris even found it, I didn't think that it was made anymore."

*Saturday*

“I know, I’ve tried finding it, and it’s nowhere to be found. I’m not sure that the company that originally made it is still around.”

“Yeah, there’s a lot of things that aren’t around anymore,” Morgan muttered.

“Well, I guess we’ll get some decent sleep, this air knocks me out,” I said.  
“Good night.”

## Sunday



I don't remember ever sleeping as well as I did aboard the Athena. Whether it was the ocean breezes or the gentle rocking of the sea, it was like having taken a sleeping pill. Even with the slight sore throat that seemed to nag at me, nothing woke me once sleep overtook me. This morning, Sunday, we went to the galley by following the smell of fresh brewed coffee.

"Good morning ladies." Andreas said with that cheerful smile as they both stood.

"Coffee!" I got a full cup of this wonder drug, and went to the booth. Dimitris let me slide in. "How are you this morning Dimitris?"

He sat next to me, grabbed my head and planted a big fat kiss on my cheek!

"I am wonderful, thank you! This lady has saved me from the fate of pounding head!" He announced as he kissed my hand. Everyone had a good laugh, it was so totally unexpected. I could do nothing but try to drink my coffee between laughs, and with a big grin on my face.

"How did you sleep, Helena?" Dimitris asked, leaning around to look at me.

"I wish I could always sleep this well. I don't know what it is about the sea, but it lulls me to sleep in no time."

"Miss Morgana was telling me about Aero Greco last night. It could have been very dangerous for two women alone. This should never happen." Andreas sounded as if it was a warning.



“We didn’t plan it! We didn’t have a choice. We had to do the best we could, under the circumstances.” Morgan retorted.

“You do not want to be stuck in Athens, two women alone, it’s too dangerous.” Andreas said.

“Once we finally got here, we were blessed with our ‘knight in shining armor’ and everything turned out good,” I said, as I glanced at Dimitris’ hands.

“Yes, two women alone on road, at night, not good!” Dimitris looked over to me as I sipped my coffee.

“Today I am showing Miss Morgana the sites of Kefala. Do you want to come with us?” Andreas asked Dimitris.

“I show Miss Helena other beauties.”

“Okay, meet us back here by 3 p.m.,” Andreas stated.

Morgan and I didn’t have much to say about it, which was okay, since we had no set plans laid out. We went back to the cabin to freshen up.

“I’ve been wearing almost the same clothes for last couple of days. Does this look too bad?” Morgan asked as she turned in a circle.

“No, it’s fine.”

“So what’s with Dimitris?”

“What do you mean?”

“He’s getting kinda friendly.” She said sarcastically, waiting for my input.

“He’s sweet. I gave him some aspirin last night, and he didn’t get a headache, so I guess that made him happy.”

“Do you know where you’ll be going today?”

“If I remember right, Dimitris said something about a beautiful spot that I’d never want to leave. So I’m not sure where that is. God! He’s just so sexy, isn’t he? On first glance, I wouldn’t have thought twice about him, especially wearing that brown Polo shirt, did nothing for him. When we first met him, I didn’t think too much about his looks. I don’t know, there’s something about him; his eyes. I’m going to have to be careful!” I joked.

“He’s been very nice.” Morgan had a half smile she tried to hide, then turned her head.

“Okay, I guess I’ll see you later, huh?”

“Yeah, you’ll have to tell me how this one comes out!” Morgan said, and we both had a hard time keeping a straight face when we got to the men. I wasn’t going to ask about her attitude or what was behind her remarks.

Dimitris seated me in the car. “Are you ready to see most beautiful site?”

“I’m ready,” and we took off.

The road was a lovely drive back up into the hills and once we crested and started to descend, it looked like a lush valley, trees and people. Lots of people.

“This is Valley of Butterflies. Tourists, all over, but I know special place, no tourists.”

“It’s so lush and green.” I commented.

“Little bridges over streams, is beautiful.”

We drove right by the main tourist area, and came into a secluded little back road. I was in awe, that a place like this thrived in such a tourist ridden and arid area.

“Oh Dimitris! This is so beautiful.”

“We get out here, walk.” He took me by the hand and lead me down an overgrown trail that opened out to a natural pond. A small waterfall divided itself over a moss grown rock and fell into this oasis pool. It was how I would envision the Garden of Eden.

Dimitris stood behind me with his hands holding my shoulders and spoke softly in my ear.

“This beauty is yours to paint. It will be your secret place.”

“Ohh, it’s so beautiful Dimitris.” I said softly so as not to break this tranquility.

“Come, we sit over here.” We sat on a downed log and took in the beauty of this paradise. “In Spring, hundreds of Butterflies live here. Most beautiful then.”

“You’re right. I wouldn’t want to leave here if it was possible to stay. It’s beautiful. So peaceful.” I closed my eyes and listened to the water falling over the rocks and the birds singing. I took a deep breath. “Thank you.”

He looked at me with those dark eyes. The atmosphere was thick with electrical charge. My heart was beating so fast that it could take my breath

away. His body heat was reaching out to me. I had to walk away. His eyes followed me as I took out my camera and started taking pictures. I had to distance myself from him.

He stood behind me as I snapped away on my camera. I could feel his warmth radiating out to me.

He reached over to pick a leaf from my hair. I turned to him, wondering what to say. My heart was jumping out of my chest, but I couldn't let him know that. I had to hide the pull he had on me. I felt that my soul was laid bare when I let my eyes catch his.

Andreas docked the Athena at a small inlet to the harbor. The inlet was shallow and deserted of tourists. Only a few motorists passing on a nearby highway was a reminder of the present.

"Would you like to swim? The water is warm like a bath here."

"I didn't come prepared to go swimming."

"I have extra shorts and t-shirts, come on." It was too tempting and they were alone, so it's not like making a public spectacle without a swim suit, so she decided to go in.

"Oh, okay, but I'm not that good of a swimmer, so if I sink, it'll be your fault!"

Andreas threw the ladder over the end of Athena and had two body boards, and chucked them over the side too. The water was cool but not cold and they floated and played for quite some time. The sun felt good and was welcomed.

The time goes too quickly when everything is right. It was time once again to weigh anchor and go back to pick up the stragglers of the group.

"Thank you for showing me this." Not wanting to break the spell but knowing it's something I must do, "I think I took some good pictures that will inspire me when I'm home."

"As artist you must stay to paint. Not good to paint Rhodes in California."

"I know, but I don't have a choice. If I were free to do what I wanted, and had the money, I'd stay a while longer. I've already fallen in love with Rhodes, and this, this will be hard to leave behind." We slowly made our way back to

the car.

“This not good! What makes you go? Husband?” He asked.

“My family, but more to the point it takes money. I don’t have the money to stay, and I wouldn’t want to stay here alone, so I have to leave. I wish it was not so soon though.”

“Yes. It’s time we leave here now, too. Andreas will be waiting.”

On board, we were in a place where we could rest, sleep, walk the deck or just sit and read. It was wonderful. We were comfortable here. These two days were worth the hassles of this whole trip.

“Ain’t this the life?” Morgan commented. “I could get used to this.” She wrapped an afghan around her as we lounged out on the deck.

“I feel like something is missing. You know that feeling you get when you leave the coffee pot on? What is it that I’m forgetting?” I asked.

“You need to relax while you’ve got the chance.” Morgan replied. “Let me see that picture you’ve got.”

“I left it in my bag, in the cabin. You want to go back with me? I might just crawl back under the covers and get cozy.”

“I guess so, I want to see if my cell phone is still alive, but we probably can’t even get a signal out here.”

We were awakened with a light knock on the door.

“Hello, are you awake?”

This was going to be an interesting trip. It was a funny thing, I thought this kind of stuff was behind me, but I’m not feeling so down anymore, and not feeling so old either. That depression that makes you feel like you’re ancient and saps your energy, I must have left it behind when I boarded the plane. Somewhere in this trip of a lifetime I lost my perspective, and was beginning to lose myself to the lure of the Greek islands. I hadn’t done anything that I should be ashamed of, but somehow I felt guilt ridden, but exhilarated.

Andreas was talking to Dimitris about our little adventures, when we walked in.

"Dimitris has been such a big help to us," Morgan said.

"Dimi knows everyone and everything on this island."

"Excuse me, I don't want to be rude, but, you don't hardly have any accent when you speak," I commented to Andreas.

"Yes, well, I went off to school at an early age, to London, so my accent is now what I would call a mellow mix of the two," Andreas explained.

"My brother, he's smart, he went to Ox-ford." Dimitris boasted. He was proud of his younger brother.

"Oh, but I have been neglectful. Let me get some coffee and something for you to eat," Andreas offered.

"Coffee sounds great," we both agreed.

"Dimi tells me you've been on a quest during your time here."

"We haven't been very lucky with it, I'm afraid." I sadly admitted.

"Nobody wants to talk to us about it, it's weird," Morgan said sipping her coffee.

I took out the photograph and told Andreas a shortened version of everything we knew, which wasn't much. He looked it over very carefully.

"I remember when I was a child, children coming home from school wearing this type of clothing, maybe from the Parish school?" He said, looking at the child in the old photo. "That's about all I can say, but yes, the house is familiar. I've seen it before. I must see to my bride, please excuse me."

As Andreas entered the bridge, the pilot warning was ringing, and red lights blinking on the ship's console. After assessing the problem, the warning was turned off and Andreas had the Athena back on course.

"Where are the girls?" Andreas asked Dimitris.

"In cabin."

"American ladies, eh, Dimi?" Andreas smiled and elbowed his brother.

"Yes, beautiful American ladies."

"Miss Morgana has spark!" Andreas grinned.

"She certainly has that!" Dimitris answered.

"They are both single?"

"I think yes for Miss Morgana, not so sure for Miss Helena."

“We shall have a pleasant voyage,” Andreas said. Morgan came on the bridge.

“Miss Morgana! How would you like to pilot Athena?” Andreas asked. Dimitris excused himself and left the bridge.

When I reemerged from my inner sanctum, I found Dimitris sitting in a lounge chair in the stern patio. He looked so absorbed in thought, that I hesitated to disturb him. I turned to leave but then he saw me.

“Ah, there you are, come sit with Dimitris.”

“How are you, Dimitris? What are you doing here all by yourself?” I asked as he took my hand to lead me to a chair.

“Nauph! And how are you now?”

“I’m good, I guess.”

“You are not sure?” He asked as he leaned forward to look into my eyes.

“I don’t know,” I said, and unconsciously pulled back.

“You tell Dimitris sometime, huh? You tell me something, I tell you something too.”

“Where is Morgan? I thought she’d be with you.”

“Miss Morgana is learning to drive boat,” he said.

“Oh. Well, I . . .,” I started to stand when Dimitris cuffed my wrist and said,

“Sit, sit, Andreas, he take care of Miss Morgana, don’t worry.”

“Your brother seems very nice, is he married?” I asked. Perhaps this type of question was a little too pointed. I wanted to cover my mouth, especially since we had only just met. Dimitris went from a side glance to looking directly at me and said,

“Not married, no. I can see he has interest in Miss Morgana. He say she ‘has spark!’” Dimitris had a small laugh.

I had to hold back a smile, because I saw that spark when she said she wanted to “take in the view.”

“She is nice woman and Andreas is good man.” He sounded distant, far off in thought.

“Dimitris, you have been very kind to us, helping us with everything. I really have to thank you.”

“Psshh, is nothing. I like to do.”

“Why is it that you’re not married? I mean, you have a lot of friends, and probably have women crawling all over you.” I asked, and tried not to be insensitive or nosy.

“Was married, once. Not now.”

“Any children?”

“No children, no, and what of you Miss Helena, you married, yet take trip with friend.” He was looking at my left hand.

“Morgan and I are better traveling companions.”

“Yes, I see.”

“Do you mind if I ask, what happened, why you’re not together anymore? Or am I being too nosy?” I asked.

“Nothing to tell. We were very young, we grow up together. We married, at 15 years old. After two years we go to Rhodes City for job, she meet other man. End of story,” he said.

“Do you still love her? You seem so sad.”

“I believe I love the marriage. A man should be married and take care of wife and family, if God wills it. But I did not do well enough with this. I leave job and leave Rhodes for Athens. I come back when Mama gets sick. I took care until she passed. So, now, taxi to make this man happy.” He had a tone of sadness in his voice.

I thought, here’s this strong man, who saw to our needs and showed us more kindness than I had ever gotten from a complete stranger. A man who seems to have a broken heart, I felt bad for him. I laid my hand on his forearm as comfort. He covered it with his hand, as we sat and looked out to the sea and watched the wake of our ship as we made our way North in silence.

We could hear laughter coming toward us. Andreas and Morgan were having a good time with each other. We stood as they entered the patio.

“Dimi, you missed the biggest show of Dolphins. Miss Morgana almost went swimming with them!” Andreas joked.

“I thought you were going to feed me to them!” She protested.

They both laughed and had that gleam about them.

“So, what have you two been up to, Miss Morgana?” I asked. Morgan had a big smile and when she looked at Andreas, I saw her eyes had that

unmistakable sparkle.

"I learned how to steer the ship," she laughed.

"She is a fast learner," Andreas added.

"When do we arrive to dock?" Dimitris asked, uncharacteristically blunt.

"We should dock in about 2 hours. I'll have to call for docking orders, but it doesn't look like we'll have to wait," Andreas answered.

"Gee, I just thought about our rental car, we'll have to go back for it." Dimitris placed his hand on mine and said,

"Car will be at dock, you will see."

"See, Helen, everything's all right, nothing to fret over." Morgan was just a little too cheerful.

"I think I'm going to hop in the shower, if that's okay?" I asked.

"Yes! And I will fix wonderful lunch," Dimitris answered.

"You cook? Really? You'd better watch out Dimitris, I might have to marry you myself!" I said jokingly.

"Dimi can do anything," Andreas added.

When I got out of the shower, Morgan was sitting on the bed.

"Did you want to shower? I think there might be hot water left?"

"I thought you'd never get out of there," she exploded.

"So, what's with you two?" I couldn't wait to ask.

"Nothing really, we just started talking and found we have a lot in common. We had some cheese and bread and just talked. He's funny! He's so easy to talk to, I feel like I've known him forever."

"He's cute too."

"That he definitely is!" She laughed, and I had to laugh too.

"After we get settled at the Paradiso, we might go out. Would you mind being alone for a while?" She asked.

"I'll probably just read anyway, so go ahead, I don't mind."

"Did you call Mark lately?" She asked, more to change the subject, I suspect.

"Yeah, he's all pushed out of shape, and is making me feel guilty for leaving. I think he doesn't want me to have any enjoyment on my own."

"Make you feel guilty for what?" She asked.



“For having fun without him, I guess. If he can’t keep an eye on me, he thinks I’m out finding someone else. He would never know how to enjoy the beauty of a place like this, so I’d have a lousy time if he were here.”

“Why would he think that? Have you ever stepped out on him?”

“No, never. I never even thought about it. He’s insecure and I think it has to do with his parents. It’s just a theory.”

“So then, when we leave here, how will it be when you get back?” Morgan asked.

“He’ll say he missed me and things will go back to what it was before, most likely.”

“Will you be the same as you were before you came here?” She asked.

“I don’t know, I hope not.”

We were next in line to dock. I looked around the room to make sure that we didn’t forget anything. As I came out of the room, Dimitris was waiting for me. He took my arm in his and said,

“I walk with you to car. See? Dimitris saves the damsels once again.”

“Thank you.” I said, then we walked, arm in arm to the car, which was left by the rental company. I wondered how he managed this feat! Andreas and Morgan were quite a distance behind us, and I could see that he had his arm across Morgan’s shoulder as they walked. They were both laughing.

Dimitris opened the rental car and put my stuff in the trunk. I was going to open the back seat door out of habit, but Dimitris ran over to me and opened the front door.

“You will sit in front with Dimitris.” We sat there for a few minutes waiting for Andreas and Morgan.

“You are kind lady and good friend to Miss Morgana.”

“Well, we have been friends for many years. I love her like a sister.”

“We will take you to Paradiso. Andreas will come too, I get my car and take him back to Athena. Put boat to bed.”

The back door opened and Andreas made sure that Morgan was safely seated, then went around to the other side and got in. The first thing that I noticed is that he put his arm around her as soon as he was seated.

“Okay, let’s go.” Andreas tapped on the back of Dimitris’ seat.

Andreas and Morgan were in a conversation which we couldn't hear, so Dimitris turned on the radio. This was the longest period of time that I hadn't heard Dimitris telling us about one thing or another. When we arrived he got the basket out of the trunk, handed me the keys then took my arm to walk me to the door of the Paradiso.

"Thank you so much, Dimitris, for everything." He kissed my hand. He stepped back and said,

"Good bye, Miss Helena!"

I lay on the bed and thought about his last words to me. Was that what he meant? Was he saying good-bye? I felt a little stab in my heart as I tried to write some postcards home. Before I knew it, I had fallen asleep.

"Were you sleeping?" Morgan asked as she closed the door.

"Oh, that's okay, I didn't mean to fall asleep." I was surprised to see that almost an hour and a half had passed since I got back. "Where have you been? I thought you were right behind me."

"We were talking and he was saying that he is a Civil Engineer and doesn't live here, he lives in Athens, and has a daughter. I think Andreas has problems with her mother. He said that she's 'crazy'. I wonder what that means?" Morgan fiddled with the fringe on the throw pillow, "anyway, they were never married, I think he said that they lived together when he was in London."

"What split them up?" I asked.

"I don't know, I didn't want to sound nosy."

"You and Andreas are going out later?" I wondered.

"Yeah, he'll be here at 8 pm," she answered.

"Any idea of where you'll be going? What are you going to wear?"

"No, I don't, but I don't have much of a choice of what to wear. I didn't bring anything fancy with me."

"You'd better get a move on, it's already after 7 pm." I said, not thinking.

"D' ya think??" She was getting panicky, her voice was higher and she was breathing faster. "Maybe this isn't such a good idea. What am I thinking, Helen?"

“Calm down, it’s going to be fine. He’ll probably take you to a quiet Taverna so that you’ll be able to talk for a while, without interruptions from ‘bridge duty’ and having Dimitris and me sitting there,” I said, trying to calm her nerves.

“I wish I had a beer right now. I just wish it didn’t feel like a date! I’m too old for this stuff!”

“Geez! You’re not old! What is age anyway? It’s how you feel, it’s attitude towards life. It’s just two people getting together for a drink and some small talk. It’s not like you will be roller skating!”

“Couldn’t you see me on skates?” She made a funny face and gestured as a person falling over! We both laughed. It reminded me of when we were living on Second Street, way back when, but at that time, it was a braid pulling that made us laugh!

Morgan reminded me of a teenager getting ready for a hot date. Nervous, and a little excited. It was good to see her like this. She didn’t have much luck in relationships, and it got so that she became somewhat hardened to male advances.

Morgan left with Andreas at exactly 8 pm, and she was finally somewhat composed. Andreas came in to say hello, and he looked so handsome and well groomed. I think that he was pleased with how Morgan looked. His eyes lit up when she came into the room. I could tell that she was really nervous, but I don’t think that Andreas was aware of it.

I wanted to go over the photos that I had on my digital camera, and some of them were pretty good shots. I had a number of photos that I had to delete, but over all, most were good. Since I was left with nothing to do, and found nothing interesting to read, I changed into a bathing suit and went down to the heated pool.

I was in the warm swirling water, of the little attached spa, my head laying back against the rim of the deck, listening to the other guests mingle somewhere out there in the night. I had my eyes closed, just relaxing in a dreamy state, and thinking of a cold drink, maybe a Tequila Sunrise! I wondered how it was going for Morgan, and I hoped they were having a good time. After a half hour of relaxing in this whirlpool, I stood for a moment to

get my balance, and get out of the pool, when suddenly a towel was wrapped around my shoulders.

“Oh! Thank you. ...Oh! I thought you were one of the attendants! You startled me! What’s up, Dimitris?” I asked, rather embarrassed that he had been sitting there, for who knows how long, in silence. “I was just going to find me a Tequila Sunrise. Do you feel like having something?”

“Yes, oh please! I get for you,” he said, and was off to the bar. That gave me a chance to put on my robe and wrap the towel around my head. When he came back we sat by the pool and had our drinks.

“So, how are you doing Dimitris?” I was worried about how he’s been so quiet and introspective since we came back.

“I am...doing good, doing good,” he hesitated, like he wasn’t really sure. “We will find your little girl, the photo. We find her.” He was looking down and I knew that he had something on his mind.

“Yes, it would be nice to know more about it, before we have to leave.”

“Today, when I see Andreas and Miss Morgana so happy, remind me of sad things, I am sorry I say this.”

I leaned toward Dimitris and touched his knee with the tip of my finger and said,

“I know, when I see them together so happy, it makes me feel like I am missing something, and it makes me feel very alone.”

He looked at me with those big sad eyes. “Yes. I begin to feel alone for myself also.”

“Tell me, Dimitris, why haven’t you re-married? You have your pick of all of these young beautiful women who come here year after year, and yet, you are alone. Did she hurt you that badly?” I asked.

I hardly knew this man, and asking personal questions was probably against every Greek belief there ever was, and in poor taste. I didn’t want him to think of me as another American, sticking my nose where it doesn’t belong.

“We married young, Marissa and me. Jobs were not too many, so I think I find work in New Rhodes. I find good job in Copper, make the pots, urns. Those kinds of utilities. Work ten hours a day. Marissa gets job at travel agency, rent the cars and travel.”

“Were you happy?” I asked.

“Happy, what is happy? I work, I sleep, and I work again. Lots of sex, but not happy. We argue, she says she travel for work. I say good, but too much she not home. She travel, I work. I come home, she no come home. But this long time ago, doesn’t matter.

“When at school I fall in love again, with Kefalonia. It is most beautiful! But, it is good to come home to Rhodes, where the heart lives.” He said, placing his hand on his heart. “I’m in Kefalonia still if my mother was not sick. I come to take care, and here I am still.”

“What did you do in Kefalonia?” I asked.

“Stay with friend, when at school, then in Athens. School, school always school.” He finished his drink. “After school, work, work, work,” he laughed. “When my Mama passes, I drive taxi and meet my American beauties! I become *Knight in Shining Armor*.” We both laughed.

“You should find a young lady, get married and have a bunch of kids.”

“What do you see, when you look at Dimitris?” He stood up and turned around, “What you see, Helena?”

“I see a strong, sensitive, maybe a bit lonely at the moment, but an honest, gentle man.” I answered with all sincerity.

“Other women do not see me this way. I have friends and they give me the ‘fix up’ with women. But no, this man scare them. These young ladies, it’s all the games, they have no heart, they are not real.”

“I don’t think that I understand.”

“I will go, please forgive Dimitris.”

“Wait! Don’t go yet. Why don’t you stay and we’ll talk? I’m going to be alone and wouldn’t mind some company. I’d like to talk some more, unless you’re busy.”

“I can stay to talk, I do that very well.” He said with a small smile. “You shake! You get cold!”

“I am a little cold.”

He felt my cheeks with the back of his hand and said,

“You are too cold! I did this with too much of the talk. You put on clothes, I wait.”

“It’ll only take me a minute, so don’t go anywhere, all right?”

“I will be here, Helena.”

It didn’t take that long for me to dress. My hair was a knotted up mess, and still pretty wet, but I kept a butterfly clip on it, grabbed my sweater and purse and left the room.

“Do you wish to walk?” Dimitris asked.

“Yes, let’s walk,” and I took his arm.

We sauntered down to the square, and there were still people milling about. We talked about how Morgan and I came to Rhodes, and laughed about some of the misadventures this trip has handed us.

There was a short pause in the conversation.

“And what of you, Helena?”

I guess it was his sincerity, that made me tell him some of my story, but I didn’t want to delve in too deeply. I began with the first dead marriage and continued from there. All of the drinking, drugs and psychological warfare that came with the territory with Mark. I hadn’t planned on telling him any of this. His eyes were so kind and understanding. I looked at his compassionate eyes, and knew I had told him too much. He was no longer a stranger, but my confessor.

I admitted that I got tired of waiting for something to happen in my life and that this trip was not only a chance to have a great time with a wonderful friend, but it was saving me from the depression that I lived with every day. I could see his eyes light when I mentioned the beauty of Rhodes, and that it has made me come alive. It seemed to breathe into him an air of pride.

“You stay! To paint Rhodes, you need to paint here. You find way, think of it. Beauty everywhere, you paint.”

“It’s very tempting. I do love Rhodes and the Valley of Butterflies.”

I was holding on to Dimitris’ arm and he noticed that my hand was like ice. He covered my cold hand with his other hand and said,

“You are cold!”

“It’s kind of chilly tonight.”

He stopped dead, reached around and touched the back of my hair, where it was pinned up.

“You are still wet! I must get you home, you get sick out in cold! We go.”

“I guess we should be heading back. This was fun, I really had a nice time. I always have a nice time with you, Dimitris.”

“I had good time too. I...” he seemed to stammer, “I do not want you think Dimitris always sad. I don’t talk of things past, to anyone, these things, but ...”

“I know, but sometimes it’s okay to talk to someone.”

“It is good to talk to special one.” He uttered in a soft voice. Then robustly he announced, “and then we go to Karpathos! We see Stefano.”

We talked all of the way back to the bungalow. Just before we got to the door Dimitris stopped, took my hand from his arm and put it around his waist, and facing me said in a soft voice,

“You are passionate woman, Helena. Rhodes wants you here.” Then he gave me the European kiss, but his lips gently brushed mine. “I call you tomorrow, Helena, good night.” He kissed my hand, and I watched him walk away.

“Geez, where have you been? I thought you were going to stay in! It’s after midnight,” Morgan scolded.

“Well, Dimitris came by and we went for a walk. Why, what happened?” I asked rather anxiously.

“You’re not going to believe this, but we talked about everything. His daughter and her mother, I never did get her name, but did you know that there are five brothers! Mattaios, Stefano, Dimitris, Andreas and Angelo. Their father died in an accident ten years ago, and their mom died here, five years ago. That’s when the sons all seemed to go their own separate ways.

“Stefano is an archaeologist, and lives in Karpathos. Mattaios is in Turkey, I think he has something to do with shipping, and here’s the kicker, Dimitris invented some kind of medical machine that is used in a lab when testing blood for... something!”

“What?” This was a surprise. “Dimitris invented what?” I asked in astonishment.

“It’s some kind of scientific testing equipment for blood, and he was married, divorced now, and takes care of the old family home.”

“Bless his heart! So how did everything else go?”

“Andreas is so polite and not afraid to spend the cash! I was a little embarrassed, ‘cuz he kept trying to buy me things!” She was digging into her purse. “Look.” She brought out a beautiful Byzantine style cross, and I could tell it was really old.

“Oooo, pretty! Where did he find this?” I asked curiously.

“We were in Old Town somewhere and I spotted this in a little shop. I just commented ‘how pretty’, the next thing I knew, he went and bought the dang thing!”

I had to laugh!

“It’s not funny, now when I see him, I won’t know how to act! Do I wear it, or not? Will it hurt his feelings if I don’t wear it? It makes me nervous with all this attention!” Morgan got all flustered.

“It’s sweet! Why haven’t these guys been snapped up? Are we missing something here?”

“You don’t suppose....?”

“You know, we’ve got to be careful of what we say, even if we’re kidding. Being American, our sense of humor might not be understood. People overhear things and get the wrong ideas. We’ve got to remember that *we* are the foreigners here.”

“I know, insert foot syndrome?” Morgan referred to things from a long time ago.

“Uh huh.” I uttered.

“So what did you do, besides walk?” She asked, and waited for some juicy details.

“Nothing much, but it was kind of cute that Dimitris worried about my wet hair.”

“Wet hair?”

“Yeah, well, I was in the pool when he got here, so my hair was still wet.”

“So, what did you talk about?” She wondered.

“Mostly about his marriage and splitting up, that kind of stuff. He was kinda feeling sorry for himself a bit today, but I think he felt better when he left.”



*Sunday*

“He was kind of sullen today.” She pulled the covers up over her and turned off the light.

“G’ night!”

## *Moon Show*



“Hello?” Morgan answered her phone. “No, I don’t think so.” She paused, and looked at me. “I’ll ask.” She covered her phone. “It’s Andreas, he’s asking if we made plans for today.”

“Don’t think so.”

Morgan went back to her conversation.

“How do you feel about going to Samos? It might take more than a day.”

Andreas asked.

“Sure, sounds good.”

When Morgan got off the phone she seemed happy and full of energy.

“Andreas wants to take us to Samos. We should take some extra clothes, I’m not sure what to bring though.”

“I’m going to pack very little. I’ll probably just buy whatever I might need. I’m running out of clothes anyway.”

“I wish I could do that. He said he’d be here in a half hour.”

Most of the night I seemed to have a sour stomach, and I hoped that the antacid that I took earlier would do the trick. As I was collecting some toiletries, and packing a small bag, I could feel my stomach; am I hungry or would I be asking for trouble if I ate?

“Morgan, how does your stomach feel? Did you have any problems with it during the night?”

“No, I’m fine. Are you catching something?”

"It might have been something I ate, it just keeps aching and rumbling." I was holding my stomach.

"What did you eat last night?"

"I'm trying to think what could have turned on me, I had the chicken with some kind of sauce."

"Oh, you had the Pablano Sauce. I didn't know what that was, but it looked like it had cream in it."

"That could have been it."

I tried to ignore my tummy and get ready to leave, but as time went by, I wondered if it was better to not go on this expedition.

"Your knight in armor is here." We heard at the door as he knocked. Morgan opened the door.

"Good morning ladies, it's a beautiful morning to be out on the water." Andreas said with a big smile.

"It is beautiful day, good morning!" Dimitris added.

"Ready to go?" Morgan asked as she picked up her bag.

"You know, I think I'd better stay here, I'm not feeling so good. I'm sorry, I have to decline." Dimitris got a worried look on his face.

"What is problem, Helena?" He asked.

"I think dinner last night didn't agree with me."

"That changes that then!" Morgan said in exasperation and dropped her bag.

"No, don't let that change your plans, please Morgan, I'll go next time." I could see the light in her eyes and knew that she really wanted to go. "I'll be alright, so go, have fun."

"Well, what are you going to do all by yourself?" She asked.

"I will stay," Dimitris popped up.

"No, Dimitris, I'll be fine here, go have a good time. There's nothing for you to do here, and I'm afraid I wouldn't be very good company feeling like this."

"Well, let's decide, are we going or not?" Morgan asked impatiently.

"You go, I stay," Dimitris said looking at Andreas.

"Okay, let's go. Hope you feel better soon, Helena." Andreas picked up

Morgan's bag and they headed out the door.

"I'm sorry I had to ruin your day. Why didn't you go with them?"

"Andreas would like time with Morgana."

"They do seem to get along very well. Please Dimitris, sit. So, what will you be doing today?"

"Ah." He hesitated and shrugged his shoulders. "Maybe today I do taxi."

"Excuse me a minute, please, I have to see if I can find anything for my stomach." I went to my purse.

"You have Ulcer?"

"No, I ate something that didn't agree with me for dinner last night."

"Oh, excuse me please, I will return." Then he left. I couldn't blame him, who'd want to spend their day with someone sick and possibly get sick in the process? So I resigned myself to sipping bottled water and waiting for the end to come, eventually. When you're in misery, time moves so very slowly. About fifteen minutes later I hear a tap on the door.

"Helena, it's Dimi."

"Come in." I was laying across the foot of the bed with the comforter over my legs.

"Here, you drink, you feel better." He poured me a cup of tea that he must have gotten from the hotel kitchen. He added sugar and placed the tray on the chair next to the bed.

"This smells nice, but I don't know if I should, it might make it worse."

"You drink, will fix stomach, is old Greek remedy, medicine of Ancient Hellas." He coaxed me to drink.

"It smells spicy, what's it called?"

"Nigella, used by Hippocrates. Drink while hot."

"It's a little bitter. What did you say it's called?" I asked as I sipped.

"Is Nigella, is herbal. In myth will 'cure every disease but death.'"

"Well then, it should help!" I had to blow on the hot mixture. After I drank one cup, Dimitris poured another. He watched as I drank, expecting the miracle to come like a flash of lightning.

"Well?" He waited with anticipation.

“Maybe it’s the power of suggestion, but I don’t think it’s as bad.”

“Good, you finish.”

“Do you want to join in the fun?” He looked at me like he wasn’t quite sure what I meant. “Will you have a cup with me?”

“Oh, no, no, is for you to drink.” He topped up my cup and started pacing the floor.

“What is it, Dimitris? Are you alright? Is something bothering you?” Just when he was going to tell me, my cell phone rang again. I took the phone and put it under the bed pillows. “Sit, Dimi. Tell me what you were going to say.”

“Andreas excited to be with Morgana. A long time since he open his mind to a lady.” He seemed edgy, nervous and kept pacing. Then he turned to me and said “How you feel now?”

“You know, I feel a little better. That tea is wonderful! You’ll have to show me where I can get some to take home with me.”

“What you feel like to do today?” He asked.

“Maybe I should stay here, and not venture too far. It’s such a beautiful day though. I don’t know, really.”

“Would you like to go back to the Butterflies?”

That question scared me, I felt my heart flip and I knew that I’d better not go back there with him. It would be too dangerous for my virtue.

“I would, but I’d like to go to see something that I haven’t seen before. We don’t have much time to see the sights and there is so much more to see!”

“Have you been to Lindos?” He asked.

“No, it’s pretty far from here, isn’t it?”

“Kamiro, Kamiro close.”

“Okay, Kamiro it is.”

Once we were on the road, I was feeling so much better. Being out in the open air is what I needed. We headed West toward the airport. We had a beautiful drive with ocean views most of the time.

“How does one decide where to live on this island? It’s all so beautiful, it would be hard to pick one place to settle.”

“Families stay close, some leave for jobs in Athens or America.” Dimitris kept looking over to me as he drove.

“What?” I asked.

“You like Rhodes. I can see in your eyes,” he smiled.

“I love Rhodes.”

“You see other islands?”

“Not really.”

His cell phone started ringing. We pulled over to the side of the road. While he was talking in Greek, I got out and stood on the bluff overlooking the cliff and sea below.

“Is for you.” He pulled me away from the bluff’s edge.

“Hello.”

“I’ve been trying to call you. Is your phone dead?”

“I forgot it.”

“Well, Mark has been calling me! Can you tell him not to call my phone?” Morgan sounded really irritated.

“Okay, I’ll have to call him. Did he say anything?”

“He doesn’t talk to me.” I clicked off the phone. “Would you mind if I used your phone to call home?” I asked.

“No, please use.” I dialed Mark. When I told him to stop calling Morgan’s phone, he got irate and volatile. He was talking so loud that Dimitris looked like he was ready to take the phone. I repeated the request to not call Morgan again and then ended the call.

“I’m sorry for that.” I handed the phone back to Dimitris.

“This Mark is not too pleasant to you.”

“That’s putting it mildly.”

“Why you stay with him?”

“Oh, I don’t know, easier than starting all over again. I guess it’s like they say *you’ve made your bed, now you must lie in it.*”

“This is not as life should be.”

“Yeah, shall we go?” I may have been abrupt, but I wanted to change the subject.

As we drove Dimitris pointed out several sights and told me some of the history behind them. It seemed like the whole mood changed. Dimitris didn’t seem like his usual jovial self and I had the wind knocked out of my sails as

well. Suddenly we pulled off the road at an Inn, sitting right on the edge of a cliff over looking the sea.

Dimitris got out and came around to open my door. He held out his hand to me.

“We’re stopping?” I asked.

“Yes, restrooms better here, not good at site of Kamiros.” When I came out of the ladies room, Dimitris waved me over to a table where he had ordered two bottles of beer.

“This looks good,” I said as I sat.

“You need glass for beer?”

“No, this is fine.” He tapped his bottle to mine.

“Is getting warmer, soon too warm to stay out in sun.”

“I guess it gets pretty hot here in the summer?” I asked.

“Yes.”

He kept looking at me. I felt a little self-conscious and after my conversation with Mark, I wasn’t in the mood.

“That Mark, he does not make you happy.”

“Mostly irritation these days.” He reached across the table and ran his finger along the top of my hand that was resting on my bottle of beer.

“How long you are with this Mark?”

“Over twenty years; too long.”

“Why you want to waste time not to be happy?” I didn’t know what to say. I couldn’t come up with a good reason.

We were seated at a small booth with a round table. He took my hand and started to pull me around the table.

“What are you doing?”

“Come, sit closer to Dimi. Easier to talk.”

I slid around the inside of the booth closer to him. It was a relief for me to comply because I had a hard time concentrating, looking into his eyes.

“See? I do not bite.” He had a small, boyish smile. “You come to Hellas to have good time with friend, and here you are sad. This man is not worth your sadness.”

“Yeah, you’re right, Dimitris.” We had another beer and each time, Dimitris

would tap his bottle to mine and give some kind of toast in Greek.

“What does that mean?”

“*To my beautiful companion.* We do not play the games here in Hellas as many others do. If someone having baby, we all celebrate, when one has engagement, all are happy for it. We find reason to be happy. There is too much sadness out there. You must find happiness, see it in all you experience. It is there like the beauty of a rose, must appreciate small things.”

“I like listening to you Dimitris, you’re very insightful. I just wish it was that easy.”

“Call me Dimi.”

“Dimi.”

“We should be on our way, are you finish?”

“Yes.”

We got back in the Bug and continued West. We only had a few miles to go to our destination. It was off of the ocean highway somewhat against the hills. Kamiros was an ancient site that was never built upon in later centuries. It was set off, away from the encroaching modernism. It is a massive archaeological site. When we parked I looked at the layout sign that was posted; most structures dated back to 7000 bc. Dimitris and I walked the stone lined paths, and after an hour of it, I was ready to leave.

“You do not like?”

“Oh, it’s wonderful! It certainly sets the imagination on fire, but I’m getting kinda tired, maybe it was the beer, I don’t know.” I stopped and sat on the stump of an ancient pillar to rest and to fan myself.

“Yes, sometimes when viewing many sites in short period of time, all begin to look same.”

“You’re very perceptive, Dimi.” He took my arm, and we walked back to the car, arm in arm.

“Oh, it feels good to sit.”

“How much time left for you here, Helena?”

“A little less than a week. Time’s getting short; it goes by so quickly.”

“Yes, too quickly.”

“Tell me Dimi, have you ever gone to the Acropolis to watch the moon-



scape?”

“What is this?” He asked.

“I don’t know exactly, I saw a flier saying something about a moon show at the Acropolis here on Rhodes.”

“You would want to see it?” He asked.

“Well, Morgan probably won’t be back until tomorrow, you would save me from my boredom.”

“I like, we go find moon,” he smiled.

“Dimitris,” I put my hand on his wrist as he was resting his hand on the gear shift knob. “I’m going to take you out for dinner.”

When I said that he came out with the biggest smile.

“Where we go?”

“I don’t know, I just don’t want to go to that place on the harbor, outside the Gate to old Rhodes town. Where do they serve good food around here?”

“I know very good place for food. You like.”

“Great, it’s a date then,” I said in a joking way. By the time we got through the traffic and Dimitris dropped me off, we made the date for 6:00 pm. Most dinners are served later, so we were sure we’d get a table.

I kept hearing my cell phone as I tried to get ready for my “date,” and I knew that if I answered it, it would probably ruin my night, so I let it ring.

Dimitris picked me up at 5:30 pm.

“Come in, I’m just about ready, you’re a little early.”

“Ah.”

“It’s okay, I only want to grab a shawl, and I’m ready to go.”

He helped to put my shawl over my shoulders and I thought he smelled my hair, but I wasn’t sure. While he drove he was telling me about Stefano and how he has all these students who work the dig, and all the information that has come from this site. It was quite interesting. He kept looking over to me as he drove. As warm as it was at this time of evening I was glad that I had the hair clip that kept my hair off of my neck.

We went to a little restaurant in the middle of old Rhodes town, amongst the stone paths and cobbled streets. The dinner was wonderful and not at all

expensive.

"This is such a nice place, I love the fish. I've never seen this type of fish before, what's it called?"

"Is called *Red Fish*, very small, but very good."

After we finished the meal, the waiter came to the table to see how we liked it. Of course we told him how good it was, and he was happy. Dimitris said something to him in Greek, then he left.

"Is he going to bring the check?"

"Check?"

"The bill?"

"Yes he bring." We rose to leave the table then he brought my shawl up to my shoulders, and as we walked toward the waiter, who was also the owner, Dimitris paid the bill.

"I'm treating *you*, Dimi!"

"Is done," he said in my ear. "We go."

"I wanted to treat you, for everything you've done, and for the tea."

"*This* treat enough for this man, come we go to see moon show." He smiled at me and I couldn't protest. As we walked he put his arm around my waist. He was very sweet and interesting all evening, so I didn't mind the gesture.

"Where do we go to get the best view? I know that the flier mentioned 8 pm to 12:30 am., but it didn't say much else."

"We go to the road Isiodou, best view from there."

We wound around New Rhodes City and out the West road to the hill. It was a nice high place with very few street lights.

"But it's a field, Dimi."

"It will be fine." He parked the car in an area that was level and had been recently plowed. We got out of the Bug. He opened the bonnet of the car and took out a folded weaved mat. He laid it out on the ground then pulled out of the back seat a very heavy wool blanket and a basket.

"Come, sit."

"This is nice, you thought of everything! This is so sweet." He got almost embarrassed, with that shy, little boy smile. It was so endearing.

"There! We sit. Moon will come from this direction and go over, like this."

He gestured.

I made myself comfortable. He opened the basket and there was wine and cheese and other small treats. Dimitris laid back on one elbow with legs out and crossed.

“Helena, lean back, relax. It will be soon, before moon comes.”

“Well, I *could* lean back, but I’m afraid I’d get too comfortable, then you’d have to wake me up for the moon show!”

“Ah, Helena, you play with Dimi. S’agapo! You will not sleep, come here.” He gestured for me to come closer. “We must toast.”

I got as close as I could within my comfort zone, we tapped our wine glasses and Dimitris said “to special one, Helena, S’agapo!”

“That’s very sweet Dimi.”

“And mean every word.” We laughed as our glasses touched again.

“I’m glad you think well of me, Dimi, it’s not often that I feel this comfortable with someone I haven’t known very long.”

“Oh, Helena, we have known us for long time,” he said as he sipped his wine.

“What was that?” I thought I misunderstood.

“We know long, long time ago.” He looked right at me, I smiled, but I wasn’t sure if he was speaking hypothetically or joking with me.

“You’re so funny, Dimi, you make me laugh.”

“Do you not feel you know this man, from before?” I was getting entranced by this feeling of familiarity. His cologne was wafting toward me with the occasional breeze, and the mellow sound of his voice was hypnotizing.

I sat up, drank my wine and cut us each a piece of cheese, avoiding the question. I handed him a slice of cheese. He took my hand and pulled me toward him. He took the cheese with the other hand and started to kiss the palm of my hand. I couldn’t breathe, my heart was racing and I pulled my hand back.

“Dimi, I...”

“Please, do not pull away.”

“Dimi, I’m sorry.... I can’t.”

“Yes, I know. You will not be angry with this man? I do not do to hurt you.”

“I know, it’s, it’s just,.... I can’t.”

“We will see moon, see halo coming?” He pointed to the glow in the distance. As we looked at the Eastern horizon, we could see the glow of the moon making a halo as it tried to rise above the distant land mass.

“Oh, look at it Dimi, it’s coming up!” He sat up beside me his arm resting behind me, shoulder to shoulder.

“We will see a beautiful moon tonight. More beautiful with Helena here to see with.”

“Thank you, Dimi, oh, look! You can see it peeking above the horizon!” The moon was orange and seemed gigantic. I turned to see Dimitris watching me.

“What?”

“You excite on it. I like.”

“Oh Dimi, I’m serious, look how beautiful it is. I’d never see this where I live. Never.”

The moon looked like a massive planet as it began to show itself. It was a beautiful sight that I will always remember. We packed the blankets and basket once the moon was high overhead. The breeze at the top of this hill had a chill to it, so we headed back to the Paradiso.

“Thank you for letting me watch this with you, it was so beautiful. This was such a nice day, I’m glad that you decided to stay with me today.” When I looked at Dimitris as he was driving, his eyes sparkled as he kept looking over to me.

“What?”

“We are here.” Dimitris walked me to the door, kissed both hands on the knuckle, and said “tomorrow; I will call tomorrow.”

When I tried to go to sleep I couldn’t stop smiling. Even though I know that nothing would ever come of it, the thought of Dimitris made me happy. I’d never known anyone like him. When I think of all the beautiful sites and places we’ve seen, I’ll remember Dimitris with the most pleasure.

I was awoken at 6:15 am. with the ringing of my cell phone, which was right next to my ear, under the pillow.

“What?” I barked.

“I’ve been trying to call you. Where the hell have you been? Don’t you ever

answer your phone?”

“Sorry, I left it here at the hotel. What’s so important that you have to keep calling every five minutes?”

“If you’d answer your phone, I wouldn’t have to keep calling!”

“So, what did you want to say, Mark?”

“How long are you going to be gone? You’ve got responsibilities here to take care of, you know?”

“What is it that is so urgent?”

“All the bills are piling up, the laundry, and you just don’t care if everything goes to hell around here!”

“Why don’t *you* pay the bills? It’s not that hard to write a check.”

“If you expect me to take over so that you can go have a fling, you’ve got another thing coming,” he yelled.

“For Pete’s sake, Mark, grow up!”

“If I have to do it all, you can just stay gone, you bitch!”

I threw the phone across the bathroom floor. It hit the tile and fell apart. I was so fed up with this shit. Even getting away didn’t seem to stop him from making my blood boil.

As I laid there with my heart pumping and my blood pressure rising, it fueled my anger. I thought about what Dimitris said. I was doing exactly what he said, “wasting time not being happy.”

I knew that things with Mark were at a low point, but I had the hope that we’d get back to where we were when I fell in love with him. At one time, he was everything to me, he was my world. Looking back, I don’t know exactly when things turned. It was like as a flower fades, a slow almost unnoticed thing that I slept through.

I had a week to gather the courage and figure out how to fix my situation when I get home. It gives me even more reason to appreciate where I am, at this time, in this place. I dread the scenario that is coming.

Later, when I was awake I made a resolution to enjoy what time I had left here. I got dressed and took all my clothes to the laundry. Here, they do the service for you. Just drop it off, then pick it up all clean and pressed.

I wondered what Morgan had been doing and when she’d be back. I took

all the pieces to my phone that I could find and tried to put it back together. Unfortunately, a piece of the motherboard broke off, so I knew it was hopeless.

I went for a walk to enjoy the fresh air, and to think. I didn't know where I was going, I was just walking. I went down the road to some small cross streets.

The little side streets were narrow and the homes were modest and well lived in; the trees that lined the street were very old Eucalyptus, and the breeze would make that rustling sound against the branches and leaves. As the noon hour had passed me by, I turned around to head back in the direction I came, as I was starting to get hungry. The sun was very bright and I felt my face getting burned and tender. I was still a mile or more away from the Paradiso when I heard that familiar "beep-beep."

"What you do out here in sun? Get in."

"Hi Dimitris, what are you doing out this way?"

"I look for you. Cell phone must be under pillow? You no answer, so Dimi come look."

"It's getting too hot to walk in the sun, I'm glad you stopped."

"Morgana call, she say your phone no ring."

"Yeah, well, I kind of accidentally threw it on the bathroom floor and it hit the tile."

"Accidentally?" He gave me a full look of disbelief.

"Yeah; I put it out of it's misery!"

"Oh, Helena." He laughed and cuffed the back of my neck. "You make this man wonder."

"What do you wonder, Dimi?"

"Wonder," he hesitated "what you do next."

"What did Morgan say, are they on their way back?"

"Yes, they will dock near 4:00 pm."

"What time is it now?"

"Is around 3:00 pm."

"I've been gone longer than I thought."

"Why you make phone *out of misery*?"

"Mark."

“Ah, yes. But now Helena have no phone.”

“I’ll finally be able to enjoy the peace and quiet here.”

“Does Dimi too much of the talk?” I had to laugh from the sweetness of the question.

“No, no, I love hearing the things you have to say, it’s just that I couldn’t take any more aggravation from Mark.”

“This Mark, he want to control you, keep thumbs on!” I almost laughed! I had to look out my window, putting my hand up to my mouth to stifle the smile. He tickled me with his use of the language.

“Yep.” I looked out of the window, trying to cover my smile.

“What?” He asked.

“What?”

“You are laugh, why hide?”

“I’m not laughing. You’re just so cute!” I wasn’t sure that I should have put it in those words, but it was the truth.

“Dimi not cute.” I looked at him, trying to keep from smiling. When he looked at me, we both started laughing.

“...and we are here,” Dimitris announced. When he came to open my door I asked

“Did Morgan say if they had any plans?”

“No mention plans,” he gave me his hand to help me out of the little car.

“Were you going to go pick them up when they dock?” It was like he was somewhere else, he put his hand on my cheek and said “sunburn” like he was talking to himself. “Andreas will call when here,” he spoke as if he was on autopilot, I turned to go open the door of the bungalow.

“You’d better come in and wait.”

When we went inside and I realized there really wasn’t anywhere to sit, except on the bed, I thought it would be more appropriate to move our conversation out to the pool.

“Should we get a drink and we can sit by the pool? It might be more comfortable.”

“If you wish.”

We found a table with a nice umbrella to shade us. Dimitris went to the

main lobby taverna and brought us back a couple of Long Island Ice Teas. It really hit the spot, being such a warm day.

“Thank you, Dimi, this is so good.”

“Helena, why you no want to go to Butterflies? You say is beautiful, but you no want to return?”

Oh dear, now I’m in trouble! How can I tell him that I’m afraid I might lose control or make it sound like I *assumed* that he would make a play for me, and that I might not decline? I can’t tell him that he makes my heart race and I just want to melt into him. I don’t want to even admit to myself how tempting he is. I didn’t know what to say and if I looked into his eyes, I’d forget my own name.

“Well, I . . .,” I couldn’t think.

“What, Helena, do this scary man make you afraid to go?”

“What? No!”

“Then what?” I was sipping my drink, trying to stall for time, I had to tell him *something*.

“Dimitris.”

“Call me Dimi.”

“Dimi,” I took a deep breath. He looked so sad, and I couldn’t hurt his feelings so I had to choose my words carefully. “Dimi, you’ve been so sweet, and I’ve enjoyed your company so much. I do love the Valley of the Butterflies and I’d love to go again before we leave. I’m sure that Morgan would love to see it too.” I could see the disappointment in his face, but I found the only way that I could think of to not lie to him.

“Yes, we must share.” He sounded dejected.

“Well, maybe not the same spot.” I gave him a bit of a nudge. He responded with his hand caressing my forearm. He laughed and we enjoyed a little private joke.

“You know, Dimi, it’s going to be so hard to leave. I’m afraid it’s going to tear my heart out when it’s time to go.” He put his hand over mine and leaned in to me and in a soft voice said

“Helena, you no have to go. You will find home here. Home should be where heart is.”



I leaned back in my chair and looked at Dimi's face. He was serious. My heart was flipping and I felt that I would hyperventilate.

"Oh! oh!" I suddenly had to get up, and breathe. I had to stop this! I can't even look this wonderful man in the eye without betraying the feelings that I cannot possibly be feeling! My heart was about to explode in my chest, I couldn't think and couldn't speak. Just then his phone rang and it diverted the situation.

"Yes, yes, okay." He grabbed my arm as I was walking from the table. He clicked off his phone. I turned as he stood and we were face to face, I could feel an electrical charge radiate out to me and I silently gasped. He was looking into my eyes and said

"They are here, must go pick up."

I was so close to kissing him. I was *so* close, and tempted! He blinked almost like something woke him up. He let go of my arm and cleared his throat.

"We must go to docks. Come."

"Hey, how was Samos?" I asked as Morgan approached the car.

"It was gorgeous! I've got so much to tell you. Hi Dimitris!"

"Come, get in." Dimitris got out so they could get into the back seat.

"It was so beautiful on the water, it was like glass the whole way. I got a lot of pictures. Was it pretty warm here?" She asked, catching her breath.

"I got enough sun for now. It's going to be like this for a while, I think." I guessed.

When Andreas finished putting the Athena to bed he joined us.

"Little Andreas," Dimitris greeted his brother.

"Is anyone hungry? We haven't eaten all day," he said.

"I'm starving," Morgan piped up.

"Yes, we should eat," Dimitris added.

"Let's find some place that's got comfortable booths and air conditioning." Morgan was fanning herself.

"In New Rhodes, the Taverna Eros is nice, and not crowded." Andreas suggested. "Cool and dark."

"Let's go." Morgan agreed. He tapped the back of Dimi's seat.

“You got so much sun, Morgan, I hardly can see your freckles!” I said.

“It was so nice in Samos, pretty hot, but I guess it’s that time of year now.”

When we got to the Taverna it was cool and dark and nice booths to slide into. It took a while for my eyes to adjust from the bright sun to this dark bar. It was like trying to find your seat when you come in late at the movie theater.

Dimitris guided me to the booth and I was able to feel my way seated. The subdued lighting was indirect from behind a facade decor on the perimeter walls. Once we were seated the waitress pressed a button on the lip of the table and the table lit up from under the glass top. She handed us menus and took our drink order.

We all talked and laughed as usual, Andreas was teasing Morgan and her face would turn more red than it already was. Dimitris was sitting on my right at the end of the booth. He leaned on the table with his arms crossed. When I’d rest my arm on the table in holding my drink, his finger would reach my forearm and slide, ever so lightly upon my skin. I couldn’t concentrate on the conversation. My emotions were barely under control. I didn’t dare look his way.

“Tomorrow we go to Karpathos. We’ll want to leave before 9 am. You’d better plan on two days, maybe three if you want to stay longer,” Andreas announced.

“Do they know that we’re all coming? I’d hate to just barge in on them,” I said.

“Barge in, what is barge in?” Dimitris asked.

“Like intrude on them,” I answered.

“Ah.” He acknowledged. “They look forward to having you visit.”

We had a wonderful meal and it was always enjoyable with everyone all together. Morgan and I excused ourselves to the Ladies Lounge.

“I missed you, did you have fun with Andreas?”

“He is such a tease! I’ve never laughed so much in my life. You know, I think there’s something about American English that makes people notice. Whatever I said, wherever I was, I’d have their attention. I don’t know, it’s strange.”

"I know that I've had to re-phrase a few things, but I'm not sure if it's me or our casual English."

"So what have you been doing? I couldn't get you on your phone," Morgan said.

I had to explain the flying phone episode with Mark.

"I thought it had something to do with him, but you broke your phone? You must have really been pissed off!"

"When we get to the Paradiso I'll have to tell you about Dimitris," I said.

"What? Tell me now!"

"It'll take too long, I'll tell you later," I was fixing my hair, the plastic cage wasn't holding my hair up.

"What?" Morgan's curiosity was peaked.

"That Dimitris, he's got to be the sexiest thing God put on this earth."

"What happened? You're making me curious."

"I guess I'm ready to leave, how about you?"

"Uhhhhh! This is so exasperating!" I kind of laughed and we left the conference room.

"Ah, the ladies return," Andreas commented.

Dimitris gave me his arm and we left the Taverna. When we got outside it was still daylight and still warm.

"Oh, my eyes! I'm blind!" I said, covering them for protection.

"You have sunglasses?" Dimitris asked.

"I left them at the bungalow."

"Good god of light, I'm blind!" Morgan cried.

"The gods of light have been generous lately," Andreas said.

"Yes. We do not anger gods of light, would be too hard to live in darkness," Dimitris added.

"Yes. But they don't have to over do it!" Morgan complained.

"The ladies are like delicate flowers. Hellas must get used to having such fragile ladies," Andreas said.

"That's not true, if I could open my eyes, I'm not all that delicate," Morgan defended the inference of the weaker sex.

When we got to the Paradiso, we were walked to the bungalow. Andreas

had his arm around Morgan as they walked. I was arm in arm with Dimitris, he didn't say anything, but still there was something on his mind that he wasn't saying.

"We will leave you ladies here, but we'll pick you up around 8:30 in the morning. We have to launch by 9:45 am." Andreas leaned toward Morgan and kissed her cheek.

"Tomorrow we take little picture. Should pack for 3 days. S'agapo Helena." Dimitris kissed my hand and they were gone.

After we were showered and getting ready to call it a night, we settled into the girl talk that had been put off earlier.

"So tell me, how did you two get along in Samos?" I asked.

"That place is so pretty, the harbor is so clean. There are so many cute little shops on the harbor. Andreas had to meet with this guy on a job offer, but that fell thru so we had the rest of the day and next morning to just look around. I hear they have caves and catacombs on that island."

"Really? It sounds interesting, did you buy anything while you were there?"

"No, we had something to eat, that's about all. What's going on with Dimitris? He seemed a little quiet during dinner."

"Well, I think Mark ruined the day for everyone. First he starts off at 6 in the morning! Can you believe that? Then he starts calling *you!*"

"What's wrong with him?" Morgan asked.

"The big urgency was, and get this, the bills have to be paid! Then he got nasty. I got so pissed I threw my phone and broke it all to hell!"

"I don't blame you for getting pissed, but now he won't be bugging you, he'll be bugging *me* instead."

"I hope he doesn't call Dimitris."

"So he's sexy, huh? That's something I didn't know!" Morgan quipped.

"Oh, I'm so glad you're back. Dimitris is just so sweet. I'm afraid I might have hurt his feelings a little. He wanted to take me to the Valley of the Butterflies, but I told him I'd rather go to some place I haven't seen before. Oh, you should have seen his face, I felt so bad."

"I thought you said it was gorgeous!"

“It is, but I can’t go to that place with him again.”

“Why not? What did you tell him that hurt him so bad?” She asked.

“I couldn’t tell him that I’m losing my mind, that I wouldn’t stand a chance of resisting him. I’m letting this get to me.” I had to take a deep breath. “I just told him that I wanted you to see it too. At least I didn’t have to lie. I don’t know, he tries to get close and I can’t let him even touch me, I feel like I’m going to lose control. I can’t believe that someone on the other side of the world, whom we just met a week ago could have this affect on me.”

“Helen, I think this place is getting to you.”

“Well, it’s a moot point anyway. I’ve got to think about what’s going to happen when I get home. Since I flung my phone when I was talking to Mark, I’ll have to probably kiss ass before I hear the end of it. Shit, I wish I didn’t have to go home. I’d be perfectly happy just staying here.”

“If it was that easy, everybody would do that. So what did you do while I was gone?”

“We went up to the hills and watched the moon rise, it was so gorgeous!”

“Gee, I thought you two would have been a lot more cozy than that by now.”

“We have to get up early, I’m going to call it a night.”

Falling asleep is easier said than done. The day played back in my mind, and if I let it, I would see Dimi’s face, and feel my heart leap again. It made me laugh to think of him and some of the things we did during the day. Sleep...if only I could.

## Karpathos



**O**n this bright morning our coffee plate came as usual around 8 a.m. and we were both dead to the world. If anyone had knocked when it was brought, neither of us heard it. It was such a beautiful morning! The air was clean and crisp. Our coffee was cold but the pastries were fresh and good. I couldn't go too far without some coffee first, so I went to the lobby area and they filled our coffee pot again.

"Why don't we take it out on the step, and have our coffee in the sun?" Morgan suggested.

We brought our coats to sit on, as the step was hard, cold, and damp from last night's drizzle. It was such a glorious morning! The coffee was wonderful and the sun felt good on our faces.

"I think that I'm really going to need this coffee today. How far do you think Karpathos is from here? I mean time-wise. How long will it take to get there?" I asked Morgan, who was sitting with her coffee in her hand and her eyes closed, face up to the sun.

"I'm not sure. I know it's on the other side of the island, so if you're going by boat it would take a while to go all around Rhodes."

"It probably would be quicker on the Hydro-foil. It's awfully sweet of Dimitris and Andreas to take us out there to see their brother. Dimitris is such a sweet person. Andreas is too!" I said.

"It was like we've known each other for a long time. You know, it didn't

feel like I was being pumped for information or anything, it was like I already know him.” She fiddled with her phone, trying to find some life in it. “I wish I didn’t have to use these adapters with my phone, they don’t work right. They take forever to charge, and the phone sounds sick if it rings. I apparently got a call a while ago, but the read out is all mangled,” Morgan said.

“Can’t make out who called?”

“No, if it’s important they’ll call back. I just hope it wasn’t Mark!”

We gathered up the tray and coats, then went inside to get ready for the day. We dressed and packed our cameras into our purses.

Suddenly there was a rapid knock on the door, which startled me. It was Dimitris.

“Are you there?” I heard him call. I opened the door and Dimitris looked as if he had been running.

“Are you okay? What’s wrong? Dimitris?” He was trying to catch his breath in order to speak. He stepped through the doorway then gave me a big hug and said,

“You did not answer. I call you! I think something happen.” He hugged me, then suddenly stepped away. He cleared his voice and said, “Andreas is ready, we go, yes?”

I was at a loss for words. I couldn’t take my eyes off of his worried brow. Morgan stepped in and asked,

“Is Andreas taking us?” Which broke the silence.

“Yes, yes we go now.” He was a little less articulate at this moment and I had lost my tongue.

“Hell yes, we’re ready to go, aren’t we?” Morgan gave me a nudge to get me going.

“Uh, yes, I just need to get my purse. Oh, the photo, can’t forget the photo.” I was talking more to myself than to anyone.

“Is this going to be more than a couple of days, because I might want to bring more clothes.” Morgan had a point that completely slipped my mind.

“Maybe bring changes, we have late start, so, clothes, yes.” Dimitris kind of tapered off and got quiet.

We both threw a couple of more things and our jackets in one duffel bag

and my huge purse and we were ready to go. Dimitris took the big bag from Morgan as I locked the door. When I got to the car, I saw the bag on top of the Bug.

“I forgot about that car.” I didn’t know what to say, I was expecting to use the rental. Morgan was in the back seat waiting while Dimitris tied down the duffel bag. I wanted to say something to him but I didn’t know what to say.

“I open door.” I stood behind him, out of the way. I took a step toward the car and turned to Dimitris before I got in;

“It was sweet of you, worrying about me. I didn’t know you called, I’m sorry.”

“I forget of flying phone; I worry sometimes,” he explained as he looked down in my eyes. I smiled and looked away from his dark eyes that followed me, and got into the car, as he took my arm to seat me.

“Thank you.” I said as he closed the door.

“We get fuel, and we go.” He looked at me and smiled that small, almost shy, smile.

When we got to the station, Morgan was leaning up at the back of my seat as soon as Dimitris got out.

“What was all that?” She asked under her breath.

“Shhh, sit back and I’ll tell you.” I was looking to see where he was. “My heart is pounding so fast! God, Morgan, what’s happening to me? It’s getting to where he makes me dizzy! Geez, I can’t think!”

“I was wondering if you’d ever let yourself go.” She whispered.

“I’m not letting myself go. I can’t let myself go! I feel like I’m on a roller coaster.” I cleared my throat. “He said I should stay, and do my painting in Rhodes. God! He’s just so sweet. What am I thinking? We’re going to be leaving soon. I’m so confused.”

“Shh, here he comes.” She warned. After the car was re-fueled, he got in.

“Here we go, off to blue wonder.”

“Yonder.” Morgan corrected.

“Yonder.” He put the little car in gear, and we were off, to blue wonder.

It wasn’t far to the docks and Andreas was waiting for us to pull up. He opened my door and helped me out with a big grin and joyful “Hello.” He



helped Morgan get out of this tight little car as best he could. Seeing the two of them together, was like seeing a flower bloom. They walked over to the dock where the Athena was moored and Andreas made sure Morgan was safely aboard. I waited for Dimitris to get the duffel bag down, then I took his arm as we walked to the boarding ramp.

“Have you noticed how they glow when they’re together, Dimitris?”

“Call me Dimi,” he said. “Yes, they do glow, as you say. Andreas doesn’t glow, but he glows now. And you will be leaving soon, and he won’t glow then.”

I don’t know why, but his words choked me up.

“Morgan seems to be happier *now* than I’ve seen her in a long time. I may have *never* seen her this happy.” I said.

“But this is good.” He said as he guided me aboard.

“Please, you can’t let Morgan know that I’ve told you anything, okay?” I asked. He dropped the duffel bag and took both of my hands and looked in my eyes,

“I will not if you say no,” then he put my right hand on his heart, “I promise.”

“Thank you.” I had to look away. His dark brown eyes were penetrating my heart, and if I didn’t look away, I couldn’t be sure of what would happen.

They had the launch well in hand, the engine was idling and Dimitris only had to cast off the lines.

Morgan came down from the bridge and was telling me that we have the same cabin as last time. Both men would be busy until we clear the island and are in open sea. It was only about 80 miles to Karpathos, but it would take six hours or more. We went to the Captain’s quarters and the duffel bag was waiting for us. I wanted to see if I could hang my clothes, so at least we had a purpose while the men were busy.

“Geez, Morgan, I don’t know what I’m doing! I’m afraid I’m weakening. Whenever I get near that man and smell that cologne....?”

“Yeah! Jade East is a killer, but, you worry too much. You’re on vacation, live a little! Go ahead and flirt, have fun! Just be careful, and don’t let him think that you care, just be like... friendly,” she advised.

“I don’t know how long I can do that, every time I look at him, my heart

beats so fast, I get weak! Shit! I haven't felt like this in such a long time, I'd forgotten how good it feels. I don't want to hurt Mark, and I don't want to hurt Dimitris either." I was mentally confused. I felt both emotionally drained and charged at the same time. "What about you and Andreas? I know you like him, and he obviously likes you. Have you thought about it at all?"

"Shit, Helen, we're on vacation. I can't think about something that's so far out there! It would be a dream come true, but I can't see myself making major changes to my life, I mean, how can I take it seriously?"

"You need to give yourself a chance, you always have your guard up. It's time you made a new life for yourself. I want you to be happy, and I've never seen you *this* happy before." I plead my case.

"If I did decide to get myself into a relationship, I'd want to be completely honest with him so that he knows everything and can make an informed decision. It wouldn't be fair to him if he didn't know everything."

"It's not like you ever murdered anyone. We're all adults and I'm sure he has a few confessions to make, too. You don't get to our age without having a past, it's inevitable." I tried to be re-assuring.

"I don't know."

"Oh, you are a pessimist! It's better to find out early. If he can take it, good, it's out of the way. If he can't, maybe that's good too, you'll know, and that will be the end of it. Let the Albatross go!" I hoped she would listen. "Let's get out on deck, I want to take some pictures. Would you take some pictures of Dimitris and me together? I'd like to remember him after we leave."

We went out on the deck and I looked for land. We made it out to sea further and faster than I had realized. We did talk for quite a while, so the time must have gone by quickly. Rhodes still made her presence known, but she was shrouded in a faint mist. Dimitris and Andreas were sitting at the bridge.

"Come in, sit here, I've got some terrific coffee, you'll love it." Andreas said laughingly. He's a joy to be around and he made the mood light and happy. He had an energy about him.

"Mmm, it sure smells good," I commented.

"Here, this for you, please take." Dimitris handed me a haphazardly wrapped

gift that turned out to be a coffee mug!

“How sweet, Dimitris, thank you, I love it! I’ll use it every day, thank you.” I gave him a peck on the cheek, and I could feel his hand start to go around my waist. Andreas poured the coffee in my new mug.

“What does it say? What’s the writing say on the cup?” Morgan asked.

“There’s a cute little dog and he’s saying....“I WUF U.” ....“*I wuf u.*” Suddenly my heart was sinking. “Isn’t that cute?” I could barely get the words out, my voice was cracking and it felt like a big lump was in my throat.

“Awww!” Somewhere off in the distance I heard Morgan say.

“We fill the new cup and make a toast, to new horizons and all that life offers.” Andreas made the toast. I took a small sip of coffee and the tears started to roll down my cheeks.

“Excuse me, please.” I had to get away, wipe my eyes and try to compose myself. I was reading more into this than was there, I was sure. It’s just an innocent little gift, but I couldn’t control my emotions. I was hurrying to the cabin when Dimitris caught my arm.

“What is it?” He asked. He spun me around before I knew what happened. “You cry.” He looked at me, and wiped my cheeks with his thumbs while holding my face. I couldn’t look at him. He gave me a gentle kiss.

“I, uh, the coffee burned my ....” I couldn’t speak.

He wrapped me in his arms and said,

“You tell Dimi what is wrong.”

The way he put it, the concern in his voice, made the tears start rolling down my cheeks. Dimitris asked if I wanted some water. While he was gone to get it, I had a chance to wipe my eyes and nose.

When he came back I sipped a few swallows of water.

“I am so sorry, you must think I’m an idiot.”

“No, no, tell Dimi what makes you cry.” He brushed the hair off of my face, and put his arm around me.

“Dimitris, you know that I’m married. You are the sweetest man, but I can’t hurt you by pretending that I’m not.” I was in an attempted state of composure.

“No, you will not hurt this man, no.” He said in a gentle almost dreamy

voice, then gently kissed me again.

“I can’t, Dimitris, everything is happening too fast.”

“Do I offend you?”

“No, no, it’s not that. I’m confused, I don’t know what I’m doing.” I answered. He looked into my eyes for what seemed like forever.

“I will not ask you. You will know. Now! We have coffee, and work! We will go to find your little child, okay?”

I felt like a little child myself, having the adult calm this child within me.

“Dimi, I love the cup.” I said, and he gave me a big hug.

We went back to the bridge where we walked in on Andreas kissing Morgan.

“Let’s drive boat now, huh, little Andreas?” Dimitris said as he patted his brother on the back.

Morgan was a little embarrassed that we had walked in on them, but she soon asked if I was okay.

“Yes, the coffee was just a little too hot, that’s all.” Everyone knew it was a little white lie, but I had embarrassed myself enough for one day.

We were able to brush up on our Canasta, by the time we approached our destination. Andreas had to listen to the radio and other ships in the area as we approached the docking area. It wouldn’t be too much longer before we docked.

“Excuse me, I want to freshen up a little.” I went to the cabin.

“Wait! I’ll go too. It was the cup, wasn’t it?”

“Yeah, it was.” I confessed.

“That is the most romantic thing, and cute too, I mean it wasn’t all sappy and dramatic, ya know? I think when we get back I’m going to write a memoir about this trip. Something like ‘The Rhodes to Passion’ get it, Rhodes?”

“I don’t know what to do. I’m surprised that this situation would come up, especially with *me!* I never dreamed that a man like this would be attracted to me. I mean, I’m in a comfortable relationship, and Mark has never done anything like this, for me to do it to him.”

“What about Dimitris, he’s going to be hurt, what can you say to him to make it better?” She asked.

“That’s why I’m so torn over this, someone is going to be hurt. *I’m* going to

be hurting either way. Dimitris is such a great guy, and he will find someone who can make him happy. He knows I'm married, so I don't know why he would do this to himself, or to me."

"Did you say that to him?"

"He didn't believe me when I told him that I didn't want to hurt him, and that I'm married." I looked at Morgan. She turned to me and spoke what I dreaded to hear.

"I might have said something about you and Mark, I'm sorry, I didn't think! I'm sorry. Andreas was telling me about not ever marrying his 'ex' and the subject just came up!"

"Oh my God! My God, Morgan!" I sat on the bed with my head in my hands.

"Well, when we were talking, it was way before Dimitris, I mean, SHIT!" Morgan was beside herself. "Well? What difference does it make?"

"Geez, Morgan. It's like getting the green light at a signal. No wonder he's been more interested, he thinks I'm single! I was having a hard enough time being good."

I gathered myself together and got my hair combed and pinned up and actually put on a little make up, trying to hide my puffy eyes.

"Let's go." Morgan and I went toward the forward deck, and as the harbor was coming into view, we saw many other boats, running about. The harbor was active and we could see sunbathers on the shore. We found some lounge chairs and sat in the waning sun.

"I wonder how long we'll be sitting out here? It looks like there's no room for a yacht this size to dock." Morgan surmised.

"Andreas said something about having to get docking orders."

"Ladies!" Andreas announced. "We will be docking in less than an hour, if all goes well, so, is there anything I can get for you?"

"No, thank you, I'm fine."

"I'm fine, too." Morgan said.

"Good, well," Andreas seemed awkward, like maybe he felt that he had intruded in on our conversation. "Then, I'll go tend to my bridge." He started to leave. He then turned and said,

“Would you like to come to the bridge? You can never tell what you’ll hear on the band radio?”

Morgan and I looked at each other, and I could see she really wanted to go.

“It’s getting pretty warm out here, I guess we should get out of the sun.”

We went inside. The radio was on and although the chatter was in several languages, we were able to discern a few English transmissions that were very interesting.

As we listened, I noticed that Dimitris had left the bridge. I didn’t actually see him leave, but when I looked around, he wasn’t there.

Since we had a few minutes to sit I took stock of where I was, and what I was doing. I had such a feeling of dread and then I knew what I had to do. I decided that I had to distance myself from him. He had been so wonderful, helping us and taking us on our quest of the photo, but things were beginning to spin out of control. I was losing it, and acting like a kid instead of an adult. I had to manage to be cordial without being too friendly or too cold, a delicate balance that I was not prepared to handle. If only I could stop looking at his eyes! After everything he did for us, how do I not hurt him? I was feeling so bad about this. It was tearing me up inside, and I felt that I could burst out crying at any moment; but I knew what I had to do.

Andreas seated himself next to Morgan and I could see that he was talking in a low tone in her ear. She kind of chuckled and didn’t look up. I stood and picked up the binoculars to scan the scene. From our position I could make out the docking area and some large trees dispersed across the back ground of the harbor. There were houses and shops dotted everywhere.

As our docking time approached, Andreas brought the ship closer to the docs. It was from this vantage point that we could watch the other boats.

“Stefano will meet us.” Dimitris reported. It was my impression that he had dismissed himself to make a phone call. “Ah, now we see the rich and famous make the entertainment.” We all shared two sets of binoculars.

Dimitris came to me, “do you see boat at dock? Watch.” He handed me the binoculars and was starting to put his arm around my waist. I stepped aside, bringing the binoculars up to my eyes.

“Oh my god! What’s he doing?” I heard Morgan exclaim. As we watched

we saw one man jump off a large inboard motor boat onto the dock, while the other man was at the controls. The first man brought the boat's trailer around and backed it up, under the water line. The trailer looked almost completely submerged. Then the man on the boat tried to drive it onto the trailer. Unfortunately, the hull of the boat was too deep. The truck and trailer took off before the boat was securely tied down. We could hear the hull of the boat scrape bottom on the cement then clunk completely aground on the concrete! This was a surprising 20 minute delay for us. Several similar events were happening, one more funny, and dangerous than the next.

"Now I understand what you mean by entertainment." I commented.

"I could watch this all day and not get bored! This is a real show. We should film some of this, Helen." Morgan laughed.

"I wish I had my camera." I agreed, and handed the binoculars back to Dimitris without looking at him. I turned and sat in a safety seat against the wall.

I watched as one mishap after another unfolded before us, but all I was thinking about was how am I going to dampen this beautiful attraction without dramatics, without hurting him and ruining what was left of our time in Rhodes? It was a difficult job, but my only other choice would be to let things happen. And then what? I'd leave Rhodes anyway with a broken heart. I came to the conclusion that Dimitris would get over it, it's not like we had slept together!

"Too bad, this is priceless!" Morgan laughed. "Does this happen a lot? I mean are there really that many incompetent boaters?"

"You wouldn't believe some of the antics that go on in the harbor! I imagine it's very much the same all over, even in California USA," Andreas said.

"When one takes time to see, the world has many entertainments." Dimitris turned and looked at me. I brushed off my jeans with my hand, just so I wouldn't look at him. He came over to me and asked if I felt okay. I was fine, but it was so hard to not sound cold, and ignore him.

"Would you like coffee while we wait?" Dimitris asked me, in such a sweet voice.

"I don't think so, I'm fine, thanks." I said, looking out at the docks. I wanted

to look into his eyes, and see that sweet face. It wasn't getting any easier.

Because of the size of this vessel, it had to be towed into the harbor for mooring, which was somewhat easier than docking, I would imagine. There seemed to be a bugaboo about which vessel had which slip, but once straightened out we were towed to our mooring, we then boarded the water taxi to the docks. Dimitris sat next to me with his arm along the back of my seat. Everyone was chatting amongst themselves. With the motor noise and other vessels moving about, it was so noisy that I didn't try to say anything while on board the taxi, and I was able to keep my eyes diverted from him. I felt terrible. I was hurting so much over this. I was on the verge of crying and I knew it wouldn't take much to set me off.

The sea front was walled with cute little shops for the tourists. Morgan and I wandered over to look in some shop windows while Andreas and Dimitris were settling with the water taxi guy. I wanted to get away. I also wanted to tell Morgan what was happening, but I couldn't bring myself to talk about it yet.

I looked around to see if the men were coming, or if they saw where we had gone. I noticed Andreas and Dimitris in deep conversation. My heart was getting heavier by the minute. It's different when it's a break-up. You say your piece, the hurt is out there and you go on from there. But this long, drawn out torture was going to eat me alive.

They soon were coming towards us, Dimitris a few steps ahead of Andreas. Dimitris hurriedly walked up to me, took my hand, whirled me around and pulled me off down the walkway.

"What's the matter? Dimitris? What are you doing? Where are we going?" I was in shock! He pulled me around the first corner, crossed the street and into a shady park like area under a huge dense tree. He turned to me suddenly and took my face in his hands and kissed me deeply, passionately!

Before I had a chance to speak he said,

"I talk now." He was breathless and had a pained expression. "You stay, with Dimi, you stay. I have home, land, I work hard, I am clean, I won't smoke cigar." He was talking so fast he wouldn't let me speak. "I am healthy, pretty much, but, I take care of you." With both hands, he held mine. He stopped



talking long enough to catch his breath. "I do, did not have many women, and did I tell already of two dogs? I have two dogs. Very nice, you like. Live in Paradise, Helena! S'agapo!" He cleared his throat, "I know you think you not know me so good enough, so I don't bother you, I don't come until you call, you will see, I help only with little photo," then he got close to my face and said sincerely, "but I will be here, with you as time too short." He was hesitating. "S'agapo, Helena, S'agapo... so," he brushed a tear from my cheek with his hand, kissed me gently, then said, "we go."

I didn't have a chance to speak, think, or breathe! I wasn't sure what had just happened, or how it happened. I think I was in shock! My heart was pounding so hard that I thought sure it could be heard by everyone, and that kiss! I felt it all the way down to my toes and it stirred feelings deep within me that I hadn't felt in a long time! He took my hand and led me back across the street. I felt dizzy and weak, and my mind went blank.

When we met up with Andreas and Morgan they were holding hands and smiling as they talked. He would have to bend down a bit to whisper in Morgan's ear. Andreas was a bit shorter than Dimitris, and his light brown, wavy hair had golden glints in the sunlight. He was of a slightly milder build than his brother, but well proportioned and broad in the shoulders. Where Dimitris had the strong square jaw line, Andreas was more tapered in nature. Andreas was outstandingly handsome. Dimitris had an animal magnetism about him. He was handsome in a rugged way, dark and dangerous. Maybe this was what he meant by women "not seeing" him.

A restored Cadillac of the late 1940's era stopped to pick us up. It was Stefano. He must have been five years or so, older than Dimitris. He and Andreas resembled each other somewhat, hair and structure of the face were a close match. He was a bit heavier than Andreas, and you could see that he abused his hands with the digs. He was very tanned and had a tan line across his forehead where he wore a hat in the sun.

The men greeted each other with boisterous bear hugs! Everyone passing by would turn to smiles. There were introductions and then we were off to Stefano's cottage, that was not far from the dig further south, which had been his obsession for the last ten years.

When we reached the “cottage,” we found it similar to what I would call a mountain lodge. All wood construction, it was big and roomy. The main room was entered through a wide and deep corridor. Antiquities were everywhere, yet it was uncluttered and orderly. The hard wood floors shined like marble. The fireplace was like a Greek exhibit. All kinds of archaeological pieces from years of hard work. His wife was very cordial and a bit on the quiet side. She excused herself from the room to let us talk.

“So? What is this about a picture of a house?” Stefano asked.

“Please to look, Stefano.” Dimitris said as I handed the photo to him.

“What can I tell you?” He asked.

“Do you remember seeing this house? I believe it’s not far from Rhodes Old Town,” I asked.

He walked over to a large desk, turned on a lamp and placed his wire rimmed glasses on his nose. “Emily.” After looking carefully at the black and white damaged picture, he took off his glasses and shook his head. He stood and slowly turned to look out the window in contemplation. “This is a sad thing to remember, and it is full of unanswered questions. Are you certain about pursuing this?”

## *Dáimônes Epialtês*



**W**e pursue.” Dimitris said.

“You must realize that there are many superstitious people in these islands. They believe that the retelling of stories may bring evil and bad luck to them. You will ask questions, and get no answers or lies, or maybe they will cross themselves in blessing and turn away. What I am going to tell you may be fragmented, but I’ll *try* to remember as much as I can. Shall we go into my study?” We followed him into another room with another desk, sofa, love seat and small bar. He offered us a drink but we all declined, waiting for the information I was seeking.

“Emily was the daughter of a woman who came to Rhodes, who wanted to get away from her husband. Not long after she moved in, she became friendly in the neighborhood, people seemed to like her well enough, even though she was from Spain. The people didn’t understand her too well, the accent you see. They had to communicate in English, what little they knew of it, as it was the their common ground.

“The little girl was always kept in the house. They never saw her outside playing, like other children. The talk started of course, people wondered what was wrong with the child, or if she was abused. Of course the tongues would wag.

“Would anyone like some water or something else to drink? I think we have tea.” Stefano offered. We all declined, waiting for the story to continue.

“The lady would leave, two or three days at a time; leaving the child alone and she was only seven or eight years old. Then they would see her wandering around at night. One night she broke a window at the church of St Steven. The police picked her up and held her until the mother came to get her.

“The lady was put on probation for neglect. Then one night the neighbors heard a lot of loud voices from the house, and the child crying. A man’s voice was heard sometimes, arguing with the child, slamming of doors, a lot of ruckus in the house. The people of the neighborhood could hear it. Once a large car parked in front of the house and many men in dark suits went in. The neighbors didn’t like all the drama with this woman.

“She lived there close to a year, there was always something going on. She sent a letter to her brother in Spain; oh, wait, I’m getting ahead of myself. The governing counsel of the district were sent some articles that she wrote and were printed in a newspaper in Spain, making accusations against and connecting big time criminals to authorities in several countries. They hushed up all the details and nothing was ever investigated, but it wasn’t long after that, that the woman left or disappeared. The house was found in a mess, there was blood, a lot of blood in the bath tub and on the floor. It didn’t appear that any of their personal items were taken, passports, letters, pictures all still there. Even the things you would think the mother and child would need, still in the house. So it was strange. They did a superficial investigation, but didn’t really try to find out what happened. Just too much for a small police department to handle, I guess.

“Of course, now the talk is that the house is haunted, and no one will go near it. It’s because of Dáimônes Epialtês. They are afraid of a curse.”

“What were you saying about the brother?” I asked.

“When the brother came to find out where his sister had gone, they had no answers. He told the authorities in Athens that something was wrong, and showed them the letter she wrote to him. Apparently they did nothing.”

Andreas was hanging on every word, to imagine that this story had been kept quiet for all these years. He had never heard about this before.

“There was no obituary, no funerals that I heard of, and I doubt if the newspaper had anything pertaining to it either. It was a short lived event that

was soon forgotten.”

“Oh my God,” Morgan gasped.

“There are more stories of what happened to them than you can count, but no one ever knew, or were ever told what really happened. The whole thing was dropped without official investigation. It was all swept under the rug, no embarrassment for the authorities, or for the people of the neighborhood. All forgotten.”

“Strange,” I exhaled.

“Like I say, gossip and hearsay, but there is some truth; just hushed up from what I know. The gossip now is of strange men driving up and down the road, doing nothing, just looking. Neighbors are nervous they say. If you continue to pursue this, it may be dangerous. So be careful,” Stefano warned.

“What you say, dangerous! Why you say this? You try to scare them?” Dimitris sounded angry at Stefano.

“No, just watch out. If someone wanted to get rid of them that bad, whoever it is may still be in Rhodes, and stirring up questions and digging into this, well, you just don’t know,” Stefano warned.

“So, how did you hear about all the gossip, living here?” Morgan asked.

“Gossip spread through these old islands like plague. This madness!” Dimitris boomed, as he paced the floor. I was surprised at Dimitris’ reaction to Stefano’s warning. Since being with Mark, I’ve become sensitive to the tone of a man’s voice. It put me on alert for more to come.

Stefano gave me back the photo, and tried to discourage us with the whole tone of the subject, which we let fade from our conversation.

The men hadn’t been all together in almost a year, and they had some catching up to do. We all moved back into the main room and sank into soft suede leather comfort. Rena, Stefano’s wife, brought in some iced tea with some tea sandwiches on the side.

“I thought you might need to eat something, dinner usually isn’t ready until around 8 pm.” We all thanked her and commented on the refreshing tea and luscious sandwiches.

A very petite lady in her mid fifties, Rena is of Chinese descent. She was

originally from Beijing, immigrated to San Francisco then to Britain, where she met Stefano.

The men were laughing and enjoying the brotherly reminiscences. Morgan and I didn't know what was said amongst the men. When Stefano said something to Dimitris in Greek, Dimitris glanced over to us. We didn't react to the conversation.

"We speak only English now." He scolded his brothers. "Is rude."

"I'm so sorry, ladies, I didn't realize, please forgive our rudeness," Stefano apologized.

"I also must apologize," Andreas added.

Stefano was telling little embarrassing moments that his brothers had when they were growing up. We couldn't help laughing with them, and it gave Morgan and I an insight into how they were raised. Each brother had his turn of embarrassing moments, Mama and Papa included. We got to know each of the brothers a lot quicker than we had anticipated, and it was a treasured time with a family that found joy, even in the embarrassing situations. They don't take themselves too seriously, and it shows in the way they live their lives. Observing the family interactions and the closeness they exhibit made me realize what is missing in the society I come from, where everyone is too busy to have time for extended family.

It was getting on toward 6 pm and we had our duffel bag still on-board the Athena. I didn't want to interrupt, but since we were staying the night, we needed our bag.

"Excuse me, I don't mean to interrupt, but I was wondering if it isn't too late to go back to the Athena for our bag? We're going to need it since we...."

"Of course," Dimitris jumped up, "we must go, *now*, Andreas."

Andreas didn't hesitate, they bid us their temporary farewells and they all were off in the shiny Caddy.

"Well, now that the boys are gone, we can get down to some real girl talk." Rena kidded in her accented voice. "It's impossible to talk when the boys get together!"

Us girls got going on our basic backgrounds and how we met the "boys." On first impression, I would never figure Rena as a funny person, but she

had us laughing, and the awkwardness soon dissipated.

Stefano and Rena have a son and a daughter and one grandson. The daughter still lives close by, and she was expected to arrive for dinner with her husband Arthur, who was originally from Des Moines, Iowa. Morgan steered the conversation around to Andreas' companion in London.

"I met her two or three times. She didn't impress me one way or the other. Her name is Sherry, but don't ever mention her name to Andreas! After she gave birth, she turned into a totally different person. Always stirring things up, making accusations about other women to Andreas. She even followed him and spied on him at school! It was hard on Andreas, having a small baby to provide for on the limited income that he then made. She got to where she would take off, leaving Andreas with the baby for days. Well, he had to miss school, and almost didn't finish his degree because of her. It finally became impossible for him, then she took the baby and left. She didn't want to live here. She would send Andreas pictures of the baby, with some strange man holding her. It really hurt him badly, and that was her intention. Since then, he's been working hard and seemed to never find someone who "clicked." So, instead of making another mistake, he stayed single."

Morgan and I both were enthralled with what she was telling us. To be around Andreas, no one would guess what he went through.

"What about Dimitris, the divorce and all, he seems to have healed fairly well," I said.

"Oh, Dimitris! I worried about him for so long, he's such a sensitive guy. But then, he was in Athens and with his life there, we didn't see much of him."

"He does seem to be rather emotional sometimes. What kind of temper does he have?" Morgan asked.

"All of the boys are pretty even tempered, except Angelo, he's more of a *hot head*! Now, I'm not saying that Dimi is a hot head, he's not, but he'll erupt if the situation warrants it." She was making dinner while we were talking. We wanted to know more about the "boys" before they got back.

Rena saw something on our faces that told her that we were uncomfortable with the term "erupt".

"I have to say one thing, for which I am grateful, and that is that none of

the boys would ever hit a woman. That's one thing they all detest, is the man who slaps a woman around. I remember one time; this was when Mama was ill and he came to care for her. Dimi had gone to the produce market, and coming back to the car there was a couple arguing about something. I guess the man was trying to pull the girl out of the car but she wasn't going to get out. That man was yelling and she was yelling back. The next thing you know, he was pounding his fist at her head! Then he yanked her right out onto the pavement! Dimi got over there and knocked the guy out in one punch! The police came and took a statement from witnesses, so they told Dimi he might have to appear in court when this guy comes up on charges. He was never called though. They all have strong convictions of what is right and wrong; a moral conviction I guess you could say."

"Hello, where is everyone? Mom?" It was Katie, just arriving with Arthur.

"We're in the kitchen, Katie," Rena answered.

"Hi Mom." Katie gave her mom a hug, and Arthur was standing by the door.

"Honey, this is Morgana and Helena. This is my daughter Katie and her husband Arthur."

"Hi, glad to meet you." She shook our hands. "The house looks different! Where's Dad?"

"He took your uncles down to the harbor, they should be back any time now. Why don't you sit down, Arthur? Take a load off," she said to her son-in-law.

It sounded funny hearing Rena with this typically American jargon with her tiny Asian voice.

"Uncle Andreas and Dimi are here? I can't wait to see them, what's the occasion?" Kate asked.

"They had some business to discuss and we managed to get them to stay over." Rena explained. "How are you two getting along?"

"Good, nothing new. What are you making?" She asked as she peered into the bowl.

"Shrimp Dim Sum."

"Oooo, you haven't made those in ages."

Arthur just sat and didn't even act as though he had an interest in being there.



Dinner was a celebration! So much food and laughter. The women cleared away the dishes while the men went out in the yard, lit a fire in a roasting pit and do what brothers do. When we were finished, we all went out on the patio. I still tried to stay away from Dimitris, but I couldn't continue successfully without ruining the mood of the evening.

The men were all having a beer and smoking cigars, except for Dimitris. He refused the cigar ritual. The men kept offering him a cigar, but he kept refusing. He sat on a lounge chair by the other men, but would glance my way every so often.

Morgan brought Andreas a beer, and they came back to where Rena and I were sitting, at a table on the edge of the patio next to the wall. Dimitris held up his beer bottle and pointed to it, asking me if I wanted a beer, in a kind of sign language from across the patio. I nodded and he brought one to me.

He sat next to me, and tapped his beer bottle to mine before I drank, to keep away the bad spirits. He picked up my wrist, which had just put down the bottle, and was wiggling my hand around from the wrist! I had to laugh!

"What are you doing?" I asked, holding back my laughter.

"Look! You see? You are tensed, all tensed up here." He gave me back my hand. Looking straight ahead at the grove of trees and sipping his beer, he said,

"Helena, do you fear me?"

I looked at him. I was surprised by this question.

"No. I'm not afraid of you, what a question!"

"Do you have trust for me?" He asked, without breaking his gaze at the horizon.

"Yes, I do." Everything was nice and calm and now I hoped he wouldn't ask me why I've been avoiding him!

"I want you to feel at home. Relax and have good time. Drink! Enjoy! I take care you will not be hurt, by anyone, even me." He put his hand on the back of my neck, pulling my head towards his, forehead to forehead, then said, "okay?"

I just sighed, and nodded a 'yes' to his question. He kissed my forehead and got up. Little by little, I could no longer freeze him out.

The men were having a good time around the fire pit and it wasn't long when Katie put on a cassette of traditional Greek music. Stefano was the first to get up and grab a handkerchief from his pocket, and began to dance. Kate joined in and Andreas, then Dimitris. It was so much fun to see this! When the line of dancers worked their way over to Rena, Stefano tried to grab her hand and pull her into the dance. She laughed, screamed then swatted his hand away, and ran into the house giggling. They never broke rhythm and kept on dancing. It was so funny! Morgan and I were laughing so hard that we almost couldn't stop. Every time I'd look at her and she looked at me, we'd break out laughing with the imagery of Rena.

The partying went on for a few hours and everyone was feeling good. Dimitris was still sitting alone on a patio lounge with his legs hanging to each side, and I was feeling pretty good. I went over to the lounge, sat in front of him then leaned back against his chest. He put his arm around me and nuzzled my ear.

"This doesn't mean anything, Dimitris."

"I know." He whispered in my ear.

The party continued for another hour or more and Dimitris behaved himself very well. He didn't have a cigar and didn't get drunk, although neither of us were feeling any pain.

Stefano gathered everyone around the pit. He and Arthur placed all the chairs fairly close to the pit, and everyone seemed to know what this meant.

"Everyone take a beer and sit." Stefano announced and started to clap his hands in a beating rhythm.

"What's going on?" I heard Morgan ask.

"Watch!" Andreas said.

Dimitris and I moved up to the pit and took our seats. Suddenly everyone was clapping in rhythm, and Stefano recited a short poem to the rhythm of the clapping. He added a made up line to the poem, then everyone, except Morgan and I shouted, "and she couldn't get up!"

Stefano then took a mouthful of beer and spit part of it out onto the fire and swallowed the rest. The clapping went on continuously and one by one, everyone recited the poem, Stefano's added on line and then the next

person in the round added on a line of their own. Then we all shouted “and she couldn’t get up.” This person then spit into the fire. This continued until everyone had their turn. It got so funny, because most everyone forgot everything in between the poem and the “and she couldn’t get up.” We all had so much fun, until everyone finally gave up. By then, it boiled down to a made up line and “and she couldn’t get up!” I think this was a left over from college days because I don’t think it’s a traditional thing of Greece. I never laughed so much!

It was starting to get pretty late, Kate and Arthur left for home. I excused myself to go to the powder room and clear my throat. I had been coughing and still felt a tickle in my throat. When I came out, I didn’t see Morgan, or Andreas for that matter. Dimitris asked Stefano if he knew where Andreas went, and found out that they borrowed the Caddy and were going to check on the boat, and they should be back any time.

Everyone started heading for bed. I was picking up empty bottles on the patio for Rena. Dimitris came over and told me that the bottles can wait. I think he might have thought that I had a lot to drink and he would help me inside.

“I’m fine Dimitris.”

“I know.” He replied, but still put an arm around me and walked me to a doorway down the hall.

He opened the door and said,

“This is where you stay tonight.”

There was a small bed-side lamp turned on but the room was still barely lit. I could see a fully dressed canopy bed and other furniture. Dimitris gave me a full blown, knock your socks off kiss that I couldn’t help but to respond.

“Good night, my Helena, S’agapo!” Then he closed the door. I stood there, looking at the door, I don’t know what I was expecting, but it wasn’t that!

I slept very well in this bed. It took me a few seconds to realize where I was when I awoke. I had taken some aspirin before Dimitris escorted me to my room, so I wasn’t in too bad of shape, even though I didn’t drink that much that I would be sick, I would have had a worse headache.

This room must have been Katie's before she married. The canopy, and the lace curtains were all so feminine. The room had its own bathroom, which was convenient. I couldn't wait to get the taste of beer out of my mouth, and was able to brush my teeth thoroughly. I found my purse and the duffel bag here, so I made sure I was presentable before I peeked out the unlocked door.

I thought perhaps that Morgan was in another room. I went out to the kitchen where Rena was cleaning up.

"Good morning, did you sleep well?" She asked.

"I slept great, what a beautiful bed! Could I beg a cup of coffee? Oh wait, don't pour yet." I went back to the room and got my "WUF" cup out of my purse, then went back to the kitchen and sat at the breakfast bar. "Okay, now pour, please."

"Isn't that cute?"

"Yes, someone very special gave this to me," I said as I used the creamer.

"The boys are in the back, picking up the bottles and trash, and I hope picking some oranges."

"Have you seen Morgan yet this morning?" I asked.

"No, I haven't, didn't they go out to the Athena? I thought that's what Andreas told me."

"Umph." Stefano moaned as he brought in a burlap sack of oranges big enough to sink a ship.

"There you go, Reenie, have fun." He patted her on the top of the head and grabbed an apple on his way out of the room. Dimitris came in with Stefano and I could feel him come up behind me. He leaned over and from behind me, kissed the side of my cheek and put his hand on my wrist, as I was holding his "WUF" cup.

"Have you seen Morgan this morning?" I asked him. Just at that moment, the front door opened and the two of them walked in.

"Good morning to everyone!" Andreas boisterously greeted us.

I saw Morgan coming in from behind him. She had Rena pour a cup of coffee and then quietly sat herself at the table in the kitchen corner. I tried to give her a questioning look, but she wasn't looking up from her coffee.

"Morgan, the duffel is in the first bedroom. Do you want to freshen up?" I

asked.

“Yes, I would.” I lead her to the bedroom.

“Where have you been?” I asked as we made our way down the hall. Her mouth betrayed the start of a smile.

“Athena.” I didn’t say anything. “We went to the docks, and stole, well, borrowed a small dingy to make it out to the boat. We were only going to check the bridge and Andreas had to tarp a thingy on the deck, and we were coming right back.”

“Ah.” I said

“Well, nothing happened!” She was getting flustered.

“We’d better go back out and have our coffee. Oh, there’s some aspirin in my purse if you need it.” I pointed to my bag on the chair and returned to the kitchen.

“Is okay?” Dimitris asked. I gave him the “thumbs up” sign.

“Mmm, more coffee, please. I don’t know what you do to make such good coffee,” I said to Rena.

“Dimi made it,” she answered.

“There’s hidden depths to this man,” I said as I put my hand on his wrist. Dimitris got the biggest grin!

Andreas seemed quiet, and doing a little pacing, walking up to the hall, looking, coming back. The longer it took Morgan to come out, the more pacing we would see. I don’t think Dimi or Rena and Stefano even noticed, with everyone talking. Then he went out of the front door for two minutes and came back inside.

When Morgan came out from the hallway, I gave Dimitris a nudge. He looked over, and gave an approving smile. We couldn’t overhear what was said, but they were all smiles as they came back to the kitchen.

It was getting on toward 10 am and there seemed to be a day plan afoot.

“Now that we’re all together, we’re going down to breakfast at ‘Scala’s’ and then I thought you might want to visit the dig. It’s not very often that non-diggers are permitted to go into a working archaeological project! Okay? Get your gear, gals, and we’ll take you all to the docks when we’re finished. What do you think?” Stefano had that family twinkle in his eye. We all agreed to

the plan. "Alright, here Andreas, you drive Rena's Fiat," then he threw the keys to the younger brother.

Dimitris and I rode with Stefano and Rena. The back seat was big and comfortable. I've got to confess that when I was dating, the one thing that bothered me and I usually was able to avoid it, was the act of eating on a date. There's nothing worse than really liking someone, then find out they eat like a pig! It's one of my quirks, I admit it, and having someone new watching me eat was just as bad and very intimidating. This went very well though. The company was interesting and Dimitris had impeccable manners. When we finished, I gave Dimitris the aspirin, which I knew he could use, and took some myself. Stefano always keeps bottled water in the car, and we made good use of it.

It wasn't far to the dig, maybe two miles.

"Watch your step as we go." Stefano warned.

Rena came up from behind me and said out of the corner of her mouth, as she passed, "he always says that, and he's always the first one to trip!" I had to laugh!

The sun was very bright and the glare that bounced off of the bare soil was intense. Stefano was telling us about this being a 4000 year old settlement, and the dig had produced remnants of a house, pots and jugs that have been dated to the Neopalatial period. There were people working, and a lot of dust was in the air. We tried not to get in the way of the work. There was a huge portable awning constructed to protect the fine pieces of relic and those who were working on them. Such a fascinating science, it's one that could be a fever one caught in the prospects of discovery.

"I don't want to mention it, but we're going to have to get back to the Athena. We may be fighting the tide if we wait much longer." Andreas reminded us.

Everyone said their good-byes at the dock. Rena said we were welcome in their home anytime, which was gracious, especially since we just seemed to fall out of the sky with this visit.

We were able to get back at sea pretty quickly, and it was smooth going for the first half hour. Gradually the seas got more unstable and the winds had

picked up as well.

“How’s the headache, Dimi?” I asked. He had just come in from the deck and had salty air and mist in his thick black hair.

“I am wonderful!” He put his cold wet hands on my face, kissed me, and said, “I am wonderful! S’agapo, and all is fine,” as he looked into my eyes. Yes, all is fine, at least at this point!

Morgan was sitting in the patio deck, and although it was open at the stern, it was somewhat sheltered from the wind.

“What are you doing out here, all by yourself?” I asked. She was all bundled up.

“Andreas is really busy, doing Captainy things, and I was just in the way.”

“Are you sure that there’s nothing that you might be able to help him with?” I asked.

“Are you trying to get rid of me?”

“Yeah, right! I just thought it would be better than sitting all by yourself.” Dimitris came up behind us and said,

“Maybe safer you keep company with Miss Morgana in cabin.” Dimitris took us both by the elbow and lead us to the lower cabin. “Be safe! I come back.” And off he went to the bridge.

“What’s up Morgan? I haven’t seen you alone long enough to find out how you are doing. We’ve got some time now, so tell me.”

“Well, this has been one hell of a vacation, I’ll tell ya!”

“You can say that again.” I agreed.

“I’m getting in deeper than I thought! I’m at the same place you were. I really like the guy, I mean, I feel like I could love him, but I don’t know if I want to!”

“You don’t want to get hurt, I can understand that.”

“I’m afraid to get hurt again! And I’m at a point where I, I’m at a point of no return, do you know what I mean?” Morgan sounded desperate. “It’s all happening so fast! I don’t think that I’ll ever have this chance again in my life, and I feel that it’ll have to be all, or nothing!”

“I know.”

“It’s too much, I don’t know, I just don’t know. I wish I could be sure of

him.” She was pacing the floor.

“You know, Morgan, you have to figure out what *you* need, and how *you* feel. Then you can ask yourself if he’s everything you think he is, and what he has shown you he is. Is it enough? And if the answer is yes, he’s everything you would want a man to be in your life, then maybe you shouldn’t turn away. Dimitris said something to me, and it was really profound in it’s own way. It really affected me, and maybe it’ll help you make a decision.”

“What did he say?”

I repeated what Dimitris said, that Andreas wouldn’t glow when we’ve left this place.

“If you should make that full confession, think it out carefully, how to tell him.”

I left her speechless for a few minutes. I know that Dimitris’ simple revelation cut deep into her heart.

“What about you?” She asked.

“Dimitris is giving me more space, because I was getting so overwhelmed! We talk more now and I’m more able to step back and see what’s happening. No pressure, no promises, that’s all. I think now he sees that even if time is short, we can be doing things and be together without pushing it. The more I see how he is with his family and listen to some of the insights into his past, I see a fuller picture of him. But, I have Mark waiting for me, which makes things a mess. I guess I have to ‘go with the flow,’ and see where it takes me.”

“Yeah, I guess you might have more to lose,” she said.

“Even though I’ve been in this relationship with Mark forever, I haven’t been happy since, I can’t remember when. Our passionate fire went out years ago. *But we’re friends*. We have a pattern and the relationship is comfortable. We know what to expect from each other and there’s something to say for that, but happy? Content with life as it was? I don’t know if I could live that way any more.”

“Well! We sure know how to do things, don’t we!” We had to laugh at the irony of it.

“I, ...huh-oh.” I took a hard swallow and suddenly I was feeling sick. “Oh! I think I’m going to urp! Oh no! I’ve got to get above deck, I need some air!”



Morgan helped me put on my jacket and make it back up to the patio room for some air. I was sweltering and couldn't breathe. If I closed my eyes I felt like I was spinning.

"Ooh, I feel shitty! Do you have any water handy?"

"I've got some in the cabin, I'll have to go get it."

"If I could just, ooh!" My knees were getting weak as the boat was writhing with the waves. They buckled under me, and all I could do was sit and hang my head between my knees.

"I'll go get Dimitris."

"NO! Don't you dare get him! I don't want him to see me sick like this." I gasped. "Check the galley, see if there is some Dramamine in the cupboard. And bring me some water, I should be all right." I was dizzy, getting hot and the sweat was dripping off of me. The cold salt spray did little to cool me down. I took off my jacket and I thought I would die with the rolling of the ocean. Morgan left to find me some relief, but I think it was too late. I was going to have to suffer it out. I went to the railing and thought I was going to see my insides come up, as the horizon seemed to double in my vision.

Morgan was down in the galley pulling open drawers and cupboards. There was an empty bottle of Dramamine, but she thought maybe some Alka Seltzer, or Tums would settle my stomach. She brought out the water.

"Here's some water, I'll have to ask Andreas if he has anything to help. Are you alright?"

"Never mind. I'll be okay, I just need air."

Morgan went back to the galley, went through every drawer and cupboard again, and found nothing to alleviate my misery. After ten minutes of searching the galley and rifling through our belongings in our cabin, she went to the bridge. I was weak in the knees and panting, trying to keep myself from getting green with the heaves. The sweat was pouring off of me more than the spray from the waves. The wind whipping through my ears made my hearing muffled, and when I opened my eyes I saw double. Two railings, two horizons. I held onto the wet railing, my knees had become so weak that I was sitting on my haunches, swaying with the swells, and dying a little more with each ocean mountain.

The men were trying to see out the windshield. The wipers were going, the sea kicking up worse by the minute. Lightning was beginning to streak in the distance and the air had a bitter bite to it. The winds brought up white peaks in the sea, and blew the spray almost as hard as the rain. The noise on the bridge made hearing anyone speak very difficult. The radio was a squelching racket that had great interference, but a necessity under the circumstances.

Morgan tried to get Andreas' attention. He saw her and made her sit in a safety seat. She tried to yell at Dimitris, but he could not hear her. She wanted to get up and talk to Andreas, but he wouldn't let her move. Finally, she pulled Dimitris' arm and yelled,

"Is there any Dramamine?"

"Dramamine?" He asked.

"Yes, Helen's sick," she yelled.

"You leave her alone?" Dimitris didn't wait for an answer and bolted out of the door!

"Are you okay?" Andreas yelled to Morgan.

"So far! I think." She knew she would have a big bruise on her arm tomorrow, after being thrown against the stair railing.

"Helena! Helena!" Dimitris was racing to the end of the stern, where I was holding on to the railing, crouched down on my haunches and wishing it was all over with. I was holding the cold, wet railing so tight that I could not feel my fingers any longer.

"Oh, geez! I'll kill her", I said to myself.

Dimitris latched onto my hands and yanked me off the rail, picked me up and carried me to the enclosed area of the outer patio. I was soaked to the skin, and shivering to the point where I could not talk.

"What you do?" He was sounding far away, all I could hear was the sea. I tried to speak, but I couldn't. He sat me on the sofa, next to the wall, then ran to the cabinet to grab a wool blanket. When he came back I was trying to go to the rail for air.

"No, no, no. Put this around you."

I couldn't feel my fingers and my vision was blurred, I guess from the

salty spray in my eyes. From what I remember, with the pain in my throat, I temporarily forgot about being sea sick.

“I take you to cabin!” He wrapped the blanket around me, and picked me up.

“No!” I panted. “I have to have...air!” I gasped. “I need....I can’t breathe..” I felt like I was going to hyperventilate. By the time I figured out what I was trying to say, he had the bed open and sat me down to remove the wool wrap.

“What you do out there, Helena?”

I felt like I was floating above my body and watching what was happening, like a movie. He felt my forehead and cheeks, and although I was freezing with cold, I had a high fever.

“Helena? Helena are you hearing me?” He tried to penetrate my muddled brain. “Helena?” I barely remember trying to focus, but the chills had me shaking so hard I was oblivious to everything.

“Helena, we must remove wet clothes, do you understand? Wet clothes! You stay here while Dimi get Morgana, will you stay?” When he opened the cabin door he looked back at this shivering wet mess. I tried to get to the door, I had to have cool air on me.

“No, Helena, you must wait for Morgana.” He helped me to the bed again.

“I need...air. I can’t breathe.” He wiped the wetness from my face, and I sank into him. My shaking was almost a convulsion in severity.

“I must get Morgana to help take clothes off. Helena?” He tried to straighten me up, and looked into my eyes, but I couldn’t open them.

“Dimi? I...oooh.” My head had a roaring sound so loud, that I could hear very little.

“You get warm, you must take wet clothes off! Helena!” He tried to get through to the rag doll on the bed, but I was incoherent. “I waste too much time.” He made a dash for the door, and flipped the lock on the outside hatch door seal.

“When will we get out of this rough sea? It’s not still raining, is it?” Morgan yelled.

“It’s not now, but it’s not finished yet.” Andreas had to turn and lean forward as he yelled to Morgan.

Dimitris came onto the bridge, he looked frazzled from the storm and then told Morgana the problem. He helped her to unbuckle and go with him to the cabin.

He unlocked the latch to let Morgan in. They could see all the wet clothing in a pile on the floor.

"I guess she got undressed." Morgan reported.

Dimitris peeked in the door and the invalid was under the covers. Morgan sat at the foot of the bed while Dimitris left the cabin.

"Do you have Brandy here?" He asked Andreas. Dimitris got a bottle from the galley and the "WUF" cup. He brought in the Brandy and set it within the holder on the table by the bed.

"Sip Brandy, slow. Please, open eyes." Dimitris got very little down the throat of this pathetic creature. "You must get warm."

He got off of the bed and after making sure that the blankets were tucked in all around, he went to the bath and brought out a towel. Reaching around he unclasped the wet stringy hair that was an encased prisoner. He gently laid out the towel and spread the sopping hair onto it, to soak up some of the sea that kept in the cold.

"Why you hide beautiful hair from Dimi?" He went to the foot of the bed, uncovered one foot and began rubbing it to help the circulation. "Warm up now, get warm."

"Ahhh." My lips let escape a sigh.

"Helena, Helena!" Dimitris coaxed, "Wake up for me." He pleaded.

"Dimi." I moaned. Dimitris got the cup of Brandy, and had better results with getting me to drink.

I remember trying to squint my eyes, recover my senses. I remember trying to sort out a blue chunky object on the table under the bed lamp.

"WUF." I said.

Suddenly a phantom came up through the floor, a beautiful man floated over me and touched my cheek. I heard a soft voice saying my name, and I tried to open my eyes to see, but I couldn't. I could still hear my name, like a gentle breeze that brushed by my cheek, and spoke to me in soft whispers.

"Fever is high." He whispered in a soft voice. Dimitris stood, leaned over

and kissed my hair, then signaled to Morgan to go out the door. When Dimitris closed the door, Morgan asked,

“What happened? She was only sea sick when I left her.”

“Was wearing jacket outside?” He asked her.

“Yes! I made sure that she put it on!”

“Now, fever, chills for fever, maybe pneumonia,” he told her. “Helena very ill.”

“Geez! I had no idea! That came on quick. She was doing a lot of coughing before, but never complained about it.”

“Ah. Fever very high. She gets warm, and feel better now.”

Dimitris went up to the bridge to see Andreas. Morgan wanted to know what they would do next. They spoke in Greek, something they normally wouldn't do in front of Morgan, but time was ticking and Dimitris needed to go back to the cabin.

Since they were reaching calmer waters Morgan went down to the cabin to check the progress of the invalid. Slowly opening the door, she peeked in and saw Dimitris sitting on the floor next to the bed.

He went out of the room with Morgan and told her,

“In cold weather, not to move her. If fever to spike, we call ambulance to meet at docks. We keep her warm, soup, hot soup if she can drink. We watch. We wait.”

“I'm not going to leave her here overnight! It's cold and drafty, she'll end up with pneumonia for sure!” She insisted. Morgan went up to the bridge and told Andreas about the situation.

“You can stay here, there's another bed, small room, but comfortable. Don't worry, we'll figure it out.”

After the Athena was safely moored, Andreas came down to the forward lounge which was below deck. It wasn't a large room, big enough for a sofa which folded out into a bed, and a chair, coffee table and tv. Being on a sea craft, the only thing not bolted down was the coffee table. He was getting the sofa pulled out and made the bed, when Morgan came looking for him.

“Andreas? ...Andreas?” She called.

“In here! There you are. There’s this bed, not so comfortable, and a very small room next to the engine room. The bed is very good, but the room is a little claustrophobic.”

Morgan tried the fold out bed, to see if the bar under the springs would hit her in the back.

“This is really comfortable, why did you think it wasn’t?” She asked.

“I haven’t tried it myself.” He confessed, with the hint of a smile.

“This is going to be a fun night! I can tell! I hope the next thing you’re not going to tell me is that this harbor is haunted by King Neptune or something?”

Andreas smiled with that cute dimple, and put his hand out to help her up, and said,

“Certainly not.”

Small incandescent lights were used in the interior rooms that were or would be occupied. Each sleeping area had electric heat and the refrigerators were kept cold. It was efficient operation when moored, which made the living quarters comfortable.

Dimitris came to the galley for bottled water, as Morgan and Andreas were snuggling and talking in the corner of the booth.

“Any change? Is she still asleep?” Morgan asked.

“What’s the prognosis, Dr. Dimi?” Andreas questioned.

“She sleeps, still fever, still fever. We see during night, tomorrow will be better.” He answered and went toward the door.

“We are figuring out the sleeping arrangement, Dimi. We are keeping Miss Helena in the main cabin with Morgana.”

“No! Miss Helena need rest, if anything contagious, Miss Morgana sleep cabin #2, no more sickness.” He said, looking at Morgan.

“How would we know if she’s contagious? I thought it was cold exposure or something.”

“Maybe yes, maybe no.” Dimitris answered.

“That’s okay, I’ll take the sofa bed.”

“Good! Then it’s settled, Dimi will take the aft room, and I will hang a hammock for me. I’m used to it.”

Dimitris was leaving the room, but Morgan noticed the worried expression

on his face.

Morgan went with Andreas, looking through the storage room for suitable canned goods.

“Let me see, this looks like Oaks. Oaks?” Morgan asked.

“No, that’s Fak’es, this is good, Lentil soup, Dimitris will want this one. Good job, my lovely!” Andreas smiled and embraced Morgan.

“Dimitris seems pretty upset.” She said, to change the subject.

“He is.”

“Does he normally get all involved like this?” She asked.

“With illness, you mean?”

“Well, I mean, we’ve been here barely a week, and he seems to be... emotional! Is he always this way, you know, with people he just meets, does he always jump right in and get involved with them?”

“Not Dimitris. He doesn’t get involved usually. He has lots of friends and meets a lot of people, tourists,....”

“Women.” Morgan inserted.

“Women tourists, yes, but he drives his taxi and gets paid. He never pursues them, they usually pester him! But he’s not interested. This is different. He is different. I think he’s finally in love.”

“He’s in love? When we first met Dimitris, he was happy, fun and we all had such a great time seeing the sights! Now, he seems quiet and, well, happy, but not joyful like he seemed before. I was wondering which is the real Dimitris? The Dimitris that you know.”

“He is worried about your friend, yes, but the brother I know is the one you say, happy, joyous and loves life. This Dimi we see now, I think his heart is breaking and he doesn’t know what will happen.” Andreas was serious. “We tend to do things with ‘gusto,’ life is too short to be unhappy, so we embrace every happiness, art, food, love, beauty in ordinary things, and we relish in everything. And cherish those we love. We do not waste it. There’s no time for falsehoods and silly games, when everything real is to be appreciated.” Morgan looked at Andreas and reached out to him. They kissed passionately and temporarily let the search for food products go.

Dimitris sat at my side, waiting. He spotted the items in the duffel bag,

some that were left on the chair from Morgan's search for something, and others that fell out of the bag and onto the floor. He went over to the chair and took out the hair brush. As he sat next to me on the bed, he began to gently brush the tangles from my hair.

"Such long hair, why you hide from me, huh, Helena?" He whispered as he stroked the long, damp hair. He felt for fever and it was still persisting. "This is not good, we need to get fever down."

He left the room to search the medical supplies, what little there was aboard the Athena. "No alcohol? No alcohol?" He turned and went in search of Andreas. "Andreas! Where is he? Andreas!"

Andreas reemerged to find Dimitris.

"No alcohol on board?" Dimitris asked.

"I don't think so, what about Vodka? 90 proof!"

Dimitris gently sat on the edge of the bed and spoke softly,

"Helena."

"Dimi." I mumbled softly, barely awake enough to understand.

He rolled me over to the middle of the bed, exposed my back and brought the covers to my waist to cover me.

"You burn up, Helena!" He then put his lips to my ear and whispered "I will rub cold on back, but do not fear. It is feeling cold, do you understand Dimitris?"

"Yes, Dimitris....." I uttered.

He poured a small amount of the Vodka into the palm of his hand and when the liquid touched my skin, I writhed with the bite of it.

"Shh, shh, is okay, is okay," his voice was soothing as he rubbed the liquid across my hot flesh.

"Dimi, ooh." The sound of crying came from the cutting touch of the cold Vodka, piercing my unconscious mind with visions of swords of ice burning into me.

"I am sorry, I must hurt you." He whispered to this burning ember. He continued to douse my skin with the cold-burning Vodka, making me wince with the pain of it at every touch, rubbing it down my arms, then carefully



moving my hair aside to douse the back of my neck. The flesh, so hot as to almost ignite the Vodka, made me jump with every torturous episode. He then pulled the blankets over me and went into the bath to retrieve a cold damp face cloth. He cleaned the Vodka soaked hair on my neck and ran the cloth lightly over the shoulders and back. Placing one arm in the sleeve of a shirt, rolling my limp body over and placing the other arm into the other sleeve. He was then able to close the garment and as I cried from the painful misery in my incoherent state, he gently held me in his arms, speaking gently in Greek whispers to calm me. This weak being began to respond, leaning with my head against his chest.

“Shh, now. All will be okay. Shh.” He rocked me as he comforted my pain. I quieted and was soon asleep. He gently laid me back and brought the blankets up into a tight cocoon, and waited. He felt my brow and cheeks and was more at ease.

A knock at the door brought Dimitris back to present events on the Athena. It was Morgan.

“We found some soup, Lentil, will that due, or should we find something else?”

“Good, Lentil is good.”

“Can I come in a minute, I need to get some stuff out of the bag?”

“Oh, please, come,” he whispered.

“Man! It smells in here! Vodka?”

“Yes, Vodka,” he admitted.

She stood next to the bed and looked down. “Is the fever down? Is she going to be all right?”

Dimitris placed his hand on her shoulder to say,

“Yes, soon.”

Andreas put together enough canned, dried and liquid ingredients to make a meal. Different types of cheeses from the galley refrigerator, olives, wine and bread of different types and a sauce of another kind.

“Dimi.” He knocked at the cabin door, opened it and asked, “We’re ready to eat, are you coming?”

“Maybe soon, not too hungry.”

“Whenever you’re ready to eat, it’ll be there,” Andreas added.

“Okay, thank you Andreas.”

I don’t know how long I laid there, with strange visions of ocean torrents flooding the room, reaching for a hand that I couldn’t quite grasp. I remember turning my head toward the light, and with a cloudy mind and foggy vision I saw someone sitting against the wall with knees up and head resting on his arms.

“Dimitris.....,” I whispered.

He looked up, “Helena?” He leaned over to talk to me and took my hand. “Hey.” He said softly as he brushed the hair off my forehead, “here you are, are you thirsty? You want water?” He had such a sweet way of getting through to my foggy brain.

“Are we home?” I drowsily asked as I felt a floating sensation as though I would lose my equilibrium should I move too quickly. The room seemed to spin.

“We are on Athena. Helena? Are you hearing Dimi?” He placed his hand on my forehead, and still the fever hovered like a phantom, just waiting.

Dimitris went to the galley to put the soup on to warm. “Is she ready to eat something?” Morgan asked.

“No, she sleeps. I will try broth, maybe Helena will take.” He warmed a very small amount of the soup and watered it down to make it easier to sip. He brought it back to the cabin and waited.

“Helena.”

“Dimitris.” I made an effort to sound normal.

“Can you sip some broth for Dimi?” I tried to open my eyes but the light was stabbing my eyes and the blur of white fog was too bright.

“Please sip, Helena. Sip broth, is good for you, will help to warm.”

I tried to take a sip. It warmed as it made it’s way down, only soon to have me nearly fall asleep.

“This is good, can you drink more?” He coaxed.

“No, no.” I tried to open my eyes again.

“Such a kind face.” I tried to say, as I reached my finger tip up to trace along

his cheek bone to his lips. "I will paint this face one day." I said in my weak, wispy voice. "Let's go home."

When I awoke, I wasn't sure where I was or what happened. I was still foggy and weak but I had these warm strong arms around me. I looked up to Dimitris.

"How are you feeling?" He asked.

"I don't know, how are you?" I weakly asked. He smiled and said,

"I am better now."

"Ooh, were you sick too?" I asked with a weak voice.

"Yes, Dimitris was very ill," he replied, "now, I want to give water for you to drink, you drink now." He helped me to sit up. I was able to drink a little and Dimitris was pleased with that.

"Did I get drunk?" I asked.

"No, not drunk," he smiled. "I help you to sip the soup. Do you want food?" Dimitris asked.

"No," I hesitated.

"Okay, we let you sleep, rest, I come back in just little time. Okay?" He asked and removed himself from my bed.

I nodded "yes" and must have dropped off to sleep.

Entering the galley, the table was full of small plates. Bread was left and some wine. Dimitris sat, poured a glass of wine and ate a little bread with olives and cheese. He didn't have an appetite, so it didn't matter what was laid on the table.

Morgan and Andreas headed for their respective beds. Morgan laid under the cozy covers and let thoughts of Andreas and her feelings for him enter her mind. She was fighting temptation in a way she had never had to fight before. If she had only talked to him when they were alone and told him the things she kept inside, would she be this miserable, or would it be over with and in the past? She thought very seriously along the lines of what she and her friend had discussed, and asked herself the questions. None of this helped her to know what Andreas' response would be, and that is on what her fate was resting.

She had prepared, she was ready to take that step; swallow her pride and brace for the worst; until she knew his response. It was time. She was standing at his door, and a wave of fear washed over her in this dark end of the ship. She hesitated for a moment then took a deep breath.

A very small knock was heard at his door, and Morgan said,

“Andreas, can we talk?” The door swung wide open and she went inside.

“Is there something wrong, you look worried, is it Helena?” He asked.

“No, I think we should talk about some things. Maybe I’m over reacting to this more than I should, but I need to know a few things.”

“Come sit down. There’s some things I have to say as well,” he took her hand.

“Oh, okay, you go first!”

“You have to tell me what it is you came to say.”

“I really think I’d better leave, this is a bad idea.” She was letting her emotions take over again.

“Let me tell you some things first then you can decide if you want to talk. Now sit. Please.... We have a connection, you and I. Do you know what I mean? I feel like I know you, like I’ve always known you, and now you’re here. I’ve been waiting for you, Morgana, all this time. Now, don’t say anything until I finish, okay? You know that I haven’t been lucky in my relationships, one disastrous one in particular, which tainted my point of view of what was and what wasn’t important to me in my life. A lot of time has past, and I never missed it! I didn’t know until I met you, what I need and haven’t found until now. I know that your life has been in America and that’s where your home is, but you could find you have a home here. We get along so well, and even your unusual outbursts, draw you near to me. I will be so empty when you leave. I cannot picture you, *not* here. Maybe in America, people come and go in one’s life like it’s just another ordinary event, but here, it is not taken lightly. There is meaning to all things we do or say, it is not without great contemplation and heart searching that I say these things.

“I would like you to say you will be with me, here. If you are even thinking of the possibility, stay longer to be sure. Come with me to my world, Morgana. Let me show you where I live, how I live. I am an adult, no childish fantasies

for me. Take some happiness and stay! I have this thing going on inside; when I see you, I am flying! You know now how I feel, and a week will go by too quickly. I am afraid that I will never see you again once your time here has ended. I couldn't take that! Now, you may want to think about it, or ask me anything you are unsure of, I am here. My life is an open book for you, so..., now it's your turn."

"It's my turn, I can speak now?" She asked in a nervous, crisp voice. Her sarcasm betrayed her uneasiness.

"Yes! It's your turn." Andreas took a deep breath exhaled, kissed Morgan on the top of her head and sat next to her on the bed.

"I came in here tonight because I had to know how you feel, and that this isn't all in my mind. Don't kiss my neck when I'm trying to tell you this."

"Okay, but it's hard to resist."

"Where was I? See? I can't think straight! You get inside me and I turn to mush! We haven't had time to really know each other. Andreas, there are some serious considerations that I'm going to tell you about, and you need to listen to what I'm telling you, because I can't go through it again! I don't want you to say anything. After I'm finished, and I'm going to tell you everything you need to know, have to know, then I'm going to go to my room. I want you to be sure that you understand what this would mean. And if you are okay with everything I will be telling you, then maybe we have a chance. But you have to listen, and you have to think about it, seriously! I can't change my whole life without you knowing everything about me, up front, from the start. It wouldn't be fair to you or me, if I don't tell you everything, and you've had time to think. Agreed?"

Morgan began her painful confession and did not hide anything. By the time she had recounted those painful memories, she was fighting back tears that were so long in coming. When she finished, she turned and hurried to her cabin. Andreas stood at his cabin door as she disappeared from view.

Dimitris saw the time, it was close to one a.m. He thought he'd go back and check on Helena, it had been close to an hour since he left the cabin. He checked for fever. The fever was lower than before.

"Where were you?" I whispered.

“Let you sleep, you need rest.”

I tried to see his face, “You left me. I was looking for you, but you weren’t here.” I whispered. He got down next to the bed so that I could see his face clearer, and he cupped my hand in both of his,

“I am here, I never leave you.”

“Ooh, that’s good.” I said. “Dimitris, help me, to the bathroom.” I asked. “Come, up with you, I help,” he pulled the covers and scooped me up like a baby, and carried me to the bath room.

“Can you stand?” He asked.

“Yes, I think so.”

“Yes, but you are weak now. Okay, I am outside.” He closed the door.

On my way back to the sink I looked in the mirror. I didn’t recognize that pale, ghostly apparition staring back at me. No make-up, hair in a rat’s nest and eyes at half mast.

“Oh god!” I said, after washing my hands.

“Are you okay? Can I open door?”

“Yes, I guess.” I breathlessly answered. I was hunched over, holding on to the sink for support, out of breath and I wasn’t sure that if I could move my feet, if I’d fall over. Dimitris came in, scooped me up again and gently placed me in bed and pulled up the covers.

“Floor is too cold, back to bed.” He handed me some water. “Drink some water. You need to eat. Soup? Good soup? Is hot!”

“No, I can’t.” I whispered.

“I should go to my bed. It is late, you need to sleep, too.” He kissed the top of my forehead. “Ah! Fever go down, is good!” And he turned for the door.

“You said you wouldn’t leave me.” I dreamily said into my pillow. He came back to the other side of the bed, slipped off his shoes, and lay on the top of the covers with his arm laying across my waist.

“This is nice.” I said drowsily.

“Shh, sleep now,” then he kissed my ear.

## Aftermath



**I**n the aftermath of the storm, the Athena was quiet as her occupants slept. It was a rough night, even within the harbor the Athena rocked with the swells of the sea.

The sky was dark with clouds and the rain persisted most of the night. The Athena did her job well, and all of her occupants were in safe harbor for the night. The cold winds coming off of the water made the mast rigging of the sail boats in the harbor sing like chimes. The whistling of the wind penetrated the door, or hatch that wasn't properly battened.

There were so many questions, and so many regrets that may manifest on this gray day. Truth uncovered may be freedom, or it may be the doom of the spirit. What would lie ahead this day was still uncertain. Morgan tried to find a switch where she could turn on the heater, finally finding it on the wall plug itself. The heat felt good. Andreas came into the galley and wrapped his arms around Morgan and kissed her neck. In between kisses, Andreas asked if she checked on Helena yet.

"Not yet."

"It's getting late. I'd better see what's keeping Dimi." He forcefully tore himself from her side.

"I'd better get dressed then." Morgan thought, and headed down the corridor to her room. As Andreas passed by the main cabin, he carefully and slowly opened the door, to see if Dimitris was in the room.

“What are you doing?” Morgan whispered from behind him.

“Come here, take a look.” They both peeked into the main cabin.

There, Dimitris slept in an embrace. He on top of the blankets and I, fully covered by them, Dimitris had not slept well in days. Andreas closed the door to let him sleep. Morgan and Andreas both smiled, looking for a happy ending in the main cabin.

Laughter permeated the Athena, and although the weather threatened, it was light and bright within. Dimitris awoke, still locked in embrace, gently removed his arm from around me and got up from the bed. He entered the galley where the laughter emanated and then poured some coffee. “Ugh,” he grimaced as he swallowed. “This is not coffee.” He then poured it into the sink.

“It was pretty good this morning, but it has been sitting there for hours!” Morgan said in her defense.

“Oh,” he swallowed. “So sorry, we make new coffee.”

“How is she today?” Morgan inquired.

“I think maybe good, small fever, few days rest,” he answered.

“I was afraid that she got pneumonia,” Morgan thought aloud.

“Keep warm, few days, she will regain strength.”

“Is she awake?” Morgan asked.

“Not yet, let sleep.”

“Is someone here?” I whispered without opening my eyes.

“Dimi.” He answered as he approached the bed.

“Ahh, Dimi, I’m glad it’s you.” He came close to me and put his hand on my face.

“Very little fever, is good.”

I didn’t remember too much of what happened, and was still somewhat dazed and weak. My senses seemed to be very slow in coming back. He sat on the edge of the bed, just looking at me, with a small smile.

“Such a kind face.” I mumbled. “I need to get up.”

“You very weak, one more day in bed for you,” he said as he pulled away the hair that wrapped my neck. “You will eat. I bring something hot for you.”



Dimitris propped up the pillows behind me. "There!" He smiled. "Clothes wet, Morgana bring dry clothes."

"Dry clothes, yes. You are so sweet." I said in a fuzzy stupor.

"Wet clothes off, you were soak to skin, cold and fever," he explained as he placed his hand on mine. I was pretty light-headed. I finally got a grip on the blankets when Dimitris stood. I lifted them up.

"What have I done? Oh, my God! Did I get drunk?" I asked in a raspy voice.

Dimitris pulled up the blankets to my neck and said with a laugh in his voice, "You have done nothing, and no, you did not get drunk. Now, sip water." He went to the bathroom and brought out a damp wash cloth to dab over my face. This helped to lift the fog in my brain, helped my eyes to come into focus, and I was able to make more sense of things. I looked under the covers again and thought, *well, that went well, got nothing to hide now!* "Where's Morgan?" I asked, in a fuzzy, weak, high pitched voice.

"She went to town with Andreas, they return short time."

"I remember meeting Rena. I like her, she's funny, and Stefano. You're so lucky to have such a wonderful family."

"Yes, and they like you and Miss Morgana." I drank more water and settled back on the pillow, my head a little more clear than before, but my eyes were fuzzy and painful.

"I don't, what day...? How sick was I?"

"Too sick, you rest, keep warm and illness goes away."

"I've got to get up. I need to get a cup of coffee. Where are my clothes?" I asked as I swung my legs off the side of the bed.

"You don't get up! Dimitris get for you."

"I need to get up, I have to walk." I said, tilting forward into Dimitris' arms.

"You must do this? I find something to cover you. Why you not do as Dimi say?" He picked up the blanket from the bed and wrapped it around me.

"We drink coffee in galley, then bed for you."

"Okay. You really don't have to do this. I'm not a baby." He carried me to the Galley and gave me some coffee.

"Did you make this coffee?" I asked.

“Tis good?”

“Very good! You can make coffee for me any time!”

“If fever not gone and weather still bad, we think of what to do with you.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“This boat, too many drafts, too easy to get chill. We think of something.”

“I’ll be alright, I need to get dressed though.” My hoarse throat rasped.

“I wish I take you back Karpathos! Rena take care of you; two days, but Rena too far away now.”

“Oh, Dimitris, I’m over it now, so don’t worry so much. If Morgan’s here, and....”

Dimitris leaned on the table, cupped my hand in both of his and looked into my eyes. “What kind of vacation would be for her to take care of sick person, while paradise outside?”

“I’m not sick now, but, you’re right, I’m not thinking.” She would want to be with Andreas for the time that we have left here.

“Helena, you no realize.....” he said as a thunderous noise came down the stairs.

“We’re back!” Andreas announced, carrying bags of groceries. Morgan came in with two more.

“You’re up, wonderful! You really had us all worried!” Andreas said as he unloaded the bags to the floor.

“Hey, how are you feeling? Glad to see you’re up, we’ve got things to do today, that’s if the weather.....”

“No, no, no, she’s too sick still to do anything.” Dimitris was adamant; I rolled my eyes.

“I’m hungry is all, and, who’s shirt is this?” I said, looking at the long sleeves.

Dimitris had his back to me, held Morgans’ arm, who was facing me and said something to her in a soft voice. She understood and said “okay,” then she left the room.

“What’s this? Secrets? That’s not very nice when I’m sitting right here.” I muttered.

“Miss Morgana bringing your clothes, after coffee you may dress in something warm.”

“Ah, good, that’s good.”

“Okay, I had to bring the whole suit case, ’cause I didn’t know what to bring.” Morgan reported.

“Thanks, I just need clothes, doesn’t matter what it is, I guess.”

“Are you finished with coffee?” Dimitris asked.

“I’m done for now, I guess.” My voice was getting weak the more I talked. I wasn’t going to reveal that I was feeling weak, too.

“Now, I take you to room, maybe miss Morgana help you dress. I start cooking and you have good hot meal.”

“I really *can* walk, you don’t have to carry me.” I sighed.

“Floor too cold, I carry.” He said and picked me and the blanket up without a struggle.

“Aren’t you tired of this?” I asked as we made our way to the cabin.

“Never tire of this.” He put me down on the bed, checked the heater, and smiled on his way out.

“I almost laughed.” Morgan confessed.

“Why?”

“When he turned to open the door and he carried you in, he looked like he was really enjoying this,” she laughed.

“He is so strong. Geez! He always smells so good, too! Where were you? It’s all fuzzy.”

“I went everywhere looking for Dramamine but couldn’t find anything to help. I thought Andreas would know if there was any, and I was only gone fifteen minutes or so, twenty at the most. You were only supposed to be sea-sick!”

“It’s my fault.” I had to close my eyes, as the lights hurt them.

“I’ve never seen anyone get that sick, out of nowhere.”

“I’ve been nursing a sore throat for a few days, and a little cough, but it was nothing. I had the worst sea sickness in history, that’s all!” I said. “I thought that I was going to heave myself right overboard!”

“Why did you go out to the rail, we could have lost you in that storm?”

“I felt so awful, it seemed like I was hot and sweating; suffocating. I couldn’t get any air, like the sea was sucking it right out of me. I thought if I could see

the horizon, it would be better.”

“Do you remember him giving you an alcohol rub?”

“He did?” I asked. “I’d remember that, I think. He did that for me?” I asked, trying to catch my breath.

“You don’t remember him sleeping with you last night, do you?”

“Oh great! I probably snored, too.” I said, laying there with feet on the floor, half dressed and trying to breathe. “Did he really?”

“Yep.”

“No wonder he’s not saying much. I think he’s disgusted with me.” Morgan just smiled. “What?”

“We’re doing what ever he says when it’s about you, he won’t let us do anything on our own for you. He’s really...” She stopped short with a kind of look.

“He’s really what, crazy, disgusted, angry?”

“In love; he’s in love! You should have seen him, last night he came into the galley, he wouldn’t even eat, well, I didn’t see him eat. We had a hard time finding anything to make a dinner out of in the first place, and he didn’t even eat.”

“I don’t know, how did all this happen?” I finished dressing and asked Morgan if she brought any socks and shoes.

“The only other shoes I could find were sandals and heels, so I brought back your athletic shoes, maybe they’ll dry in front of the heater.”

“Good, I don’t want Dimitris thinking he has to carry me everywhere.”

“Did he hurt you, picking you up like that?”

“No, not at all, he’s really very gentle. Do you have anything my big fat feet will fit in?”

“No, but you could double up the socks.”

“He’d still carry me around, though. Anything new with you and Andreas? Were you able to talk?”

“Oh, geez, that was the hardest thing that I’ve ever done! I told him, and went back to my cabin and cried. I cried so hard, I didn’t think I’d stop. And it wasn’t the telling of my past or my health, or any of that. It was just the fact that I had to put it all into words.”

“And?”

“Well, he later came to my cabin and says he’s okay with most of it, and we’ll have to work out the rest. I think he was trying to be supportive, but I couldn’t stop crying and I couldn’t look at him. It’s going to be tough, and I told him that I can’t change my life in the hopes that he can accept everything, but he thought about what I said, and thinks that it doesn’t have any bearing on how he feels about me.”

“So he’s okay and you’re okay, and everything’s okay?”

“We slept together last night.” A big grin came over her and we were both laughing.

“Oh, Morgan, I’m so happy for you! I know what a hard thing it had been, and this is such a big step for you! This is great news!” She had that smile that she tried to swallow. Then she left the room. After a couple of minutes there was a small knock on the door, I answered,

“Come on in Morgan.”

“Is not Morgana. You are losing voice?”

“Uh,...no.”

He came over to the bed where I was sitting. He felt my face for fever, and then passionately kissed me. I really wasn’t wanting him to stop, and I had to respond. Besides this man being the sexiest thing I’ve seen in ages, he was kind and caring. Dimitris was passionate, and I was weak. He stood and picked me up then laid me properly in bed. He pulled the covers over me and pressed his lips on mine. He pulled back just far enough to look into my eyes and say,

“You will rest now,” then smiled and left the room. I thought I would die! I couldn’t get my heart to stop racing. He made me tremble in my weakness. Dimitris leaned against the door he just closed. From inside the cabin he could hear “Hey! Where’s my coffee?” He smiled, and went back to the kitchen.

“For Chicken Soup, that smells pretty good! Too bad I’m mostly vegetarian.” Morgan said to Dimitris.

“*Mostly* vegetarian? Ah, that’s no way to eat!” Dimitris scoffed.

“Yes it is, it’s harder, that’s why I said ‘mostly.’” She defended herself.

“Yes, harder, maybe, healthy? Yes. I try that too.” He said to Morgan as he put the finishing touch on his soup.

“He tried it for one day, when he was so sick he couldn’t eat at all!” Andreas laughed.

“Where you been, little Andreas?”

“I was on the radio. We’ve got a big storm coming in by tonight. We’re going to have to close down everything. All doors shut, windows latched and we have to get the women on shore. We can’t take a chance with the women.” Andreas warned. “None of us should be on board tonight.”

“That sounds pretty bad, is it a hurricane?” Morgan asked.

“Close enough to be, but the West coast will get the worst of it, so, we’d better get our things. Maybe find a way to pack that soup, Dimitris!”

“But cannot pack soup! Helena cannot go out yet, still has fever, we stay!” Dimitris stated.

“No, we have to leave now, so do whatever you can with that and let’s get going.” Andreas insisted. “Morgana, maybe you should help Helena, get all your clothes and get ready to go.”

“Okay. Going to get our clothes was a waste of time.”

Andreas pulled her back with both shoulders and said that she should be calm, then kissed her head and sent her on her way.

“This is not good; do you own thermos bottle, maybe?”

“Oh, wait, try this!” Andreas pulled out a large industrial size mayonnaise jar. It was empty except for a supply of new sponges.

“Good, we wash out and use, is okay.” Dimitris hurried and got most of the soup saved, and into a canvas bag. He set it out with a few other groceries that were packed, then went down the corridor to the cabin. Morgan had almost everything back into the suitcase and duffel bag.

“Good, good, you are ready?” Dimitris asked.

“I think I have everything, but Helen’s jacket is still wet.”

“Give bags to me, stay here until Andreas says to go.” She handed him the bags.

“I’m not a cripple you know, I can do some of this stuff.” I told Morgan. “All I need is a blanket, my sandals and some plastic trash bags to put on my feet.”

“And you think you’ll get away with that? You’re dreaming.”

Andreas was securing all the storm doors and lines, making sure the ship was protected against high winds and tides, as much as possible.

Dimitris took the suitcase and duffel bag out to the car and secured them to the luggage rack.

He made another trip out to the car with the soup and a few groceries. He was fighting the wind to get everything tied down, and food had to be unpacked to fit in the bonnet of the Bug. The soup would have to ride inside.

We were all together in the galley when Dimitris came in.

“That wind is bad, we should go now.” Andreas said.

“You take Helena and Morgana to the car and I’ll close down Athena.”

“Yes, of course, yes. I need heavy wool blanket for Helena.” Dimitris was off to get it out of the cabinet.

“I’ve got to get my cup, I don’t know where it is!”

“I put it in with your stuff.” Morgan reported.

“Oh, good, I don’t want to lose it.”

Dimitris wrapped the blanket over and around me like a mummy.

“Okay, let’s go, Morgana go first, car door unlocked. Okay? Go Morgana, go now!” Dimitris instructed.

The wind was blowing and kicking up the ocean’s spray. Going down the ramp to the dock was treacherous, with the sea rocking the ramp up and down. Morgan made her way and nearly went over once, but she managed to get to the dock.

Dimitris was holding my blanket together and I had to laugh, as he was so intent on not letting the blanket slip. He saw me starting to laugh and when he asked me “what”? I couldn’t hold back my laughter any longer. I had an uncontrollable laughing jag!

“Stop laughing, you are losing blanket, Helena!” He started to laugh too. “Stop, now. There is no time for this.” I almost had it under control, when he said. “You get hiccups!”

I lost it all over again and could not stop laughing, tears coming to my eyes, and Dimitris trying to keep the blanket from falling down. The more I tried to stop laughing the worse it got.

“Okay, stop that, we go now, ready?” He asked.

“Yes.” I was trying not to start laughing again.

He hoisted me over his shoulder like a rolled up rug, and swiftly stepped along the ramp and went toward the car. I was still laughing, even though I felt folded in half. I think my situation made me laugh. Dimitris spanked me through the blanket in a teasing way.

Morgan opened the door for Dimitris, and without letting my feet hit the ground, he slid me into the passenger side seat.

“You should see what that looked like! I should have taken a video of it!” Morgan said, and as I couldn’t get my hands out, I started to laugh again! No matter how I struggled, my arms were wedged straight down, wrapped in this cocoon.

Dimitris got in the drivers side and took the blanket down from my head so that I could see better. I was struggling back and forth to get my arms free, but not having any luck. I was getting weak from the laughing which didn’t help free my hands.

“I think we leave you like this.” Dimitris said as he tried to help loosen the blanket. “Don’t take off, until inside house.”

“Oh, geez, you win, I give up!” I was finally able to calm down, and hoped I wouldn’t get the hiccups.

Andreas came running up to the car. Dimitris got out to let him into the back seat.

“Let’s go, it’s getting cold out there, feel my hand.” He said as he put his hand on Morgan’s face.

“Andreas,” I said, “you’re an Engineer?”

“Yes. With this weather we probably won’t go back to work until next week.” The heater was beginning to cook through the blanket, and I was beginning to sweat. I started to drift off to sleep, and no one woke me.

When we arrived Dimitris reached in and scooped me up out of the car.

“Are we there?” I asked.

“Yes, we are here, now will you sit with blanket, so I can make warm fire?”

“Where are we?” I asked. All I could see were some trees, then we went



into a house. It was fairly dark inside, but I could hear the wind and dogs and branches scraping the windows with every gust of wind. Dimitris put me down on a sofa and kept me wrapped in my prison of blanket. It was cold in the house. It had been closed up, and the cold damp weather seemed to follow us inside. I began to shiver again.

“Stay here with blanket, I will make fire for you.”

I cuddled up under the blanket on the sofa. Dimitris got a fire going. As I watched him at the fireplace I started thinking about my situation, Mark, and having to go home. I tried to think of actually being with Mark, and then the curtain of dread came down over me. If I was truthful, I'd have to admit that I didn't *want* to go back there; but I have to return.

“Is this your home, Dimitris?”

“My father's house, but yes, all brothers house now.” He came over to me. “Will you stay here while I get stuff? Keep under blanket, you still have fever.”

“Yes, I will.” I said and he gave me a pat on the head, on his way to unload the car.

“Oh, man, this fire feels so good! Isn't this neat?” Morgan was all smiles.

“Did you remember my shoes?”

“Ya, I got them.”

“Good. If they are still wet, maybe they'll dry by the fire,” I said.

“Geez! We just got here! When I can get a chance to open the duffel, I'll grab them!” Morgan barked. “Oh look, two dogs, aren't they cute?” Morgan said as they came running in, and investigated us with tails wagging. Dimitris called them away to feed them.

“They are my good boys.” He said, smiling as he watched them eat, so happy to have their master home.

As the men put the groceries in the kitchen I had a chance to talk to Morgan.

“You didn't call Mark when I was sick, did you?”

“No, was I supposed to?” She asked bitterly.

“No. Since it's not anything serious, he didn't need to know.” I hesitated in asking her what was wrong.

“It's such a beautiful room.” Morgan offered.

“Mama used to crochet in front of this fire.” Andreas said as he put more

wood next to the hearth. "My father built this with his brothers for the wedding present for Mama," he recounted. "We'll eat soon, so make yourselves at home."

"Sorry that I've ruined our trip by getting sick. Do you remember where my purse went? I put it down in the cabin, and since I got hog tied, I lost track of it."

"I put it with mine, they're probably in one of the guest rooms, I would think. Do you need it now? Do you want me to see if I can find it?"

"I was just wondering where it got to, I don't really need it right now."

"You haven't eaten hardly anything in days, aren't you hungry?"

"I haven't even thought about it, I just want to sit by this fire and drift off." It wasn't long when I did drop off to sleep. The fire was such a comfort.

Dimitris and Andreas laid out a great spread of cheeses, deli cutlets, and bread. The Olive oil, bread, and the soup that got interrupted on the Athena made enough for a good meal. Dimitris came over to the sofa.

"Helena," he said in a soft voice. "You need to eat now, then back to bed."

He picked me up and brought me into the kitchen. It was wonderful, having this evening with no ship duties and other things to interrupt the conversations. Andreas and Morgan were snuggled on one sofa on one side of the fireplace and Dimitris and I were on the sofa on the other side. It was relaxed, funny conversation, and I think we all enjoyed the warm peace that enveloped the room. Seeing Andreas and Morgan, so happy and comfortable with each other, warmed my heart. I was so weak and fuzzy headed that even though Mark was an issue, I had no guilt about my situation. I just wanted to relax and enjoy the warmth. I was cozy and comfortable leaning against Dimitris, and started to drift off to sleep.

When he put more wood on the fire, I sat up to let my feet touch the floor.

"You need to be in bed, before fever gets worse." Dimitris told me in his soft low voice. He put his hand on my forehead. "Fever is back, no more floor for you. You go to bed, now."

"Just a while longer, the fire feels so good, and I'm so comfortable here." Dimitris was letting me lean on him as I lay with my feet up under the blanket. I could hear his heart beating, and he was so warm and comfortable.

“You are sleepy, come.” He got up and put my arms around his neck and lifted me off the couch.

“You are such a strong man, Dimitris.”

“Dimi.”

“Dimi, I’ll bet your Mom was proud of all of her sons. She must have been a very happy woman.”

He took me to a room off of the living room. There wasn’t any light on, but I could see the room from the doorway with the light that shown in from the living room. He sat me down and turned on the bedside lamp. I stood to unwrap the blanket from around me, and Dimitris reached out and kissed me. It was a passionate kiss that excited every cell in my body. We continued, almost forgetting the door being open, even forgetting who I was momentarily. I was getting so weak and dizzy that I could hardly stand and Dimitris seemed to be holding me up.

“We” “need” “to” “talk”, he said between kisses.

“Now?” I asked, as I was trembling with the sweet waves of passion that his kisses created. We were lost in emotion that burnt like a fire and in my delirium, I wanted him. He opened the bed and put me under the blankets.

“We talk.” He breathlessly whispered in my ear, then went to close the door. He went to the other side of the bed, took off his shoes and laid on his side, facing me. With my heart still racing and trying to breathe, I waited to hear what he wanted to say. “I will try to speak better, so you understand.” His voice was soft and he spoke well. “Do you believe there could be love at first look, uh, sight?”

“Yes.” I said.

“Do you believe in love that lasts a lifetime?” He asked.

“Yes, I believe it’s possible.”

“We, in this country, do not look for divorce to fix marriage problem. It is not against law, but marriage is sacred thing, and most Greeks live by that. When I had divorce, made me feel out cast, failure and hard to find my legs again. Time does fix hurt, take long time, but does fix.”

I listened but I couldn’t concentrate with my ears still humming with the wind that they were exposed to on-board. I was getting sleepy. His eyes were

so distracting, and with my fever rising it was hard to concentrate.

"I was child, in love every day, different girl, but, I loved her at the time. Now I see it as learning mistake not to be repeated. And this man, Mark, you love him?"

"What? What did you say?"

"Mark."

"I was very much in love with him, once."

"Not now?"

"In love is not what we ended up with."

"In love is best part of living, should always be." He put my hand to his lips, he could tell my fever was climbing. He went out of the room and came back with water and aspirin. "Take aspirin, fever coming back. Now you sleep. We talk tomorrow."

He kissed my forehead and said good night, and went out of the door. A couple of minutes later, there was a small tap at the door,

"Helen, can I come in for a minute?"

"Sure."

"Sorry, I just wanted to get some stuff before you go to bed," she smiled. "Well?" She asked in a quiet voice. "We could see you two before he closed the door, that looked pretty serious."

"You know, Morgan, I must be a very weak person."

"Are you sure you're not just delirious?"

"Would you let me borrow your phone? I need to call Mark"

"Here, and don't forget, when you're talking to him, who's waiting outside!"

"I can't figure out what he sees in me. Why a man like him, would be single? What does he see in *me*?"

"It's chemistry! I know how it feels to spot someone and be dumbstruck! Shit! It happens all of the time, and this time it happened to him, with you!"

"I'm not used to this." I said.

"Me either! You know, Andreas wants to do everything for me, carry stuff, belt me into the car, and even tied my shoe when we went walking! I'm not used to it either." There was a small tap on the door and a voice said,

"Go to sleep now, Helena."

"I'll see you tomorrow." Morgan whispered. "You were going to call Mark."  
"Oh, yeah."

Morgan, Andreas and Dimitris gathered in the kitchen. It was a well laid out room with a large eating area, lots of room to cook. With five children and many other family members close by, a large kitchen was a necessity for his parents.

Andreas, sitting with his arm around Morgan, couldn't stop smiling.

"Andreas, you look like the cat that swallowed the canary! This is what love does to you?" Dimitris asked.

Andreas stood up and swung his arms out straight from his sides,

"I am in love, and I don't care who knows it!" Then started singing a Greek tune and dancing.

Morgan sat there, her face red as a beet and with elbows on the table, she covered her eyes like a sun visor.

"Oh my God." She muttered under her breath. She never expected this!

Dimitris, drying some plates and stacking them on the table, bent over to whisper in Morgan's ear,

"It looks good on him."

"You're embarrassing me!"

Andreas danced over to her, put his arm around her shoulder, stooped down and said,

"Why? Love is nothing to be ashamed of, rejoice in it, feel the splendor of everything around you, let it fill you up!"

"A toast to the woman who did this to my brother." Dimitris said, pouring out small glasses of Ouzo, and a water for Morgan, and they made the toast.

"Does he always get like this?" Morgan asked Dimitris. Laughing at his brother he said,

"No, we blame this on you! You did this to this poor man!"

"And I will always be happy, my Morgana, and you will forget that you had any sorrows before you came here. The sun will shine, as you shine in my heart, so, sing and dance for life is waiting for you to enjoy it!" Then he danced out of the room, singing.

“Tell me Morgana, what life is in America for Helena and yourself? What is it like there?”

“Personally, if it weren’t for my daughter, it wouldn’t matter where I lived, but it’s all what you get used to. Since my daughter just got married, I’m not sure how my life will be.”

“And Helena, what of her?”

“What do you want to know?”

“Is she happy in America, how do people live, happy or no?”

“I’d say, generally, no. People aren’t happy. It’s a rat race every day. We worry from one paycheck to another about healthcare, price of food. It’s hard to be happy, we’re the most depressed people in the modern world.”

“What are American men like, I want to know how you are treated? The man and the woman.”

“I don’t want to sound awful to you because I have very little good to say about American men in general, but there are a few good men. Most don’t think a woman is good for much, except in the bedroom, and they’re lazy, and have no regard for anyone.”

“It’s sad that so many men waste the lives of their women. It does not happen here. If one man goes astray, the rest of us bring him to his senses. We make sure of woman to be happy.”

“How can anyone be sure of that?”

He leaned down and explained,

“Because if man makes his woman happy and treat her well, she will not stray. If Greek man treat woman like American man do, the men would have no women; they all leave.”

“That’s right, we’re no fools! We know that if we treat our women badly, there’s others will treat them good, so, we will not risk losing.” Andreas said as he hovered. “It’s not a hard thing to be considerate, and take care of the woman you love.”

“I’m not going to be able to make my flight tomorrow, so it’ll be another few days.” I said into the phone. “It couldn’t be helped.”

“I got sick, and....”

"It'll take two days to...."

"What are you saying?"

"I don't know."

"Fine! Fine!!"

Dimitris walked by Andreas' door and laughter was emanating through the door and into the hall. As he passed by my door, the light shown underneath and he could hear stifled sobs. He knocked.

"Helena?" He came to my side and surrounded me in his arms. "Shh, what is it?"

"I need to go home, as soon as possible!" I put my arms around him as we sat on the bed.

"No, no, you are not well. What makes you go so soon?"

"I had a big fight with Mark! He said I can come and get my stuff or he'll destroy it all, he doesn't care if I ever come back, and accused me of 'screwing around' with somebody else."

"And this hurts you?"

"What hurts is that I have tried to be good. I've done nothing to regret, nothing to be ashamed of, and he's going to destroy my family pictures and anything he thinks means something to me? I have some family heirlooms, and all kinds of things that belonged to my family, that were given to me. My whole life is in that house. It hurts, but I'm too sick and confused to get control, I'm losing it."

"And the man?" Dimitris asked.

"I've had enough! I don't care about that. The only thing I can think of now is things that cannot be replaced."

"So what will you do?"

"I'm thinking, I'm thinking that I need to see to my things, pack them, store them, sell whatever I can. I just don't know! It's going to take time to do all this."

"Leave it! Leave it all and stay here," he said.

"I wish I could."

"You can! Stay here, you get all you want."

“There are some things I have to have, my clothes. It’s not possible.”

“We buy new.”

“My paints and paintings.”

“Yes, yes.”

“A lock of my Mother’s hair.”

“You go back, when you are well, fix stuff to storage, come back, I wait.” He turned my face towards his and softly said,

“I wait.”

He kissed me with a passion that consumed me. My heart was on fire and soaring with the joy that I have found in this man, while the tears rolled down my face. I had been denying myself the pleasure of him for too long.

“You must rest, you still have fever.”

“I can rest later.” I said as I tore into him like I never thought I would. He was everything and I wanted it all. This is what every woman would want in a man, and I knew it. The passion and sensuousness of this time, in this place, heightened my senses, yet I was weak, and out of breath. My feverish skin was sensitive to the touch, but with the discomfort I could feel his gentleness. This was my time. I wanted it all, and I let it take me. Soon, I would be leaving this place, and in the back of my mind I had to make our time together unforgettable. I lost myself in him. Every minute together was ecstasy and hell. Knowing how much love I have denied for this man, and the prospect of having to be on the other side of this world within hours was mind boggling to say the least. I could finally admit to how much this man has come to mean to me but now I have to leave.

I looked at Dimitris and I wondered, what had I been doing before this? What was so important in my life that I didn’t find this man before? Now that I’ve found him and let him into my heart, how will I ever go on if he broke it?

I was gone, beyond all hope and I knew it. He tried to be so gentle, and even without breath, I was savage in my weakness. He had created a beast in me. At last, he was mine, and I let him take me. I was not the person that I ever was before. This frightened me and empowered me. Who is this person that I have become, or is this a form of temporary insanity?



## *Greek Whispers*



**I**t seemed that we waited a long time for our coming together. It was more than I had ever expected it to be. This sweet, gentle and caring man was profound in the art of making love, and as ill as I had been, he did not let me down. I was afraid that I would be a disappointment to him, with my fever persisting and being so weak.

It was like having everything, all at once. I let my guard down, I let him into my heart and was willing to pay the price of any mistake I may have made for it. It was worth the chance I had taken. I had no guilt about Dimitris, or Mark. The only thing that scared me was what Dimitris would be thinking in the morning. What would he think of me? I know that he's a good man, and that he hadn't planned any of the events that took place, but I can't help wonder how long this crazy, out of control passion would last, and once it's cooled, then what?

I had a magnetic attraction to a Scorpio before. It was an unforgettable albeit short-lived relationship. It didn't hold a candle to this! This attraction was monumental in the short time that I've known Dimitris. There was nothing ordinary about it. It was impassioned from the start and only became more intense as I tried to stifle it.

As I lay in his arms, I was hearing the whispers of Greek in my ear. This was so sensuous to me. It had been a very long time since I had the warm arms of a wonderful man around me, and the feel of his breath against my

neck as he whispered strange words, was intoxicating. I was feeling so many emotions. As I lay there waiting for sleep to take me, tears rolled down my cheeks. Tears of love, happiness, excitement, fear, and passion all at once. I silently let the moisture soak into the pillow, and drifted off to sleep.

I felt his arm tighten around my waist and his lips found my shoulder in the middle of the night. When he began whispering in Greek again, it inflamed my passion and once more I turned to find his lips. I'd never felt so alive so unquenchable. We made love again and we met the dawn in our fiery interlude. I couldn't get enough of this gorgeous man. Everything that I tried to repress had built up to an insatiable hunger that I was helpless to quell.

He was perfect. Sweet, kind and caring, gentle and considerate, and he made me believe that he was genuine. There didn't seem to be anything here to set off any alarms. I wondered why I felt so insecure, and vulnerable. Would I wake up and find him gone? Would he be embarrassed and fade away? I was so weak and exhausted that I collapsed into the pillow and fell asleep. Sleep wouldn't let me escape the emotional turmoil that I was experiencing. I had dreams of Mark and Dimitris. Even in my dreams I was having problems for which I was not able to find the happy ending. Was my guilt infiltrating my dreams, my subconscious mind, showing itself to me? I could see myself with Dimitris, that spark that flew from his eyes to my heart, and making love. In my dream we were laughing, and I could feel my body reacting to that emotion. I was on the edge of waking, as I could feel his arm around me and I was comforted. I went back into a deeper sleep.

When I finally opened my eyes, he was there, with me, and my heart leaped. My reaction to him startled me. I wanted to believe that I hadn't made a fool of myself.

"How you feel this morning?" Dimitris asked.

"I don't know yet, better than before."

"No fever today?" He asked as he put his lips to mine. "Ah! Maybe little fever. We talk, first me, then you. Okay?"

"Okay." I said. I snuggled deep into the blankets and feared what he might say.

"When Greek man find *the one woman*, the one to give whole heart to, he

make sure the woman to be happy. The one woman, she is everything. She know she is loved and cherished.

“Greek man will not let her fall out of love with him. It is not to be made light of when Greek man give his heart, he also give his whole self. Helena?”

“Yes.” I said. He put his arm around me and drew me near, to put my head on his chest.

“I am strong, healthy man. Never have these diseases spread with one to other in bed. I do not drink excessive and no gamble. No bad habit or that, but I like socks folded, not rolled in ball. I have house, some money, no debts, I am Greek Orthodox Christian, although I don’t go always to church. I like all Greek food, Chinese and Italian, and no like Big Mac. I cook well, I fix things, sometimes work with Andreas. I keep busy, no potato!” He stopped and brushed his hand across my cheek.

“I want you to stay, stay in Rhodes with this man. Go to your home, fix your things to storage. Then come to live here, with Dimi.”

I looked up at him. I was at a loss for words. I wasn’t sure I heard right, my heart was pounding in my ears, I was getting light headed.

. “Tell me of your family and your American life.” He said as he held me. Without realizing it I was babbling away. With my eyes closed and resting against his chest. I took a deep breath and continued.

“I’ve never been married in the church, and it was probably just as well, since it didn’t work out.”

“Good!” He said, listening intently.

“I’ve never been able to just sit and tell the story of my pathetic life, most of it I’ve tried very hard to forget, so digging it up? I can’t do it all at once. A little at a time, it will come, and I’ll tell you. I have no big secrets, no big regrets, nothing special that shines in my life. So, to make a long story short, coming to this place has made it impossible for me to go back and live the way I did. I was dead when I was there, and now I’m alive. Here, I have come alive.”

“This man, Mark, did he beat you?”

“I don’t think ‘beat’ would be the right word,” I said.

“He hurt you.”

“Things were kind of crazy. He was a master of brainwashing and dominance. I was always afraid, especially when he drank, but I don’t want to talk about it now, okay?”

“You will tell me? One day you will tell me. What else, Helena?”

“Well, I used to be pretty creative, I mean I’d paint, or draw, do anything with my hands, but I haven’t done any of that in quite a while.”

“Yes, you paint pictures, you say this on our first day.”

“I do have one quirk, that even I wonder about.”

“What is that?” He asked.

“Tines on a fork. If they aren’t long and pointed, and especially if I know that there is one somewhere, I can’t use the fork with the blunted tines.”

Dimitris smiled and cuffed his hand across my ear, laughed and said,

“Yes, we make a good pair, you and I. You have sharp fork and I fold socks.” We both laughed.

Dimitris went into the shower while I laid there and thought about my situation. In California I would go back to possibly living with my family, that is if Mark has flown the coop. Or I would end up where I was before. On the other hand, if I decided to take that step, come back here and live, not only would I be cut off from my family, but if Dimitris tires of me or we end up splitting apart in a month or two, where would I go? I’d be stranded. Then again, if Dimitris is what he has shown me to be, then I would be in Paradise and would die happy. So confused. I had to think, but then, I was not quite myself, and sorting out details would not be good if left to me alone.

He came from the shower, his hair dripping and all askew.

“That much better,” he said, sitting on the end of the bed, getting dressed.

“Is there enough hot water for me to shower?” I asked. He crawled over the top of the bed and kissed my bare shoulder and said

“You stay here, I get coffee.”

“I’d like to get showered and dressed.”

“Yes, yes,” he said, kissing my hand, “but not shower, you get hair wet and chill.” He leaned up and kissed me under my ear and I was almost in heaven again. Sensing this, I think, he kissed my wrist, and palm of my hand then left to make the coffee. I sponged myself off as best I could and dressed. I

dabbed a little make up on, hoping to offset the pale pallor that I've carried with me this week.

"What are you doing up?" Dimitris scolded.

"I'm fine, and I can't spend any more time in bed. I've got some calls to make and figure out what to do." I said as I was handed my "WUF" cup of coffee.

"Please to put feet up, okay?" He took my hand and looked at me, then said, "we sit, and find best answer."

"Oh, this is good coffee." I sipped the hot brew. "I don't have much time, it will take me a whole day to get home, and I don't know what will be happening in the meantime."

"Meantime, I am missing you."

"You're so sweet, but I mean, with Mark." I looked into those dark eyes that make my heart race. "Dimi, tell me honestly, am I making a mistake? I'm confused and letting my emotions cloud my judgment. I don't know what I'm doing anymore." His eyes were so compassionate. He wrapped me in his arms.

"Helena, you must follow your heart. If this man can help, I am here." Andreas came bounding in.

"How is everyone this beautiful morning?"

"It's pouring outside." I said.

"Beautiful rain, it makes the flowers grow," and he grabbed a cup from the rack.

"Your cheer will scare away the rain, Andreas." Andreas just grinned. A few minutes later, Morgan came in.

"Well, I'm hooked now, where's the coffee?"

"I've never seen a more beautiful addict." Andreas said, and poured the coffee for her.

We were all seated at the table and I had such a heavy weight hanging over my head.

"I'm going to have to leave for home as soon as possible, today if I can, but I need your ideas on this. I'm so wound up, I'm not thinking straight."

With the help of Dimitris, we replayed the whole saga with Mark, about

my personal belongings and what has happened.

“What should I do? I’m going to need a lot of help packing and moving furniture to the storage and all of that. I’m not strong enough to handle the job myself. It would take too long.

“You’re coming back here?” Morgan asked.

“Yes, she will live with me.” Dimitris announced and took my hand.

“I’ve moved enough times to know how it is. You’ll have to pack the best of what you want to keep, first. Put it in storage, then be very selective of what next can be stored. Get rid of the rest! I know it’s hard to get rid of all the books and video tapes and records, but you can’t have it all at this point. You can always replace whatever you might want later. Get rid of the rest, give it away, whatever.”

“That’s good advice, Morgan, I was thinking the same thing, but it’s going to be hard if Mark is still in the house.”

“Yeah, it most likely will be,” she agreed.

“I go!” Dimitris piped up.

“What?” I asked.

“I go, I help, get done fast, we come back.”

“No, it’s better if you don’t. If Mark is still there, and he hasn’t thrown all of my clothes in the street, then he’s probably cooled off and might try to get me to stay. He’s going to be hurting, whether he shows it or not, so no, I don’t want to throw this in his face. He doesn’t deserve that.”

“He deserve worse!” Dimitris interjected.

“I wish Morgana could come with me, but it’s impossible. I couldn’t ask you to do that, and travel expenses are a problem, too. Major problem.”

“Miss Morgana, you stay here with Andreas? Make him happy like singing bird?” Dimitris asked. Andreas looked at Morgan and waited.

“Okay! I’ll stay!” She blurted out.

“Stay because you want to stay, because you want to be with me, not for anything else.” Andreas told her. She looked at him as we all waited.

“Yes, I’ll stay.” Andreas gave her a big bear hug, Dimitris reached over and patted her on the wrist.

“Good! Now we make plan.” Dimitris got us all more coffee. I liked the way

he said “we,” it gave me a real warm feeling. The first thing on the agenda was making all of the ticketing arrangements and confirming our flight itinerary. I called my family and had a long talk. It was understandable my leaving Mark, but not the move to Rhodes. My father agreed to rent a storage unit for me so that I only had to pack everything. He also volunteered to get some of my stuff, like my paintings from Mark, but I wasn’t sure how that would work out. I didn’t want my Dad to get in the middle of everything. Once we all finished and completed our tasks, the plan was set.

First we needed to settle up with the Paradiso and collect the rest of our luggage, or whatever we may have left behind. Andreas was making the flight arrangements for a direct flight from Athens, so that it saves us the nightmare of changing planes. My Dad will pick us up. When I mentioned that it may take me a month to financially be able to come back, Dimitris shouted,

“NO! Not a month, no!” Dimitris pounded his fist on the table. “If money the problem, we give, so no more problem!”

“Money is not a problem, and there are flight miles too!” Andreas added.

“You leave to us, the flight, you get back here fast,” Dimitris said, and he was ready to kick into action.

“Morgan, we should go now to the Paradiso and take care of that.” I said.

“You still have fever, it’s raining! I go to Paradiso, you stay here out of weather. Come Miss Morgana, we will go, be back in few minutes.” He gave me a peck on the cheek and they were gone.

“I think if there is anything that you can leave here, you should, so that it will be that much less to bring back on your return.” Andreas said to me.

“Thank you, Andreas, you know that we would be basket cases if it weren’t for you and Dimi?”

He gave me a wink, and took out his cell phone to confirm our reservations for our flights.

When Morgan and Dimitris came back they were almost drenched from the downpour. Our belongings were brought in as they rushed in the door.

“Man! It is really coming down out there!” Morgan exclaimed.

“All of the arrangements are confirmed, so you should make good time on your flight.” Andreas reported.

“Helena, come with me.” Dimitris held out his hand. He took me to the sofa where he put his arms around me. “You will be away from Dimi too soon enough. I have to tell my Helena, that it will be too long to be apart.” He held me tightly and snuggled his face into my hair. “You will be sure Morgana’s cell phone is charged.”

“I will, I don’t want to be gone long, and I’ll try to get back as soon as I can. I’ll miss you, Dimi.”

He kissed me and started whispering to me in Greek, and I was beginning to go into a trance. He could weave a spell on me quickly and I had to catch myself from falling into it.

“I’ve still got to get ready to go. We’ll need to get to the airport early.” I gave him a kiss on the cheek and headed for the bedroom to pack a few things.

“Helena.” Dimitris came in the room behind me. He pulled me away from the bed by the waist, then as he sat on the edge, and brought me to stand in front of him. He held me close and rested his head against my chest. “You will return to Rhodes, to this poor man?”

I brought his face up to look into his eyes, that see my soul. I kissed him.

“I’m coming back as quickly as possible. I wish I didn’t have to go.”

“You will go, return fast! Get all storage done, I wait. If you need help, call Dimi, I fly out on next flight. This man should be with you, too much for two little girls to do.”

“There is a lot to do, but I’ll have to manage it, and if it comes to it, I can always hire a man to help out.” I said. He stood, holding me closely.

“You have family Patakinis, you shouldn’t have to hire.”

“Ooh, Dimi, if it were at all possible, you know that I would want you with me.” I held him tightly and could feel his heart beating next to mine. I didn’t want to let him go. I wished that I could just walk away from it all, but if I did, there would be too many regrets later.

“My Helena, you won’t change mind once you are home? You were too ill, you are weak and if not careful get more ill, then forget Dimi.”

“I could never forget you. You are my life now, until you tell me to not return, I’ll be coming back. When I look into your eyes, there is no where else for me. If I can’t be with you here, then I should have stayed on the deck



of the Athena, and let the storm take me.”

“Don’t ever talk like this. Never let Dimi hear of this. You will always be in my heart, Helena. We don’t think of the storm, ever.” He hugged me tightly like I was never coming back, saying sweet Greek whispers in my ear. His hand was laced into my hair as his thumb soothed over my cheek. “You should not be traveling yet, you are too weak and sensitive for this job. Maybe father can pack for storage.”

“This is something *I* have to do, no one else.”

“You still have small fever, you shouldn’t be flying yet.”

He held me tightly. His sensuous kisses consumed me. We used the short time that we had to envelope each other in soul bonding passion. We savored every minute that could be spared.

## *"What if" Friday*



**T**hen, "What if" Friday came. Our scheduled flight to Athens was at 8:30 am. We checked in for our flight out of Rhodes an hour early. Morgan and Andreas were kissing and talking and Morgan looked like she had no qualms about leaving and coming back. So confident and calm. Me, on the other hand, I tend to be more pessimistic and think in terms of "what if's." What if this is all a holiday dream? What if we come back and they have cooled on the idea of us being here? What if, what if, what if. Dimitris was pacing.

"I should come too, leaving you to do this, I should do!" He was talking to himself and pacing.

"Dimitris," I reached for him as he paced by me. "Dimi, come sit with me." He swooped down and wrapped me in his arms.

"You have my cell number? Of course you do. You call! This man should have bought you new cell," he said as he held me. "If changes in flight, you call. You need money, here," he stood and handed me a credit card. "You use."

"I don't think I can use this in the states."

"Forgot, here take this, you change money in Athens, you will have 55 minutes between planes." He handed some Euros bills in an envelope. I don't know what the exchange rate is, but it looked like a lot of money.

"This is too much!"

"You take, not too much. Is good." Being under stress his language skills in

English were deteriorating. I put the bills in my passport pouch. He hugged me, with one hand behind my head, he gently kissed me, several times, and when he put his face to mine, forehead to forehead, he kissed my eyes, saying,

"So you see Dimi in your dreams." I started to cry when he said that. I have always been terrible at good-byes, but this was the worst good-bye that I've ever faced.

When our flight was called, he walked me to Morgan and Andreas, and we all said good-bye to each other. One more long and deep, painful kiss, as though trying to implant the memory and the passion of it in our hearts before we part. I turned to the boarding gate where they scanned my ticket, then I waved good-bye. As I wiped my eyes, and turned, Dimitris came running up saying,

"Helena, wait! I almost forget," then he handed me a stone.

"What is this?" I asked as it sparkled in the light.

"You take Rhodes with you." I gave him another quick kiss then I had to leave.

Our flight out of Athens was on time. Morgan and I knew that we would need to sleep on this long flight if possible. With all of the possibilities for emotional disaster ahead of me, it would be difficult to relax enough to get any sleep.

As I looked around, seeing all of the passengers in their seats, I was wondering how much emotional energy emanated from this plane? Each passenger having their own story, each having the excitement of new destinations, or the wrenching from loved ones.

Andreas called Morgan during our flight out of Athens. She reported to him that everything was okay, so far. I wanted to talk to Dimitris, but he wasn't there with Andreas. I'd have to wait until later.

"With all the money Dimitris gave me, I could ship my whole house! Did you see all the money he gave me?"

"Yes, I saw it. Andreas gave me a check for \$5,000.00 American. These guys are something else, huh?"

"Where are you going to cash it?"

“I don’t think I’ll have a problem if I can find a bank facility at the airport. They’re used to dealing with foreign money and checks. I hope it won’t be a problem.”

“Dimitris gave me enough, if you run into trouble. That man! I don’t know how he can afford to give me any money, let alone \$2,000.00 in cash. I mean, he drives a taxi, for Pete’s sake, and that’s only when he feels like it!”

“Yeah, but,” Morgan had a smile she was trying to hide, “he invented that machine thing, I’m sure he gets an income from it, or sold it for big bucks!”

“True, I forgot.”

“You really surprised me!” She said.

“What?”

“Never in a million years would I ever dream of seeing you in this situation, with all that’s happened! I mean it isn’t you!”

“It surprises me too that I’m going to take this frightening step, and me living on the other side of the world! I just had a thought; I hope I still have my computer when I get to the house. I just remembered that my camera has a download disc and, oh! All of my documents and programs, too.”

“You don’t think of these things when you’re all emotional and in a hurry. Maybe you should write some notes, because you’ll forget if he’s there, causing problems.”

“You’re right.”

We were somewhere over the Atlantic. The occupants of this transport were finally sleeping and the quietness was making me nervous. I went to the Ladies Lounge, where I thought I could make a phone call without disturbing the other passengers. I had to call Dimitris. It was going to be close to 2:00 am in Rhodes. I had to talk to this person, whom I met two weeks ago, and stole my heart. He answered his cell phone on the first ring saying,

“I am holding “WUF” cup and feeling so alone.”

“I feel it too, Dimi.” We talked for ten minutes and never had that awkward ‘dead air’ that kills the conversation. Just hearing his voice propped me up, gave me the resolve I needed to continue.

At 9:30 pm Saturday, we landed at Ontario International Airport. Our luggage wasn't a problem since we had very little with us, so we were on the look-out for a place to cash the check that Morgan had. My Dad was at the airport early, as usual, and our flight ran 30 minutes late. It was so good to see my Dad. He couldn't understand what would make me live in another country.

"What do you think about all this Morgan, have you told her how crazy it is?"

"Well, call me crazy too, because I'm moving too!"

Almost everything was ready to go when we got to the house. Finding what was most important to take was a chore. With the help of my father, I was able to move just about everything of importance to storage. There was no sign of Mark, he took what little he had and left. That was a major stress factor that I didn't have to deal with, luckily. We were back on the plane to Frankfurt after 4 days. This has to be a record for me! There was a lot of things that got tossed out, but I was able to store more than I thought. So that was good.

We were getting uncomfortable and not able to sleep in these coach class seats. With a crowded flight, we were lucky to get what little sleep we did.

"Are you awake?" I heard from Morgan.

"Yeah, how long have *you* been awake?"

"Only a couple minutes, I can't get comfortable!"

"Do you need a pillow?" I asked, "I have an extra one I can give you. Oh shit! I forgot my favorite pillow!"

"You didn't!" She said sarcastically.

"Yeah? You say that now, but I'll bet you won't forget yours!"

It didn't take much for us to laugh now! I had my major stumbling block behind me, at least the emotional part of it. We giggled and laughed like little girls at a slumber party! I think that whatever happens with the choices that we make, we'll have each other to lean on.

"Do you think everyone will scream if I make a call?" Morgan asked.

"Naw, go ahead, then I'd like to call Dimitris, too." It must have been around midnight in Rhodes, when I finally got a decent signal.

“Hello, my Helena.” Dimitris answered in that dreamy voice.

“Buona Sera, amore mio.”

“Helena, you are surprising me!”

“I surprise you? Were you sleeping?”

“No, I was do the wash.”

“Well, if you’re busy, I’ll call you in the morning.” I said in a joking way.

“No, no, no! We talk now. Where are you?”

“I think we’ll be in Frankfurt in a few hours or so.”

“Did you talk with father? Is okay? Will he come here to see you?”

“I don’t know.”

“He will come, Helena, he will come.”

We talked until I lost the signal and I thought I’d cry. It seems like I think of more things to ask, and talk about after I get off the phone, but to be cut off in the middle, was like being left in the ozone.

Morgan was laughing, then talking real low, then laughing. It had to be Andreas again. I watched her as she was listening to him talk. She’d smile and laugh, and then try not to laugh! She was shining! Andreas has a liveliness to him. He’s the type that in America, he would be the prom king, the popular boy that all the girls liked. When they say that “he lights up the room”, they are talking about Andreas.

When Morgan got off the phone, I had to ask “what’s the word?”

“Andreas says ‘hi’ and he’s been trying to get caught up at work so that he’ll be able to take time off when we get there.”

“Does he bid is own jobs?”

“I guess he’s like an independent contractor, he works with a contract and if he finishes his obligations early, then he’s got free time until he negotiates another job. He says he hasn’t seen Dimitris since we left, so I guess I can’t tell you anything about him.”

“How would you describe Dimitris? I mean personality, demeanor, you know?”

“Well, besides the obvious, tall, dark and handsome, I’d say he’s kind, compassionate, thoughtful, oozing with sex appeal, and I mean he is *sexy!*”

You know what's cute about him? I mean I have to be careful to not laugh. Have you ever noticed how his English gets pretty choppy when he can't use his hands, like when he's driving?"

"I did, he's funny!"

"You know, I thought the "WUF" cup was the cutest thing. I mean, that was only like, not even a week after you met? I've got to hand it to him, he never gave up, even with Mark. I guess he had it bad! You should have seen him when you were sick! I've never seen a man get so upset, or worried is a better word for it. He was at your side all night, and I don't think he slept until you started losing the fever. And really, I had no clue you were that sick," Morgan said.

"It all came out okay. One thing I guess was good about it, I was unconscious the first time he saw me *nekkid!*" We laughed so hard! No matter how good you *think* you look, there's always going to be that little piece of doubt that pops up the first time you're with someone 'sans' clothes!

"Yeah, I wish *I* was unconscious! It's embarrassing, the first time with a man, especially when you've been celibate forever!" We almost were rolling in the aisles with laughter! All of the other passengers around us were now shushing us.

"Oh get over it! It's time to wake up anyway!" Morgan replied to the two shushers behind us.

"Man! I'd like to walk around a little, I'm growing roots!"

"You shouldn't do too much of that, just in case of turbulence," Morgan suggested.

"You know, we've been pretty lucky not having much of it. I should knock on wood."

"I guess we could get up long enough to use *the facilities*, and I've got to brush my teeth," Morgan remembered.

"Well, let's go, maybe there won't be a line yet."

By the time we deplaned in Germany, the surrounding passengers were commenting to us in every language about making so much noise. One young lady who sat in the center section across from us came over to say something.

"Pardon me, but I wanted to thank you," she said.

“Thank us?”

“For the laughing!”

“Why?”

“Because, I’m traveling alone and have been so afraid of flying. I’d been praying and in fear the entire flight, until I overheard you. I didn’t know what you were laughing about, but just hearing full, honest laughter is what I needed. So, thank you.” She gave us a big smile and said good bye, then was gone.

Our flight was 1 hour 15 minutes late, so we had to scramble to our plane to Athens. Amy was in the airport waiting area with suitcases and boxes of Morgan’s things.

We were in a real rush for time. I could see Morgan’s face as we filled out the labels. She was ready to cry. I kept filling out the tags, and let them have what time was left, to talk.

The look on Morgan’s face spoke volumes. I only asked if she was okay. She said she was, and we let the subject drop.

It had been a hectic week, with a lack of sleep and the muscle strain of moving, we slept most of the way from Germany. Morgan called Andreas to let him know the time of our expected arrival, and when she finished I asked if I could return my sister’s call.

“You might not want to hear this, but Mark called Dad, wanting to know if you moved in with him. When he said that Morgan was with you, I guess he wasn’t too happy. He called me, wondering if I knew Morgan’s address or phone number and I told him no.”

“How did he sound?” I wondered which way the mood was swinging with Mark.

“He sounded pretty down. He might be trying to call you, so I thought I’d warn you.”

“Whatever you do, don’t let anyone tell him where I am. I know that he would never come after me, he’s too proud, but I’d rather he didn’t know.” She understood.



"I didn't think he had a passport since he never travels. Well, be sure to let us know how it's going, if you need anything."

"Oh, if I need Dad to ship something to me, will you help him? I'd appreciate it! Now, I hate to cut you off, but I've got to call and let Dimitris know what our arrival time is, so you take care, and I'll email you as soon as I can."

I called Dimitris and gave him our estimated arrival time, which he already had gotten from Andreas.

"I think you not call," he said quietly.

"My sister called and I had to return her call. Andreas already let you know the time?"

"Yes, we both come to Diagoras."

"Is there something wrong?"

"Why you ask, Helena?"

"You sound....different."

"Dimitris always same, missing you."

I had to let him know what my sister told me about Mark, but his voice or demeanor seemed indifferent, distant. Maybe he's changed his mind. It left me worried and uneasy. I didn't know what to expect on our arrival. I didn't say anything to Morgan, she seemed to have a great talk with Andreas, and she acted happy enough, considering how tired we were.

"What's wrong? You aren't saying much." Morgan asked.

"Just nervous, I guess."

"Oh, Helen, you worry too much! But it's not a good idea to fly if you're not feeling good."

"Yeah, well, I'm not sick."

There was a long lull in the conversation.

"Morgan, do you think these guys are for real? I mean, say everything is wonderful for two months. Then, maybe the sex gets awkward or one of them throws a fit about something innocently said. Will we be dealing with someone we don't know how to handle? We're American; we have no idea of traditions and all that."

"Are you getting cold feet?" She sounded astonished.

"I'm just, well ....."

“Well come on, out with it!”

“Dimitris already knew what time we were coming in, before I had called him, and when I talked to him, he seemed, different, distant. I don’t know, maybe it’s me.”

“You’re just nervous. You mean he wasn’t his gracious, loving, want to jump his bones dreamy on the phone?”

“Exactly!”

“Maybe he’s tired. Maybe he’s sick. Maybe...he had a rough day!”

“Maybe he changed his mind.”

“I doubt that. How much money did he give you when you left, just so that you’d come back?”

“That was then.”

“Did you know that he took care of you the whole time you were sick? Then, and I find this beyond belief, he gives you an alcohol rub, and doesn’t try anything! This guy is either an awful good actor or a man who’s in love!”

“I hope so; did Andreas have anything new to say?”

“He was going on about the places he wants me to see, and people he wants me to meet and on and on.” There was a lack of enthusiasm in her voice.

I was really feeling shaky, afraid it was over before it began. All kinds of thoughts were racing around in my head. I had the worry of leaving my family, and my “ex” asking about me. This is the first time I didn’t feel Dimi’s pull on me. It was as though I had bothered him, or he had lost interest. I had a pain in my heart with the doubts I was nursing. It felt like it was all coming down around me and I was beginning to doubt if I made the right decision. I had such extreme emotions of fear, heartache and apprehension.

After we left Athens and the closer we got to Rhodes the more the feeling of fright was over taking me. Upon landing, we’ll have to wait for a ton of checked luggage and boxes, but I was dreading the next step in this trip.

I kept trying to tell myself that, if it’s over, if he has gone cold, I’ll be devastated, but I’ll go home and start my life anew, just as I was going to start a new life here. But it wouldn’t be easy.

“Finally! We’re here!” Morgan popped.

“Yay!” I muttered, and helped Morgan get her carry-on out of the overhead

bin. "Why don't you go ahead, I'm going to use the restroom first."

"I can wait."

"No, go, try to catch our luggage and boxes. I'll be right behind you."

I really wanted a minute to calm down, I was shaking and was expecting the worst. I finally got my bag and I took a deep, shaky breath and went to the exit.

Morgan was greeted by Andreas with a big bouquet of flowers and a big hug. She was towing her bag which Andreas took and handed her the flowers. They headed off to the luggage carousel for the rest of her boxes.

I gathered my courage, and entered the terminal from the gate ramp. With a hard knot in my throat I was afraid to look up, and see what I was sure would be true. An unenthusiastic reception, a peck on the cheek and the barest of meaningless, forced conversation.

Not wearing my glasses, I wouldn't be disappointed from a distance. I'll wait to be disappointed face to face. I heard my name being called, and coming closer.

"Helena, Helena!"

I looked up and saw this well dressed, tall, dark and handsome man, rushing forward. My heart was suddenly revived and I seemed to freeze in my tracks. He surrounded me in his arms and nuzzled his face in my hair, saying something I didn't understand.

"Helena, Helena, I think you change mind, not come." He held me tight as he heaved his heavy sighs in my neck. The tears rolled down my cheeks in relief and joy that I had been so totally wrong. We stood there in each others embrace, just feeling our hearts beating with joy. We could hear people in the airport around us saying "aww."

"Not to cry now, you are home." As he held my face, he wiped my cheeks with his thumbs. "Come, we find Andreas and get luggage." We walked to the luggage claim together. We waited for all of our boxes to come down the shoot. Finally everything was accounted for, and we were off.

"Stefano and Rena were going to come, but they said they'd see you when you've rested up." Andreas reported.

"We go to house to drop off boxes and go to eat. We celebrate!" Dimitris

was driving something like a land rover, but I'm not sure what it was. It had enough room for all four of us and all the luggage and boxes.

"You look so handsome, Dimitris."

"You not know me in suit!"

"I'd know you anywhere." I was totally serious.

He reached for me from across the seat and pulled me closer to him. I had to try very hard to control myself. It seemed like we were away a lot longer than a week.

"Why don't we stop and eat first?" Morgan suggested. "Our luggage will be okay locked in the car, we're starving."

"Yes, we do that." Dimitris agreed.

Morgan was getting tickled in the back seat, and finally convinced Andreas to stop.

"My Morgana is too sensitive!"

"You are so mean."

"That could be considered *cruel and unusual punishment*, Andreas!" I said.

"I could never be cruel to such a beautiful woman. If I am cruel, Dimitris will take me out to the Aegean and dump me in."

We arrived at the restaurant and Andreas opened the door for Morgan. He was whispering in her ear and she started laughing.

"Dimi? I'm not all wrinkly from the flight am I? Does this look okay? I've been wearing it forever. I feel self-conscious."

"You are more beautiful each day." He said, and began kissing me. I wasn't in a hurry to go into the restaurant and everything I questioned from before melted slowly away.

"Come, Dimi, let us eat, huh?" Andreas said, patting his brother on the shoulder.

When we were walking to our table, I noticed all of the ladies, young and old, were staring at these two gorgeous men that we were with. Morgan and I were not dressed for a fancy dinner, especially after just getting off of a plane. We could imagine what the ladies were saying about us! Once we found our table, Morgan and I excused ourselves to the ladies room.

"Did you see these people staring?" Morgan commented in her flustered

voice.

"Don't flip out like before, okay? I think it's the women, looking at the men."

"Yeah, then they look at us and think 'what do these two slobs have to do with those two men?'"

"Well, we could look better, that's for sure, but we have to forget that! The guys dressed nice for *us*, and the hell with everyone else, I'm going to enjoy my time now. This is *our* time, Morgan! Let's take it in and savor every minute of it!"

"I know, I get paranoid when people stare. Let's go, I look as good as I'm going to, under the circumstances."

After the lovely dinner and talk that people do in a public place, we went to the house. When Dimitris opened the door, there were flowers everywhere. The dim lights revealed white, yellow and pink roses, and flowers of one kind and another.

"Oh my God, what have you done?"

"Made nice for you," Dimitris said.

"Holy shit!" Morgan exclaimed.

As we removed our coats and admired the many flowers, the brothers began bringing in the suitcases.

"Leave the boxes for morning, okay? We won't need them tonight." Morgan requested.

Andreas and Morgan took her suitcases and duffel bag into one of the other bedrooms. I didn't see them again for a while.

I was standing in front of the fireplace when Dimitris came back from the task he lovingly performed. He took my face in both hands and gave me a long, sweet, toe curling kiss.

"I miss you so much," he said, and wrapped me in his arms.

"I couldn't get back here fast enough."

"You are tired?"

"Not anymore, I've come alive, just seeing you." He gave me another unforgettable kiss. I had to pull away.

“I want to change my clothes, I’ve been in these for too long.”

“I will pour Ouzo, and we sit by fire. You tell Dimitris all, uh?”

I nodded, and went to the bedroom. I figured since I was changing, I’d get in the shower for a quick refresh.

Andreas lit candles all around the living room. The mantle was covered in every size candle stick imaginable, all with white candles.

When I came out of the bedroom, the candles in the living room had brought out the scent of the flowers. Dimitris stood as I entered the room, holding two glasses of Ouzo.

“You are beautiful.” He stood close to me, still holding the two glasses. He put his lips on my forehead and said in a whisper, “so beautiful, S’agapo Helena.”

His soft lips and having him standing there, not touching me in any other way, made me want him right there. We sat on the sofa and tapped glasses together, and sipped the wonderful drink of the ancestors.

“I waited for you, Helena, think maybe you change mind, not come. Never do I feel so bad, never.” He was facing me and looking into my eyes with every word, his brows tight in a worried pinch.

“Shh” I smoothed my fingers over his face. “I’m home now.” I could feel the passion mounting and wanted him to make the gesture.

He began kissing me, slowly, on my neck, one side around to the other, and searched my face to find my lips. His deep passionate kisses penetrated me to my soul.

“Maybe you two better get a room?” Andreas said.

“Morgana! Did I tell you how beautiful you are tonight?” Dimitris stood for her to be seated. Morgan just smiled and sat on the other sofa. Andreas poured each a glass of Ouzo and sat next to her.

“Where did you find so many flowers? Some of them wouldn’t bloom this time of year” Morgan said in amazement.

“Dimitris had them flown in, he planned this on the day you had to leave. This man is, well, he’s a genius!” Andreas smiled.

I didn’t look at Dimi, I couldn’t. I crossed my legs and placed his hand in my lap. We all talked for a while, then Andreas let his “Kefi”, his uncontrollable

happiness get to him and was dancing all the way to the kitchen. Morgan laughed and followed him in.

"Come, I show you something." Dimitris took my hand. We went into a small room at the end of the hallway that had a washer and dryer and freezer. He closed the door. The light shined in through a sliding frosted window that was over the washer. He turned to me, and drew me to him with one arm around my waist. His other hand stroked my face. We kissed with the passion that we both were holding back for so long. Deep, passionate, and intense. He pushed me back until I was up against the wall. I was pressed in a rapture that I could not control. He was speaking to me in Greek whispers that sent spiking sensations through my body.

We were animals, we devoured each other wildly and it was more than anything I had ever experienced. He was strong, yet gentle, ruthless and caring. What a treasure I've found on the other side of the world. I was breathless. My face red and beating. My heart racing, I felt weak and throbbing vibrations within my body. I held on to him. I couldn't be without him, I wanted all of him, and he gave himself to me.

I could not stand, I was weak and I wouldn't let him go as I clung to him.

"Are you okay, did I hurt you?" He whispered, as he kissed my neck and pulled back my hair. I looked up to him, smiled and kissed him again.

"We go back now, before I know not what I do." He spoke in a soft voice. I turned and held on to the dryer, wiping my cheeks and catching my breath. He kissed the back of my neck and when I turned to him he found my lips, then we went back out to the living room.

Morgan and Andreas were in the kitchen, laughing about what I thought was water.

"Dimitris, you settle this, should Ouzo have the water or the lemon soda?" Andreas asked.

"Always water." Dimitris said.

Morgan was barely touching her Ouzo, and I had enough too. I sat in the kitchen with Dimitris on my left, Morgan on the right and when Andreas was sitting, he was directly in front of me.

Morgan was noticing both Dimitris and my reactions when he'd kiss my

hand or run his hand along my arm. "Helen, I think one of your bags is in our room. Come on, I'll give it to you."

Dimitris stood when we got up, and I told him I'd be right back.

Her room was filled with flowers, and candles and the scent in this enclosed area was near overwhelming.

"Look what they've done! Have you ever seen so many flowers?" She was in awe. "I guess everything is alright? With Dimitris and you, I mean."

"Better than alright."

"I can tell!"

"Is it that obvious?"

"Did I tell you how glad I am that your room is on the other side of the house?"

"I'm glad of it too." We had a good laugh.

"I guess we should get out there before they come looking for us."

"We did good, Morgan. Everything is going to be good. I can feel it."

"Did you know that there is a room next to ours that's locked?"

"What is it? Did Andreas say anything about it?"

"I didn't ask, I didn't want to be too nosy."

"It might be their mothers room, I can understand wanting to keep it as it was, for a while. They'll tell us what it is, when they're ready," I said.

"I think that whenever any of the brothers come to this island, they stay here, or live here as long as they want. A family thing, estate, I guess."

"That's really nice, keeps traditions alive. Well, let's go. Oh, before we get out there, I've got a question for you."

"What?"

"Has Andreas ever said that he loves you? I mean, to you, has he said to you 'I love you'?"

"Yes, many times. Sometimes I wonder if it has any meaning to him anymore, he says it so often. But yes he does, a lot! Hasn't Dimitris?"

"No, not like that. He says things like 'my Helena,' but I don't know, I'd like to hear him say it."

"I know, I know what you mean."



"Don't tell me you two have been talking about us!" Andreas asked.

"Well, what do *you* think?" Morgan answered.

I took what was left of my Ouzo, and went into the living room. The fire was almost out and I started poking it with an iron poker.

"Let Dimitris do." He took the poker from my hand. He added more wood to the fire and I sat on the sofa watching him.

"What is it, Helena?" Dimitris asked as he stood before me.

"I just, I guess I'm just tired." He knelt down in front of me and took both of my hands.

"Helena, you are sad, what makes you sad?"

"It has been a very emotionally exhausting week, and I guess it just hit me, I feel suddenly drained." He got up, sat next to me, and put his arm around my shoulder.

"I am sorry, Helena. You say good-bye to all you know, and I ask the questions. Forgive, please, this man was thoughtless." He had me lay my head on his shoulder. I put my arm around him, and found some of the comfort I needed, although the question was still on my mind. We sat like that for quite a while, in silence.

"You have been very kind to me, and understanding, Dimitris. I want you to know that if you change your mind, you only have to let me know and I'll leave, whenever you ask."

"I will never ask you to leave, never!"

"I'm not saying that you will, only if you ever feel that I should...."

"STOP! Stop now!" He stated firmly. "You do not ever talk this!"

"Tomorrow, I guess I'll be putting my things somewhere, when I unpack."

"Yes, we talk of that, okay?"

I was still feeling my way around and not sure of what to do or say. It's an uneasy feeling not knowing where I was going. Morgan and Andreas came in to wish us a good night.

"It's already 11:30 pm."

"We go to bed, too." Dimitris announced. We stood, Dimi holding my hand while he separated the coals in the fireplace.

"I come back to put out candles." He led me into the bedroom and sat me

on the bed and said,

“I come back, we talk.”

Dimitris was extinguishing the candles and picking up glasses, and putting them in the kitchen. I put out all but two of the candles and opened the window. It was fairly cool outside but the fresh air coming in replaced the smell of burnt candles in the bedroom.

I opened the bed and sat on the top with my hands clasped around my knees. I didn't think that this would be so hard! Do I get undressed and wait for him under the sheet, or walk around the room like an idiot until he comes in? What does he expect of me? He surprises me sometimes and I'm confused on how to act. I hope we reach normalcy soon.

After ten minutes of nerves, I started pacing the floor. I dug up my brush and figured that I'd brush my hair. At least when he came in I'd be doing something!

When he came into the room, he stood behind me, watching me brush my hair. He took the brush from my hand and laid it on the dresser, leaned over me and kissed my neck.

I turned to him and saw the most beautiful dark eyes, sparkling in the reflection of candlelight. I unbuttoned his shirt and let it fall to the floor, revealing a most muscular physique. He kissed me furiously, guiding me with his lips to the bed. We were again animals in search of the ultimate pleasure.

“My Helena.” Dimitris whispered. “We talk?”

“We talk later.” We fell asleep just before dawn.

## *Things Nazi*



**W**hen I awoke it was to the barking of dogs outside the open window. Dimitris was up and left me a glass of juice on the night stand. I looked out the window and saw Dimi and Andreas playing Frisbee with the two dogs. It was so cute, but I didn't see Morgan.

I had to get some coffee before I could do anything, but when I checked the time, it was already 11 am. I poured some coffee and headed to the bedroom. I made the bed, and thought that I should unpack and see what I could do with the boxes that I brought with me. I went to the dresser and every drawer was full! Okay, now what? I went back to the window and called Dimitris. He came in, all smiles and a little breathless.

"I was going to unpack, but I don't know where to put my clothes."

"Come here." He walked up to me, wrapped me in his arms.

"Good morning, my Helena. Leave the unpacking, we do later, I will show you something first." He took me by the hand and we went out the front door.

"Where are we going?" I asked.

"You will see, now come." We got into the little car, Dimitris was all smiles.

"This better be good! I haven't had my coffee yet." I was giving him fair warning. When he stopped the car, we were in the hills in an area with older trees and overgrown bushes. It looked as if the side of the hill had been at one time, part of a kept property. There were old stone steps that were partially hidden by natural growth. They appeared to be of granite, but it was hard to

tell for sure. "Where are we?" I asked, which was a stupid question, since I didn't know where I was most of the time.

"Come, I show." He took my hand and held back the bushes as we walked up the steps. The incline was quite steep, and we took it slow. We came to a plateau which was encircled with a low stone wall and ancient pillars. It reminded me of an outdoor patio with the trees making a canopy overhead. Then we ascended more steps. We arrived at a slope of a shady yard, and above, a structure. As we got closer it was a huge abandoned house. It was white plaster for the most part, with a veranda and stairs leading to it. There was a huge wood door, and an iron key hole plate. Dimitris took out a key and opened the door.

"Look," he said.

As we entered the doorway, the size of the place was surprising. An impressive stair case lay straight ahead, but did not divide the room. On the right hand side was a tile-faced fireplace that I could stand in, and on the left side of the room was a huge bumped out bay window. It was all full of litter and looked as if people had slept there.

"What is this place?" I asked. Our voices echoed in the open space.

"Old mansion. Nazi's took in war, now empty."

"It could be so beautiful. Why hasn't anyone lived here, and let it go to ruin?" I asked.

"After war, other things more important. People stay away from things Nazi."

"It's a shame. It could be so beautiful. Look at this staircase!" I exclaimed.

"I come here when young boy, always look for the treasure." He laughed.

"Any luck?" I asked.

"Once found button, nothing special. But is restful to sit, dream and listen to birds."

I found an old torn towel on the floor in the debris. I picked it up and wiped off a clean place for us to sit on the stairs. Under all that dirt was beautiful dark wood that had a Cherry-red cast.

"Dimitris, can I talk to you a minute?"

"Yes, always, Helena."

"I am having trouble feeling comfortable at the house. I know that it's your family home, but I have no where to put my clothes, and I need to have some familiar things around me. I don't know where anything is, or where to put things, and I feel out of place."

He put his arm around me and said,

"I do not want you feel 'out of place'. We fix. Time for you to unpack clothes, make it home for you," he said. "I want you to be happy."

"Dimi, you haven't worked for awhile, and I don't think you should be buying me flowers and...."

"You no like flowers?" He asked and looked a little hurt.

"No, no, it's not that. I loved the flowers, and I appreciate all of the trouble that went into doing such a beautiful thing; but the expense! I don't know if you should have spent so much money on something like that. You probably could have bought another taxi with what it cost for the flowers." I had my hand on his muscular back.

"Yes, I understand." He leaned over and gave me a peck on the cheek and said, "you too much worry!" He stood, brushed himself off, turned and took my hand. "You worry about me spending. Good!" He made me laugh.

We left this quiet, peaceful sanctuary and went back to the house.

"Where have you guys been?" Morgan asked.

"Dimitris was showing me an old house, so what's going on?"

"Andreas wanted to take me to see some island to the north, do you want to go?"

I looked at Dimitris.

"No, not today. We stay here," Dimitris said.

"Well, okay, I guess we'll see you later."

"Come, Helena." He led me down the hall to the locked room. "Unpack bags in here." He said as he opened the door. "This for you, we, you fix. Anything you want, do."

As he opened the door, I saw a very large bedroom. It wasn't real fancy, but neither was it austere. A comfortable room, but it needed help, and I could do a lot with it. I was so glad to have a space that I could make "my own." I stood there looking, and planning in my mind. Dimitris stood behind me,

hands on my shoulders.

“You fix as you like.” I was so happy, and it was a relief from my frustrations.

I gave him a big hug and said,

“Thank you, Dimi.” And kissed him.

“Now, I bring bags in, you unpack, drawers empty, closet.”

“I know, thank you.” I whispered, and he left the room to bring my suitcases.

Morgan and Andreas took his boat to an island called Symi.

“I have to talk to an associate of mine, we consult on projects sometimes. Do you mind?” He asked Morgan.

“No, go ahead, I can find something to do, so, go.” She said and added, “how long do you think you’ll be?”

“Not more than fifteen minutes. Will you be okay alone? You can come with me.” He offered.

“No, I’m fine, I’ll look around and meet you at the dock.” She answered.

This beautiful place looked like something out of a travel magazine. Morgan didn’t know which way to go. Without the weekend crowds, everything seemed wide open. Shops all seemed crisp and clean on this day.

A yardage shop filled with goods from Turkey and lace from Europe invited Morgan to come in. Woven goods in desert colors and prints, all alluring and tempting. There would be many uses for these tapestry style fabrics, and with Morgan’s talent for interior decorating, she made notes and hoped to come back to Symi, and this diamond of a shop. Time passed quickly for her in this amazing place. When she turned to leave, she spotted Andreas walking toward the dock. She hurried to catch up with him. “Andreas!” She called.

He turned and smiled at her, and met her half way.

“Did you find anything interesting?” He asked.

“They have some really nice fabric and tapestry in one of the shops. It’s very tempting.”

“Do you sew clothes, or make things with fabric?”

“It depends, sometimes, but I was thinking more of decorating with them.”

“You like to decorate, rooms, interior decoration?”

“Yeah, I really enjoy it, when I can do it.”

“You can decorate the Athena!”

“That wasn’t what I was thinking about.”

“You know the forward lounge? It could use the touch of a decorator. Think about it, it really needs help.”

“You’re serious!”

“Yes, I am.”

Dimitris came in with wood for the fireplace. I couldn’t stop watching him, stacking each piece on the hearth. I was standing by the kitchen entry and just watched. Thinking about him, I go into another world.

After he stacked the pieces of wood, he came to me and gave me a peck on the cheek.

“I clean up, we cook.”

“Isn’t this a lot of food for just the two of us?” I asked.

“Always someone come, so I make more.”

“Is someone coming over for lunch?”

“Is possible.”

“I hope you don’t mind, but when you were outside, I answered the phone. Rena was looking for Andreas. I told her to call him on his cell.”

“Helena, this your home, you answer telephone, you make call, is okay. You don’t ask permission,” he said, as he finished making something with yogurt. “You want go outside, go, want to go to town, take car, you want to get away from Dimi, well, you let me know of that.” He smiled and finished setting out entrees that he showed me how to make. “We get wine, and eat.”

Everything seems to awaken the senses. The simple food, seemed to be extravagant. It’s a way of life that is something I found harder to get used to than I thought it would be.

“I’ll pass, on the wine, Dimi, and the Yogurt thing.”

“You need wine, help to regain strength, eh?”

“But it makes me tired.”

“You get used to wine, you not be tired.” He poured me a half a glass.

We had all this food, and only the two of us. When we were finished, Dimitris carefully wrapped and covered the dishes and placed them in the

refrigerator.

“Dimi? If I wasn’t here, or if I had never come here, what would you be doing today? You know, a normal day in your life?”

“Might go to town, do taxi, but not in off season. Often work for Andreas, construction, depends. Why you ask?”

“I just wanted to know how a normal day is for you.” He hesitated a moment, like he was thinking,

“You take interest, is good!”

“I want your days to be normal for you. I can always find something to occupy my time.”

“Yes, well, normal comes soon enough.” He leaned over to kiss my cheek.

Andreas answered his phone as he and Morgan were leaving the harbor.

“Yes, yes, okay, yeah, right.” He said and clicked off the phone.

“That was interesting,” Morgan commented.

“A job confirmed, tentatively,” he said. “This job may take up to three weeks. You won’t be alone, but I thought you should know.” He held Morgan’s hand, then kissed her finger tips. “This doesn’t happen often.”

“When will the job start?” She asked.

“Probably in a week or so, it depends on the weather, too. If you want, you can stay with Rena, or Helena.”

“Is the job on Karpathos?” She asked.

“No, but I’d have to go right by it anyway.”

“Honey? Stefano!” Rena yelled out the window, “Where is that man?” She said to herself. “Honey?” She called again. “Where did he go?”

“I hear you, what do you need Sugarplum?” Stefano asked as he tickled her rib when walking past.

“Did you remember to call Andreas?” She asked, as she wiped off the kitchen counter.

“Already did that, and you know what? I think that boy is just a little too happy.”



“What do you mean?”

“It seems that both he and Dimi are diving in too fast. It’s all too quick.”

“Oh! For Pete’s sake, Stefano, you didn’t waste any time when I met *you*! It’s not like these two are on the re-bond, they’ve both waited a long time for someone special. I think it’s great!”

“Both ladies are fine choices, I’m sure, but what about children?”

“What about them?”

“Don’t you think the boys should have gone after someone younger? To have a family?”

“Well, maybe it isn’t that important to them. Besides, Andreas has a daughter.”

“Sons are important.” He said, as he bit into an apple.

“You guys and your sons. It’s a new world, Honey, get with it! Sometimes you have to give up one thing to have another. It’s a compromise. It’s their choice, so I don’t want you to say anything to the boys about this. Don’t spoil it for them. I’m sure they have thought it all out, many times. Just be happy for them.”

“I am.”

Dimitris was standing at the sink, rinsing our plates. I was watching him. He was reeking sexy! I couldn’t help myself. I came up behind him, just taking him in, his scent, his essence that he radiated.

He glanced behind him and smiled. I reached in front of him and turned off the water, turned and looked into his dark eyes, and kissed him hard and deep. The message was clear. I broke it off and took him by the wet hand to the bedroom. We had the house to ourselves, and we made love like there was no one or nothing to stop this tidal wave of desire. So intense was this soul bonding that tears were running down my cheeks. He took his hands to both sides of my face and wiped the tears with his thumbs and kissed me with passion. I wanted to tell him that I love him, but it might seem like words out of passion, and I didn’t want that. I wanted him to know without this electrical atmosphere. I couldn’t let him go, so sweet, so gentle. He kissed

my cheek, as tears were still coming. I had all of my emotions scrambled into a frenzy. With sweet release, I trembled and the tears just came. I didn't have this with Mark. In the beginning, yes, but after so many years of strife, it all became mechanical. Now, my tears of pleasure have been reawakened. Dimitris whispered in a soft voice,

"Andreas back soon." He rolled onto me gently, leaning on his elbows and said in a passionate whisper,

"We must dress," as he kissed me; I wanted him to never stop. He took me in his arms as he rolled back and brought me on top of him. There he held me tightly for a while, listening to his heart. We could hear voices coming from the other part of the house. Andreas and Morgan were back.

"Should we dress?" Dimitris asked. I laughed a little and said,

"That's a good idea." He kissed me with a big squeeze of muscular arms around me, and then I rolled over to the other side of the bed. I laid there, thinking, while Dimitris got dressed.

"I go," he said and kissed me on the shoulder. As he closed the door, he turned the lock. I turned back to his side of the bed. I wanted to hold onto him a little longer.

"Ah, back from island Symi! How you like Morgana?" Dimitris asked.

"It was beautiful!"

"And little brother, did you do the business?" Dimitris asked Andreas.

"Yes, and everything went well! As long as the weather holds, we should make good progress, and if you aren't booked, I'll need you there."

"Good, yes," Dimitris agreed. "So, did you eat?"

"Not yet."

"Good, I have all ready for you." He took out all of the plates from before and set them out again.

"Hey, how was it?" I said, coming into the kitchen, while trying to get my hair clip straight.

"Oh it was the most beautiful place I've been to, the shops were cute and the harbor was breathtaking! Listen to me, I sound like a travel agent."

I was reaching into the cupboard for a wine glass, Dimitris came up behind

me, put his arm around my waist and reached the glass for me. He gave me a soft kiss under my ear, whispered something in Greek, "S'agapo," then took the butterfly clip out of my hair, letting my hair fall to my waist.

"Sit Helena. How was your day today?" Andreas asked.

"Couldn't have been better, Dimi was showing me how I've been cutting vegetables wrong all my life and how to make this yogurt thingy." I said pointing to the contents of the blue bowl.

"Tzatzike!" Andreas said.

"Were you able to unpack yet?" Morgan asked.

"Well, I wanted to be sure that I have a place to put that stuff before I unpack it." I was kind of evading the fact that I did nothing productive today.

"Geez!" Morgan exclaimed. "What is this in the red bowl, it's burning my mouth!"

"That is Tyrokafteri." Dimitris said.

"You should have warned me, ooh!"

"Here, eat bread, it helps." Andreas said and handed her a hunk of bread.

"Ooh, that's hot, good, but hot, I need water!!"

"Sorry, so sorry Morgana." Dimitris apologized. "I don't think when making."

"That's okay, I'll live." She was in gasping misery.

## *S'agapo*



**T**he days went by very quickly and I wasn't looking forward to Dimitris being away. The guys were busy preparing for the job, and it was going to be a very quiet house without them.

"Good morning!" I said to Morgan, who was sitting at the kitchen table looking at the newspaper.

"Good morning yourself. The guys are getting some kind of equipment or supplies for the job, and I guess they won't be back for a while. Where did they say the job was at? Was it Kos?"

"Dimitris said Kefalonia. He seemed excited about it, I guess he used to stay there once in a while when he was in school. It'll probably be a frat party when he gets there!"

"Oh, that's closer to Athens, isn't it?"

"Yes! It's right off the coast of mainland Greece." We sat and drank our coffee.

"Have you and Andreas decided where you're going to live?"

"We were talking about it, and I want to see the other place before I decide. His place in Athens is like a condo, but Athens is so polluted and crowded. I've kind of gotten used to the island, so I don't know. His work is mostly out of Athens, so we'll have to probably go there."

"Wow!" I commented. "Another move."

"Yep! Have you told him yet?" She asked.

"No, the time hasn't been right. He's been so busy with Andreas, I haven't found the right moment."

"Well, you better do it if you're going to, they'll be gone for maybe a three week stretch!"

"I know. Did I tell you that I talked to my dad the other day?"

"No, how is he? You sure have a nice father. I've always liked him."

"He seems to be doing good, I still worry though. He said that Mark moved out of the house, and he went to see him. Mark said he wanted, or needed to contact me."

"What did your dad say to him?"

"He told him that he didn't have the address yet, but it's in Germany. I was wondering, do you think that Amy would mind if I gave him her address? If her husband doesn't mind, I wondered if she would forward a letter to me?" I asked.

"I'm sure she would do it, but I'll call her just in case the *stilt* objects. I'll let you know."

"It's too bad that someone has to be here to feed the dogs and take care of things. It would be closer to the job if we went to Rena's."

"We could stay there, but we probably wouldn't see the guys much anyway, if this job is intense. They'll want to get it done, not wasting time traveling to see us!"

"I know, you're right. Dimi said that if I was staying too close to the job, he wouldn't get anything done! He's so funny."

"Are you going to tell Dimitris if you do get a letter from Mark?" She asked.

"I'll tell him as soon as you let me know what Amy says. That way, if there ever is a letter, he won't be disturbed about it."

"That's probably the best thing to do." Morgan agreed. "What are we going to do with ourselves when they're gone?"

"Well, Dimitris is leaving the keys to all of the cars, so if we want to go explore, we can do that. After that, I guess we'll have to figure out what we want to do. If I have enough money, I might see if I can get a small laptop. Maybe there's a free internet we can connect to."

"I saw an internet cafe in Rhodes City, but it's probably expensive."

“Well, I’m not that desperate to get back online, but I would be able to connect with family and friends easier. Oh, well, I’m going to get dressed and try to do something with my hair.”

“He doesn’t like your hair bound up does he?” Morgan commented.

“It doesn’t seem like it!”

“I noticed that he’s always taking that butterfly clip out of your hair.”

“Yeah, he does.” I said and couldn’t help but smile, just thinking of him doing that.

“If we were on the Athena we could watch a movie!”

“I’m going to have to get a tv. At least a small one that’s not in the way. I don’t know why there’s no tv here!” I said.

“You know, I thought I saw an antenna on the roof. Maybe the reception was so bad that it wasn’t worth the trouble getting a tv, five or ten years ago.” Morgan figured.

The telephone rang, it was Rena.

“Hey girl, what are you doing?” She asked.

“Not much at the moment, what’s up?”

“The guys just got here, and...(she got interrupted), sorry, these guys won’t leave me alone! Anyway, they are going to unload the supplies here at our house, then go home. It’s a shorter trip from here to Kefalonia, so they’ll make a couple of trips for the equipment. Anyway, they said they would be on their way home in another hour.”

“Oh, good. I feel better knowing that they will leave before the tide gets rough.”

“Yes, and, oh wait,...well, I’ll have to give this over to Andreas, we’ll talk later, okay?”

“Okay, bye Rena!” I said. “Andreas wants to talk to you.” Morgan gets a smile on before taking the phone.

“Hi.” Since her conversation was hushed, I took my coffee to the bedroom.

“Helen, Dimitris is on the phone.”

“My Helena, one hour more, we leave to come back to my girl. I am missing

you.”

“Yes, be safe, but hurry back.” I said. “Dimi, could I put a TV and DVD in the bedroom?”

“Bedroom?”

“Well, it’ll also play CD’s, and I’d like to have some music, and maybe cry over a movie once in a while.” He sighed with a bit of a laugh and said,

“Yes, we do that. Now I go, to be home soon. S’agapo Helena.”

“I’ll be waiting. Bye.” I hung up the telephone.

“Anything new?” Morgan asked.

“They are just about ready to leave for home, so it shouldn’t be too long, unless a storm pops up! Morgan? Whenever I talk to him on the phone, god, I just get all weak, and turn to jelly. I’m a goner, I swear, I am hopelessly in love, and I haven’t even *told* him yet.”

“He probably knows, your reaction to him is obvious. But maybe you’ll have your chance when they get home.”

“I’m going to get into the shower, so try not to turn the water on, okay?”

“Don’t use all the hot water!” She yelled as I was going down the hall. An hour later there was a knock at the front door. A man with a delivery truck was standing there.

“Dimitris Patakinis?”

“He isn’t here right now.”

“We to install this in bedroom, so you sign, please,” he said, chewing the butt end of a short cigar.

“What is it?” I asked, but I had a hunch.

“TV, DVD, DISH, surround.”

I didn’t know what to say!

“You sign?” He impatiently waited.

“Yes, come in, it’s the second room on the left.”

“You sign?” He said again as he shoved the clip board at me.

“I’ll sign after everything is installed.”

He gave me one of those New York cabby looks and continued with his partner to go about his duty. I thought I’d better warn Morgan about men in the house. Don’t want her coming out of the shower in a towel, thinking it’s

just us.

“We can connect one more TV for free if you want it done now,” his young assistant said.

“I’ll tell you what. Run the cable to the big room, and leave enough of a line so that if we move the furniture it will reach the other side of the room. Leave whatever else we need and we’ll connect it ourselves later.”

“We would have to connect it,” he said.

“If I don’t sign your delivery receipt, what will happen?” I asked.

The elder gave me a surprised but disgusted look, and said something in Greek to his co-worker. I signed the delivery sheet finally, and then they were on their way.

“Oh, my God, Helen, look at this! What did you say to Dimitris anyway? Shit! This isn’t cheap stuff either. And satellite TV? Cool!”

“I don’t know! I am going to be so embarrassed to talk to him!”

“Why?” She asked.

“Never in my life has anyone done this kind of thing for me. Usually if I want something, I either have to beg, pay for it myself forever, or do without. But this! I’m speechless.”

“Let’s put something on,” she said. I found an old CD and put it on. We listened for a while and it was beautiful. I wanted to dig out more of my discs and movies, just to have a selection that I wouldn’t have to hunt for in the boxes.

The men got home around 7 pm, later than they had anticipated, but home safe! I had just lit a fire in the hearth when they came in.

“Dimi!” He had a big smile and we came together like we hadn’t seen each other in a month. I tried to say something, but I was stopped by his kisses. Then he asked if it got here.

“Come with me,” I was able to say, and pulled him by the hand to the bedroom.

“Ah, good, do you like, is it good?”

“It’s wonderful,” I said. “You’re spoiling me. Dimi, I didn’t want you to.....” he put his finger up to my lips to silence me.



"I missed you," he said softly, kissing me. "Now, I shower, then cook."

"I don't know what to say, Dimi."

"You say, you let this man shower, then we eat." He gave me a peck in the ticklish part of my neck. When I reacted to the tickle, he laughed and kind of shook his head as he took off his shoes. I left him to shower. Once I knew he was in, I went back into our room and lit a candle and put a CD on of Chopin, the only CD I could find. I don't know if he even likes classical. This would be a risk.

When I walked down the hall I could hear Andreas' voice talking to Morgan in their room, although I couldn't understand what they were saying, it was joyous and happy sounding. It had been almost 20 minutes. He didn't usually take that long in the shower. I went back to see what he was doing. I opened the door and peeked in. He was dressed and laying back with his feet on the floor at the foot of the bed, listening to the music. When he saw me peek in, he gestured for me to come in. I sat next to him on the foot of the bed and he pulled me to lay back with him. He had his arm around me and gave me a peck on the temple. We laid there and listened to the CD to the end. We didn't have to talk. It was so beautiful. When the CD ended, and it was quiet, he turned to me and said.

"So beautiful, thank you."

"I have to thank *you*," he gave me a long, sweet kiss, then said in a soft voice, "We fix some food now." He pulled me up and he headed me down the hall to the kitchen with his hand grasping the back of my neck.

I kept looking for the right time. The right moment to tell him how much I love him. If I tell him now, he's cooking! Not good. I couldn't tell him after he surprised me with the TV stuff. So when? I don't want to wait until we're making love, so, it'll have to be after we eat. Great! On a full stomach. Maybe I can get him alone for a few minutes. This doesn't feel right, but I don't have much of a choice.

I was pulling the forks and knives out to set the table, and in comes Andreas and Morgan. Andreas, cheerful as ever, takes me by the head with his two massive hands, and kisses the top of my head and says,

"How are you, Helena?"

I almost dropped the silverware! Morgan was laughing, I was in shock, and Dimitris said,

“You watch out! This man is dangerous.”

“Oh it’s a beautiful night and I want to sing!”

“If you want to sing, go to bedroom with CD!” Dimitris said.

He laughed as he wrapped his arm around Morgan’s shoulder then pulled up her chin with his other hand to kiss her.

“I heard music earlier. Piano concerto. I think Chopin,” Andreas said.

“Right, pretty good, you must know your music.”

“There’s only one Chopin.”

“That’s for sure.”

“This house need music for too long!” Dimitris said.

Morgan and Andreas took their drinks into the big room and sat by the fire. We knew that our men would want to go to sleep early, so they can get an early start in the morning.

“Dimi?” I said as we were wiping the glasses and cleaning up.

“Yes?”

“I know that you want to get an early start tomorrow.”

“Yes, we will leave very early.”

“Will you come outside, the dogs are going to miss you while you’re gone?”

“Yes, I must see my boys before I leave.”

“Come, I’ll go with you.”

He took my hand and we went out on the back patio. The dogs were getting excited and wanting attention from their master. He patted them both all over and a little wrestling ensued. I went over to Dimitris and said,

“They love their master.”

“Ah, they are good dogs.”

“Dimi?”

“What is it my Helena?” He leaned over to look into my eyes. I felt my heart beating hard. I was so nervous to reveal what was kept there.

“I know that you have to go on this job, and I don’t....”

“What is it?” He asked, looking into my eyes and putting his arm around

my cold shoulders. "You tell Dimitris." I was getting more nervous, and didn't know how this was going to come out.

"I didn't want you to leave without knowing.....how much I love you. I know you may be gone for weeks but you have to know this and...."

"Stop talking," he said, and began kissing me and holding me tight. Rocking me in his arms.

"Helena, I wait for this! You tell me now, before I go, best gift this man could have to take with me, in my heart."

"God! I *do* love you." I said and he kissed me deeply and held me tight. He buried his lips into the crevice of my neck and said something in Greek that sent shivers down my spine. He took my hand and lead me to the old olive tree which had a circular planter seat around it, just off of the patio. He put his arms around my waist and knelt, with his head against mine. He was breathing heavily and erratic.

"I think you never say to me, I wait, and still no. I carry this love in my heart for you all this time." I pulled back.

"Why didn't you ever say anything? Why didn't you tell me?" I asked softly. When I looked into his eyes, I could see the emotion he held.

"Oh Dimi." I said, smothering him in passionate kisses. We stood, holding each other, while tears of happiness flowed as he embraced me. I was happy, relieved, exhilarated and my heart was flying.

"Shh, shhh," he said in a soft low voice as he rocked me. "I am sorry, Helena, I say I love you, many times. When I say "S'agapo", I say I love you, I don't think, forgive me." I couldn't say anything. We stood out in the cold air, holding each other and rocking. I was happy, and there was no need to talk.

"She told him." Morgan said, looking out the kitchen window.

"What?" Andreas asked, and he came to the window also.

"She told him she loves him. This is exciting, like watching a movie. I wonder if he ever told her?"

"Told her? Told her what?"

"Geez! That he loves her!" She said in exasperation.

“He’s said he loves her, lots of times, I’ve heard him.”

“No he hasn’t!” she said. “He never actually said ‘I love you.’”

“I heard him say ‘S’agapo’, all of the time, that’s what he says.”

“What is it? You mean he’s been saying it in Greek?”

“Well, sure, I guess, I didn’t notice.”

“Uuuuuuuuhhh”! She groaned.

“You begin to shake, we go in now, okay?”

“Yes, let’s go in.” I answered.

“And you be good boys to my Helena, I love her, so be good!” He told the dogs as we went inside. I had to laugh.

We sat at the kitchen table, Dimitris was getting us some juice.

“Come.” Dimitris said. We went into the living room, where Morgan and Andreas were sitting near the fire. Dimitris poured them some juice and handed them out.

“I have toast.” Dimitris said. Everyone stood. “To love, to giving your heart, and getting one in return. To love!”

“To love,” everyone said, and tapped glasses. Dimitris kissed me and Andreas kissed Morgan. We were all able to relax and finish our juice, in good company. It was like a huge fog of confusion and tension had lifted. It also seemed that everyone knew where everyone else stood. There were no secrets and no pretenses. We all had a couple of good laughs about miscommunication and how funny it is, that things can be so easily misconstrued.

“I will say good night, to get up early,” Dimitris said, and took my hand.

“I too am off to bed.” Andreas agreed.

“Well, shit, I might as well go to bed too! Not that I’ll sleep!” Andreas laughed and pushed Morgan along by the shoulders. I followed Dimitris to the bedroom and closed the door. He sat on the bed and took off his shoes. I sat next to him and said,

“I have to apologize to you Dimi, and everyone really. I never meant to become emotional and cause the atmosphere to become so tense.” I had to stand to talk, or he would touch me, and I’d forget what I wanted to say. “It’s me, Dimi! I’m too cautious, I expect the worst from people, I second guess

my gut feelings and I must have trust issues, because I knew I was falling in love with you, but I doubted *you*, and I shouldn't have. I promise I won't be the 'drama queen' anymore, never again."

"No, not your fault. I should know to tell you, so you don't guess." He stood and ran his hands down my arms to my hands. "No drama," he said, looking into my eyes. "All this! New for you, take time to trust, I know. My Helena, I tell you from heart, I love you, I never lie to you, I never accuse you or belittle. I take care of you. Always." He kissed the palms of my hands, and I knew that if I stayed much longer, he wouldn't be sleeping!

"I'm going to let you go to sleep. I know you've got to get up early and I don't want to disturb you. I'll come to bed later, okay?"

"Yes, best to do that, or I don't want to sleep." He hugged me and kissing him was too hard to resist, but I did the best I could.

"Okay, good night. I love you, Dimi." I said, and closed the door. I started back up the hall and heard,

"She loves me!" from the room I had just left. I laughed to myself and went to the kitchen.

"Hey." Morgan said softly. "Are you going to stay up awhile?"

"Yeah. If I go back in there, Dimi won't get any sleep."

"Thank God! I thought I'd have to sit here all night by myself! It's too early for me to go to sleep."

"Eight o'clock is too early for me too." I said. "I'd have to take a pill to be able to sleep this early. Did you get to talk to Amy about the letter?"

"Not yet, I'll probably call her tomorrow. I can't keep track of the days any more, they seem to fly by," she said. "When you guys were talking, on the patio...."

"Yeah?"

"I caught part of it at the kitchen window. I couldn't hear what was said, but I could tell you finally got it out. It was like watching a movie, I swear! So romantic, I almost cried!"

"Yes, well I did! So melodramatic, I'm embarrassed!"

"Don't be, Andreas told me that Dimitris has been saying that he loves you from the beginning, in Greek!"

“Dimi finally told me about the Greek, but I didn’t know, I mean how could I know what it meant? I thought it was like a blessing, or something. How much did Andreas know about this?”

“Well he didn’t know about it until tonight, but he seemed to know something was going on with it. I think Dimitris might have confided in him at one time. He said that every time Dimitris talks about you, he says something about it. I kept saying to him that you didn’t hear it from Dimitris.”

“I guess it’s all out in the open now! Everyone knows everything about everybody! It’s really quite liberating. No embarrassment about being in love, we can be open and crazy and enjoy it! But, I haven’t heard from you, where do you stand about Andreas? Are you in love with him?”

“Who wouldn’t fall in love with him? I mean, he’s so alive, and spontaneous and cute! He’s just so damned cute!” She laughed.

We picked up our water, tapped our bottles together and I said,

“We did good!”

“We sure did!”

## *Where You Get This ?*



**W**e talked for another hour and found some interesting notes to compare. It was not a secret that everything was eventually going to be shared amongst us all. It was indeed liberating. We all had our privacy, and each respected and protected it, in what has become a type of commune. Although it was never a planned arrangement, under the circumstances it was a god send. I doubt if the transition from our old life to this new one would have worked, without the mutual support that Morgan and I gave each other on a daily basis.

Not to disturb Dimitris, I changed in the laundry room, where some of our clean clothes were waiting to be folded. I tried so hard to enter the bedroom quietly.

“Helena,” whispered from under the covers of the rumped bed.

“You’re supposed to be asleep.” I whispered.

“Come to bed.” His open arms were waiting for me as he opened the bed for me.

“I could not sleep. Now I sleep.”

He put the covers over me and hugged me, kissed me, and said goodnight again. He rolled over so that his back was facing me, holding my right hand to his chest. I tucked myself in next to his warm body and kissed his back.

Just before dawn I felt Dimitris get out of bed. He brushed his teeth, and started to get ready for his long journey to Kefalonia.

“Were you going to leave without waking me?” I asked in a soft voice, still trying to preserve the quiet calmness of the night.

“Dimitris never do that” he said as he climbed back in bed. He began kissing me, and his lips tasted of toothpaste. Before I could fully awake, we were making love, and in the back of our minds, we knew it would be the last time for perhaps weeks.

He was so intense and I lived every moment I could with him. Soon he would be gone from me, and I would be empty. He continued until neither of us could breathe. We fell into each other in blissful collapse, and held each other with the heartache of separation looming.

The time for them to leave was quickly approaching, and I felt my heart being squeezed tighter with each passing minute. I promised “no more dramatics”, but I would be breaking this promise soon.

Andreas had his arms around Morgan and they were talking softly. She was also showing signs of separation pain. One last long kiss, the men got into the truck and were gone to the docks. My arm on Morgan’s shoulder, we waved them goodbye, and then we supported each other back into the house.

“Helen? Do you feel like going to church?”

“That would be a nice change.”

“There’s an Orthodox church a mile or so away, should we go there? I’d love to see an Orthodox service.”

“Great! I’ll get dressed.”

Being in this old city of Rhodes and attending this ancient ritual gave me an inner peace that I desperately needed.

The remainder of the week went by very, very slowly. I was glad to have some entertainment that Morgan and I could enjoy. The TV was a godsend especially at night, when dinner clean up was done and there was nothing to do.

“Morgan?” I called. “Morgan?”

“I’m in the laundry room,” she yelled.

“Rena had an idea, we could go this afternoon to one of those big stationary



stores, download our digital photos, maybe print some and send them home. What do you think?" I asked.

"Sure, if you want to, I'd also like to see what they have in post cards."

"Did you get any pictures of the guys? I only got a couple, and probably not very good ones."

"Yeah, I think I did. I got a few of Dimitris when you were so sick, and a bunch of Symi. I'd like to show you those!"

"I should have asked Rena if she could recommend a place that has what we need."

"We should find a place in New Rhodes, a drug store maybe," Morgan suggested.

"Well, we've got a choice. We can take the Bug or the land barge! You'll be driving."

"Oh, thanks! I guess the Bug, what the hell! If Dimitris gets around in it, I guess we can." She held out her hand for the keys.

We locked the house and made sure we had our memory cards.

"Holy shit! I can't see out of this mirror!" Morgan screeched, and we had a good laugh.

We found our way into New Rhodes City, just going North-West and there it was. We weren't sure where to go once we were in the city, but we had fun seeing many things, and it was a beautiful day.

We finally located a pharmacy on the outside of town that had photo developing and do it yourself digital copies from our memory cards. This was the first time I had ever tried this and it was quite painless, and not really expensive.

It was getting late and we wanted to get home before dark. When I had to pay the cashier for the prints, I had to dig into my purse, remove my cell phone the little photo, and my passport, but while I searched for my money, the cashier picked up the little old photograph.

"Where you get this?" She said, very loud and harshly. "Where you get this?"

"I got it in Old Rhodes. Do you know who this is?" I asked.

“You ask questions? Why you have this, and ask questions?” She screeched.

“It seems that you asked me first! Who is this child?” I asked.

She stood there holding the little picture with an irate look on her red face, and I knew she wouldn’t be giving us any answers. I threw 20-Euros at her and grabbed the picture out of her hand, took our photos and scooped the stuff on the counter back into my purse then we left the store.

“Geez! Let’s get out of here!” Morgan said.

“Shit! She scared me!” I said and looked again at this strange thing in my hand.

As we were trying to pull out of the parking space in which we were tightly wedged, I could hear the woman yelling from the sidewalk, and pointing at us as we tried to escape.

“I’m going to have to leave this at home from now on! This is getting too weird.”

“I wish we knew our way around a little better. We could get out of this traffic and maybe lose those men who are behind us. You’d better lock your door.” Morgan said as she tried to get the mirror to stop swinging.

“What? Are we being followed?” I asked.

“Unless they turn off somewhere, I’d say yes.”

“We better not go home. We’ll have to drive around, or find someplace to pull in.”

“Like where? I’m sure they know the city better than we do. Any ideas?” Morgan was getting panicky.

The little car was good at maneuvering through traffic, but we were getting farther and farther from where we should have been going. We were headed South and getting more frightened.

“How far are we from the Paradiso?” I asked.

“Not that far. Good thinking, at least they know who we are, maybe they’ll let us hang around awhile.”

“I hope they have a well lighted parking lot, or driveway.”

“Hell, I’ll park on the front lawn if I have to.”

After several attempts to ditch the followers to no avail, we turned into the driveway of the Paradiso. We parked the car near the check in area, as close

as possible to the door. We got out and ran into the lobby and sat down. The car that was behind us pulled into the parking area and drove through very slowly.

We could see the headlights pass by, but did not see it pull out. We were sitting; waiting and waiting. We stopped talking when two men in their late thirties came in the door. They stopped almost in the doorway then spotted Morgan and I in the corner of the lobby. We held our breath as they came toward us. The stumpy man started pointing his finger and talking in Greek. He kept getting closer as his voice got louder. He started poking his finger into my chest as I tried to bat his hand away from me.

“We don’t speak Greek, English only.” Then the stumpy, stocky man stepped forward and pulled me up. Morgan instinctively stood.

“Which one has the picture?” He said as he walked toward Morgan. “Who has it?” He snarled.

“I do.”

“Give!” The short man demanded it as he got in my face.

“Why do you want it?” I asked, hoping to stall them enough to be able to think. Then he tried to grab my purse!

“Hey! Get away from her.” I heard Morgan say.

He kept trying to get his fat, round face in my face and bullying me into a corner.

“You two scums, get out of here or I call authorities!” The desk clerk, an elderly man, tried to intervene. “I am calling right now,” he said as he put the receiver to his ear. The two thugs started to leave, pointing a short stumpy finger at us from the lobby door, then left.

“I am so sorry ladies. Did they hurt you?” The clerk asked.

“No, we’re not hurt, just a little shook up,” Morgan exhaled. “Do you mind if we stay here for a few minutes?”

“You stay as long as you like.”

We sat in the lobby trying to regain our composure.

“So, what are we going to do? Did you see them leave yet?” I asked Morgan.

“I’m not sure, I didn’t see.”

“We’ll just wait. Maybe there’s a back door. Geez, I hate this,” I said as I

rubbed my chest.

Morgan's phone started ringing inside her purse. Perfect timing!

"Hello!" She covered the phone and mimed to me that it was Dimitris on the phone. It was hard to make small talk when we just had such a scary thing happen, but I managed to tell him how much I missed him and wished he was back home. I told him how much I love him, then said goodbye.

"You didn't tell him?"

"No. There's nothing he can do for us, so, why worry him?"

"How's the job coming?"

"Shit, I didn't even ask. How much longer should we sit here? Let's go, if it comes down to it, I'll give them the damn picture!"

"Okay. I hope they're gone."

Morgan peeked out the door, of course, by this time, it was very dark, and we couldn't tell if anyone was sitting in a dark car, waiting. We left the hotel and hoped for the best.

Thirty-five minutes later we were home. We were so relieved not to have more problems following us.

"I think I'll have a beer, or three!" I said.

"Did you lock the door?" Morgan was nervous and had the "deer in the headlights" look in her eyes.

"Yes! The first thing! Oh, and I'd better feed the dogs. Do you want to go out and sit for a few minutes, while I give the dogs their dinner?" I asked.

"Sure, I'll keep you company, we shouldn't go out by ourselves for awhile." We went inside after the dogs got some attention.

"I think we'd better put that picture away, or better yet, throw it out! It has been a pain in the butt, everywhere we go, you ask a question, and we get the odd looks, and now this!" Morgan was exhausted.

"I know, what started out as a curiosity has almost gotten us hurt. I'm sorry Morgan, I'll get rid of it."

"Are you going to tell Dimitris what happened?"

"When they come home, yes."

"Why? Just drop it! They'll get all upset and tell us how stupid we've been."

"I have to tell him. He'd want to know."

“Aren’t you afraid of how he’ll react?”

“I don’t want him to worry, but if I don’t tell him, and he finds out anyway, I’m going to be sorry that I didn’t tell him. He’ll look at me and wonder what else I’m not telling him.” I explained.

“Whatever.” She waved her hand in a dismissive attitude.

“Besides, they were probably just trying to scare us, right? Right, Morgan?”

“I hope that’s all, ‘cause it worked.”

In the back of my mind, I was nervous about us two women, alone in the house, especially after what just happened. It wouldn’t have been so bad if they hadn’t followed us. I was glad that we had the dogs, but I would feel better if we had one of them inside.

Every rustle of leaves and the other night noises made me anxious and kept me awake. I felt that we were vulnerable in that these two men could have followed us home. I was afraid that we had unknowingly, asked one too many questions and stirred up the hornet’s nest.

In all of the time we have been in this house, I had never seen any kind of weapon. The iron fireplace tools or kitchen knife would be our only means of defense, should these strangers ever return.

By Tuesday of the following week, we had calmed our fears and nearly forgot about our encounter. The weather was turning, and I was hoping for a downpour. At 5:45 a.m. Andreas called. The connection was cutting in and out, and I could barely understand what he said. He was letting us know that they were leaving and will be home later today. Then his cell phone dropped the call.

Later, I awoke again to the sound of barking dogs. I needed some coffee to clear the cobwebs. It was looking dark and nasty out, and I thought about the guys, out in this rotten weather. I couldn’t believe that it was already 9:45 a.m! It had been four hours since I got the phone call from Andreas.

“Morgan? Is there any coffee?”

“Yeah, it’s not too good, though.”

“I don’t care. I just need to wake up.” I poured my “WUF” cup of coffee and sat at the table with Morgan. Every time I see this cup, it makes me smile.

“Andreas called this morning.”

“He did? When? I didn’t hear the phone.”

“It was at 5:45 a.m. He said there’s a storm, and they were on the way home. I hope they get ahead of the storm and make it home safely!”

“Why didn’t you call me? I would have wanted to talk to him! Were they just leaving?” She asked.

“I gathered that they were, but it was such a bad connection.”

“That’s probably why he couldn’t call *my* phone. All that static storm interference, he’d never get through.”

The thunder and lightning got closer, and although it hadn’t rained yet, it looked like it would at any time. I finished dressing and finally got my hair combed out from shampooing. I lit the fire in the living room.

“I’m going to shower, Helen, so ‘don’t turn on the water,’” Morgan mimicked, and went down the hall.

I decided to let the dogs in, just to see how they would behave. I couldn’t let them stay out in the storm, especially if they tend to panic. The dogs seemed happy to be inside. They weren’t behaving badly, and they liked the warmth of the fire. I heard a slamming noise outside. As I turned to see what the noise was, suddenly the men came in the door. I was so happy to see them. I was by the fireplace when he came to me. “Dimi, you’re home!” I said as he wrapped me in his arms. I planted a huge kiss on his lips.

“Ahem,” Andreas said.

“Hi, Andreas,” I reached out to touch his arm. “Morgan’s in the shower.”

“Okay.” He said and took his baggage down the hall.

“God, I missed you,” I said. Dimitris was holding me close and burying his face in my hair as he kissed my neck. The dogs spotted their master and demanded attention. He gave them both a good ruffing of the fur, and they reciprocated with the wagging of tails.

Andreas dropped his bags in the bedroom. He hung his wet coat on the doorknob, went down the hall to the bathroom, entered quietly then closed the door.

“Helen? That you?” Morgan asked. “Helen?” There was no answer. She stood silent, listening for movement within the room. Suddenly the curtain was pulled back. Andreas stood there, tracing his eyes over her wet body.

Morgan knew that she cared for this man, but never expected to be entirely taken by him. He had broken her defenses, and she gave herself to him with all that she possessed. She knew that it would be “all or nothing.”

Dimitris was smiling from ear to ear. The warm welcome from his pups was a surprise to him. Dogs weren't usually in the house, but this was an especially nice welcome. I went to the kitchen and poured him a glass of wine.

“Helena, come back to me.” I was bringing his wine, and didn't want to spill it, so it took me a minute. “Where is my Helena?”

“I'm coming.” He looked up at me like “you're serving me?” I took his hand and placed the glass in it, then I sat by him with my arm around his shoulder. He took a sip of wine then put it down. Suddenly he let out a growl and pounced on me! He was making these growling animal noises in my neck and acted like he was mauling me. I was laughing, but the dogs tried to get in the middle, and we ended up on the floor, laughing.

“You see? These boys won't let me be bad!”

“They're in my face!” I laughed.

“Okay, now go, go sit,” he commanded, and they obeyed. “Now, what to do with you?” He was looking into my eyes while laying on top of me on the floor. I put my arms around his neck and said,

“First you're going to tell me how you got home so fast!”

“Well,” he said, “we took” and gave me a peck on the lips, “the hydroplane.”

“No wonder.” I managed to squeeze out before he started kissing me.

“Mmmm,” he said softly, “I was missing you. When job done, I no leave you again.”

“Mmmm.....Dimi.”

“Hhhhh?”

“I'm getting squished.” I whispered. Then I tried to move.

“I am sorry,” he whispered. “You see what I do?” He was able to get to his feet and move the coffee table, then he took my hands and helped me up. “So much oaf!”

“You didn't injure me, Dimi.” He took me into his arms and said, “this man should be more careful, so I don't crush you. You make me forget.”

“Good, only next time don’t forget when we’re on the floor.” I whispered to him. He kissed me slowly and gently and kept saying he was sorry.

“Are you hungry? I could try making you something?” I said as he tried to gather up my hair. “Or would you like to eat out? We could....”

“Your hair, not dry, so we stay here.” I could tell that he was feeling bad for accidentally causing me some discomfort. This would be the last thing I would want him to feel now. How will he handle the news of the men who followed Morgan and me? Now I wondered if I should just drop it.

“Hey!” I took his sweet face in my hands and made him look at me. “I love you so much. You didn’t hurt me, Dimi.” I kissed him, and I think it made him feel better. I knew that he was tired, and a little on edge.

“Oh, I think I never get home!” He put his cold hand on my cheek.

“Sit! Have your wine, you’re still cold. How is the job going?” I asked.

“Very well!” He said, putting his arm around me as I snuggled up to him. “Storm get in way, though.”

“How much longer will you have to be gone?”

“As short as possible. Dimi will worry for you here; women alone, not good.” He said. “Were you okay, Helena?”

“No.”

“But why?”

“This is a very quiet place without you here. The days were beautiful, but you weren’t here, so I wasn’t happy.” He kissed my temple and said,

“Miss Morgana was here, you go see sights?”

“We went to Liturgy on Sunday at the Orthodox church.”

He turned his eyes to meet mine. “And what you think?”

“It was so beautiful. This was the first one I had been to, Morgan too.”

“Good! That is good.”

“There’s something I want you to know.” I said, getting nervous.

“What is that my Heart?”

“Morgan’s daughter agreed to forward any mail to me, from Mark.” I waited and waited. He sipped the last of his wine. “Not that he will contact me, but I don’t want him to know where I am. I had my father give him Amy’s address in Germany. Is that okay?”



*Where You Get This ?*

“Is good, he will not know where you are. Do you want mail from this man?”

“No, but I don’t want my family to have to lie to him or even get involved. You understand what I am trying to do, don’t you?”

“Yes, family important, you do, Helena, is okay. I am glad you tell me of this.”

“It may not even happen, but if it does, you should know about it, and I thought I should tell you as soon as the arrangement was made.”

“Is okay, we don’t worry.”

“Dimi, you seem tired, did you get any sleep last night?”

“Not too much sleep. We need food and no more wine. Come to kitchen.”

## *Dead Quiet*



“**G**ood afternoon! It’s a beautiful day.” It had to be Andreas.  
“You always say that, and it’s always raining!” I said. “How are you, Andreas?”

“I am wonderful! Something is smelling very good.”

I excused myself and went down the hall. I knocked on Morgan’s door.

“Yeah,” she answered.

“I’m going to tell Dimitris about what happened in town, but I want to do it while we’re all together. Did you mention it at all to Andreas?”

“No,” she said, “I forgot all about it.”

“Okay, well, I’ll wait until we’ve finished eating, and I hope he won’t get upset.”

“Do you think he will?” She asked.

“He’s been a little sensitive since they got back, but I hope he doesn’t flip out.”

“Andreas isn’t quite ‘normal’ either, but I think he gets slap-happy!” Morgan laughed.

“I think they must be tired and don’t want to seem “weak” to us, by taking a nap.”

“Oh, I’m sure of it. The male psyche is so...what would you say? I don’t know, obvious?”

“They don’t realize that they let the “macho” thing get in the way of good

sense. Bless their poor innocent hearts,” I said.

“Tell me about it! And Greek men?” We both looked at each other and with a rolling of eyes, we giggled.

“Are you coming? We’re getting the lunch made.”

“I’m right behind you.” Morgan followed me back to the kitchen.

“There you are! You were here and then gone!” Dimitris said.

“I wanted to ask Morgan something.”

“Yes, these girls, they must have their moments.” Andreas sighed, in a dreamy state.

“Yes, we do!” Morgan agreed.

Everyone was enjoying the lunch, when I looked over to Morgan, she gave me the nod to begin.

“Dimi, last week we went to New Rhodes to see if we could print some of the pictures from our cameras, and we had a bit of a problem.” I started.

“What, car give problem?” He asked.

“No, not the car, we had another unpleasant encounter because of the photograph, my little picture.”

“The little child, yes,” he said and waited.

I began to relate the episode with the cashier, and then I noticed that he was getting upset. I clasped his forearm on the table, where he was clenching his fist, and gently soothed it.

“Dimi, I don’t want you to get upset.”

“Not upset,” he said, glancing at me and tapping the top of my hand.

“People can be rude, ignorant! You ignore.”

“That’s not all,” Morgan added.

“What happened?” Andreas asked.

I gave Morgan the nod. She continued about spotting the car behind us, the hotel and the men. When she got to the part where we were threatened, she didn’t mention the thug poking me. I tried to calm Dimitris by stroking his back shoulder and holding his arm. When Morgan finished, I said to Dimitris in a soft voice:

“It’s alright, we weren’t hurt, and the men haven’t bothered us since. They

just wanted to scare us.” I said in a soft, calm voice.

“I hear enough!” He stood suddenly, sending the chair sliding noisily across the floor.

“You two could have been seriously hurt!” Andreas said as he stood behind Morgan with his hands caressing her shoulders.

“This will not happen again!”

Dimitris was pacing and thinking. I stood, and he pulled me toward him. “I will kill them for you,” he said in a stern voice, surrounding me with his arms.

“No, Dimi, it’s all over with now, there’s nothing we can do about it. I didn’t want to upset you, but you had to know, in case...” I bit my tongue and stopped talking! I let a conversational blunder start images of dire scenarios.

“In case they followed you home.” Andreas finished what I didn’t want to say.

“If these jerks spot your car, I just, I don’t want anything to happen to *you*. I don’t want them to hurt you because of *me*. If I never got that picture, it would never have happened.” There was a long pause that held heavy in the air.

“When we go to job, you two stay with Rena. No more alone here,” Dimitris said in a determined tone.

“But what about the dogs, and the house? We can’t leave them for any length of time.”

“Dogs be okay. We have neighbor, old Petros. He looks out for them.”

“Okay then! Let’s get this mess cleaned up and put some wood on the fire!” Andreas was trying to lighten the atmosphere. Dimitris took my hand and said,

“Let us get your hair combed.” He led me by the hand into the bedroom. I knew that he was still worried that he couldn’t protect us while on the job. I felt guilty for this predicament we found ourselves in.

He walked straight to the dresser and picked up my brush.

“Come, sit on bed.” He took the clip out of my hair. My hair was almost dry but had gotten tangled again from our romp on the floor. He sat on the bed behind me and started at the bottom and slowly worked the brush up. He was patient, careful and amazingly gentle. I could tell that he was doing

some thinking about the situation.

“This man will not let anyone hurt you,” he said quietly.

“I know, Dimi.”

“You stay with Rena.”

I didn’t say anything. He leaned forward to look me in the eye.

“You stay with Rena,” he said again, requiring acknowledgment.

“Okay.”

“Is hair always....difficult?” He was having a bit of a struggle. I took his hand and the brush that was in it.

“You should take a nap.”

“Don’t need nap.”

“Yes, you do. You need to get some sleep. Just an hour or two. You’ll feel a lot better.”

“You must nap too.” I took his hand and led him to his side of the bed and pushed him over. He sat with a bounce. I got down to take his shoes off.

“What you do, Helena?”

“I’m taking off your shoes, and you are taking a nap!” I kissed him on the forehead. He pulled me on top of him on the bed and said with a smile,

“I see you are being mean to your Dimi.”

“Yes, well, you’ll get over it.” I gave him a big kiss, then tried to get up. He kept holding onto me, and we started laughing.

“Oh, Dimi, stop, I need to get up.”

“What I do with such a mean woman? I go away for week, and you are mean. You must not be mean to your Dimi, or I know not what I do.”

I pulled the afghan up over him, saying softly,

“I’ll tell you what, if you take a nap, and I mean, like sleep, later I’ll want to find out what that really means!” Before I closed the door, I said, “sleep.”

When I came out of the bedroom, there was no one around. I figured that Morgan and Andreas were in their room. The weather seemed to be getting better, very little rain and the sky was now a light gray. I checked on the dogs, and they were dry, huddled in their dog house.

The house was dead quiet. I went into the laundry room and got Dimitris’ coat. It felt so good to have his scent wrapped around me. I went out the

front door and the crisp air, fresh from the rain, had the scent of Eucalyptus. I got into the Bug, which was parked in front of the walk. I started to laugh, looking at this mirror that rocks to the beat of the road. It looks like there was only one bent screw holding it on. It gave the little car its personality. I don't think I'll ever look at a "Bug" in the same way again.

I saw the mail carrier pull up and leave the mail. I picked it up and went to the kitchen. I wasn't expecting to receive any mail, and it was a relief that there was none for me.

"Oh!" Andreas said in surprise. "I didn't think anyone was up!" He had come in from their bedroom, barefoot and in his drawers. "I...I'll just grab a couple of beers and..." I put my hands over my eyes like a shield. He was embarrassed; I was embarrassed, but I had to laugh to myself. It's something that Andreas would do. He smiled and waved the beers at me as he trotted back into the hall.

"What kept you? I missed ya." Morgan said to Andreas.

"Helena was sitting in the kitchen. I was so embarrassed." She just smiled at him.

"I told you to put something on. Nobody ever listens to me," Morgan said with a bit of a laugh.

"You know best, Mon Cherie," he said, and gave her a kiss on the top of her hand.

"Oooo..., French! Umm, Dimitris, he's pretty sensitive, isn't he?" Morgan asked.

"Like, how do you mean?"

"Well, he seems emotional."

"It's in our blood," he said.

"You're not like that, at least I haven't seen you that way."

"This is Hellas. We eat, sleep and dream life! We don't hide our feelings. We don't get ulcers, either."

"Yeah, but, there's some things like self-control in a civilized society!"

"Yes, some things, it's true. Common sense tells us that, but when it comes to family, and those we love, that's another matter."

“I didn’t hear you flip out when we were telling you about what happened at the hotel.”

“First consideration goes to Dimitris. You were both in danger. Dimitris is the older brother. He has first say. If it were you, by yourself, it would be mine to deal with, and I might not have handled it as well as Dimi did.”

“I can’t imagine you getting that upset.”

“You don’t think I’d want to keep you safe from danger? Do you think I would go back to Kefalonia and leave you unprotected?”

Morgan was seeing Andreas as more than the fun, happy, wonderful man that she knew. She also realized that the frequent hang-up phone calls that she has been receiving should not be mentioned.

“No, I guess,” she answered in her wispy voice.

“Do not guess. You will not be left alone, and I will not let anyone threaten you.” Andreas was looking into her brown eyes, and she knew he was serious. It made her feel safe, knowing that he would keep her from harm.

“I’m going to have to get used to this,” she said.

“Yes, you will. Do you want some water or something else to drink?”

“Sure, but put some pants on, at least!”

“Yes, I think I will. See? I listen to you.” He turned and smiled at her.

## *Back To Rena's*



I quietly went into the bedroom to get my sweater. Dimitris was asleep, but I couldn't stop looking at him. I never enjoyed having to wake anyone from their sleep. When one is sleeping, they are perfect. No anger, no tears. An angel of innocence for that short period every day of their life.

I slipped back out of the room as quietly as I could. I went into the kitchen, opened a beer, and took out a frozen chicken for dinner.

"What, you take chicken for dinner?" I turned and there Dimitris stood, rubbing his eyes. His phone rang. He talked for a few minutes, then turned on the light. I couldn't understand what was being said, but it sounded important.

"Hello?" Morgan said, bringing in some shopping bags. Andreas was right behind her and closed the front door.

"In here," I said.

"We got the Romano and Celery. Andreas said the chunk cheese is better. I didn't know if you wanted the grated."

"That's perfect. The only way to buy cheese!" I washed the chicken pieces and threw them into the pot.

"What's going on?" She asked as she saw Andreas with Dimitris, still on the phone.

"I don't know," I said.

After smelling the soup cook for a few hours, we were all hungry. It had



been a fairly relaxed day, but everyone had the coming departure in their thoughts.

"Tomorrow we go to job. Must leave early, so go to bed early," Dimitris announced.

We all sat down to eat. Everyone was suddenly so quiet. It's like there was something else that we haven't been told.

"The sky was really clear when we came back from the market, so I guess the storm is over," Morgan said, which broke the silence.

"I thought you'd be home at least a couple of days," I said.

"Lose time with storm. Now we make up," Dimitris explained. "Wonderful soup, is good with Romano."

The night was too short, and I didn't want to let go of Dimitris already. We still had our ferry ride together, but my preference would be to stay right here, wrapped in his arms, being intoxicated by his Greek whispers. When it was close to 4:00 a.m, I felt him stir.

"Helena," he whispered.

I was awake, just laying there. I moved my hand from under the pillow and slid it over to his hand. He kissed my palm, my wrist, the inside of my elbow. We made love, and it was sweet and electric. Reluctantly we got up on this Friday morning. We got dressed and dragged ourselves around the room trying to finish the packing.

"Would you hand me my brush, Dimi?" I asked, and as he handed it to me, he sat on the bed next to me. He leaned over and laid down across the bed behind me.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Dimitris stay here with you."

"Yeah, that would be nice, I wish we could, but, come on, get up." He didn't want to cooperate. "Okay, you've convinced me. Move over! I could live in this bed if you're here." I said, kidding with him.

"Ooo, Helena, you make Dimi want to be bad too much. We go, but I want to stay,"

"I know." I had to go through the tedious hair combing routine, and Dimitris

sat there mesmerized.

“Are you all packed?” I asked.

“Yes” he replied.

“Did you see to the dogs,” I asked.

“Yes,...no, I go do that.” With a sigh, he got to his feet, kissed me on the eye and left the room.

We all boarded the ferry and settled into comfortable airline style seats. It was relaxing, and we took advantage of it to talk.

“When we get home, will you help me find the American Embassy?” I asked. He sat up and looked at me.

“Yes...”

“I’m going to see what I have to do about my passport. I’m only allowed ninety days. I need to get an extension or a visa, or something.”

“Ninety days? Are you sure? I thought six months.”

“Well, I don’t know, they were telling me all kinds of things that I didn’t think would pertain to me, so I didn’t pay that much attention.”

“If only 90 days, how many left?” he asked.

“I don’t know, I just want to prepare, they take forever to do anything.” He held me close and rubbed his hand up and down my arm as he thought.

“We think of something.”

“Are you cold?” Andreas asked Morgan.

“No, I feel fine.”

“If you had one wish, what would it be,” he asked, with his arm around her.

“To be younger, healthier.”

“Mmph! We all wish the same. No, something else.”

“Gee, I’d have to think about it. I stopped wishing a long time ago.”

“Now, you will wish again. Wishes come true in Hellas,” he said and kissed her. This was something she hadn’t thought about; making a wish for anything. She had to admit, though, Andreas was a lot of wishes already come true.

"We will part at the docks. Rena and Stefano will be there. Athena will leave there too," Dimitris said.

"So, you'll be leaving for Kefalonia right away?" I asked.

"Yes. We must, if wait too long, another day gone."

"I guess it's best."

"Yes, it is best."

As we pulled up to disembark, we could see Rena and Stefano waiting. We picked up our luggage and descended the ramp for our reunion.

"Hey, how are you girls doing? Good to see you, I almost thought you missed the boat." Rena laughed.

There were hugs all around and then the men grouped together to discuss the launch.

"We're going to have a great time! It'll be our own little sorority!" Rena said.

"I'm ready. I'll need a good time!" I said.

"We're going to howl," Rena joked.

"We have to set launch, so we'd better go," Andreas announced. There were kisses all around and good wishes for a safe voyage.

"You will be safe here," Dimitris assured, kissed my forehead, hugged me, and I could feel him take a huge deep breath.

"I want you to have something. You wear it until you come back to me." I said, looking into his dark eyes, then I took off my cross and placed it over his head and tucked it under his shirt. He enveloped me in his arms and kissed me so intently.

"Okay Dimi, we have to go," Stefano interrupted, tapping him on the back.

We picked up our bags, the men going one way further up the marina, as we were going opposite to the car.

"Come on girls! This calls for a drink!" Rena announced.

When we got to the house, we dumped our bags in our choice of rooms. Once we got settled, Rena invited us onto the patio, where there was a huge pitcher of Margaritas!

"Come on girls, grab a glass! We can talk about the brothers until we turn blue," Rena chuckled.

“All right! This is what I need! I haven’t seen a Margarita in ages! This is great Rena!” I said.

“Well, I figured we needed to relax, and at least if we get wasted and wake up with our heads in the toilet, we won’t have to hear about it from the men! Morgan, I’ve got some non-alcoholic drinks too, Pink Lady, Shirley Temple, and some Black Gloves if you’d prefer. They’re pretty good!”

“Thanks, but I could use something stronger today.”

Needless to say, we all had a great time, discussing some of the little things in life that make getting to know someone easier.

“What was all this I heard about you two getting mugged?” She asked. “Stefano was in a real state when he heard about it!”

“We weren’t exactly mugged,” I said.

“You were about to get punched, so how much closer can you get?” Morgan injected.

“It was scary when that guy tried to take my purse and poked me in the chest.”

“He poked you?” Rena asked.

“Hell yes, he almost pushed her backward,” Morgan said.

“My God, Stefano didn’t tell me that part of it, no wonder the guys were upset.”

“They don’t know about that part of it,” I admitted.

“What? You didn’t tell them?” Rena exclaimed.

“Dimitris was already upset, I was afraid to tell him all of it, so, well, we told them about that jerk trying to take my purse, but not the poking.”

“Maybe it’s just as well. He would have killed them.”

“That’s what I was afraid of; we weren’t hurt, and they didn’t follow us home, so we’ll just let it drop,” I said.

“Did Stefano go with the guys to Kefalonia?” Morgan asked.

“Yeah, he’s going to give them a hand on it for a few days. He has to wait for the mud to dry out a little before the dig can be worked. I’m glad to get him out of my hair for a while,” she laughed.

“How long have you lived here, Rena?” Morgan asked.

“We’ve been here eight years, and it looks like we’ll be here until the dig

plays out. We started out building only a five-room cabin, but the job turned into a monster, so we kept adding more bedrooms and the big room. Stefano has a lot of big faculty and staff meetings so we needed the space. I think we're done with adding-on for awhile!"

"How do you like Karpathos?" I asked.

"It could be a lot worse! You should see some of the places we've had to live! When we first met, he was sent to the Gobi for eight months. I don't know what it was that they found, some elephant bone or other, but we lived in tents out there. I could only take it for three months. Then I high-tailed it to see my sister! You talk about hell! Now tell me, ladies, how is Rhodes treating you? I mean, besides your latest encounter?"

"It's so beautiful," Morgan said. "There's so much to see."

"Well, I gotta tell ya, you two sure flipped our boys about! I thought I was the only one lucky enough to land one of these dolls. I mean, they were out there, just waiting, and waiting .....and waiting!" Rena was feeling good! "And you know what? There were a lot of women after those two! So what are the odds? They fell for two women who are best friends, what could be better? I mean, what are the odds?"

"It is funny!" Morgan chuckled.

"You should hear some of the things women have done to try to get the attention of these guys. It would really make you laugh!" Rena continued.

"Like what?" I asked.

"Oh, you name it, it's ridiculous! Dimi was driving his cab, and this girl, I say girl, but she was in her thirties, had him drive her to the nude beach. She was naked before they got there, and then she grabbed him! She took a stranglehold around his neck from the back seat! Dimi got out of the car, put her on a bench with her clothes and took off. Then there was this one girl who stalked Andreas. Where ever he went, there she was! In the market, at the docks! There was a construction site that he was on in Crete, and she shows up there too! They've worked really hard to stay single!"

"Then along we come!" Morgan said.

"Yes," Rena said, leaning on the table, smiling, and looking at us. "Yeah, what did you do to them?" We had to laugh because I don't think Morgan

or I were sure if she was serious or not. If it were anyone but Rena, I would think that this was a dig.

“What did we do?” I asked.

“Yeah, both of them are crazy about you girls. How did you do that?” Rena asked as she filled our glasses again.

“Maybe it’s because we’re not from here, you know, the foreign thing?” Morgan suggested.

“No, there are foreigners here most of the time, so it has to be something that got to them, you know something so different or strange that it made them sit up and notice. So, think, what was it that turned their heads?”

“Nothing. Nothing different or strange. We were just ourselves. We did everything we could to discourage them!” I said, and we all laughed!

“Ah, that’s it! It’s the classic rebuff! The more you treat ‘em mean, the more they want! Oh, wow! And these guys think they’re so hard to figure out.”

“Well, it wasn’t intentional,” Morgan said.

“Oh, I know! That’s what makes it so funny! You really try to give them the *heave-ho*, and it plants the hook! This is priceless!” Rena laughed. “I remember that day when Dimi couldn’t take his eyes off you, Helena, you know, when we were all out on the patio? He was like a lost puppy. Do you want to hear something else? Stefano, he’s such an open book, I told him not to say anything, but you know men! He has a thing about men having sons, you know, carry on the name and all that? He said something to the guys about having kids, and that you probably wouldn’t be able to give them sons! Oh man! He almost got himself disowned! Dimi was ready to punch him, and Andreas walked away, he wasn’t having any of it! Stefano, he doesn’t realize what he says sometimes. He felt really bad after that. I told him to stay out of it, they are happy and to be happy for them. Poor guy, he really begged forgiveness. This was after the hook was set, so what ever it was you did, it was before Stefano made his blunder! Well, I’m glad they picked two women I like. It would be the pits trying to make small talk with some bimbos!” She kept us laughing.

“Hey, Rena, do you want to hear something funny? Helen lucked out. She was unconscious the first time Dimitris saw her ‘nekkid’! How’s that for

luck?" Morgan blabbed.

"Oh thanks, Morgan!" I said, and covered my face as we all laughed!

"Really?" Rena said. "How did you manage that? Were you drunk?" She asked.

"No, that's when she was sick."

"Oh, when you left here and got sick, holy cow, you must have been out of it!"

"Yeah, well, Dimi gave me an alcohol rub. I guess the fever was getting bad."

"You probably don't want to remember all that, do you?" Rena asked.

"I'm sure he was well behaved," I said.

"Yeah, but, by the time you two actually got together, he'd already seen you! I wish I was unconscious with Andreas....the first time!" She said, as we continued laughing.

"Why is it that when someone says the *nekkid* word everyone cracks up?" Rena asked.

"Because it's a condition you don't want to find yourself in by accident!" I explained. By this time we were all giggling and trying to catch our breath.

"Helena, it's Dimi, -wants to talk." Rena handed me the phone.

"Dimi." I said.

"My Helena."

"I miss you."

"I am missing you too," he said.

"I think I'm a little drunk."

"Good! You're having good time."

"I'd rather be with you."

He laughed.

"Are you almost finished with this job?" I asked.

"We just get here, so, no, not yet, my Heart, not yet."

"Well then, all I can do is pray for rain," I said.

"No, no, do not do that!"

"Is everything okay?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "and now I am better."

“Oh, you are a sweetheart, did I ever tell you how sweet you are?”

“Dimi not *sweet*.”

“Yes, you are sweet,” I said.

“Will you be good and not to get too much more drunk?”

“Yes, we’re finished drinking for tonight I think.”

When we disconnected, Rena and Morgan started laughing at me!

“Oh, man! You have got it so bad!” Rena laughed and reached over to tap me on the arm.

“What?”

“I’ve never seen anyone *melt*, like you say, as you do when you hear that man’s voice,” Rena said.

“It’s really interesting to watch!” Morgan said, with a big grin.

“God! It’s true. I have to admit it! That man makes me turn to jelly! He’s just so sexy! I thought I was too old for all this stuff, but I’ve got to confess, I do love that man.”

“And he wears Jade East,” Morgan added.

“Oh, God, yes!”

“And you love him. It’s written all over you,” Rena said.

“Is it too obvious?” I asked.

“Oh it’s obvious enough to me, but you know these men, you have to hit them over the head before they notice anything!” Rena joked.

“Let’s get something to eat, eh?” Morgan suggested, and we all agreed.

“Helena, how is it that you and Morgana came to Rhodes? I mean, you had never traveled from what I heard, so why Rhodes?” Rena asked.

“I wanted to go somewhere different. It seems like everyone goes to Italy, especially on their first European trip. I didn’t want to do what everyone else does.”

“I’ll bet you had a lot to write home about on this trip! Is it anything like what you expected?”

“You know, I didn’t really know that much about Rhodes itself, but I heard about the ancient city and thought it would be interesting to see,” I said.



When I saw Morgan coming, I remembered that she and I both needed to see about getting some cash and making sure that all our accounts and mail are going to the right place. When I thought about it, I wondered if I had any mail that was forwarded yet.

"Rena? I was wondering if I should go back to Rhodes for a day and check on the mail. What do you think? I know Dimi wants me to stay here, but....."

"I'm not sure, but the mail might be held at the post office. Dimi usually does that if he's away from the house for a while," she said. "Do you want me to mention it when Stefano calls?"

"That would be great, I'd appreciate it."

"Waiting to hear from the family?" Rena asked.

"It's been weeks."

"I know, it can be rough, it was for me when I moved here, but then, my family was used to me moving all over the place," she said. "I'll talk to Stefano. Don't worry."

When we got home to Rena's we were tired after a great day, and a movie at the Cinemata. It was almost 10:00 pm when we got back to Rena's. We just went to bed. We were so exhausted.

I was asleep and was having a dream that I was with Dimitris. It was so real. I woke up and thought I could smell his cologne. I reached out and slid my hand across the sheet. It would have been a dream come true had he been there.

"Helena," a whisper said. "Helena." I opened my eyes to a pitch dark room.

"Dimi?" I whispered. I never thought I'd get an answer.

"I am here," he said and took my hand from the sheet as he slid in beneath it.

"Dimi! How did you get here?" In a bit of shock, I whispered. He rolled over me and gently kissed me. "When did you get here, and how?" I asked.

"Shhh, we don't wake others," he said. "I bring mail from Rhodes for you."

"But how, ...when did you...?" I tried to say something coherent, but I was flabbergasted! "Rena!" I said in a soft voice. "Does she know you're here?"

“She leave key for me.”

“I’m glad you’re here,” I said.

“We talk later.” I was never so glad to be awakened from a beautiful dream. In the morning it was like my wish had come true. Here was Dimitris and we were together and happy.

“Good morning, my Heart, S’agapo.”

“S’agapo, Dimi.” His eyes lit up with my very poor attempt at Greek. We made love slow and quiet and I thought I would die from the heaven he brought to me. As I rested in his arms, I wondered how he does the things he does? How did he get from Kefalonia to Rhodes to Karpathos in such a short amount of time when I only had just mentioned the mail to Rena?

“Are you Superman and didn’t tell me?” I asked.

He laughed and looked at me. “What kind of question for me?”

“How did you get to Rhodes and over to here with the mail, in the middle of the night?”

“Oh, I see, no not Superman.”

“So tell me, the whole story.”

“Rena tells Stefano. You want to go to Rhodes. To get mail. I take hop flight, get mail, get here late and here is Dimitris, with mail.”

“This sounds like a conspiracy!” I said.

“Yes, well, you no go back alone.”

“I was being good! I didn’t go anywhere.”

“Yes, but you *think* it!” He looked me right in the eye, and I laughed because it was true, I was thinking about how I could go.

“Yeah, well, what came in the mail?” I asked.

He got up and went over to the dresser. There was a pretty good stack of mail that he brought over and plopped it on the bed. I sat up, half covered by the sheet and started to sort through all of the stuff. Most of it was for Dimitris, but I found a couple for me that had been forwarded from California and one from Germany. There were also a few for Andreas and Morgan, from her daughter.

Dimitris was kissing my shoulder, making it very hard to concentrate. I

gave him the mail that was his and began to open some of the others.

"Dimi! You're tickling me!" I laughed as I turned on my side, toward the light, so that I could see what I was reading.

"Read this one." Over my shoulder, Dimitris slid the Germany letter to fall in front of me.

"I don't want to read it. You read it to me."

"No, read. It will not go away. Read, is okay. I go in kitchen," he said.

"No, Dimi, stay. I want you to stay, please?" I asked.

"If you wish, I stay."

I opened the letter.

"Dear Helen,

Running away from here isn't helping the problem. I know that I said things that I shouldn't have, and you had every right to get angry. But why did you go to Germany? You know I didn't mean what I said.

I would have let you visit Morgan if I thought you were serious about it. I shouldn't have lost my temper, but you are so stubborn, I lose it! It isn't like you to just take off like this unless you are meeting someone, so if that's the case, I'm sure you'll have a good time. I wish you would call so that we can talk. I can't write and say what I'm thinking. You don't know how bad I feel that this happened. Just come home so we can talk. Call me.

-Love, Mark

P.S. In case you don't know, I do miss you."

I put the letter down, and turned to Dimitris and kissed him.

"Thank you, for bringing the mail. You don't know how much I love you." I said.

"Are you okay, Helena? Does this man make you sad?" he asked.

"No." I reached over to him and hugged him. "You are more wonderful and precious to me than anything in my life."

"I go back to job today. Flight at 11:30 a.m," he said.

"Oh, I know, you have to finish the job, but, Dimi, I can't stay here for weeks on end. I need to get used to my home. Right now I feel like a nomad."

"I know, but this man want you to be safe."

"I'd rather barricade myself in our home, than be a guest in someone else's. Rena has been wonderful, and I love her to pieces, but, I want to go home."

He held me tight and said, "you must wait for me, I take you back with Miss Morgana. But you wait, no go there alone."

"Okay, but when?" I asked.

"I will know, two days, I call. Do not go there!" He said sternly, then looked at me in a strange way.

"What? I promised I wouldn't go." He looked away, but I knew there was something on his mind. "What?" He hesitated, but knew that whatever it was on his mind, I'd eventually hear about it.

"Stefano ask about little picture, what we do with it."

"Why?"

"He say stories go 'round about it, and the evil that follows."

"What? Evil, eh? What did you tell him?"

"I say you still have."

"I wonder why he asked about it?" Dimitris wasn't wanting to bring up the subject of the photograph, especially since our last encounter.

"He do not say, just curious maybe."

His demeanor seemed to change, like he knew that once mentioned, it would open up more curiosity and trouble.

Those few hours we had together renewed me. They always pass too quickly, then he's gone. We said 'good-bye' again at the airport.

"I wish Andreas could have come." Morgan said when I came back to the house.

"Did you know that Dimi was coming?" I asked her.

"No, I didn't know! Why did he come, well, you know what I mean, anything in particular?" Morgan asked.

"I still wonder how he did it, but Stefano told him that I was telling Rena about wanting to check the mail at the house. I mean, we've been here almost two weeks!"

"So he brought the mail?"

"Oh, there's a letter from Amy for you and a couple of things for Andreas."

"Did you hear from Mark?" She asked.

"Yes. I got a letter. Didn't say much," I said. "And Rena, she was in on this little surprise! Weren't you?"

"I'm guilty!" She confessed. "I thought it turned out pretty good!" Rena smiled with a gleam in her eyes.

"It did, it was a surprise, thank you, Rena." I gave her a hug.

"Sometimes a secret can be kept! Well, we've got to stick together, we're family!"

"Thank you, Rena."

"You're not sitting on a secret from *me*, are you Rena?" Morgan asked.

"You never can tell, I might! If I am, it's a secret." She whispered and put one finger up to her lips, "Shhh."

"I'm going to get you your mail, Morgan. I'll put it in your room." I went down the hall and put her mail on their bed and went to my room, where I picked up the letter off of the floor, and read it again. It didn't affect me as I was expecting. That was good. I wasn't looking forward to another emotional upheaval. There was no chance of me calling Mark, and there wasn't anything worth discussing. Let sleeping dogs lie, as they say. Anything I could say would only make things worse. No need to rub salt in the wound. I soon fell asleep. A nap felt good.

"Well, ladies, I hate to break up a good thing, but I have to meet my daughter, we might end up having dinner. There's lots of food in the refrigerator if you want to fix something, or the keys are all hanging in the cupboard if you want to use one of the cars. I'm hoping I'll be home before dark, but if there's a problem, I'll give you a call. I don't like to drive at night, so, I'd better get going. I'll see you later."

"Have a safe trip, Rena." I said, and we all hugged farewell.

As the daylight of this day turned to moonlight, Morgan and I had this huge museum to ourselves. It was a treat for us to be able to watch a big screen TV. It was a real luxury. This is one thing I missed.

"How are things going for you and Andreas?" I asked.

“We’re doing good. I miss him not being around. He’s got such a positive attitude. It rubs off.”

“I know, he’s a happy guy.” I said. “It’s been a while since we’ve really had a chance to talk. Are you settling in okay? I mean, you never look like anything is bothering you, you always seem perfectly content. Do you think this will be your life, I mean here with Andreas?”

“Well, there’s the Athens thing still looming, I’m not sure if that’s where we’ll be, but if things with Andreas continue to go as they have been, I can settle here. He’s made some comments about the future, like I’m going to be here, and that gives me a feeling of security.”

“That’s good. What are your feelings about commitment?” I asked.

“Permanence? I’ve always been open and ‘go with the flow.’ At this stage of my life, I might be willing to settle into a committed relationship. I wouldn’t have before I came to Rhodes!”

“You have to learn to relax and let someone take care of you. I know that you’ve always had to fend for yourself, but these guys need to be needed,” I said. “It’s a big part of who they are.”

“I know, Andreas wants to do everything for me, and I’m not used to that.” Morgan confessed.

“Yeah, it’s nice, isn’t it? The feeling that someone is paying enough attention, that they can see what needs to be done.”

“He does things before I get to them, like he reads my mind! That’s a little scary, in a good way,” Morgan smiled.

“Ha-ha! You love it!” I laughed.

“Gotta love the guy,” Morgan sighed.

We watched some TV, and when sleep started to gain ground, we decided to call it a night. As I awaited sleep, the photo of the child came to mind. Where did I put that thing? I hid it away but with all the emotion and stress my mind was scattered. So much tension built up with having to tell Dimitris about the thugs, knowing we had to stay at Rena’s and the thug encounter itself, I don’t know where my mind went. I don’t even remember putting it down anywhere.

It seemed to penetrate my thoughts, the picture of the child that no one

wants to talk about. It's obvious to me that the local people know *something*, but the mere mention of the child in the picture sends them into a tizzy. As the image in my mind was hard to ignore, it stirred more thoughts. If there was something that happened at that old house, perhaps there is something in the newspaper archive. Of course we probably would be looking at the Greek language, still, there could be a picture that we'd recognize and could later find interpretation of the story.

I tossed and turned in trying to sleep. I finally got up and grabbed my journal. I wrote about the house, the child and our strange encounters with the photograph. Questions would come to mind, and I jotted them down. I still have to ask Stefano why he was inquiring about the picture.

I was starting to get drowsy. Somewhere far off I could hear Morgan's phone ringing. Then I was asleep.





II

*A Dangerous Step*



## *Why Does Everything Always Happen To Me?*



**A**fter another ten days without the men around we were beginning to feel awkward at Rena's house. She always made us feel welcomed and she went out of her way to please us, but it was a matter of starting to feel neglected by the men, or maybe just missing them so much. Then they surprised us by coming home.

Two days later we were all together once more, the men bidding their farewells to us again. Two days together wasn't long enough. The job being stalled by some bureaucratic red tape has prolonged the final approval of the project.

Morgan and Andreas were wrapped in each others arms making the most of the last few minutes that they had together. Dimitris and I held one another tightly and had said the last of everything that needed to be said. The time was slipping through our fingers, and he would be gone from me again.

"Dimi, I can't take this. I can't keep letting you go again and again. I need to go home. I need for you to take me home. Take me home, Dimi." I pleaded as I looked into his eyes. He buried his face in the corner of my neck and was whispering in Greek to me.

"It's time, Dimi." I heard Stefano say. It was that time, and I had to let him go.

"You will call your father, your family. Arrange Christmas, okay?"

"I don't know what....."

"I forget, I get you this." He pulled his jacket off the luggage and dug into the pocket. He handed me a new cell phone.

"What's this?"

"Now I call you. You get calls now." He said and kissed me goodbye. Then they were gone again.

"This gets harder every time," I said.

"Them leaving?" Rena asked.

"Yes."

"I feel so empty like something is missing," Morgan said.

"It's getting to where I feel like I'm missing the other half of me. I don't like this at all." I moaned.

"Did Dimitris just hand you a cell phone?" Rena asked.

"Yes, now I've got to figure out how to use this thing. He's so sweet. I was going to get another phone, but I just kept putting it off."

"That's one thing that these boys don't usually do, and that's put things off. If a thing has to be done, it gets done! No procrastinating with them." Rena said.

Another ten days passed as slow as grass grows. After her conversation with Stefano, Rena hung up the phone.

"Well, girls, this might be it! I think the job is just about finished, so the guys should be coming home in a few days."

"I thought it would be at least another week or two!" I said.

"If it doesn't rain, maybe a week at the most. I hope they don't have any more delays. Stefano said that Andreas got a couple of guys that work other jobs, and put them on this one, so maybe it won't be that long. They won't have to go back for the final approval, so that's good." Rena said.

"It can't be soon enough for me." Suddenly, my cell phone started ringing.

"Hello?"

"My Helena, I am missing you already."

"Dimi, I'm glad you called, is it true that it's only going to be a few days?"

"Not for sure yet, if all goes well, maybe yes, we try."

"Why didn't you tell me?" I didn't know if I should be happy about the news

or angry that he didn't tell me before this.

"This man do not want to see you sad if take longer. We make arrangements now for Holidays. Are you calling your family? Must do now. Holidays busy."

"I'll call them from Rena's land-line. Hello? Dimi?" I was losing the connection.

"Phone breaking up, S'agapo, Helena." He said, and he was gone.

"Rena, I want to thank you for putting up with us for so long. I hope we weren't too much of a bother for you. I don't know how I can ever repay you for everything," I said.

"That's what family is for, so don't think about it. It was fun for me too!"

Although our stay with Rena was enjoyable and we were never bored, the last week seemed like such a long time to wait, before we would head back to Rhodes. It was hard to stay another night once our men were here with us. But after saying our goodbyes to both Stefano and Rena, it was like a celebration to see Rhodes coming into view once more.

I thought we would never get back to this house. It was such a relief. Dimitris got all of the luggage brought in, and we had a ton of mail to pick up off of the floor. All I wanted to do was to breathe. It was such a good feeling to get back home.

Morgan and Andreas will be going to Athens in a few days, and it would be quite different when they're gone.

"We need bread and fruit," Dimitris said, looking in the refrigerator.

"Why don't we go now, get what we need so that we can finally relax?" I said.

"We go in Bug, needs to run." We got in and drove to the produce market, which was outside of New Rhodes City.

Dimitris was showing me how he picks fruits and vegetables. There is a knack to it apparently, and I've been doing it wrong all these years. I looked up from one of the bins, and from the other side of the market I saw that short, stocky man who threatened me, but I tried to be as invisible as possible without letting Dimitris know what was going on.

I stayed with the cart while Dimitris went to get some Olive oil on the aisle. This man was stretching up on his toes to see across the fruit stalls. I was

more or less hiding behind Dimitris, trying to make myself very small.

The stocky man began to come closer. He pointed his finger at me in a threatening manner from across the market. It frightened me to think that after so many weeks, this was still going to be a problem.

When Dimitris noticed what I was doing, he looked in the direction of the stocky man, who turned and moved beyond the checkout counter toward the exit.

“Who is this man?” Dimitris asked.

“I don’t know.”

“He scare you?”

“Yes, a little. He was one of the men that followed us.” I had barely gotten the words out when Dimitris ran out of the market looking for this person. He came back a few minutes later.

“He threaten you? It was he poke finger on you?” Dimitris was getting upset. His big eyes got even bigger with his anger, and I didn’t want him to do something stupid. I wondered how he got wind of the finger poking, but nothing stays a secret for long.

“It’s okay. He’s gone. If he was going to hurt me, he could have, but he didn’t. It’s just a scare tactic; doesn’t mean anything,” I said.

“Come, we go.”

In the kitchen, I was helping to unload the grocery bags, when Dimitris came in and washed his hands. He turned and leaned against the sink, wiping his hands dry.

“Helena.” He said, getting my attention. “Helena, I cannot protect you if you hide things from me.”

“I just don’t want you to do anything. I don’t want you to get hurt.”

“Next time, you will tell me?” He held me at arms distance. Looking deep into my eyes, they asked again.

“Yes, alright, but you have to promise me that you will take care, and won’t run amuck,” I insisted.

“Run.....what?”

“Amuck. It’s like, a chicken with its head cut off.” He looked at me. “Crazy,

you know, berserk!”

“Ah. Well, I try to not be headless chicken.”

“Okay,” I said and stood there in front of him and laughed at the imagery of his words. He put his arms around me, and he laughed a little too. “It’ll be different here when Andreas and Morgan go to Athens,” I said.

“Yes.”

“It will just be us, together, just us two.”

“Yes, us two. You worry?”

“What?” I asked.

“You worry what you do?”

“I think about it, but I don’t worry.”

“Well, you will find your way. We buy paints, and you will paint, or what you want to do,” he said. “Soon, we send for your belongings, okay?”

“I don’t know if it’s worth the expense. But, what will *you* do? I’m used to having a routine of some kind.”

“Well, we see. I drive taxi maybe, or I stay home and make love to my Helena.”

“Yes, but you can’t do that all of the time, what else?”

“Maybe I surprise my Heart.”

“Dimi! Dimitris!” Andreas yelled.

“What you want?”

We went into the living room where we spotted Andreas carrying Morgan and placing her on the sofa.

“What happened?” I asked.

“I twisted my ankle on that dang driveway,” she winced.

Dimitris brought a big basin with water and vinegar. “We put foot in, keep there.” Then he went into the kitchen and brought the ice.

“Keep in water, little swelling,” Dimitris said.

“It’s not broken?” Andreas asked.

“No, just small sprain.”

“This is great! Now I’m going to be laying around with my foot in the air when we have to get packed,” she said, flailing her arms.

“I can help you with that, but you might want to see someone if you think

it's serious. Maybe Andreas knows who you can see in Athens?" I suggested.

After fifteen minutes, Dimitris brought out a towel. "I take foot out, you say if hurts." He carefully cradled Morgan's foot as he dried it. He touched different spots on her ankle and foot. After assessing where the injury was located, he wrapped her ankle with an elastic bandage.

"There! Now we put up on pillow. You to stay off, no trying to walk. Andreas, see to her not to get up."

I watched as Dimitris wrapped her foot. This was not an amateur job that he was doing. He knew exactly what to do for her. Every time I think I know him, he surprises me.

"How does it feel?" I asked.

"It doesn't feel too bad."

"Do you think you need some aspirin for the pain?"

"No, it doesn't seem to hurt much right now."

"Dimi, you did a good job on Morgan's ankle," I said.

"I have lots of practice with this," he said, without further comment. I looked at him, and was expecting further information on the subject, but it wasn't forthcoming.



## *The Mark Equasion*



**I**'ve never seen so much mail, what is all this stuff?" I picked up a letter from Germany, forwarded I'm afraid to say, from Mark. When I opened the envelope, a note dropped out from Amy. It said that her husband told Mark that neither Morgan nor I have been living in Germany. He told Mark that we went to Greece. How accurate a location he gave, it didn't say.

Mark's letter had a distinct bitter flavor to it. Accusations and an attempt to make me feel bad for what I did to him were obvious. Then there was "If I knew where you were, I'd find you, and talk instead of writing letters that are never answered." This implied that there had been more than just the one letter that I did receive. I knew that this was just empty talk, but with Richard telling him where we were, it made me nervous. Who knows what Richard told Mark that could set him off!

There were many envelopes marked with return addresses to a University, a few tech institutes and other important looking institutions. I knew that Dimitris went to school in Athens, but I never pressed him for details.

"Dimi, this whole table is your mail, and I've separated out the junk mail, but you have some important looking mail here that you might want to look at first."

"We do later, now we eat."

"How did you fix something so fast? I'd still be thinking about it!"

“We do not fuss, there is food..... we eat. Now we put mail away for later.”

“I’ll set up a tray or something for Morgan.”

“That is good, there is one in laundry room, behind door.” He pointed toward the door.

We all took our plates into the living room to join Morgan for dinner.

“Did you find the letter that Amy sent? She told me about what happened. I guess she thought that you had seen it weeks ago.” Morgan said.

“I was surprised to hear that Richard butted in.” I said.

“It doesn’t surprise me.”

“Come, Andreas, we eat.” Dimitris called.

We all sat around the coffee table and it was a relaxed, informal meal.

“Dimi, there might be a problem with Mark.” I said casually.

“Problem?”

“Maybe, Richard told him where I am, but I don’t know if he gave him the address. Not that Mark would come looking for me, but you should know just in case.”

“Let him come.” He said as he took my hand.

“If he comes here, that’s *if* he comes to this house looking for me, he can’t see you. I don’t want him to see you. I have to handle it, and you can’t get involved. Agreed?” I asked.

“I do not like, but yes, we do as you say.”

We finished our meal with a small Ouzo. Andreas carried Morgan to the bedroom and propped up her foot on some pillows. I brought in all her mail and packages.

“It looks like you got some mail!

Morgan’s phone rang so I left her to have her privacy. When I got back to the kitchen, Dimitris was reading some mail and tossing out others.

“Anything important?” I asked.

“Not too much. Too much trash in mail.” I wanted to ask about some of the letters, but I didn’t.

“You wonder with these, huh?” Pointing to the pile from the University

and tech institutes.

“Yes.”

“I inquire on jobs.” He said quietly. The letters were mostly written in Greek so there was no point in me looking at them.

“Jobs? But they are all from the *mainland*.”

“Most offices locate to mainland. So I find something new, more stable,” he said. “I do this for you.”

“I know.” In the back of my mind I wondered if that meant more separation or moving.

“Helena, Morgana wants to talk to you.” Andreas announced as he came into the kitchen.

I went to the bedroom, where Andreas made her comfortable. Morgan was still looking at mail.

“Hi, what’s up?”

“That was Amy, she said that Richard was fed up with her forwarding letters and being the *go-between*. He gave Mark our address,” she said. “I guess he figured it was taking her time away from him!”

“I guess it was inevitable. I hope he didn’t say anything about Dimitris.” I said.

“I don’t know if he knew about him, but he knows about Andreas, so who knows what he told Mark, he’s such an idiot.”

“When did all of this happen?” I asked.

“I guess it happened a week ago, but she just found out about it.” She said.

“It never ends, does it?”

“So, what about Mark?” She asked.

“What about him?”

“You still love him, don’t you?” The words slammed against my chest. It was a question that I had put out of my mind.

“In a way, yes, but I’m not *in love* with him, do you know what I mean?” I asked.

“Yes, I do. I guess that’s why you don’t want Dimitris around if Mark shows up,” she surmised.

“It’s better not to confuse the issue. Mark probably believes that I left him

for another man, but that isn't why I left. Mark can rationalize me leaving him if he thought another man was involved. If he wants to hate me, I don't want it to be for the wrong reason. Well, I'll let you rest your foot in peace, is it feeling better?"

"It feels good, I probably can walk on it, but I'll wait until tomorrow and see."

"Okay, well, if you need anything, just yell!"

Dimitris and Andreas were laughing in the kitchen when my cell phone rang. I answered it without thinking.

"Hello?"

"Helen?" I recognized Mark's voice.

"Yes."

"Where are you? We need to talk."

"How did you get this number? Where are you?"

"I'm at the Paradiso in Afandou. I thought you'd be here. Where are you?"

The guys were still talking and laughing and I knew that Mark heard them.

"I'm at someone's house right now, when did you get here?" I asked.

"This afternoon. You don't ever answer my letters and I want to talk to you. I've come all this way, will you at least talk to me?"

"We are talking." I said.

"I need to see you."

"Give me your number, I'll have to call you when I can make arrangements."

"When will that be?" He asked.

"Later tonight."

"I'll call you back." He said and hung up.

When I got off of the phone, Dimitris saw there was something wrong.

"What is it?"

"Mark is here."

Dimitris stood, then came over to me. He didn't say anything. He looked at me and knew I was upset.

"Come, we sit." He said, so we went into the living room.

"He's at the Paradiso, he thought I was still there. He wants to see me." I said.

“Yes, you will see him.”

“I have to meet him somewhere, a public place I think is best.”

“Taverna Nikos.” Dimitris said.

“That would be perfect. Tomorrow afternoon?”

“Yes, is good.” Dimitris agreed. We sat on the sofa and held each other, in silence.

Later that night Mark called. I set up the meeting as planned.

The dread that I felt getting ready to see him was more than I ever thought I would feel. I was apprehensive and felt like I was about to go to walk the last mile.

Dimitris went into Nikos first, then Andreas went in a few minutes later. They got a beer and sat at the bar where they could see everything. I’m not sure how long Mark was there, but I waited the longest ten minutes of my life before I entered Nikos.

I saw Mark sitting at a table facing the door along the right hand wall. I sat across from him at his table after ordering a beer.

“You look good, I guess this place hasn’t hurt you any,” he said.

“What is it that you have to say, Mark?”

“You don’t have to be antagonistic,” he said.

“I don’t mean to be. What’s on your mind?”

“I’m sorry for what happened. You know I didn’t mean anything by it. I don’t understand how you ended up here! I thought you went to Germany to see Morgan.”

“I did go to Germany.” I said as I slid my hand out of his reach. “The trip here was a chance to travel for free, so why not? I didn’t demand to know every move you made when you went to see your relatives. You made side-trips.”

“So, when are you coming back?”

“Why?” I said. “You made it perfectly clear, *don’t comeback*, you couldn’t be any plainer than that.”

“I think we can find a place and get our lives back to normal. I want you to come home with me.”

“I don’t have any plans on going back. There’s nothing to go back to,” I

stated.

“You just can’t throw away all the years we’ve been together! I need you to come back with me.”

“Why? The love we had or have for each other is more platonic than anything. We were room mates! I need more than that in my life,” I said.

“Who are you screwing? You wouldn’t be living here unless you moved in with someone. Who is he?”

“Here we go with the accusations.”

“What am I supposed to think? You run off to some strange country and never come back? That’s not you. So who is he and when did you meet him? Were you screwing him before you left me?” He started to get disturbed and raising his voice.

“Look, things weren’t all that great before you threatened me, so why are you surprised that I left?” I spoke in a subdued tone.

“I didn’t threaten you.”

“When you said if I go to Germany, ‘*don’t come back*,’ what did you mean by that? Bon Voyage? I don’t think so.”

“I didn’t mean it.”

“It’s too late for that now. I’ve heard it too many times over the years. It’s too late! I’m going to try to make a life here. So maybe it’s best if you go back home.”

“I love you. You know that.”

“How was I ever supposed to know? You never showed it.” I said. “It’s not enough anymore, Mark. I’ll always care about you, you’ve been my best friend, and we’ve had some good times. I have to do this, I can’t go back to living my life the way it was. I was dying a slow death there. Here, I’m alive! I never meant to hurt you, even though you hurt me enough over the years.”

“Here we go! You’re going to bring up the past. I thought you forgot about all that. It’s been years ago, and you’re still holding it against me?”

“I don’t hold anything against you anymore, but I’ve never forgotten.”

“You bitch, you just waited for your chance didn’t you?” He stood and yelled.

I could hear Dimitris’ chair stumble back, and I hoped he wouldn’t come to

our table.

“Shh!” I said in a hushed tone. “You created this situation. You were inconsiderate and controlling. How many times did we go somewhere and you’d get pissed off and leave me?”

“You deserved it!” He spoke loudly.

“There’s nothing more to say here.” I got up and he grabbed my wrist.

“I’m not finished.” He said loudly and tried to get me to sit again.

“This man bother’s you?” Dimitris asked.

“No, thank you, I was just leaving.” Mark let go of my wrist, and I walked outside and around the corner.

“Do not touch the ladies.” Andreas said to Mark.

Dimitris and Andreas left the Taverna. Mark sat drinking another beer.

Andreas drove the land barge, and I crumpled into Dimitris arms. The emotional strain was over, and I was again safe. When we got home, I got into the tub and soaked for a half an hour.

“Helena?” Dimitris knocked on the door.

“I think it’s locked, Dimi.” I answered.

“Will you be in tub all day?”

“I’m coming, just a second.” I got up, put a towel around me then opened the door.

“This man worry you not well. This was too much upset for you.” He spoke as he looked into my eyes. I put my arms around him and it felt so good to have his arms around me. I looked up to him, as I felt so comforted in his arms, and said

“I have been so wound up over this, I just needed to soak, to relax.”

“Miss Morgana wants to talk, about Mark, you dress.” He kissed my forehead and left the room.

Morgan was able to put some weight on her ankle today. She was allowed to get up but do very little walking, although she was able to get around somewhat better. Andreas made sure that she didn’t stand for any length of time or do any unnecessary walking.

"I'm not incapacitated, you know! I can just hop a little, and save putting my weight on it. Geez, you treat me like an invalid."

"No, you stay off another couple of days to be sure." Andreas told her.

Dimitris stood when he saw me come into the room, and handed me a glass of wine.

"I wish I could have gone with you to Nikos. I would have liked to see his face when you told him you're staying," she said.

"It never ends well, I don't know how people break up and remain friends. I just don't have the knack for it."

"Some people wouldn't let you be friends in the end no matter how well the break up goes," she said.

"I thought for one moment that Dimitris was coming over to the table when Mark grabbed my wrist. But he controlled himself very well."

"I want to hit him!" Dimitris added.

"But you didn't, and I'm proud of you for that," I said and gave him a smile.

"So, is he on his way back home?" Morgan asked.

"I suppose so, I didn't ask."

I was so relieved that this hurdle had passed, I went to the front door and there was such a nice breeze that I went outside, just to take a few minutes to breathe. I had to appreciate the quiet.

"What you do out here?"

"It's so beautiful, quiet. I just wanted.....to pay homage to this beautiful place."

We walked, arms around each other down the road.

"Do you know how happy I am?" I asked Dimitris.

"You tell me, Helena."

"I love you, Dimi. I can't help it, there's nothing I can do but love you."

"Good! And now we make plan."

"What kind of plan, for Andreas Day? I think Rena already has done that." I said.

"We make other plan."

"I am so tired, can we go back to the house?" I asked. "It just hit me, I'm



suddenly totally exhausted.”

“Are you feeling okay?”

“Just tired,” I said.

“Too much in one day, I forget all emotional strains for you,” he said. “Where this drains my Helena, anger make Dimi energy.”

We walked back to the house where Andreas was putting some of Morgan’s boxes near the door. Morgan was in the kitchen with her foot up on a chair.

“Why do these things always happen to me?” She complained.

“I’m surprised that something like this didn’t happen sooner,” I said.

“Yeah, well, I’ve been trying to be extra careful, especially walking on the street.”

“It doesn’t seem to be swollen, that’s good,” I said.

“Thank goodness for that. I might be able to walk on it better tomorrow,” she said, “if someone will let me.” She said extra loud, pointing her comment at both Andreas and Dimitris.

“Are you looking forward to moving?” I asked.

“It’ll take some getting used to, but I think I’ll like it. It’s got some real possibilities.

“Ooo, I can see those interior decorating cells working overtime!” I kidded.

“Yeah, I’m going to have to go into business! Andreas wants me to do the forward lounge, Rena wants me to do the living room museum and now the Castle of Andreas! I’d better be good.”

“You are! The only thing I’d worry about is if they don’t know what *they* like. If you can figure that out, it should be easy for you.”

Suddenly these arms came around me from behind, and I got a kiss on the cheek. At first I thought it was Dimitris, then I heard

“She loves me, Morgana loves me and I am in heaven!” He started twirling me, and dipped me like a dancer! I screamed!

“Helena! Watch out for this man, he is insane!” Dimitris said.

“He is, he’s crazy!” Morgan said, and both Morgan and Dimitris just laughed, meanwhile I’m stuck in a dip, screaming!

“Okay, Andreas, let Dimi take over.” Dimitris said, then helped to release me from my horizontal position.

“What is going on, did I miss something?” I asked.

“Andreas’ kefi is gone, what you say, amuck?”

“Morgan, what have you done to this poor man?” I asked and we all laughed. Andreas is definitely a man in love, or he is crazy!

We called it an early night, for tomorrow we were to take Morgan to Symi to have her ankle examined, a precaution that Dimitris insisted on. It was a crisp windy night, a perfect night to slip under the covers and cuddle. And so we did.

We were on our way back from Symi and I was enjoying the beauty of all these island horizons in this area. I went into the forward lounge. Too much wind in my ear was beginning to bother it.

“There you are,” Dimitris said, “we go home.”

“That didn’t take very long.” I said. “So, she’ll be able to get around a little easier now.” Just then my cell phone rang. I couldn’t tell who it was, I didn’t recognize the phone number, but I thought it might be Rena.

“Hello?”

Dimitris stood behind me, giving me a bear hug and kissing my neck while I was trying to hear who was talking.

“What? I can’t hear you.” It was Mark. I didn’t want to talk to him. “I can’t talk to you. There’s nothing to say.”

“Please, I was tired with jet lag, and I know I got pissed off and I pissed you off. I’m sorry, but I have to talk to you, or I’ll just stay here until you’ll listen to what I’m saying.” Mark said. “Come over to the tavern, I’ll wait.”

“I can’t I’m in Symi, I won’t be able to meet you until tomorrow.” I replied.

“Okay, around 11 am.?”

“Yes, 11 a.m.”

I clicked off the phone and turned to Dimitris.

“You meet with him?” He asked. I held onto him, my forehead against his shoulder. I didn’t say anything.

“What he want with you?” He asked.

“Tomorrow, he won’t leave Rhodes until he talks to me again,” I said, “He

had jet lag before, so I have to let him say his piece.”

Dimitris removed my hand from his arm and backed away from me. Suddenly I felt like I had a knife cutting into my heart, he turned away from me and left the lounge. When he did that, it hurt more than anything could. I was suddenly very, very alone. If I had a way to erase myself from existence at that moment, I would have.

How can things go from perfect to disaster in a matter of minutes? I hurt so bad! Dimitris knew that I had to do this. I wasn't going to beg him to understand. If he believes that I love him, there shouldn't be a problem. I felt defeated. I went to the patio deck and to that fateful railing, just looking at the wake of this boat. All of the fleeting ripples of sea foam that drifted outward had a sadness that I related to, a sad dissipation of what it once was. The wind was blowing in from all directions. I wanted it to take me away. The pain in my heart was consuming me.

“My Morgana! Come here.” Andreas said. She was seated behind him on the bridge.

“God, I missed you.” Morgan said as she came up to him and put her arms around his waist.

Andreas had the biggest smile and kept looking back to Morgan.

“I missed you, my dove.” He said then turned to kiss her on the forehead.

Dimitris went up to the bridge.

“Where is our other American Beauty?” Andreas asked.

“Cabin.” He said with a distinct tone.

Morgan and Andreas looked at each other, but didn't say anything. Dimitris didn't say anything. He walked to the console, picked up the binoculars to put to his face, but laid them back down and left the bridge.

“I wonder what that was about?” Morgan asked.

“Trouble in Paradise, maybe?” Andreas replied.

Dimitris descended the stairs and went into the cabin, but there was no one there. He looked everywhere below deck. He raced back up the stairs then looked out to the end of the Patio deck. I was trying to think, but my mind

went blank. I had too many emotions churning inside of me to be able to think clearly. I closed my eyes with the pain that burned in my heart. Dimitris came up from behind me and put his hand over mine, holding onto the railing. I turned around, then Dimitris wrapped me in his arms.

“You come away from here,” he said. “We get coffee, talk, okay?”

We went into the galley. I sat in the booth while he poured our coffee. He brought them to the table and slid in to sit next to me. I hadn’t said anything to him, not yet, and I was at a loss for what to say. My mind was floating in a state of shock. He took my hand that was on the table.

“Helena, you are killing me. I hear of this man, and anger comes. You had long time with him. You walk away. You say you love me now. You walk away again?”

I looked at him. I couldn’t believe what he just said! I think the shock of it left me speechless, but I understood what he was thinking. I had to try to compose myself and not get angry at the implication or cry because of the hurt that I felt. I put my arm around his shoulder and turned his face toward me, and I kissed him.

“Dimi, I’m not leaving you, now or ever, unless you tell me to go. You know that I don’t want to do this...talk to Mark, but I may have to be brutally cruel to him if he doesn’t stop this, and go home. I will never go back to him. Do you understand? *You* are my life now, *you*. S’agapo, Dimi.”

He sat up and put his hand to my face and saw the wetness that streaked my cheeks, and kissed me. I felt so many emotions that I was going to have a melt down, but I wasn’t going to let them overtake me.

“Dimi, when you turned your back on me, and walked away, you hurt me so badly. It cut me to the core.” I spoke, with a knot in my throat. “Please, don’t do that to me again.”

He got a hurt look on his face. I don’t think he realized how his reaction to the situation affected me.

“I hurt you?” He asked, looking at me with those dark eyes. He paused. He put his arm around me and brought me close to him, and held my face with his other hand. “Never mean to hurt you, Helena, never. I have anger at that man, Mark, not you. He cause blindness with anger for him. I am sorry, so

sorry. You are sensitive flower, I forget with anger. Forgive Dimi, please, I am sorry, I will not do again."

I felt a tear roll from the corner of my eye, down my cheek and over his hand. His kiss got more intense. My hand moved from the table, knocking my coffee cup into the creamer.

"Uh-oh," Dimitris said. "I will make mess of it if not careful!"

He gave me two more popping kisses and said, "tomorrow, you meet him in park, across street from Nikos. Better, if trouble."

"Yes, that would be better."

"We'll be docking soon, it sounds like the engine is in idle." I said.

"Yes, then home." Dimitris agreed.

We were laying on the bed in Cabin #1, I had my head on Dimitris' chest.

"Tomorrow, when I see Mark, where will you be?" I asked.

"Where I know you are safe," he said.

"And that means, what?"

"You will not be hurt."

"Please let me handle this," I asked.

"I worry."

"Yes, I know and I appreciate that, but there is nothing to worry about," I said. "I want you to go to the taverna and wait for me. I'll be across the street, and you might be able to see from there, but I don't want you in the park."

"What do you think I do?" He asked.

"I don't want to take a chance of you running amuck."

"Yes, like headless chicken," he laughed.

He was so cute, I reached over and grabbed his chin and kissed him and said,

"Nothing is going to happen, okay?"

"I will do, but I will not like," he said. "Ah, Andreas is in Harbor, we go, huh?"

We got up and I straightened the bed. We went to the bridge and watched as Andreas parked this large vessel. Once the Athena was battened down we were on our way home. Since Morgan had her foot problem, Andreas was

driving. Dimitris and I sat in back.

“Too small back here,” Dimitris complained.

“Now you know how it is for the rest of us! Only a few minutes and we’re home,” Andreas said.

“Is nice to be cramped back here with you, my Heart,” he said.

He hadn’t called me ‘my Heart’ in quite a while. It felt good.

My mind was occupied with the coming event tomorrow. I knew that there was no reason to ever think of leaving Dimitris, but I was afraid that if Mark wouldn’t take *no* for an answer that I might have to give him the whole truth.

I went into the bedroom and put on a CD, music to soothe the nerves. I just laid on my back, put my arm over my eyes and tried to relax. The CD played the most beautiful Piano concertos, and it was soothing. After fifteen minutes, I was nearly asleep when Dimitris came in. He said in a very soft voice,

“Are you awake?”

I opened and closed my hand that was over my face, but I didn’t say anything. He closed the door and came over to the bed. He leaned over the side of the bed toward me and ran his finger up and down my arm, in almost a tickle.

“Music is beautiful.” I didn’t say anything, I was still thinking of tomorrow, and how Dimitris hurt me today. I was exhausted. He laid on his stomach next to me, looking at me. Waiting for me to react, he took my arm off of my face and kissed me.

“It will be okay.” I said. He rested one arm across me with his face toward me on the pillow. I rolled over and kissed him. How could I resist? He reached my hair and let it loose. It was me, Dimi and Chopin.

“Helena, we talk?” He was writing Greek letters with his finger on my back.

“What’s bothering you, Dimi?”

“You were with him for long time.”

“Too long, yes.”

“Why you not marry him?”

“Things weren’t right, I was always waiting for things to get better.” I said.

“Did he ask?”

“Yes.”

“What you say?”

“It was an implied ‘yes’, but I never let him pin me down on it. Why?” I asked.

“In Hellas, very traditional. Shouldn’t live together too long.” He went silent while still writing letters on my back. “Maybe we make plan.” He ran a finger down my arm. I turned and looked at his dark eyes reaching into my heart, and I said,

“Yes, we make a plan.” He cradled me in his arms with his face buried in my hair and was whispering to me in Greek.

## The Plan



“**A**ndreas! When are we going to eat?” Morgan called.  
“For such a little girl, you do have a big voice! Have you seen Dimi? I guess I’m going to have to disturb them.”

He knocked at the door. Then he knocked again. “Dimi? Let’s get dinner going!”

Andreas went to sit next to Morgan, who had her foot propped up on the coffee table.

“Well, my dear, it might be up to me.” Andreas said.

“There’s got to be something in the freezer, maybe we can just microwave something.” Morgan suggested.

“I’ll get something going and I’ll just have to improvise,” he said.

“What you do in kitchen, Andreas?” Dimitris put his arm around Andreas’ neck and knuckled his head.

“Where have you been, Dimi?” Andreas smiled.

Dimitris waved his finger and said,

“A gentleman never tells.”

“Oh brother! Now I’ve heard everything!” Morgan said.

“No, no, no, you have not!” Dimitris said, taking a dish towel and started to dance. He let loose his kefi. “Okay, Andreas, I cook, you take care of Morgana.” He sang and started to whistle.

“Everyone looks busy,” I said, Dimitris turned with hands full, and leaned



in to kiss my cheek.

“You look beautiful, my Heart.”

“Thank you,” I whispered. “Can I help?”

“No, we have it all figured out,” Andreas said. “This man is a maniac tonight!”

I sat next to Morgan, “how’s the ankle doing?” I asked.

“Not bad, it only hurts if I rotate it.”

“Maybe you should soak it before bed.” I said.

“That is good idea. Warm water and salt.” Dimitris said. “We have food, now we need drink!” Dimitris poured a Sangria wine for us. He tapped the side of his glass and said,

“I have a toast! To my beautiful Helena, who premised to be my bride.”

When he said it aloud, suddenly I had many mixed emotions. Love, excitement, happiness, fear, and uncertainty.

“Helen! Congratulations!” Morgan said.

We toasted, and brothers hugged. Dimitris came up to me with a sweet smile, put his arm around me and tapped my glass to his and said,

“S’agapo Helena,” and kissed me. “Helena, I want to have whole life with you. My heart is bursting with love for you. I give my heart to you, Helena,” then tapped his glass to mine.

I felt the tears well up in my eyes, I was so happy. This day has been such a roller coaster for me. I was beginning to get overwhelmed with it all.

“So when are you going to do it? It sounds like a lot to go through just to get married.” Morgan commented.

“There are steps to take. Not to hurry through, it will be in Spring, after Easter.” Dimitris said.

“Well, by that time you should be sure that’s what you want to do.” Morgan said.

Everyone looked at Morgan.

“Well, I’m just saying that if you have doubts, you’ll know by Easter. That’s all I meant.”

“Yes, that is what waiting is for, the test. We have official engagement, then we live apart until wedding.”

“What!?” I wasn’t sure I heard right.

Dimitris grabbed my hand, and said

“We have civil wedding. Then have official engagement. Then we have church.”

“Holy shit!” Morgan gasped.

“There’s something you’re forgetting.” I said.

“What is that, my Heart?”

“I have to get permission to marry in the Greek Orthodox.” I was expecting this revelation to cause a problem.

“Yes, we do that, too.” He said

Dimitris was so happy, making plans. The more I knew about the process, the more nervous I got about it. It seemed like a big, never-ending line of problems. I didn’t want to cast a shadow on Dimitris’ day, but I worried about getting married in the Orthodox church.

Dimitris was all smiles and happy as he cleaned up the dinner dishes and finished the kitchen duties. I sat quietly in contemplation of the mountain before us. Morgan came over to me as I was sitting by the fire in the living room.

“You’re kinda quiet. So, you’re going to get married!” she said.

“I don’t know what happened,” I said.

“What do you mean?”

“This isn’t exactly what I thought it would be, I’m sinking in a quagmire of things to do, responsibilities and dealing with ex’s, family and the Holidays, I don’t think I can handle it,” I said.

“Sounds to me like Dimitris will do all of the wedding stuff. He’s really excited about it. Why aren’t you happy?” She asked.

“It’s so involved. What if I can’t get permission from the church? What if he can’t? The civil marriage is easy, we do it and it’s done, but dealing with two churches?”

“The only way to know is to find out. If it gets hectic, I’ll help with what I can.” Morgan volunteered.

“Thanks, I appreciate that. I am happy, don’t misunderstand, but you know it’s been a long time since I’ve committed to a marriage. With Mark, I always knew I had a way out. So, I guess the wait is a good thing. We have to live

apart from the time of the engagement. I don't know if I can handle *that*." I said.

"Yeah, that's a tough one," she agreed.

"We'll have a lot of talking to do," I said.

"Yeah, I guess."

"First, I've got to get Mark out of my hair."

"What is it with him?" Morgan asked.

"I have to see him tomorrow. I'm not looking forward to it."

Dimitris leaned over to kiss me. He warms my heart and when I'm near him, nothing seems impossible.

"Tomorrow arrangements for storage to ship." Dimitris said.

"Yes, that too."

Tomorrow came too quickly. We were at Niko's at 10:30 am. I waited at an outside table for Mark. Dimitris was inside.

When Mark came, we went across the street to the park. It was a windy day, the sun was really bright and the shade from the trees kept the glare at bay.

"Alright. Now, what is this all about?" I opened.

"Are you still planning on staying here?"

"Yes."

"Who are you with?" He asked.

"Morgan."

"How can you afford to stay here?" He asked. "You can't get a job here, not with just a passport, so how are you planning to stay once your money runs out?"

"I'll be painting, and Morgan has a job already," I said.

"You think you can live on that?"

"Thanks! You always were real supportive of my painting! I'm going to try. I have to try."

"Just come back with me now, we'll get an apartment or something. Things weren't great, but we can work on it. I miss you."

"Mark, we've been good friends for a long time, but we haven't been lovers

for a *very* long time. I love you, but we aren't *in love*. Do you understand? That's gone. It was there once, but it died. We ended up as room mates. Living in a stagnant relationship is not living."

He didn't say anything, because he knew I was right.

"It's been hard, coming home to a cold empty house. I never realized, I guess I took it for granted that you would always be there. You're just being unrealistic. You can't live here."

"You should keep working, meet people, go see your family. You're a natural flirt, you'll meet someone so you won't be alone for long. Find a new relationship, someone who makes you *light up*."

"You've made up your mind?" He asked.

"Yes, I'll stay here."

"When you come back, will you let me know?"

"We can keep in touch," I said.

"You know that I never meant for any of this to happen."

"Neither did I."

"Did you get all of your things?" He asked.

"Most of it got stored."

"Then, you'll be back to sort it out?"

"I'll be going back to see my family now and then. I'm not sure when."

"Are you sure of what you're doing? What are you going to do if you run out of money? Your family can't afford to be paying for you to live here."

"I'm not sure of what the future holds. How can I? Things have a way of working out one way or another, all I know is this is what I have to do now," I said.

"Well, I don't have to check in for the flight home until 5 p.m., so I'll be at the hotel if you change your mind," he said. "I'll have to get some sleep before my flight."

"Then I'll say goodbye now, and have a safe flight." I tried to smile. He kissed me and gave me a hug that was so familiar, and he walked away. I walked away too, and didn't look back.

My walk across the park was more for composure than anything. I felt really bad about Mark. We had our problems. I only wish I had still been

angry about it all, but that's why we were together for so long. I'd always try to forget and forgive and carry on.

Dimitris was at the outside table when I came back. I walked past him, went into Niko's and up to the bar. I needed a drink.

"Is it over, he is returning?" Dimitris asked as he put his hands on my shoulders and spoke in my ear.

"Yes, I hope so." I said, and soothed his hand.

"Good, we sit."

We found a little dark corner, hidden away in a separate private dining area behind the bar. Dimitris gave me one of those toe-curling kisses before we sat. I needed it too.

"We need to talk to priest, and go to city for license." He held my hand and looked at me. "What is it? Mark?"

"Well, it's just that I feel so bad for having to hurt him," I said. "How long do we wait between the engagement and the wedding?"

"That depends, short as possible," he said.

"I won't be able to keep my hands off of you for any length of time, you know!" Dimitris got a big smile on his face.

"Shortest time as possible, my Heart." We finished our drink and drove off in the "bug."

"Has anyone ever told you that you don't let any grass grow under your feet?" I said to Dimitris as he seated me in the car.

"What you mean? Let grass grow?"

I smiled and explained what it meant.

"Time enough to waste when dead. Helena, you want it too?"

"Yes, but you don't stop to think about anything; you just get out there and do whatever needs to be done! I'd like to discuss some of this with you."

"Yes, of course, but do you not like what I do?" He asked with his expressive eyebrows in a worried pinch.

"It's not that, it's just that everything is happening so fast! I can't keep up."

"We will make list of what to do. We check off when done. You see where we are." Dimitris suggested.

"Maybe that would help, then, at least I'll know what I still have to do and

what *you* are taking care of, or am I making a big deal out of everything?"

"Is big deal. Is very important done right. You feel better when we talk to priest," he reassured me.

"What's the first thing to do, top on the list?" I asked.

"See priest, no, send for storage first, find documents."

"Okay, and then what?" I asked.

"Buy rings."

"I have a diamond band we can use...."

"No! You get new rings. New marriage, new rings. Then all bride's things."

"Bride's things. Is there special stuff that I don't know about?" I asked.

"Rena help with it, she knows. Will help find dresses and crowns."

"Crowns? How many dresses am I going to need?"

"Depends on how many weddings," he answered.

"How many Grooms will there be?" I joked.

As he drove he looked at me, and started to laugh.

"Oh, Helena, it looks to be big mountain, but will go by fast. You will see."

"We will need invitations, I suppose. How many do you think?" I asked.

"Maybe one hundred. Yes, one hundred invitations," he said thoughtfully.

"Holy shit! We're going to need a stadium."

"You are funny today." He smiled.

When we got home we went to the kitchen to make a list, while we were thinking about it.

"I hope someone knows about weddings, because I don't have a clue." I said.

"Did you not have a wedding?" He asked.

"Nope, I never did." Dimitris came over to me with a big hug and said,

"Well, you will have the best wedding."

"I just want to get married, I don't care about huge, the smaller the better."

"You will not worry about anything. You will be beautiful bride and the rest will take care of itself." He said as he rocked me in his arms.

"Hello, hello!" Morgan said as Andreas carried her into the kitchen.

"Time to soak." Andreas announced.

"Good! Should soak for twenty minutes, make up for not soaking earlier."

“I knew he wasn’t going to let me get away with not soaking!” Morgan said. “I guess we’re going to stay here another day or two, until I can walk half way decently.”

Dimitris ran the water while Andreas got Morgan situated in the kitchen.

“Man! If anyone has to get hurt, it would be me....sorry! What were you doing?” Morgan asked me.

“We were talking about what we have to do, what comes first with the wedding stuff.”

“It looks like a lot of work,” she said.

“Dimitris take care of everything but bridal stuff. Rena help there. All else, I do.”

I went back to the bedroom, turned on the TV to see if I could find something in English to watch. When my phone rang I had to go to the dresser to answer it.

“Hello.”

The reception was not good, clattering, squealing sounds obscured the voice. Then the call was lost. I tried to find the caller number on my cell, but it didn’t register. It was probably a wrong number.

Ninety minutes later I heard signs of life in the house. I must have fallen asleep. I went into the living room to find Dimitris there.

“There is my Heart. How do you feel?” Dimitris asked.

“I am wonderful now.” I said, giving him a hug and a kiss. Where was everyone?”

“We go do some things. You’ll see.” Dimitris said in a mysterious way. Andreas brought Morgan in and put her on the sofa.

“How’s the foot doing?” I asked.

“Not bad, I can walk on it, it’s just a little sore,” she said.

“Where were you guys?” I asked her.

Morgan looked around for someone to step in and save her from saying anything, because she’s such a bad liar, she knew she couldn’t fool me if she didn’t tell me the truth. I really wasn’t looking to find clandestine activities, but her demeanor gave her away.

“Uh, Dimitris went to check some things, and we were going to talk to the priest, but, I don’t know, you need to ask Dimitris! Andreas and I just waited in the car.”

“Helena?” Dimitris called from the kitchen.

I came up behind him and put my arms around him.

“Come, sit.” He led me to the kitchen table, where we sat facing one another, and Dimitris holding my hands. Leaning forward he said,

“In Orthodox we have ceremony for all things. Very nice. We have lessons with priest then engagement. From then, not to be together until wedding.”

“Yes,” I said.

“Orthodox, rings go on right hand,” he said. “You have captured my heart, Helena, and you will marry me, yes?”

“Yes.”

“So, in West, rings on left hand.”

“Right,” I said, and he looked at me with a small smile.

“Until we do Orthodox, I get this for you as promise.” He reached into his pocket and said “for you to wear on left hand. S’agapo, Helena.”

I couldn’t say anything. I was filled with emotion. I was speechless. What a surprise! I finally said,

“It’s so beautiful.” He slipped the ring on my finger and I had no words. He held my cheeks, and smiling he said,

“We will be happy, yes?”

I nodded “yes,” we embraced, and he kissed me as we stood in the kitchen.

“Don’t cry, my Heart.”

“I won’t. This is so beautiful, Dimi. This is too much though. You shouldn’t have done this. The Orthodox would have been enough.”

“Yes! I have to do! You will not be out there for the others, so you wear. From engagement, I am not to be with you until we do Orthodox ring, so you wear this now, make Dimi happy.”

“I love you, Dimi.” I said and kissed him. We stood in loving embrace for a few minutes as I couldn’t let go of this man.

“You are rested?” Dimitris asked.

“I’m good.” I said. “How did you know what size ring I wear?” He nodded



toward Morgan. "You are sneaky, aren't you?" I said as I traced his jaw to his chin with my finger.

"Well, you would not want me to buy things, so..." He stood me at arms length and looked into my eyes and said, "We go to Stefano and Rena's on Andreas' Day, you will see about dress and bridal stuff, okay?"

"Isn't it a little early for the dress?" I asked.

"All kinds things to do, best to start." I wrapped my arms around him.

"Whatever you say, Dimi. Tomorrow I'll try to talk to the Parish priest."

"No, not here. We do on Karpathos."

"Karpathos? We'll need more than a day in Karpathos to do this."

"Yes."

"Does Andreas know about Rena's celebration?"

"Yes, he knows, so no surprise."

"Okay, now, what plans have you set for tonight?" I asked.

"None."

I went into the living room, shaking my finger at Morgan in a scolding manner.

"You have been conspiring in covert activities!"

Morgan laughed. Andreas came in just as I was scolding her.

"Yes, she is a major conspirator!"

"Thanks!" She said, as Andreas sat next to her and put his arm around her.

"What else have you guys been up to?" I asked.

"That's all, that's it, nothing more. Do you like the ring?"

"It's so beautiful. Some promise ring! It must have cost a small fortune!" I said. "Did you help him choose it?"

"No, he did that all by himself, in fact, I think he already knew what he was getting."

I peeked into the kitchen, Dimitris turned and smiled at me.

"Can I help do something?" I asked.

"If you rinse lettuce and tomato, epharisto."

"You have been up to something." I said as I prepared the salad.

"Up to something?" He questioned with an innocent look.

"Yes, there are things you're not telling me." I said.

“But I tell you everything.”

“I don’t think so,” I said, then walked over to him and in a kidding way, I whispered, “Confess! Your cover has been blown.”

“You play with me!”

“I couldn’t resist.”

“Good morning! Good morning!” Andreas bounced into the kitchen with his joyful enthusiasm. Dimitris and I were having our usual morning coffee and talking about what we should be doing.

“How’s Morgan’s foot?” I asked.

“She is walking today!” Then Morgan came in with one shoe in her hand.

“Will you help me with this?” She asked, carrying her shoe and the elastic bandage. “I think I should wear it one more day.” She sat in one of the chairs.

“Let me do.” Dimitris volunteered. He wrapped her ankle like a pro and she then was able to put on her shoe.

“Bandage too big for small foot.”

“Maybe if they were bigger I wouldn’t keep hurting them,” she said.

“Are you sure you can walk on it yet?” I asked.

“Yeah, it’s fine, I just want the extra support for awhile. It doesn’t hurt anymore.”

“Good.” Dimitris said.

“We were talking about going into New Rhodes City. Dimi has to pick up some forms and maybe we can look around for bridal shops or fabric. Do you think you feel like coming?” I asked Morgan.

“Hell, yes!” Morgan said. “I’ve been laying around here for too long. I’d like to look around too, I’ve got to get some samples to show Rena.”

“How about you, Andreas?” I asked.

“I have to go to Kos. I won’t be back until around 3 p.m. I’m going to leave right now to get to the airport, so I wish you all a good day. Dimi, I will take the Bug.” He bent over Morgan and gave her a kiss.

“Okay, well, I’ll miss you, I wish you’d come with us.” Morgan said as she walked with him to the door.

"I would, but I need to get work done before all of the events. You be careful, let Dimi help you if you need it."

"Okay, don't worry." Morgan said. They kissed and hugged and said their long goodbye. He got into the Bug and was gone.

"Ready to go?" Dimitris asked.

"I guess so!" I said. We piled into the land barge and drove to New Rhodes City.

"What do you have to do today, Dimi?" I asked.

"Find out requirement to get license. Do forms, see to details," he said.

"How long will it take? We can be sure to meet somewhere," I said.

"Maybe two hours, I call cell phone to tell you I love you and how long to be. Morgana, don't over tire foot. Sit when possible."

"Okay."

We were being dropped off in town where there were new shops and old, with quite a variety of goods to covet.

"I guess we'll see you later." I said. I kissed him good bye, then he was off.

We were in the newer end of Rhodes City where the hotels and resort shops were at every turn. We looked around the major stores and specialty shops, but all I could do was take notes and take some pictures.

"This is so confusing. I need to get together with Rena, maybe she can give me an idea of tradition and what is expected in an orthodox wedding dress."

"That would be a good idea, but we still can look at fabric. I need to get some samples for her anyway. We really should go to Symi. The fabric there is gorgeous!"

"How many samples have you collected so far?" I asked.

"I've gotten quite a few. I asked the lady in the last shop about where the best place to find bridal things would be, she said probably Santorini. A lot of people go there to get married, I guess," Morgan said.

"Your ankle is looking a little swollen, why don't we go to the Kafenia? You can get off your foot," I suggested.

The Kafenia was just around the corner, off of the main lane of traffic, in an alley. We went in and sat in a booth where Morgan could put her foot up. We had just taken a table when Morgan's phone started ringing.

"Are you going to answer that?"

"Someone keeps calling and hanging up, it's been happening for the last three or four days. I'm ready to throw it in the sea." Her exasperation was fogging up her sun glasses.

"Does it show the caller's number?"

"Are you kidding? Nothing helpful like that. I just let it ring." The waitress brought us our sodas and we later ordered some lunch.

"Have you and Andreas discussed anything permanent yet?" I asked.

"He's hinted around about it, but I don't know if I'm ready for that," she said.

"You love him, and he definitely loves you."

"I know, but getting into a binding, legal deal scares me. What I don't get is why you're taking the plunge so soon. Why would you want to get married so fast?"

"Well, there is a lot to be said for being married. When you're living together there's always that little piece of escape that lingers when you're not married. I don't want that again. I don't mind living together for a while, but beyond that I'd want to be married. It's just better if you really love someone. You don't have to hold back emotionally when you're married, like you're reserving a part of you "just in case". Do you know what I mean?" I asked. "It's like you've been holding your breath all this time, and now you can finally breathe. You know that there can be no doubt that you can depend on this person who loves you enough to want to marry you, to be there for you. That's something I need in my life, I don't want to be always on my guard that if we have a fight, he'll just walk out."

"I don't think you'd have to worry about that with Dimitris, but being married isn't going to stop someone from walking out. I've never allowed myself the luxury of leaning on someone, being taken care of and not being on the alert all of the time. I don't know if I can let go of that part of me." Morgan went quiet for a moment as if in deep thought.

*The Plan*

“I guess you really feel married after all that, and as you say, that doesn’t guarantee that there won’t be any cheating. With all the hassles, you do have to be committed to the other person and if you get through it, I think the marriage has a better chance.”

Morgan nodded in agreement.

## *The Nightmare*



**W**e were just about ready to go. The waiter left our bill and we were just leaving the booth when I looked up. I thought I saw those two men who threatened us, and they were with two other men.

“Let’s just leave the money here on the table and get out of here,” I said, helping Morgan get out of the booth.

“What’s wrong?” She asked. When I told her, she tried to see where they were.

“Come on, we’ll just be quiet and sneak out.” We were almost to the door when the waiter yelled at us in Greek!

“Shh, what is it?” I asked him.

“You pay! Here you pay!” He shouted. I ran back to the table, got the money and handed it to the cashier.

“Okay.” He grumbled. By this time we were spotted, so Morgan and I hurried out the door.

“You!” We heard someone yell. “You there!”

It was them! I knew that we were in no condition to run, and where would we run to? Morgan was having a hard enough time walking. We made our way toward the main road. Suddenly I heard Morgan scream! I turned to look, they had her by the arm, grabbing her purse and pushing her back against the wall.

“What are you doing? Get your hands off of her!” I said. Then the tall one that we saw before grabbed my purse, and then the smaller stocky man came up and kept poking his finger into my chest, each poke harder than the last.

“Where picture?” He kept saying, forcing me backward. One of the men took hold of Morgan’s arms as she was trying to defend herself. She was trying to scream, but a hand went over her mouth.

I was pushed into a cardboard box that was sitting on the ground by the brick wall of the building. I fell over and hit my head on the brick.

“Where is photo?” The man hovered over me, angry and threatening to hit me.

“I threw it away!” I yelled. He got a wide eyed, wild look and hit me with his fist across my cheek near my eye. Then I felt a kick.

“Hello? Lady?” I heard.

I was dazed. It was nearly dark. Someone was putting a cold cloth on my head. I had blood in my hair and my ribs hurt when I breathed.

“Where is Morgan?” I looked around the alley, she wasn’t there. The people helped me up and brought me into the Kafenia through the side door.

“Where is my friend, she was with me before.....” I was in agony! I heard my cell phone ringing, it was still in the alley under the box that I fell into.

The matron of the kafenia retrieved the cell phone and answered it. I was holding an ice pack on my eye, when I heard all this Greek going on as she came in from the alley, talking on my phone. I held out my hand for the woman to give me my phone.

“Hello?” I barely could get the word out.

“Helena, where are you?” Dimi asked.

“Dimi, I’m at the Kafenia Marcos, we’ve been mugged and I don’t know what happened to Morgan.” I started to cry.

“Did you call police?”

“I don’t know if they did or not. Hurry, Dimi.”

I kept trying to ask about Morgan, but they were all speaking Greek and putting ice packs on me. My clothes were torn, my shoe was missing and I think I had a knot on my head as big as a grapefruit.

“Helena!” Dimitris called from the front of the Kafenia.

“Dimi!” I called out to him. I tried to stand to go to him, but the pain in my side made it difficult to maneuver. His arms wrapped around me as he fell to his knees.

“What happened? Who did this?”

“Dimi, Morgan is gone! They took her!”

His big eyes got even bigger. He took out his cell phone and made a few calls, one to Andreas and one to the police.

“Sit, Helena, you are hurt.” He turned and took a table cloth off of the table close by, and wrapped it around my shoulders. “You will have bruised eye.”

He stood and looked at my head. “Who did this?” He looked at the proprietors. They didn’t know.

“It was those thugs that want the picture,” I said.

Just then the police arrived. They started asking all kinds of questions. I gave them Morgan’s description and that of the men who accosted us. I was in too much pain to do much else.

Dimitris put his hand gently on my cheek and looked at both of my eyes. He took the ice pack off and looked at my head. He sat, holding my hand while the police asked questions and was interpreter for me. After what seemed like hours, I spotted Andreas come in and nodded to Dimitris to go to him. Andreas went ballistic! I had never seen him this upset and emotional. He paced back and forth and waited to talk to the police. Dimitris told him everything that we knew. I started to stand, when Dimitris came over to me.

The policeman said something to Dimitris in Greek, then he told me,

“You will go to station tomorrow.”

“Yes.”

“What are they going to do about Morgana?” Andreas wanted to know.

“They said they would look, but...” I said.

“This is not good, they do nothing! We’ve got to do something.” Andreas was pacing.

“We find her,” Dimitris said. “Come, I take you home, then Andreas and Dimi, we find Morgana.”

When he put his arm around me to help me up, I moaned in misery.



“What I do?” He asked. I held onto his arm as I hunched over in agony, holding my side.

“I’m okay, let’s go home, drop me off, and go look for Morgan.” I gasped. “Please hurry.”

“We will find Morgana. You will rest,” Dimitris said.

He helped me climb into the land barge then he sat next to me, afraid to touch me. I wanted to put my head on his shoulder, but I had a black eye in progress and a cut on my head. Dimitris took my hand and found abrasions on my knuckles.

“How could I let this happen? What to do with you?”

“Don’t ball me out, Dimi, I feel bad enough.”

“No, I do not do that, I worry for you, and Morgana,” he said.

“How did you get in the alley?” Andreas asked.

“We tried to get out of the café, but we were surrounded, then they grabbed Morgan and pulled her further back in. I went back to try to help her.” I said.

“You sit or go to bed, lock doors, wait for Dimi to return,” he said as he brought me into the house.

“Dimi, the first time we saw those men, we were at the drug store where we got our pictures printed. That’s where that cashier yelled and they followed us from there,” I said.

“We go get Morgana. Put cold on eye, we be back.” He kissed me gently.

I stood and went to him. “Be careful Dimi, please, be careful,” I said and kissed him again. When I reached up to put my hand on his cheek, he saw my chest, and the bruises. His eyes latched on to the bruises and I could see the anger in them. He closed the tablecloth around me and hugged me gently.

“Put clothes in plastic bag when changed. We give to police. He turned to the sliding door and let the dogs in the house. “They will guard you while we go. Keep them inside.”

They waited for me to change out of the rags that I then put in a plastic bag for them. Then they left.

“We go to police first,” Dimitris said.

“This is the worst thing that could have happened! What was it that set them off, that little picture?” Andreas asked. “Why is this happening?”

"It is dangerous, that picture. Stefano was right!"

"He did warn us, didn't he?" Andreas said.

"This will not happen again." Dimitris said. "We must take them away from here."

"Where can she be? Where would they take her? By now, she could be off the island."

They parked in front of the police building which was facing the harbor. Entering the building, they searched for a familiar face. Andreas went up to the counter and hailed a clerk.

"Petros Poupulos?"

The clerk went to find this officer. The conversation was conducted in Greek. This officer was one of the first police personnel to get to the Kafenia Marcos.

"We have not found the lady. There were some items found in the vicinity, perhaps you can identify? Do you wish to view them?"

"Yes, we will look at them." Andreas said. They were brought into an office where three bags on the desk held an assortment of items. Some of the items were just discarded litter from the alley. It was hard to identify these items, as the men could not be absolutely sure.

"We will go, we look," Dimitris said.

"We should go back and check around the alley too," Andreas said.

They drove to town; back to the drug store. Andreas went in through the front, Dimitris went around to the back. Andreas looked for a matronly woman who may be the owner of this establishment. He began to talk to this woman. Turning on his charm, he was able to distract her. Dimitris first looked around the outside of the building. He looked in the trash bin, a lean-to that stored boxes and tires, then entered the building through a back door. He came into a store room, that attached to an office but saw nothing out of the ordinary. He left the store in the same manner. Andreas finally departed the establishment to meet with Dimitris in the land barge.

"I found nothing!" Dimitris said.

"She only said something about she 'has ways to keep thieves away' from the store. I couldn't get her to be more specific," Andreas said.

“We go back to alley, look again,” Dimitris said.

“How could I not see this coming, I wasn’t thinking.”

“They are American, Andreas. They trust, and do not think of bad things to happen. We be more careful,” Dimitris said.

“There’s more to this, more than what *we* know. Why would an old photo and a few innocent questions cause all this?” Andreas asked.

“Flash lights in box. We get out and look, maybe find something,” Dimitris instructed.

They parked on the street and walked up and down back alleys and dark corners. Every unusual bit of debris on their trek was examined. Would it be something of Morgan’s personal items from her purse? They could only hope.

Every person on the street was asked if they had seen this small dove, and none had. Their search had taken them in concentric circles, trying to cover every crevice of the city. Dimitris’ phone rang.

“Dimi, any word yet on Morgan?” I asked.

“No, my Heart, nothing.”

“I know that you’re trying, and this might be way out there but, those men followed us to the Paradiso. Do you think maybe.....?”

“Yes! We will check there. Did you lock all doors?”

“Yes, I’m okay. Did anyone check the hospitals?”

“We check again. Leave dogs in house, we be home late. S’agapo Helena.

Andreas called for an update from the police. No news. He called the local hospital; nothing there either.

They drove up and down and across every street and alley, over and over. Their frustration and worry was approaching panic.

“What am I going to do, Dimi, if something has happened to her?” Andreas lamented.

“We find her, we look more,” Dimitris said. “We get coffee, start over. We get tired we do not see anything.”

“Okay, maybe some coffee will help me think,” Andreas said.

They sat with their coffee and tried to think of where they would take her,

and why?

"We have to assume that she's okay, and that she's out there somewhere. If they dumped her or she got away, where would she go? What would she do?" Andreas asked.

"She hide. She find place to hide. Place to be safe," Dimitris said.

"If she's still on this island, she would try to find something familiar first, yes?" Andreas asked.

"Yes. Helena say maybe Paradiso. Maybe they make search, thinking photo hidden there."

"If she is in an unfamiliar area, she would hide until daylight, right? And then find help? I don't know, the Paradiso is too far away, we waste time there when we can be searching here," Andreas said.

"We start again. Places she know."

They got back into the vehicle and Dimitris drove toward the Paradiso. Andreas couldn't sit still. He frustrated over the time it took to get to the hotel. The clerks had not seen her. Andreas and Dimitris separated to scour the grounds and look around all parked cars and dumpsters on the grounds.

Dimitris worked his way around the pool, looking for anything that might point them in the right direction in which to find her. When he came to the bungalow, there was a small metallic object on the walkway below the step. When he picked it up, he recognized it as the metal clip that secures an elastic bandage.

He turned and hurried off to find Andreas, who was searching the overgrown shrubs, under bushes and benches.

"Andreas." Dimitris called in a quiet voice. "Andreas!"

"Did you find something?" He softly answered. Dimitris showed the clip to his brother.

"It's Morgana's! Where?"

Dimitris showed Andreas where it was found. They flashed their lights all around the walkways and bushes. Andreas flashed his light on the door of the bungalow. The wood had been damaged around the casing by the door knob. It had been broken into recently.

They quietly pushed the door to see if it would open. It opened with very

little effort. There was debris all over the floor. The whole place had been ransacked. Furniture, mattresses shredded with stuffing coming out all over the floor. Everything upside down and broken.

The flash light ran over dresser drawers that were tossed into the corners of the room, linens and blankets heaped on the floor. The light caught a slight movement from under the shredded mattress.

“Morgana?” Andreas called and lifted the mattress. Morgan laid on her side in a fetal position. Her legs bound together with the elastic bandage, hands tied behind her and tape over her mouth.

“Morgana, my God! Morgana.” Andreas was in shock at Morgan’s condition. Dimitris untied her legs and Andreas loosened her arm restraints. Morgan put her arms around Andreas and began to cry. He held her there for a few minutes, trying to calm her. Dimitris found the blanket from the bed and wrapped it over her shoulders.

“Are you hurt? Did they hurt you?” Andreas asked.

“Nothing is broken.” She said in a raspy voice.

“I will get car,” Dimitris said.

It was almost dawn, the light outside made it unnecessary to use the flashlights. Andreas was able to see Morgan more clearly. She had a large swollen bruise on her jaw and hand imprints around her neck. Her clothes were bloody and torn and her nose had been bleeding.

“Thank God we found you. I thought I lost you! I’m taking you away from here.” Andreas held her as she cried. “Let’s get out of here now.” He picked her up and took her out to the barge where he put her on the back seat, sat next to her and held her gently. She closed her eyes and Andreas could feel her body trying to recover from her horrendous ordeal. She quivered in trying to hold back her tears of fear and relief. She was safe now, and held protectively by Andreas.

“We are home soon.” Dimitris said.

They pulled up to the house quietly. Andreas had to awaken Morgan upon their arrival home. Dimitris went to open the front door.

I was at the door just as Dimitris opened it. I wrapped my arms around him, I was so relieved he wasn’t hurt.

“Did you find her?”

“Yes, we have her,” he said. He held the door for Andreas, who had Morgan in his arms. He went straight to their room then laid her on the bed.

I hobbled into the kitchen and wet a towel to bring to Andreas.

“You need to sit, I take to Andreas,” Dimitris said. “Are you putting ice on eye?”

“I was.”

“You go to bed, I will be there, okay? Go.” Dimitris said.

He handed Andreas the wet towel and left him to care for her. As Dimitris went into the bedroom, he noticed that the bed was still made.

“You have not been to bed?”

“I’ve been so worried about Morgan and you two, and I had so much pain that there was no point in going to bed.”

He closed the bedroom door and came up to me.

“Let me see you.” He looked at my black eye, which was swollen shut. It had a small cut above it on the brow bone, and there were traces of blood in the white of the eye. The blood in my hair was from a gash on the top front of my head, plus a huge knot on the back of my head where I hit the brick wall.

He opened my kimono and saw all of the black bruises on my chest. He got a look on his face that I’ll never forget. He brought his hand up, then hesitated, and did not touch me. He opened the kimono further to reveal my ribs. My left side was turning a dark grape color. He sucked in his breath through his teeth.

“Ohh, Helena. Can you breathe deep? Is there much pain when breathe?”

“There’s some pain, but it’s not excruciating.”

“Good, maybe nothing broken. I touch, you tell me how bad, okay?”

I nodded “yes.” He gently moved his hand over my hot black and blue skin, which surprisingly felt mostly numb to the touch. I had major pain on the ribs when pressed upon, but it didn’t feel like anything was broken and I didn’t want to cause him more worry.

“He closed my kimono and tried to hug me without hurting me, which was near impossible, but I had to have him close to me regardless of the pain.

“Helena, Helena; I hurt for your pain. I will not let you be hurt again, ever.

We leave here.”

“Where would we go? This is your family home, we’re safe here,” I said.

“When I see this, your pain, someone touch you like this, I get very angry. If I find man who did this, I will kill him. If I kill him, this man go away for very long time, then no one to care for you, so we leave. Leave Rhodes.”

Andreas helped Morgan to change her torn clothes and cleaned the dried blood that had fallen on her body. She had abrasions on both elbows, a loose tooth, her nose was not bleeding any longer but her jaw was swollen and very painful. She felt like her throat was disjointed, and would cough from the discomfort. Her arms had strangulation marks from the rope that bound her. He helped her to the bathroom where she could wash her face and rinse her mouth. It gave her strength and revived her somewhat.

“That’s better. Oh! My foot, I think there’s something in it.”

“Come, we’ll look at it,” he said. He put her on the bed and asked if she could roll over so that he could see the bottom of her foot.

“Let me get the tweezers.” He momentarily left the room.

“Dimi, come here, I need your help,” Andreas called. Dimitris came in and looked at Morgan’s foot.

“How do you feel now, Morgana?” He asked as he touched her ankle.

“I’ve felt better, but I am so grateful you guys kept looking for me.”

He manipulated the tweezers and pulled out the glass.

“There,” he said. “Andreas will put something on there, iodine.”

“No! Not iodine!” Morgan bolted.

“Only kidding, we will find something.”

Morgan sat up on the bed with the afghan around her shoulders, but Dimitris spotted the bruises on her neck.

“Does neck hurt when swallow?”

“Yes, it’s like it’s disjointed, it clicks.”

“Yes, happens when choked. I am sorry Morgana,” he turned to Andreas. “I go to bed now Andreas, we all go to bed, eh?” Before Dimitris closed their door he said in a soft voice to Andreas: “Watch her, she is very fragile.”

I could only lay on my right side, so it was hard to be close to Dimitris. I couldn’t put a lot of pressure on the side of my face and my ribs couldn’t

handle the pressure of the blankets.

“I have no place to touch, I hurt you!”

“Do you want to sleep on my side of the bed? I’ll at least be able to see you.”

“Yes.” He said and bounded out and around the bed. I maneuvered myself to the other side of the bed where I could see him. He was able to kiss me and by putting his leg over mine, we found another large bruise on the side of my upper thigh. I was able to share his pillow and put my arm across his chest. He kissed my hand and held it to his heart. In a soft voice he told me a story in Greek.

Andreas brought Morgan some Chamomile tea and called the police department. He told them that she had been found, where she was found and her condition. They agreed to delay the taking of statements from her and pictures of our bruises. She was finally safe in Andreas arms and they both were able to finally get some sleep.

In the early hours of morning I heard a scream! It jolted me awake. Dimitris got out of bed and opened our door. He could hear voices and Morgan crying from the other bedroom.

“It’s Morgana.” He said in a soft voice as he crawled back into bed.

“She must still be in shock. Poor thing,” I said. Every muscle in my body ached. I could hardly move to sit up.

“Your eye needs cold pack,” Dimitris said.

“I don’t think it’ll help much now. Come closer and hold me.” I asked.

“I hurt you, you tell me.” I was able to cuddle with him, as long as my eye had a soft spot upon which to rest.

I slept for a long time. I could feel Dimitris get out of bed, and every time I’d move I’d wake up. My body was so depleted, I could only sleep.

Dimitris was on the phone most of the day, making one arrangement after another. By 6:30 pm. I woke up enough to use the bathroom and throw on a caftan. I hobbled into the kitchen where I heard voices.

“You are up.” Dimitris said as he took my arm and helped me to a chair.

“Oh my god, Helena, you look terrible! You both could have been killed!” Rena said as she came over to give me a little hug.

“Rena! You’re here!” I said.



“Well, I couldn’t let these guys have all the fun.”

“Dimi has been an angel,” I said.

“I wanted to help out, I see they didn’t steal your ring.”

“They weren’t out to rob us. Is Morgan still sleeping?”

“That poor kid, she got up for a few minutes a couple of hours ago, but she was so exhausted,” Rena said. “Your eye looks so painful.”

“If it would stop throbbing, I could live with it,” I said.

“You will eat something then take something for pain,” Dimitris said.

“Rena, it’s sweet of you to come all this way, but there’s nothing for you to do. We just have to rest,” I explained.

“Dimi wanted me to be here if they have to leave to do something; and I don’t mind. Stefano is in Athens at the University this week, so I’m all alone anyway. So if you need me to do something, I’m here.”

Dimitris fixed a great soup, very warm and tasty, but I could hardly eat anything. Everything hurt in one place or another, especially my ribs. Dimitris gave me something for the pain.

“Take again in 4 hours if you need,” he said. “Tomorrow, police want to see you and Morgana. Look at pictures and pick out thugs.”

I had to laugh, it wasn’t funny and I certainly did not want to go there, but the way Dimitris said it, it struck me funny.

“How is Morgan doing?” I asked.

“She’s doing pretty well, physically. Emotionally, I don’t know. She doesn’t want to talk about it,” Rena said.

“She is still in shock,” Dimitris said.

“I want to see her, when she’s ready. Dimi, do you have anything I can use as drawing paper? I want to see if I can make some sketches of these men from memory, before I get confused,” I asked.

“I have roll freezer paper, is okay?” He asked.

“That would be good, as long as it isn’t waxed.” I went about the task of trying to translate my memory to my hand. It had been a long time since I had done any sketching. “I’ll have to ask Morgan if she thinks these are right. Maybe it will save some time with the police.”

“They look like thugs to me, that’s pretty good, Helena,” Rena said.

“Thanks. I hope that they are close to what they look like.”

“Did you take pain pills?” Dimitris asked.

“Yes, I took them. I’m sorry, Rena, I can’t sit here any longer,” I tried getting up off of the chair. Dimitris took my arm and helped me back to bed. I yelled to Rena as I went down the hallway, “Thank you, Rena.”

“Look at me Dimi, won’t I make a lovely bride?” I said with sarcasm.

He sat next to me and looked at my swollen black eye. “Is going down little, you will be beautiful bride,” he said.

“That’s a good one,” I said in a defeated tone.

“You have pain, go through much, you feel better soon.”

I didn’t want to tell him that it’s not the pain; it’s not the black eye or the rib. It’s the way I feel. The way I am. I felt suddenly depressed, and I know that feeling too well. He put his arm around me and kissed me, long and slow, and sweet. I wanted him so badly, but it wasn’t going to happen.

“Now, lay down, here is cell phone, call me in kitchen if you need this man. Rest.”

“Could you hand me the TV remote? I’ll watch something for awhile.”

He handed me all of the remotes, kissed my forehead and said “I love you, my Heart. Do not let this make you sad. It will be okay.” I tried to smile, then he left the room.

“Andreas,” Dimitris said when he came into the kitchen. “How is Morgana?”

“She is doing better but she won’t talk. She has shut me out. I’m worried about her,” Andreas said.

“Maybe they both talk tomorrow. Police want to know.”

“Rena, make yourself at home, we’ll call it an early night. Did Helena do these sketches? This one looks like someone who was in the drug store when we went there,” Andreas said. Dimitris went to his brother and they each looked at the sketches, then to each other.

“I hope Morgana better tomorrow, Andreas,” Dimitris said.

Andreas entered the room. Morgan was laying with her arm resting on her forehead.

“Morgana, you must not shut me out. Please talk to me,” Andreas said.

“There isn’t anything to say,” Andreas held her in his arms. She did not reject him, he was glad of that.

“Tomorrow the police will ask you a lot of questions. We’ll leave Rhodes when you’re finished. We’ll go to Athens,” he said.

She looked up at him and let him kiss her. Her jaw was nearly black with a clear imprint of knuckles on her face.

“I’m in this first bedroom, Dimi?” Rena asked.

“Yes, is okay?”

“It’s fine. Will Helena need to go to the police tomorrow, too?”

“Yes,” he said, “thank you for coming.” Dimitris went back into the bedroom. “Are you asleep?” He whispered.

“No, come here, Dimi.”

“Are you getting rested?” He asked.

“I can’t get comfortable. These pillows just don’t work for me.”

“What you need to do?” He asked.

“Well, if I put them behind me to sit up, my ribs hurt, so I don’t know what I need.”

“Here, I have idea, see if helps.” He took all the spare pillows and a blanket from the closet. He rolled the blanket and put it under me and over a couple of pillows. Then he propped up my arms with the other pillows to form a sort of cocoon.

“This feels so good. What were you saying about leaving Rhodes?” I asked.

“Yes, we leave.”

“When?”

“Soon as this police business over.”

“I never dreamed that Rhodes would be a dangerous place. I mean, it’s not like Athens where you’d expect the possibility of getting mugged.”

“Not from here. They come in from somewhere else. Never have criminals like these in Rhodes.”

“Where would we go if we left?” I asked.

“Away from here, where you be safe.”

“I don’t understand. Your taxi is here, your home, everything is here.”

I sat up and tried to turn to see him, which was so painful. “Dimi, what

aren't you telling me?" I asked.

He looked away, then looked at me again. "I would wait to tell you when I know. I may be having new job. I will take if we move from here, away from Rhodes."

"I know that there are things that we've never talked about, and I didn't want you to feel that I want to know things that don't concern me, and were none of my business, but now I think I should know about things that will be affecting me, as well as our life together. I know that you want to take care of me, but I want to take care of you too," I said.

"Yes, Helena, you are right. I will tell you when I know for sure. Okay?"

"What is this job you might take?" I asked.

"Is bad luck to talk about yet."

"Okay, you know best, I hope."

"Ah, Helena, you worry about everything." I laid back, holding his arm that lay over me. He leaned over my ear and said in a soft voice,

"Tomorrow, we take two cars, so when we finish, we go. Morgana and Andreas they go when ready. If you feel like, we apply for license. May take a few weeks, or we see about other things. If you no feel like that, we come home. I will need to see lawyer also, but it will wait for now. You want to call your family, the storage, see how it's coming," he said and kissed my cheek. "Don't worry him with your adventure though," he said. "We sleep now, we think again in morning."

I kissed him good night and then I wondered why he would go to a lawyer? It started to bother me the more I laid there. The first thing that came to mind was a prenuptial document. I didn't want to think about legal issues on top of everything else. I know that a prenuptial agreement is a common thing, but it bothered me. I guess I still have some old-fashioned ideas. I hoped that this wasn't going to be another thing that had to be dealt with.

The morning came again, seeming to be different than all of the other mornings we've had in Rhodes.

"We need to get up, Helena, will be windy today." Dimitris said as he got out of bed.

"Is windy a good reason to get out of bed?" I asked.

“You are feeling better this morning!”

I didn't seem to be able to maneuver any better. Muscles, still stiff and sore. Dimitris had to help me sit up, then he was off to make the coffee.

I went into the bathroom and looked in the mirror.

“Holy shit!” I said, when I saw my face. The swelling was not diminishing as fast as I hoped, but my eye was getting a dry shriveled look to it. The color although definitely black and blue was also red with tinges of yellow around the edges. I looked like a walking rainbow! I put on my kimono and went for the coffee which was calling me. I walked into the kitchen, drawn by the aroma.

“Ah, I love the smell of fresh brewed coffee,” I said.

Dimitris turned to me and wrapped me in his arms. “Good morning, my Helena. Your eye, still mean.”

“Yeah, now it's *day glo*.” Dimitris looked at me, but I don't think he knew what I meant. He reached for the “WUF” cup, then poured my coffee.

When he handed it to me, suddenly I started crying. I don't know where it came from. Dimitris held me close to him, rocked me in his arms and said,

“Shh, shh, is alright, shh.”

“I'm sorry, I don't know what happened,” I confessed.

“Is okay, you release emotion, now is better, yes?”

“Yes, better. It just came on me, I don't know what happened. It was just there.”

“I know,” Dimitris said. “Shall we sit?”

“Good morning!” Andreas said as he reached for two cups.

“How is Morgana this morning?” Dimitris asked.

“She's trying. She's just so quiet.”

“Hello everybody.” Morgan entered the kitchen, then sat down. “Holy shit! Helen! You look awful,” she said. This was the first time I'd seen her since we were separated.

“Thanks, you're looking good, too!” I said.

“Yes! You joke!” Dimitris laughed.

“You've still got blood in your hair,” she said.

“It wants to leak every once in a while. I'll have to wash my hair before we

go anywhere.”

“I think better to wait. Police want to see first.” Dimitris said.

“I didn’t think of that.” I said.

Morgan was sitting to my left. I reached over and touched her hand.

“We were all so worried about you,” I said.

She looked over to me and started to cry, which made me cry. We put our heads together and cried with each other. We each were in so much pain and misery and worried about one another. Seeing what condition the other was in brought out our combined relief for each others safety, and the empathy we were feeling. We held onto each other in tearful consolation.

Dimitris and Andreas left the room. Morgan and I had a good cry and compared notes on our injuries. She was more open to talking about what had happened and it was a relief for her to unburden herself. I think all of the fear and horror of the incident that we had held inside and the worry over the condition of each other, had been released.

After we had cleared the air with our injuries, we found that we were still able to make each other laugh. Once the men heard us laughing, they came back into the kitchen.

“Need a refill, ladies?” Andreas asked.

“That sounds good,” Morgan answered.

As he poured our cups of coffee, Morgan reached for Andreas’ arm, he bent down and kissed her.

“I should get dressed,” I said, “as soon as I finish my coffee, I can figure out what to wear.”

“Be sure bruises can see easily,” Dimitris said to Morgan.

Andreas and Morgan drove into town in the land barge, while we drove in the Bug. We weren’t sure if by separation, one of us might be detained longer than the other.

We brought the sketches I had drawn to the police. Morgan agreed that these were close to what they looked like. Pictures of our bruises were taken as well as statements covering the sequence of events. The police were very considerate of us, although there were very few women officers that I

saw. Dimitris was not at all pleased to see that the officer and photographer were men, who examined and photographed our injuries. I'm sure if our injuries were more intimate in nature, that a woman officer would have been provided to us, with Dimitris' insistence. We were trying to cooperate as fully as possible to expedite the procedure, however, when we could not produce identification, they wanted to bring in the American Consulate. This nightmare was going to continue, so any hopes of leaving the island were diminishing.

The representative from the consulate was called and we waited for his arrival for an hour and a half. He was very helpful and understanding. They would be able to have faxed to them identification copies from America. New passports would be issued but it was time consuming. We were looking at a minimum of five days. We were allowed to leave the island if we notified the police of our whereabouts and left a contact number for communication. We were not allowed to leave Greece, but this wasn't an issue. Dimitris wanted to let my wounds heal more before we do anymore running around to court houses and churches. I tire easily and the staring that people do, because of my eye, made me uncomfortable. We were able to leave the police station before they would release Morgan. She had more details to her case, even though we were in the same boat.

"Is Rena still at the house?"

"Yes, she go home in two days," Dimi said. "I will go to Athens tomorrow, she will be here with you and Morgana. Andreas, I don't know."

We were driving home when Dimitris said, "You and Morgana talk, is good. Andreas worries, Morgana so quiet."

"I'm worried about her, too. When I hadn't seen her, even though I knew she was home, I was still afraid for her."

"I think Andreas is relieved," he said. "I am glad of it too, you are happy today?"

"I am better now," I said. "I just want to get settled, but now that you want to move?...I don't know, I'm just so tired. I want us to be in one place, get settled and make our home. I have been like a feather in the wind since I came here."

Dimitris got such a serious look on his face, he reached over and took my hand.

“Soon, Helena. Next week. We will know what will happen next week. I know then about job. We make plans.”

“We have to go to Rena’s for Andreas Day next week, we’re going to be busy.”

“Yes, so you will rest now, be ready for things to do.”

I knew I had been cranky and irritable lately. I was depressed and in pain. I have not been easy to be around. I was beginning to question my decision to stay in Rhodes, and wondered if my bubble had burst. When I wasn’t with Dimitris, I questioned our relationship. Then I thought, if I really love this man, I wouldn’t be questioning it. Then questioning my questioning? The symptoms were clear. I was depressed, but I’d look at Dimitris, so kind and patient, he’s concerned for my welfare, how could I not love him? Maybe it’s homesickness setting in? Homesickness can be wicked on the emotions. I didn’t think that was my problem, but then, I tend to over analyze everything.

Andreas and Morgan went into another room with the officer in charge of our case. Morgan needed to look over all of the items collected to identify anything that might belong to her. There wasn’t much left of her belongings.

After twenty minutes of waiting, Morgan came out of the room, and Andreas wrapped her in his arms.

“Are you okay?”

“Yes, fine, let’s get out of here,” she said.

The officer advised them of not leaving Greece. Andreas politely agreed and they left for home. Although Andreas wasn’t present when Morgan recounted her ordeal to the police, he was apprehensive that she may not have revealed everything.

“Did they ask you about rape?” She was shocked!

“They asked if I needed to be examined, I said *no!*”

“You would cooperate if.....,” he was interrupted.

“I wasn’t raped,” she barked.

“I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to imply anything.”



“Yes you did,” she said bitterly.

“No, I just....”

“You think I lied to them! You don’t think I’m telling you the truth,” she said. “You want me to take the test, don’t you?”

“Morgana, please, I just want you to be okay. If you weren’t raped, I’m glad for it and I believe you.”

“I think I should go see my daughter.”

Andreas stopped the car in the middle of the street.

“What are you saying, you want to leave?”

“I don’t know, I can’t leave Greece for awhile, so, I’ll have time to think.”

This revelation hurt Andreas. He sat there behind the wheel just staring straight ahead. The wheels were turning in his head. He was speechless. They didn’t speak the rest of the way home.

Andreas helped Morgan out of the car and walked with her into the house. We were in the bedroom when we heard the front door close. Morgan was coming down the hall.

“How’d it go?” I asked from our doorway.

“I don’t know, I’m tired, I’m going to take a nap.” She said and closed her door.

I turned to Dimitris and said, “I wonder where Andreas is, was he going to go somewhere today?”

“Don’t know, I look.” Dimitris went to find Andreas. He went out the front door to find him washing the car.

“Little Andreas, what you do? It will rain again and all this for nothing.” Andreas didn’t say anything. He continued to wash the car. I was listening to music, when Dimitris came in and closed the door.

“Something wrong,” he said.

“What? What do you mean?”

“Andreas washes car, will not answer and Morgana, something happen. Go, talk to her,” He said as he pulled me by the hand.

I knocked lightly on her door.

“Morgana, can I come in?” I asked.

“Sure.”

“What’s wrong? What happened with you and Andreas?” I asked.

“I told him I want to leave.”

“What?” I didn’t believe my ears.

“I really should leave. I miss Amy and I can’t take this anymore.”

“Don’t you love Andreas?”

“Yes, but he thinks I was raped,” she said. “There can be no future if he thinks that. It would always be there, doubt, and it’ll affect our relationship. So, I’d rather get out now than wait for the inevitable.”

“We can’t leave for at least a week. You’ve gone through a terrible ordeal, you need time to heal. You’re sensitive and vulnerable now, so don’t try to make any major decisions until you feel better,” I said.

“Yeah. I don’t want to hear it, just...just stay out of it!”

“You know, you hurt Andreas something terrible. He’s out there washing the car!”

“I don’t know what to say to him. We didn’t talk all the way home. I didn’t mean to hurt him,” she said.

“Sometimes we say what we feel, even before we’re sure exactly what those feelings are, or mean. The trick is to let them settle, let your emotions cure. There’s no hurry to announce every little emotion we feel, we have to understand what is the deeper meaning first. Maybe you can just explain it to him that you need time to get your emotions back under control.”

“Yeah, well, I don’t want to give him false hope.”

“Are you sure, absolutely sure that you want to throw away this man who loves you?” I asked.

“No.”

“Give yourself time then. You know, since this happened to us, and I have to blame myself, because if I didn’t start asking questions we wouldn’t be in this mess. Anyway, this morning after we left the police, I was questioning if I really love Dimitris and Rhodes. I wondered if the magical bubble had burst and I was awakening out of a spell. I had all of those feelings too, but I looked at Dimitris, and I couldn’t tell him what I wasn’t sure of myself. I thought maybe homesickness had struck me. I don’t know what my mind was making of all this. I couldn’t, or I should say, wouldn’t tell him. I couldn’t

hurt him when I didn't know."

"You too? God! I thought I was losing it! What you just said is exactly how it was, but I didn't think. I thought I was the only one. I don't know, I guess I should talk to Andreas. You'd think I'd learn my lesson! This seems to happen to me, and I always just jump before I think. Geez! This is going to be hard. I guess I'd better do it, though."

"He'll understand. He loves you," I said.

I went back to Dimitris, who was out on the patio with the dogs.

"You speak with Morgana?" He asked.

"Yes, we had a good talk." I sat on the circular bench under the tree. I felt deflated and weepy.

"What is wrong?" He asked. I told him how it went, that her emotions are in turmoil and that she was not sure of her own heart.

"She's talking to Andreas now."

Dimitris had the dogs loose and was throwing a ball for them.

"Dimi?" I called to him, and he came over to me. "Will you kiss me?"

He gave me a most passionate kiss. I needed that!

"How is your rib?"

"It's a little better."

"Good."

"Where is Rena?"

"She go to town, she gets Pitas and tomato, she want to make lunch."

"Okay, well, I'm going back to the bedroom."

Dimitris came to the bedroom also. He helped to disentangle my braid from my blouse. He stood behind me and kissed my shoulder and neck. We leaned back onto the bed. It had been too long since he held me in his arms.

Morgan sat on her bed and thought of how she would approach Andreas. She had her pride and it was hard for her to find the words that would smooth over this large bump in the road. To make Andreas understand and not alienate him further, would be difficult. How could she make everything alright with him when everything wasn't alright with her? She braced herself, hoped for the best and left her room.

“Andreas, can we talk?” He was rinsing the suds off the car. He turned off the water and dried his hands. He came to sit by her on the front porch bench. She put her hand on his knee.

“I want to explain, if I can, about what I said about leaving.”

“What more is there to say?”

“I...I’m confused, I don’t know what I’m doing! I don’t know what it is that I’m feeling and that scares me. I don’t know what it is that makes me feel like I need to hide. I didn’t want to hurt you, I get emotional and didn’t think.”

“You’ve gone through a lot, I understand that, but I thought you would be happy with me,” he said.

“I am happy with you! You see? I don’t even know what my emotions are telling me. I’ve been happy with you, that’s just it! If I left, I wouldn’t be happy where I would go, and I would always regret leaving you. It’s just, I feel like, *what’s next?* What’s the next thing that’s going to happen to me? I feel very unlucky, and I jump at every sound. It’s not you Andreas, it’s nothing you’ve done. Can you be patient with me? I need some time to calm down and sort out my feelings.”

“What can I do to help you? Should I go back to Athens, give you space?”

“I was thinking maybe I can go with Rena back to Karpathos, get started on the ‘museum’ and get my mind off of all this,” she said. “She’s going to need some help with your special day, too, so if I keep busy I’ll feel more normal.”

“Yes, you’re dying of boredom out here!”

Andreas took her hand. “I will give you time to recover, I have been insensitive about this. Thinking more of myself than of what you have endured,” he said. “You’ll feel safe in Karpathos.”

“Thank you.” She said and leaned into him to give him a peck on the cheek.

“But when something is wrong, tell me about it, alright? If I’m crowding you let me know, okay?”

“Okay.”

“Okay, let’s go in, huh?”

“I didn’t mean to hurt you, I guess I took it out on you. My jaw hurts, I’m afraid of my own shadow, I don’t know why I.....”

“I know, you’re sensitive now, I understand,” he interrupted. Morgan and

Andreas had barely closed the front door when Rena drove up.

“Helloooooo!” She sang out. “I’ve got groceries,” she announced. Andreas went out to the car and grabbed all four bags.

“How are you today Morgana?” Rena asked.

“Better. You’re looking good.”

“I try real hard, especially when I go to the market! I bought lots of stuff for Pitas, sprouts and cheese, all kinds of vegetarian things too, so Morgana, you’ll have a choice.”

“Gee, thanks Rena!”

Rena started getting all of the vegetables washed and chopped, cheeses sliced and others crumbled. The table was a buffet of sandwich stuffing’s for every taste.

“Okay, I guess we can dig in, where’s Helena and Dimi?” She asked.

Morgan and Andreas just had sly smiles, and didn’t say anything.

“Oh, I see. Well, let’s eat!”

“I think there is food out, we should help Rena,” Dimitris suggested.

“No, let’s stay here, I’ve missed you. I just want to stay like this.”

“Are you not getting hungry?” He asked. I looked at him, and knew that he was.

“Okay, let’s eat something,”

“Ah! There you are, what a beautiful caftan, Helena. Come on and eat something,” Rena coaxed.

Dimitris led me to a chair and had me sit. “I will get for you.” He said and stroked my cheek.

“Rena, it is a banquet! Thank you!” He quickly filled the Pitas and laid the condiments within close reach.

“When does Stefano come home? He’s in Athens?” I asked.

“Oh, any time now. He’s had meetings at the University and I guess they had him give a speech at a symposium while he was there. So he’ll be back maybe tomorrow,” Rena said.

“This is wonderful Rena! I love Pitas!” I said.

“The great thing about them is they’re light and you can put anything in them,” Morgan said.

“Would you mind if Morgana stayed a few days with you? She wants to see about the decorating?” Andreas asked.

“Oh, that would be wonderful, Morgana! Are you up to it? I mean, are you feeling well enough?”

“I think I should get started on it, if that’s okay.”

“Great! I can’t wait.” Rena was all smiles.

“She will do a beautiful thing for you,” Andreas said.

When Morgan and Rena finished, they went into the living room and were talking decorating. Andreas just sat at the table, looked out at the patio and drank his iced tea. I got up to take my plate to the sink. When I passed Andreas, I put my hand on his shoulder and said,

“It’ll be alright, she loves you; give her time.” He put his hand on mine and said,

“Yeah, I know.”

Dimitris reached over and tapped his brother on the shoulder, then came to the sink with me, putting his hand on my back, and whispered in my ear,

“I know I am lucky man to have you.” Then he kissed my ear. It was sad to see the shining light of Andreas sitting there so dimly miserable. He tried to act cheerful, but he didn’t fool anyone.

Dimitris returned to the table to clear the leftover food.

“Helena will talk to her again,” he said to Andreas.

“She will need time so, no, don’t.” Andreas then left the kitchen. He went out the front door and quietly shut it.

Once the food was put away, Dimitris led me to the bedroom. He made me lay on the bed, then put a cold wet face cloth over my eyes.

“Take the strain off eyes,” he said. “Is okay, we talk,” then he laid on his side facing me.

“What should we talk about?” He took my hand and looked at the ring he had placed there.

“I would like to show you church in Karpathos. Maybe we wed there? And

maybe mayor in Karpathos will marry us sooner. Take too long in Rhodes. What you think?"

I was going to take off the eye cloth, but he caught my hand in mid air.

"Yes, I really would like to see some churches, and find a pretty one."

"Good, we do that, maybe make shorter the engagement."

"The shorter the better, and that reminds me, how long will we be apart? From the newspaper announcement, to when, the wedding?"

"Yes, we hope for short time. Priest will give date, so we separate after lessons to wedding." He opened the top two buttons on my caftan and then pulled open the neckline of the dress.

"Let me see," he said. He was making noises and although I couldn't see, he was making faces over my bruises, I'm sure. He traced them with his finger and asked if they still hurt.

"Only the darker ones still do."

"No one to ever to hurt you again! I get angry to think on this!" I could feel him getting riled up all over again. I took off the wet cloth and reached over to put my hand on his cheek.

"It's all over now Sugar, don't get upset over it, okay? We have plans to make, remember?"

He reached over to pull me close.

"Oh! Wait!" I said with a start.

"I hurt you? Clumsy! Dimi get carried away." He didn't know what to do.

"It's alright, I...it was just a pinch."

"Not liking this! Always hurt you." He said and laid back on his pillow in frustration. I rolled over and planted a big juicy one on his lips. I think I scared him!

"What you do?" He laughed.

"I'm not broken, and I love you, I don't want you to feel like you're hurting me," I said.

"You are funny girl. I hurt you and you give me kiss."

"Yeah, well, you've been very good lately."

He started to laugh and gently wrapped his arms around me. And said something in Greek.

"You know, if you keep wearing that cologne and speaking to me in Greek, I might have to seduce you," I said.

"Ah, you teasing me. You will seduce me tomorrow when rib is better!"

"You just have to be like that, don't you?" I grabbed my pillow and with a twinge of pain, hit him with it. He was laughing and trying to defend himself. We were both laughing.

"Okay, now will you behave?" Dimitris said. I didn't answer right away. He popped a kiss on me and asked again, "will you be nice?" I wasn't going to give up except that I couldn't move and if I tried to squirm, it hurt.

"I give up, you win," I said.

"Yes," he said and kissed me very seriously. In the middle of this luscious kiss I said,

"Mmm, what did you do with my pillow?"

"You are a sneaky one! Here is pillow." He picked me up with one hand and stuffed the pillow under my head with the other.

"We are going to be good, Helena. We have fun, you like to laugh, you make this man happy. You surprise Dimi, every day a surprise."

"I surprise you? How do I surprise you?" I asked.

"You don't know?"

"No, I'd like to know though."

"Little things. I hurt you, you kiss me. You tell me things, then embarrass over them. You so sick you don't stand, but you make love. Many surprises. I like!"

"You're going to have a lot more surprises," I said. Then I kissed him like he kissed me. A quick pop on the lips. Three times. "I've got to get dressed and try to brush my hair. Oh God of pain! I hate this."

"I will learn to do this." Dimitris said.

"You will go to talk to Andreas and let me do what I have to do. Okay? Come on, get going."

"See? Surprises! Now you kick me out of bedroom!" He tried to act so tortured.

"Yeah-yeah." I said and closed the door behind him.

"See? Surprises!" I heard as he was walking down the hall.



As I sat there brushing my hair, I thought about Dimitris, his eyes, his scent, his sweetness. I love to watch him walking away, he has such a sexy walk, broad shoulders and the way that his hair falls over the fold of his collar. All this and a great lover. He's fun, attentive and doesn't hover. Nothing worse than a man who hovers and doesn't give you room to breathe; the needy type. I have a lot of shortcomings; I mean *a lot*, but Dimitris has shown me a new way of looking at life.

I thought about Morgan and Andreas. He is so in love with her, and I'm not sure if she sees this. I know that she loves him; but I don't think that she has let go of her defenses. It has been a short time that we've known these brothers, and maybe as time passes she will be more open.

When I went back to the kitchen, Rena had everyone laughing. Andreas was sitting with Morgan. He had his arm on the back of her chair, no touching at this point, but seeing her laugh was good.

Dimitris stood when he saw me, and offered his seat. "Coffee?" He asked. "Yes, thank you."

"Rena was telling us about Stefano and his adventures," Dimitris said, handing me my coffee.

"Shoot! I miss all the fun!" I said.

"Oh, I've got lots of them!" Rena said. "Like the time we had to camp out at a site in Arizona, some cave writings or something. Stefano points out every bush and plant. *Don't step on this, watch out* for that! He got real tedious, then he tripped over his own feet and landed on a cactus! I spent the rest of the week picking cactus thorns out of his butt! Now that was a fun trip!" We laughed. "Those little buggers disappear into the skin, you can't see them!"

"Do you usually go with him on these trips?" I asked.

"I try not to, but this one was in the States, so I went. When he called me yesterday, he said he was moving a podium stand for his talk and the microphone fell on his head!" We all laughed!

This little Chinese lady had more spunk and energy. She had a way of speaking that was small, a little bit on the nasally side and she had that big man wrapped around her finger. They were a good match for each other. She's small and petite, Stefano is big and I guess clumsy. She's aggressive and

he's on the mellow side. He's always got his hands in dirt, she's manicured and well dressed.

The phone rang. Dimitris got up to answer it.

"That's probably him, he probably lost the key to his luggage again." Rena said.

"That was police, they find things to identify. Want you to come to see them." Dimitris said to Morgan and I.

"I hope they found my camera." I said.

"Shall we go now?" He asked.

"Well, let's get it over with," Morgan said with a hint of dread in her voice.

We all piled into the land barge. When we got out, Morgan took Andreas' arm, to walk with her into the building. We were escorted back to the same room where we saw the other items they found. Spread out on the desk were several familiar items. My check book, no checks of course, my little black book, a card case, a rosary, my memory card from my camera, and other small items.

We picked out the items, most of which were valueless, then they were each pulled and labeled for evidence. My camera was not found. My sun glasses not found.

"Will we get any of this back?" I asked.

"It will be released." The officer said.

"When?"

"It would be the decision of the court."

"Great!" Morgan said. "Is this it? No suspects to pick out of a line up?"

"This is all, you may go."

"What a waste of time!" Morgan complained.

"Well, maybe we can still salvage the day. Let's go shopping!" Rena said. "I want to show you some things, see what you think."

Morgan had that "deer in the headlights" look on her face again. I knew what she was thinking.

"I'll be with you, nothing will happen." Andreas said to Morgan as he put his hand on her back. She put her arm around him and said,

"Okay." Then she turned to me and said, "sure you don't want to come?"

You might find something.”

“No, we see you later.” Dimitris interrupted. We turned and walked in the opposite direction of them in a hurry.

“What’s the rush?” I asked.

“No rush,” he said. “We need to buy you sunglasses. Sun should not touch black eye.”

Rena was letting Morgan go wild. The shops were loaded with exotic decorator goods and fabrics. Rena wanted to have everything shipped to her house, which made things easier all around. Morgan’s decorator sense was in high gear. Rena even bought a sewing machine so that Morgan could make pillows or whatever she fancied for the house.

Andreas was enjoying the process. Watching Morgan being creative and seeing the Morgan he fell in love with reemerge.

It had been nearly three hours when Dimitris got a call. “We will meet them in twenty minutes,” he said to me. We were in the middle of looking at rings in a very high priced showroom. I felt uncomfortable in this place. It gave us an idea of what we could and could not agree on in style and especially price. I was glad that we got the call to meet everyone at the car.

“We must decide on rings. Maybe in Karpathos we look.”

“You want to spend too much on this, it makes me nervous!” I said.

“Nervous?” He laughed.

“Yes, Dimi, I wonder sometimes if you realize the value of money. You work too hard to spend a lot of money on, on anything! You don’t question the price of anything. I worry about how you spend your money. You’re....”

He looked at me and I almost forgot what I was saying.

“I am what?”

“You’re too free with it,” he smiled. He just stood there and smiled, almost laughing. “It’s not funny, Dimi.”

“You won’t get angry?” He asked, then he put his whole arm around my neck and gave me a smooch while we were walking back to the car. “You worry for me spending, but we do not be pinching money when we buy rings. Rings are for always, we do not go cheap way.”

“But what we’ve been looking at is so extravagant! I don’t need anything

so expensive.” I tried to make him understand that although a big beautiful diamond is always appreciated, I wouldn’t want him to go broke getting one.

I wanted to suggest that what he wants to pay for a wedding set, he could buy another car and have a great taxi. I have to admit though, the little car with it’s swinging mirror is precious in it’s own way, and I’d hate to see him get rid of it.

“I was always the one left to pay the bills, do the budget, live within that budget and cut corners wherever possible. But none of that type of stuff seems to bother you. You scare me sometimes.”

He got a seriously strange look on his face. “This man never want to scare my Heart.”

“I didn’t mean scare, scare. It’s just that I want you to be more careful. Some one is going to take advantage of you if you don’t watch out!”

“I be very careful so you don’t worry.”

We found a Pharmacy that had a good variety of sun glasses, and although I got some odd looks where ever I went, it was a relief to put on some shades. Not only was this eye swollen and ugly, it was beginning to itch. This is the first black eye that I’ve ever had, and it surprised me how it looked differently strange, every day a new color. Not my idea of a fun accessory.

“Maybe we take picture of it, every day it is changed.” Dimitris commented.

“That’s what I want, is to be reminded of it.”

“I was only joke, we won’t take picture.” He put his hand on the back of my neck and drew me near him. He kissed my cheek then we waited for the others to show up.

## *Little Things*



**W**hen we met up with everyone, Morgan and Andreas seemed to be getting along well. They had decided before we arrived, that we might as well eat dinner out since we had to skip lunch. It was still a little early for dinner, but everyone was hungry.

“I have to call my dad when we get to the house. I’ve got to tell him about the container.”

“Yes, more information for shippers,” Dimitris said.

“Which shipper are you using?” Andreas asked.

“I don’t know who it is on the other end,” I said.

“We use Continental when we have jobs overseas,” Andreas volunteered.

“How long will it take from when it is picked up to delivery? Any guess?” I asked.

“It could take months,” Andreas said.

“I’d better get my sister in on this. I’ll need some legal papers sent as soon as she can find them. I can see that this is going to be a waiting game.”

“We buy what you need if ship is too slow,” Dimitris offered.

“I may have to go shopping after all, Rena.”

“Ooo, I know the perfect place to go.” She squealed with excitement.

“We do all that on Karpathos or Santorini,” Dimitris said.

“Santorini?” I looked at Dimitris, and he held my hand in both of his, got real close to me and spoke in a soft sexy voice,

“Santorini.” Then he kissed me.

“Santorini.....the island of L-O-V-E!” Rena joked, in her little sing-song voice. Everyone at the table got smiles on their faces, then Rena said, “I better watch out when I get there, I might have some big hunky man sweep me right off my feet, then Stefano will know what happens when he leaves me alone so much!”

“Rena, you are one funny lady,” I said.

“I’m serious! What you think I can’t get a big hunky man?”

“I think you have hunky enough!” Dimitris said.

“But I never get enough time. He’s always running off somewhere. If I didn’t latch on to him like a plaster, I’d never see him!”

When the laughter quieted down, Dimitris said,

“I will talk with this brother of mine.”

“Helena, when did they say your new passport will be ready?” Rena asked.

“They said that it could be the same day. I’ll have to expedite it or it could take forever. I guess they’ll want me to take another picture, so I’m going to wait until my eye is back to normal before I go over there.”

“Yeah, me too, my jaw I mean,” Morgan agreed. Driving back to the house, Rena was looking over fabric swatches and catalogs.

“Morgana, I can’t make up my mind. You’ll have to use your best judgment; I just get confused. Now, tomorrow we’ll get to the house and do whatever you need to prepare. The deliveries should all be there by three p.m. Do you think something can be started by Andreas Day? Or do you think you want to wait?” She asked.

“Andreas Day is Sunday?”

“Yes, is that not enough time? We think we’re having about twenty five guests, or so, so I would like to show it off!”

“That’s not much time, but we might get something accomplished. As long as the stuff is delivered on time, I can get a start on it!”

When we got to the house, Dimitris and I were going to watch a little television.

“Dimi?”

“Yes, my Heart.”

“Did you notice Andreas?”

“He’s lost,” Dimitris said.

“Maybe you should ask him if he wants to watch TV with us. Get his mind off of Morgan.”

“You don’t mind this?”

“I think we should.” He got up to go into the living room and deliver the invitation to Andreas.

They came back into the bedroom and since Andreas was more familiar with what to watch, we gave him the remote and let him make the decision of choice.

Andreas got comfortable across the foot of the bed. We were all content and able to see the TV, without being in each others way. We enjoyed being together, at least Andreas seemed to get his mind off his problem. I was so relaxed and comfortable that it was tempting to fall asleep. Dimitris would occasionally run his hand across my cheek or shoulder. After two hours Morgan came in.

“Here you all are! Rena went to bed, and suddenly the house got quiet. Anything good on TV?”

“The same old thing,” I said.

“I guess I’d better let you go to bed. Good night,” Andreas said as he got off of the bed and took Morgan’s hand.

“Good night,” Morgan said, and the two of them went to their room.

“I think he never leave,” Dimitris said. I got up and started the shower going, and then undressed. Dimitris came in, put my kimono around my shoulders and said, “put on,” then turned off the water.

“I need a shower, Dimi.”

“No, you are fine, too late to wet hair.” He took my hand, and sat on the edge of the bed, opened my kimono and said,

“Let me see ribs.”

He pulled me closer to him then gently touched my bruised side. He said something in Greek in a whisper, then kissed my ribs so gently. He worked his way up to my chest where again he whispered something Greek. This man was making me weak, and I just wanted to melt into him. He let my

hair down and kissed my neck. He swung me around in a graceful dance that cradled me back onto the bed. He followed me there. Every move we made seemed to cause pain but I needed him to make love to me. When I involuntarily groaned, he jumped away from me.

“S’agapo, Helena.” He said in a whisper, catching his breath. “This man will not hurt you. We will wait until you heal.”

“It’s okay, it didn’t hurt.” He looked at me with sympathetic eyes.

“More pleasure to work for next time. We rest now, you are tired.....what?” He asked.

“Nothing.”

“Must be something. I hurt you?” He asked as he skimmed over my arm with his hand.

“No. I was wondering, you’ve been single for quite a while.”

“Yes, long while.”

“Why me?”

“Why you?” I wasn’t sure if he understood the meaning behind my question.

“After all this time, you’ve had every opportunity to fall in love with any number of beautiful ladies. What is it about me that makes it different? I mean, what’s so different about me?”

“You are my Helena. You did not try tricks or acts. You laugh at little car, the mirror. I watch you first night. I talk, from heart and you listen, and not laugh when I talk English. I get beating heart when I drive for picnic. And still beating heart for you. I try not to look, but I see; I try not to get close, but I must. You cry and not hide it like shame. I try to leave, remember? At Paradiso, I try to go away from you, but you ask me to stay. We talk, you get cold with wet hair.” He laughed remembering these little things. “You did not want me. You turned away, again and again. You drive this man crazy. You took my heart, Helena.”

“I drove you crazy? Really? That’s interesting.”

“You not know this? See? All this intrigue comes from you for me. You don’t know what you do! See? No tricks, is real!” He explained, and kissed my forehead.

“I never dreamed that you paid any attention to little things like that.”



“Little things important, sometimes little things say what words do not.”

“You are very observant. I’ll have to be careful before these little things get me into trouble.”

“You already in trouble!”

“Oh, I know, I know! I came to this old rusty island and lost my heart after I tried so hard not to.”

“You tried *not* to lose heart to me?”

“Yes. You made it so hard on me though. I felt it the first time you looked at me.”

“Tell me,” he said, leaning over to look into my eyes.

“I knew you were a Scorpio from the start. It was like I was drawn to you like a moth to a flame. But, I had to fight this attraction I had for you because I couldn’t act on it anyway; because of Mark.”

“Tell me more.”

“You were always so sweet and went out of your way to help us. I couldn’t escape your eyes. They saw right into my heart. They still do.”

He pulled me over to lean on his chest and moved my hair up so that his arm wouldn’t be resting on it.

“Go again,” he said.

“The day of the picnic. It seemed like you could see my soul, and the way you took care of me when I was so sick. I don’t remember a lot of it, but I know how gentle you were. And then you would wear that cologne! Even after I told you how it gets to me, you would wear it, just to drive me crazy.”

“Helena.” Dimitris was surprised. “Why you not tell Dimi this?”

“When was I going to tell you something like that?”

“At that time!”

“I couldn’t tell you that! I hardly knew you, I was still with Mark, sort of, and... I couldn’t! Then when you showed me the oasis in the Valley of the Butterflies, it was almost more than I could handle! I could have melted right there, you were so sexy and so sweet, I had to walk away from you or....”

“Or, what?” He asked as he looked at me with those dark, sensuous eyes.

“I wanted you so bad. It took all my willpower to keep my distance from you. God! I can remember it so vividly.”

“We waste too much time,” he said solemnly.

“We had only met four days or so earlier. Too soon to jump your bones!” I teased.

“You should have told me of this. We could have made love at the oasis, mad and crazy.” His expression was so intent, so sensuous.

“I don’t think you would have fallen in love with me if I made love to you right away. It would have been like all the others you aren’t with anymore.”

“No, I fall in love, on way to picnic, I think,” he said thoughtfully.

“You are so funny, how do you know exactly when you fall in love?”

“It is funny thing. It start out as small attraction then creep up and hits in heart! Then I know. Dimi did not expect to fall in love.”

“It was the last thing I ever expected to happen to me!” I confessed.

Morgan and Andreas were in an awkward position. Andreas didn’t want to push himself on her; he wanted to give her space. Morgan didn’t want to alienate Andreas, but she wasn’t sure how close she wanted to let him get.

Morgan was more relaxed and almost her usual self. She felt good about having a purpose and a project ahead of her. When they got into bed, Andreas wanted to put his arm around her.

“I know you have a lot on your mind, and you aren’t ready yet, so I’m not going to pressure you into anything, but you’ll be leaving tomorrow. I’d like to hold you for awhile if that’s okay.”

“I’d like that.”

“S’agapo, Morgana.” He kissed her on the temple.

“It’s six o’clock everybody, let’s get up!” Rena announced as she tapped on all the bedroom doors in the hallway. “Let’s get this show on the road!”

Andreas kissed Morgan’s shoulder.

“Morgana, time to wake up.” He said to her as she put the pillow on her face.

She muttered into her pillow, and Andreas knew what she said, but he prodded her anyway.

“Morgana, are you there? I know it’s early, but you know Rena! More

energy than one person should be allowed to have.”

He felt her laughing under the covers and into the pillow. Suddenly the pillow flies to the side of the bed.

“Geez! I wanted to sleep! Oh, man! It’s too early!”

“She is relentless. Rena will not go away, so let’s get up. Okay?” Morgan sat up and fiddled with the blanket. Andreas got dressed and sat at the end of the bed.

“Were you going to go on to Athens?” She yawned.

“Yes, I’ll go to see what trouble I find there,” he looked around to see Morgan.

“I’ll miss you, I think,” she admitted. Andreas reached back and held her hand.

“Come on, get dressed,” he urged. “I’ll pour your coffee.” Then he went to the kitchen.

“Dimi,” I said. “What are we doing today?”

“We look at church and rings today.”

“You sure are cute in the morning, has anyone ever told you that?” His hair was all askew and standing on end. He must have thought that I was making fun of him. He hurriedly combed his fingers through his thick black hair.

“You are playing too early, Helena,” he said, and slipped me a quick peck on the cheek. We got dressed, and I made the best of my hair that I could, first thing in the morning, and took a look in the mirror at my eye.

“Crimeinee!” I said.

“What is that?” Dimitris asked as he looked at me in the mirror.

“My eye, look at it! It’s got a yellow bag underneath with a blue ring around it! Oh, cute!”

“But it is healing, you must be grateful.”

“I am, I just can’t stand it looking back at me. I’m so ugly.” I said.

“Well, after coffee freshen up. You don’t look again. Eye ugly, yes, not you.”

“Oh, thanks. That makes me feel better.”

“It is a beautiful color that goes well with your eyes. Just don’t wear no yellow today!”

“You’re funny, you’re such a funny man in the morning.”

We went into the kitchen where everyone was seated and having coffee with some Taralli, an Italian cookie made to go with wine.

"We'd better get a move on, it'll be almost 9:30 am. by the time we hit the island," Rena said.

"Can't go anywhere without coffee, Rena," I said.

"Well, you can always come out on the fairy later or the airbus, but Andreas is going on to Athens. He'll need at least six hours."

"Okay, okay, we're ready to go, just need one cup to keep the eyes open," I said.

"I will feed dogs before we leave," Dimitris said.

"Helena, come sit over here with me," Rena said.

"Let me get some coffee."

Dimi reached for our cups and poured the coffee. "We will need this." He said and tapped his cup to mine.

"I love you." I mimed to him before I turned to sit next to Rena.

She began telling me some of the plans she and Morgan made. I smiled at Morgan, and she seemed excited about what they were doing.

"Okay, dogs fed, we have cell phones ready, let us go," Dimitris announced.

We all piled into the land barge and from there we were launching the Athena. It was a beautiful day to be out on the water, at least at the moment.

I finally got Morgan alone for a few minutes and wondered how it was going with Andreas.

"I think it'll be okay, we'll be able to call each other, so..." she hesitated.

"But nothing definite?" I asked.

"No, not really. But he's been so sweet about everything. How's it going with you? You've made up your mind and are going through with it, huh?"

"Yes, full steam ahead," I said.

"How can you be so sure?"

"We talk, it's something I know in my heart is right. I finally asked him last night, 'why me?' You know what he said? I drove him crazy!"

"What?" Morgan laughed.

"He said that I didn't put on any acts or anything, I guess to trap him. I kept away from him, and that drove him crazy. I guess when I decided to cool it

with him, it threw him for a loop!”

“When did you ever do that? I mean you didn’t give him the cold shoulder, did you?”

“Yes, more or less. I didn’t even look at him the whole way to Rena’s that first time, after the “WUF” cup. I stayed away from him as much as I could without being conspicuous! And it was killing me, too. But then, this is before I got sick.”

“I didn’t notice you shun him,” she said.

“Do you remember when we first got to Karpathos and Dimitris came up and hauled me off around the corner? That was when he flipped out about me ignoring him.”

“Yeah, I remember that! That’s what it was about? Gee, I wish you would have let me in on it at the time.”

“I made it clear to him while at Rena’s, that we can be friends or whatever, but being cozy won’t mean anything. He was okay with it.”

“I knew something was going on, but I didn’t connect the dots.”

“I kind of think that living in a tourist area, these guys were used to the women coming in for a fling. You know, one week of total abandon and then they’re gone. They fall all over these good looking Greek men, and the men get used to the women who chase them, seduce them, then leave. So maybe when they get the cold shoulder, they don’t handle it very well. I’m not saying that’s what pushed Dimitris over the edge, but he did admit that it made him crazy!”

“Yeah but he was crazy about you from the time of the picnic. I could see that!” Morgan said. “I saw how he kept looking in the rear-view mirror. At first, I thought he was just driving, but he kept smiling, so I figured he was flirting with you.”

“Really? He smiled? I couldn’t see that with that cocked-eyed mirror! He said something about that, but, at the time I just thought it was me. I mean, he had been so nice, and his eyes were, well, anyway, I just thought it was all in my mind. You know how it is if you have an attraction to someone, every little thing that person does is misinterpreted to mean something that isn’t there.” I said.

“Yeah, I’ve been there before.” Morgan agreed.

“Hello? There you two are! I was stuck up there with the boys, what’s happening down here?” Rena asked.

“Helen was telling me that she gave Dimitris the cold shoulder the first day we were at your house!” Morgan said.

“Morgan!” I scolded.

“Oh that’s okay, I know all about it. Dimi was asking Stefano what it was that he could have done wrong, and why you were staying away from him, and all that stuff. Of course, Stefano didn’t know anything, so he was no help.” Rena chirped.

“What else did he say?” I asked.

“Oh, I didn’t stay there and listen, they started speaking Greek. But he was pretty much confused. I guess you were pretty friendly then shut him out?”

“Something like that.”

“Yes sir, he was a mess for a while, I’m not sure how long he would have lasted if that kept up, a good thing you decided to be nice to him,” she kidded.

“What do you think Dimitris would have done?” Morgan asked.

“That’s hard to say. I’ve never seen him like that. He’s a pretty passionate guy, I mean he’s not afraid to show his feelings, so, I don’t know. It might have been interesting to see. Now, Andreas is the one!”

“I don’t want to hear about it, okay Rena?” Morgan retorted.

“Okay, that’s fine, he was asking for you on the bridge,” Rena said.

“Thanks, Rena,” Morgan said and left to go to the bridge.

“She’s touchy.”

“She’s still fragile, Rena, she didn’t mean anything by it,” I said.

“Gee, I forgot, I’ll have to apologize,” she said. Just then her cell phone rang. “Oh, it’s Stefano!”

Stefano met us at the docks. Andreas and Morgan were on better terms than in previous days. Before he departed, Andreas carried her bag for her to the docks. He stopped her from walking away, said a few words which no one else heard, and kissed her deeply before she left. Andreas waved to us all then launched for Athens.

The scene was both sad and hopeful. They would be apart for four days. Andreas would come back Sunday for the celebration. At this point, it was hard to tell how long Morgan would be staying with Rena. She had her work cut out for her.

“Stefano, honey! How was the symposium?” Rena asked as she greeted her husband.

“It could have gone better. The Regents will give me an overview of the response, so we’ll see.”

“Stefano!” Dimitris said. “You have not been eating! That is what higher education does for you, you get thin!”

“Hello, ladies! Where’s Andreas?” Stefano asked.

“Honey, I already told you,” Rena said under her breath and nodded her head toward Morgan.

“He’ll be back on Sunday,” Morgan said.

“Stefano, we will have use for car later,” Dimitris said.

“No problem. There’s Rena’s if she’ll let you, or the jeep from the University. We’ll fix you up.”

“Today, we rest, make calls, tomorrow we do things.” Dimitris informed me.

Tomorrow was going to be a long day.

## *Andreas Day*



**A**ndreas' Day is the first name day celebration for Morgan and I, so I was excited to see this tradition. The expected guests numbered fifty people or more, coming and going throughout the evening. Friends, relatives, neighbors, and colleagues. It is more of an open house than a formal event, yet there are traditions.

"Helena, what you wear?" He took me by the shoulders and turned me around, looking at it.

"Is it too drab?" I asked.

"I like."

As the guests came, each brought a gift, which was placed on the table in the entry hall. Food was placed on the dining room table. Dimitris kept me on his arm and introduced me to relatives by the dozens. Even Mrs. Paolos came, who, as it turns out, is a distant Aunt by marriage. There were so many cousins and Aunts and Uncles that I lost track of names that go with faces. Andreas was the center of the celebration, so Morgan had more to contend with. I saw that one of the guests, a ship owner from the docks, had Morgan in a face to face animated conversation and needed to be rescued. Poor Morgan got stuck with this cigar-laden man when Andreas was stolen away from her by the cousins.

"Dimi, I'm going out on the patio, could you go get Morgan and bring her



out with you? I think she needs help getting away.”

He took a look.

“Yes, she certainly does.” He kissed my hand and I went out the patio door, grabbing a small glass of beer on my way out.

“Hello, my name is Camilla, I grew up next door to these boys! You are Helena! I hear of you. We all think you *young!* I try to get Dimitris to see my cousin, Rosa, but he always has taxi work. You are American? Hmm, yes I see. So, you are to marry him, eh? Rosa won’t like this.” She said, giving her glaring red lips a lick.

“It’s very nice meeting you, please excuse me.” I walked over to Morgan and Dimitris as they came outside.

“Where is Andreas?” Morgan asked.

“I haven’t seen him. I did however meet Camilla.” I said, and looked at Dimitris.

He took my arm and put his other arm around my shoulder. He spoke softly in my ear, “We stay away from that one.”

“I think Andreas got stuck with the cousins,” I commented.

“I go find,” Dimitris said.

“Don’t forget us out here.”

“I never forget,” he said and kissed my hand.

“Well, I guess we’re on our own,” I said to Morgan.

“I hope he finds Andreas, I hate this kind of thing. I always have some weirdo cornering me,” Morgan complained.

“You should have heard Camilla. What happened to Dimitris?” I wondered. “He was supposed to be right back.”

“Look! Isn’t that Camilla? And Dimitris?”

“And Andreas, we’d better go to the rescue!”

When we spotted them, Camilla was hanging on Dimitris’ arm and trying to drag another woman over to him. Andreas was stuck, being polite to another frizzy haired woman whom I presumed to be Camilla’s sister. There was a distinct resemblance. I walked up to Dimitris, slid my arm around his waist, kissed his neck and said,

“Hi Honey.” He put his arm around me and said, “I missed you.” He retrieved

his arm from Camilla and kissed my other hand.

“Excuse please.” He said to Camilla, then we turned and found Andreas and Morgan.

Suddenly, Rena grabbed Andreas. They were going to do some special thing that is done on Name Day. Dimitris took my hand and since all eyes were on Andreas, he led me out of the crowd. He took me to the loft room, blocked the door with a box and a brick then kissed me slowly and gently. He was so handsome, and I couldn’t resist him. The passion rose quickly. He was passionate to where we were losing control. He made me tremble and I gave in to him. We didn’t take the time to climb up to the loft. Dimitris threw down the packing quilt under the stairs and there we let our passion rule our bodies. We were an uncontrollable flame that had to run its course.

Dimi kissed me over and over as breathless as he was, and said in a whisper, “S’agapo. S’agapo, Helena.” Then laid his head on my chest. With his gentle hands holding me and his whispers of Greek, he kissed the tears that rolled down my cheeks as he was catching his breath.

“Dimi.” I whispered in breathless gasps, “Dimi, we can’t be doing this.” I said as he kept trying to stop me from saying it with more kisses. “Dimi.” I had to lift his face to mine. “Dimi.” He looked at me and gave me a passionate kiss, that nearly started everything all over again.

“Dimi, .....please,” I whispered. He totally exhaled and collapsed.

“You are right, what I do?” He looked up at me as I was trying to catch my breath. “S’agapo, Helena, help me.” He said in a soft sultry voice. “You must help this man be good. I cannot do, you help me.”

“Who’s going to help me?” I said. “We need to talk about this.”

“Oh, no talk, no talk,” he said as he kissed my neck and made movements that rocked me.

“Dimi.” I whispered in a semi-hypnotic state. I grabbed his face and kissed him with such intense passion. The world could have fallen apart but at this moment I didn’t care. He took my hand and put it deep between my legs. He brought up my fingers and pressed them against his lips. Then he kissed me passionately.

“Dimi.” I whispered. I was breathless as he brought me to new heights. We

lay in each others arms, the dim light sparkled off his eyes. His hair, so thick and black would come down into his eyes. I'd brush it back and he'd kiss my fingers. My weakness for this man is such that I have no resistance.

We got ourselves presentable, Dimi being my guide and my mirror, as I made sure he was neat and everything in order.

"I break your hair," he said as he tried to replace the comb. I took the comb, put it back in my hair, put my arm around him and said as we began to walk out of the room,

"We need to get a handle on this, Dimi." We went out to the patio and I asked him if I could just sit somewhere.

"Yes, in here, sit at bar. You are okay?" He asked with concern. I wiggled my finger in a "come here" meaning. He bent to listen,

"You make me weak and breathlessss," I said in a devilish way, as I stroked his cheek.

He stood and hovered over me saying in my ear, "You are being very, very mean again." And kissed my ear.

"Would you get me a beer, please, Honey?"

"I would love to do that and more," he said in my ear.

"Now who's being mean?" He turned and smiled as he got us each a glass of beer. Then he got hooked by Camilla again. She was using the fact that he had his hands full to try to fix his hair that came back down into his eyes. I was too weak to get up and go over there, so I had the pleasure of being able to observe.

She latched onto him and as he would take two steps away from her, she'd step three and get in front of him. Then she took one of the glasses of beer from him. I was getting a little aggravated at the scene, as he was being too polite to this cow. I turned on my stool to get ready to go in there, when my crossed legs accidentally kicked this man who was walking by.

"Oh, I am so sorry, I didn't see you," I apologized. When he turned to say something to me, I couldn't believe my eyes! It was Aiden! I fell in love with him back when I was still in college. It had been more years than I'd care to count, since I had seen him. There was a lot of passion in the memory of him. It was such a shock to see him here, of all places.

“Helen? Is that you?” He asked.

“Aiden?” I couldn’t believe how handsome and distinguished he looked.

“You haven’t changed a bit!” He said and gave me a hug and a kiss on the cheek. Then he quickly kissed the top of my hand, then fingers. He always was a charmer.

“How are you, do you live here now?” I asked.

“I work with Andreas, here and there. Small world isn’t it?”

“I can’t believe how small.”

“Can I get you a drink?” He asked.

“No, I’ve got one coming, I think.”

“So, how do you know Andreas?” He asked.

Dimitris came up and handed me my drink, and said,

“Hello, Aiden you have met my Helena?”

“Helena? This is your Helena?” He asked.

“Dimi, I used to date Aiden, many years ago,” I said.

“When you talked about Helena from California, I had no idea. I was just saying how this is a small world! Hey, it’s good seeing you, Dimitris.” He shook Dimitris’ hand.

“Helen.” Aiden brought my hand up to kiss it. He hesitated over it as though in thought, kissed it and went to the other end of the patio.

“What kept you?” I asked.

“Camilla! She remind me of Black widow. Can’t get away from her web.” I had to laugh!

“I wondered how long you were going to be polite.” My patience wavering.

“You are looking too sexy tonight,” Dimitris picked up my hand and brought it to his lips. He closed his eyes and whispered something as his lips touched my hand.

“That’s because you know I can’t say no to you.” I tried to get him to lean down to where I could kiss him, but he was trying to see where Aiden went while he still held my hand to his lips.

“Dimi, Dimi! What are you looking for? What’s the matter?” I asked.

“Nothing, nothing.”

“Then look at me!” I said. He then came close and kissed me with passion.

He was leaning me back on the stool with a kiss so penetratingly sensual, he could have taken me right there. I cleared my throat.

“Have you seen Morgan?” I asked.

“She and Andreas in living room, talking on decorating.”

“That’s good! I guess she’s on her way!”

“Yes, she will be busy,” he said.

“How long do these shindigs last?” I asked.

“Shindig? Party? Until everyone go. Are you tired?”

I got off of the stool and put both of my arms around him. I looked at him, and could see a little bit of something going on behind those dark eyes. I said,

“I’m not sure that we still have a room with all these people here. But, yes, I am getting a little tired.”

“I want to tell you something, but will wait for later. Not important.”

“Good. You know, I really was starting to get irritated with Camilla. If this wasn’t my first time meeting everyone, I might have had to tell her off.” I said.

“You jealous?” Dimitris asked.

“Well,....”

“You jealous!” He said, smiled and hugged me.

“Maybe a little, yes, but only because she was putting her hands on you.” I said to defend myself.

“You surprise Dimi.”

“Why, why would that surprise you?” I asked.

“.. but jealous, you never have to feel, Helena.”

“Dimitris, good meeting you, see you again, no doubt.” The gentleman shook Dimitris’ hand.

“Good night,” Dimitris said to the gentlemen as he left.

Dimitris put my fingers up to his lips, closed his eyes and said something in a Greek whisper, and kissed my hand. “These beautiful hands belong to me,” he whispered.

“Where have you been? We want the family around Andreas for a picture.” Rena said as she stepped in and took over the proceedings of placing Andreas in a chair with the brothers on each side, and the rest of the direct family all around. This was not an easy task, as everyone kept cracking jokes and

Andreas couldn't keep a pose to save his life!

"That's quite a ring you're wearing." It was Aiden, leaning against the bar.

"Where did you come from? You startled me," I said, in a state of shock.

"Yes, Dimitris spoils me."

"How long have you known him?" He asked.

"Not too long, why?"

"Nothing, just making conversation."

"He is the sweetest man," I said. "I'd better..."

"No, don't get up, I'll go if you don't like me talking to you," he said. I was so used to the jealous insecurities of Mark that my first thought was to flee.

"It's not that, I don't mind. So, how have you been?" I asked.

"I can't get over this, seeing you here in Greece." He took my hand and turned me around on my stool to face away from the action in the living room.

"You know it was a weird time, back then, I guess I have a lot to tell you about that," he said as he sat next to me playing with the condensation that dripped down his glass onto the bar top.

"That isn't necessary. That was a long time ago." I put my beer down on the bar. I started to turn back to see the action in the living room, when Aiden took my hand to his lips and said,

"You smell so good, Helen, or is it Helena?"

I snatched my hand back from him, grabbed my beer and said,

"Please excuse me, Aiden." Then I went to find Morgan, who was somewhere watching the men have their picture taken. I got there just when everything was over, the pictures were taken, Dimitris came over to me and put his arm around me.

"Rena, she is not to be trusted with camera!" Dimitris said.

"Where's your beer?" I asked. "Do you want me to get you one?"

"We go, want one cold?" He asked.

"Yeah, I could use a cold beer," I said.

We went to the keg, and Dimitris poured us another beer. He turned to hand me the glass, looked at me, smiled and shook his head.

"What is it?" I asked as he handed me the glass. He walked close to my side

and in my ear, in a soft voice he said,

“You make my heart leap, Helena, you are too sexy tonight.”

“Oooo, Dimi, I do believe you are flirting with me!” I said.

“Can’t help.” He took my hand and kissed it. He closed his eyes, holding my hand to his lips.

“Dimi? Are you okay, maybe you shouldn’t have anymore beer until you have something to eat.” I said.

He took me by the hand and led me back to the loft room. He blocked the door, as he did before. There was a desk lamp on in the loft, other than that it was dark. He surrounded me with his arms and backed me up until we were under the stairs again, speaking Greek in whispers and laying back on the blanket that was there from before. He was an uncontrollable force that I could not stop. There, under the stairs, he did things to me that sent me into spasms. There was always the sense of danger, with the voices of the guests going by the door. I was spent, I was weak, I was crying, I was in heaven. I didn’t want to let go of him, “stay like this, just until I catch my breath,” I cooed.

“We must not stay too long, my Heart,” he said, resting his body gently on me. He propped himself on his elbows and kissed my tear-streaked cheeks. I looked into his eyes. He took my hand and kissed the palm of my hand, and put my whole hand over his face and inhaled.

“Ooo, Helena, I cannot stop myself.” He put my fingers into his mouth and started to get wildly passionate. “Dimi, wait.” I said as I pulled his face up to look at me. “Dimi, stop.” He looked at me and kissed my cheek, then rolled to the side of me and was catching his breath.

“I’m sorry, Dimi, we can’t keep doing this!” I was catching my breath, and had to ask. “What was that, what just happened?”

“Your perfume, I cannot resist,” he said as he put my hand to his face. “It is a love potion. Too powerful.”

“I don’t remember what it is,” I said.

“No, perfume of you,” he said.

“I don’t know what you mean,” he stopped playing with my hand long enough to bring it up to my face and said,

“Inhale.”

“I don’t smell anything.” I said after trying to inhale.

“Inhale, lightly,” he said. “The perfume of you.”

“What?” I inhaled again. Suddenly, I knew what he meant. “We have to leave.” I said and I stood up.

He got up and straightened his clothes, and came to me, putting his arms around me.

“We will go out, you will be beautiful.”

“I have to wash my hands,” I said.

“No, do not do that, my Heart.”

“Go check our room, Dimi, see if anyone is in it. I’m so embarrassed.”

“Don’t embarrass over this. Is beautiful thing.”

“Not for me.”

“Only for me.” He said and kissed my hand, “ooo,” he said as he sucked the breath through his teeth.

“Where have you been?” Morgan asked.

“We kind of got pulled away, what’s up?” I said.

“This is wild! Everyone dancing, and Andreas, I haven’t seen him for more than five minutes all night.”

“Things should be wrapping up pretty soon. People are beginning to thin out. I hear you made a big splash in the decorating.”

“Oh my god, Helen, you wouldn’t believe it! I’m going to have to see what decorators charge because it looks like I’m going to be busy with a new career!”

“See! People appreciate your talents! That’s wonderful. You should get some business cards printed.”

“I go check room, be here, okay?” Dimitris said, and went into the house.

“You’ll never guess who’s here,” I said.

“I don’t know, one of the thugs? The rude lady cashier?”

“Do you remember my old boyfriend, Aiden?” I asked.

“Scorpio Aiden? You’re kidding! He’s here? I didn’t see him. Is he still here?” She said looking around.



"I don't know, I think he left, but get this, he works with Andreas!"

"He recognized you then?" She asked.

"I accidentally kicked him," I said.

"Where was Dimitris?"

"He got stuck in the clutches of Camilla, but I think he saw Aiden give me a kiss, you know a 'haven't seen you in ages' peck on the cheek. Dimitris and Aiden have worked together, for Andreas."

"Holy shit, you're kidding me!" She said.

"Dimitris brought my drink and they were friendly to each other. Apparently, Dimitris has talked about 'my Helena from California' because Aiden said that he had no idea it was me. I wonder how much and what Dimi has said about 'his Helena' to him?"

"Oh, man! That's awkward."

"I wish I could tell you the rest of it."

"Tell me! What else?"

"Maybe later, Dimitris will be back in a second." I said.

"What, tell me now!"

"You have to promise you won't tell Andreas this, or anyone, this is between you and me, and don't let on to Dimitris that I told you."

"Okay."

Then, with embarrassment, I told her what happened. This is the one person who would understand what is putting me in such an awkward, embarrassing place of existence.

She sat there, with her hand over her mouth, listening.

"Oh my god! Oh, and Aiden? He?"

"Well, you know how everyone kisses your hand around here? I'm so embarrassed. I hope I never lay eyes on Aiden again!"

"Take it from me, if there ever was anything between you and Aiden, and if he's single, do you know if he is single?"

"I don't know."

"Well, if he is, then you might not have seen the last of him, unless he doesn't have olfactory capability!"

"Geez, Morgan! I didn't want to hear that!"

“What does he look like? It’s been so long I don’t remember.”

“Back then he had brown hair and a dark, dark red mustache and sideburns. Kind of had a little bit of a young Montgomery Clift thing going on.”

“Oh yeah, I vaguely remember. He was pretty hot! You really loved him, didn’t you? I was there when you two broke up. So, what does he look like now?”

“Shh, he’s over there. The man standing next to Rena in the dark brown trousers and beige shirt.” I said. “Oh, I’ve got to get out of here. Where’s Dimi?”

“Do you still have feelings for Aiden?”

“What a question!”

“Did anything stir when you realized it was him?” She asked.

“Yes, he scared me. A wave of fright went through me.” I said.

“That wasn’t fright. This happened to me with Rick. It’s a natural thing, the heart doesn’t forget, Helen, no matter how much time has gone by. It doesn’t mean you’re still in love with him, but it does mean you’d better be careful.”

I looked at Morgan, I knew she was right. Even after all these years, the sight of Aiden made my heart jump.

“Gee, he’s still a fox, isn’t he?” She said. “And who’d have guessed you’d run into *him* down here? He’s looking over here.”

“Where is Dimitris? That cow probably has him in her clutches again.” I said.

“If you want to go get him, I’ll go with you.”

“No, I’d have to walk by Aiden, and I told Dimitris I’d wait here.”

“Right.” She said. “You sure can tell when there’s something going on with our brothers.”

“They do show their feelings. I wish Aiden would stop looking over here.”

“He is, isn’t he? Oh, there’s Andreas. Oh great! He’s talking to Aiden.”

“I’ve got to get out of here! Where is that man?” I was getting very impatient. “Since Andreas has Aiden occupied, I’m going to quickly slip by them.”

“Okay, I guess I’ll go listen to what’s going on.” Morgan said.

As I passed through the slider into the house, I tried to avoid Andreas and Aiden, and just slip by unnoticed. I found a mirror in the entry foyer and

tried to get my combs back where they are supposed to be, and remove the smudge under my good eye. I could see through the open front door that Stefano and a few other guests were out in front. I thought I'd look to see if Dimitris was amongst them.

I went out the front door, and there they were, looking over the fender of the Caddy.

"Here you are, what happened?" I asked.

"Someone dented my fender!" Stefano said.

"Is too bad." Dimitris said. "I am sorry to leave you so long." He put his arm around me.

"That's alright. Did you see who did it?" I asked.

"No, but maybe tomorrow." Stefano said. "Probably too drunk tonight, but we'll find out tomorrow."

"I thought you might have gotten pinned into a corner with Camilla!"

"Almost, but no," He said. "Where is Miss Morgana?"

"She's with Andreas and Aiden."

Dimitris looked at me at the mention of Aiden.

"You are cold, we go inside." Dimitris said. We walked to the kitchen and sat at the bar. "Tell me about Aiden. It was long time ago?"

"Very, very long time ago," I said.

"And you loved him?"

"It was a long time ago, it doesn't matter now."

"I would like to know," he said.

"Yes, I did love him very much," I admitted.

"Why you not with him?"

"Apparently, he didn't love me. I don't really know what happened. We broke up. That's all I know."

"People just do not break up, must be reason."

"I never knew the reason. If he'll tell you why we broke up, you can tell me, because I never found out why he broke it off."

"Coward not to tell a lady" Dimitris said.

"Well, when you're young, things don't always come out the way you think it will. It's all water under the bridge now," I said. Dimitris spotted Aiden still

talking to Andreas.

“How well do you know him?” I asked.

“Not well, just work together odd jobs for Andreas.”

“What have you told him about *your Helena*?” He looked at me, and I wasn’t sure if he was going to smile or be irritated with this. He put one arm on the bar and the other around my neck, and said,

“I tell all men what lucky man I am to find my Helena.” Then he kissed my neck and hair. “I get us another beer, then we sit on real furniture!”

“Sweetie, I’ll take a water instead.” I said.

The living room had been set up to make conversation easier, instead of centering around the TV. The sofas were set closer together and easy chairs added to the groupings.

I found us a cozy place near the fireplace that was roomy and comfortable. Morgan saw me and came over to sit also.

“Man it feels good to sit. Where’s Dimitris?”

“He’s getting some beer. I thought I’d grab a corner before it was taken. We haven’t been able to sit together all night.”

“Oh, I know. I didn’t think so many people would show up! Can you imagine, this goes on for every name day! It’s wild!” Morgan commented.

“They do like to party,” I said.

“Miss Morgana, if I knew you come here I bring another glass,” Dimitris said.

“That’s okay, I’m only drinking water.”

“I get.” Then he was gone again.

“Andreas is coming over, nooo! He’s bringing Aiden!” Morgan said in a soft voice.

“Holy shit.” I said as I looked out for Dimitris.

“There’s Miss Helena! I hear you and Aiden know each other!” Andreas said.

“It was a long time ago,” I said.

Dimitris came back with a pitcher of beer and a couple of bottles of water.

“You may pour for yourselves, little brother.” Andreas poured himself and Aiden a glass.

“Dimi, can you believe what a small world it is, both are from California, USA, and both here! The gods have been active.” Andreas joked.

“Yes, it is very rare to happen in Karpathos. So, Aiden, what of your wife?” Dimitris asked as he put his arm around me. Aiden looked up like he wasn’t expecting a question like that.

“Divorced, what can I say?”

“How long have you been in Greece?” Morgan asked.

“I’ve been in this area three years. Before this I was in Albania and then Kuwait. It’s been a lot of moving, the last ten years.”

“Dimitris says you’re quite an artist! I never knew you were a painter.” Aiden said to me.

“Yes, I do paint.” I said. Not wanting to encourage much conversation, I kept it brief.

“I remember that gigantic art piece you made. That was amazing, ever sell it?” Aiden asked.

“Yes, I did.”

“Stefano!” Andreas called as Stefano walked by. “Stefano, grab yourself a glass and join us!”

Stefano brought back a glass, and filled every glass from the pitcher then sat in the chair to the right of Aiden.

“Stefano has a beautiful home.” Aiden commented. “So many antiquities! I find it fascinating.”

“Yes it’s a fever, once you start, it never leaves you.” Andreas said.

“Excuse please.” Dimitris got up to go into the bathroom. As he passed me, my water spilled out, down my elbow and onto my lap.

“Oh, shit!” I got up. “Excuse me, I’ll get a napkin.”

I went into the kitchen and grabbed a paper towel. I was wiping off my arm and my skirt, when Aiden came up behind me. He brought the empty pitcher and put it on the sink counter.

“I’d forgotten how you got to me, all those years ago.” He pulled on the bottom of my hair while I was wiping the wet paper towel over my skirt. He took hold of my arm and I tried to step aside to let him pass by the sink.

“Do you remember when we were together? We should talk about what

happened sometime. It bothered me for a long time afterward. I should have taken you with me.”

“You miss your chance.” Dimitris said. Aiden let go of my arm.

“Sorry man!” Aiden said, and left the kitchen.

Dimitris came up to me and put his arms around me and said,

“You did good. He is after you, but you did good.”

“He’s not after me, he’s just had too much to drink. Which reminds me, I need to take some aspirin. You should too.” I said.

“Yes, we do that now.” He turned and looked in the cupboard by the sink.

“Ah, here is, for you, for me, we take.”

We took our pills, but I had to put my arms around Dimitris under his jacket and just hold him close.

“I like the way you say *we*.”

“Good! It will always be!”

I turned to the sink and turned the water on to rinse my hands. Dimitris pulled my hands away and turned off the water. He hovered in behind me, pushing until I was pinned against the counter. He put his arms around me with his head over my shoulder and in a soft voice he said,

“When he find your scent, it make him crazy. Now he want you. When I know he find your scent, make me crazy, and *I* want you. The woman is such a mysterious gift to the man, mystery and intrigue. I take you right here if I could.” He kissed my neck and I could feel that weakness creeping up on me again.

“Dimi,” I struggled to turn toward him, “we’ve got to stop doing this. We’re getting out of control.”

“But you make me like this!”

“Well, you make *me* like this!” I said.

“But I have to touch.” He said.

“No, no, no.”

He clasped his hands behind my back and said,

“You are right, my Heart, we act like children together. Maybe we practice for engagement!”

I just looked at him and laughed. I shook my head and said,

“Let’s not go to extremes!”

He put his head against mine and said,

“See? I know not with you. You say a thing and then change. Don’t play with Dimi.”

“I’m not playing with you, we just have to use better judgment. That doesn’t mean become monks!” I said in a soft voice. He laughed.

“Yes, I see, I will try.” He said.

As we walked back to the sofas, I told him in a soft voice: “I’ve never thought of myself as a sexual person. I mean not in those terms, but since I met you... woo! I can’t help myself.” I blinked my eyes and fanned myself. As I turned to sit, Dimitris grabbed my head and gave me a big kiss on the cheek, and let out a yelp. He grabbed Stefano’s handkerchief and let his kefi take over. Everyone started clapping, dancing or whistling. After two minutes or so it was Dimitris, Andreas, Rena, Stefano, Katie, Mrs. Paolos, Camilla and her sister Frances. Arthur was too drunk to get up. So the only ones left on the sofa were Morgan, Aiden and me. I was surprised to see Rena in the dance, but she did very well.

After they tired of the dance, Dimitris pulled me up off of the sofa and dipped me down to a big kiss. Everyone clapped and laughed. I was laughing and probably as red as a tomato.

I handed Dimitris his beer and he tapped his glass to mine as he caught his breath. He was so happy, and I’m not exactly sure why he let his kefi out. He sat next to me and gave me a kiss on the cheek.

“Andreas! Andreas, look who’s here!” Rena yelled from the foyer.

“No! Mattaios?” Dimitris got up and wanted me to go with him, but I waved him on.

There was the eldest brother. We couldn’t really see him from where we were sitting, but Morgan leaned over to me and said,

“That’s Mattaios, the oldest and apparently the biggest of the brothers! Wow! There’s a hunk if I’ve ever seen one!”

“Morgan! I wish I had my glasses.”

Just then, Aiden leaned in and squatted between the sofa and the coffee table next to my legs. He put his hand on my knee and said,

“I’m really sorry if I bothered you earlier, I can see you’re with Dimitris, but I just want you to know how sorry I am for how things ended with us. Maybe we can talk about it all sometime.”

I kept looking for Dimitris to come up and see this, which was the last thing I needed.

“I’m going to be leaving, but I might call you later,” he said. I looked at his hazel eyes and although he has a way that still gets to me, at this moment I could only think of Dimitris and protecting him from coming in on this scene.

“Please, get up.” I said. “It was good seeing you again, Aiden.”

He smiled, took my hand and kissed it, kissed Morgana’s hand and said,

“I’m sorry Morgana, we didn’t get to talk. Maybe next time. Good night.” And he left, saying his farewells to Rena, Stefano and Andreas.

“Thank goodness for small mercies.” I said.

“What a relief, huh? If Dimitris caught any of that, what would he say?” Morgan always seems to get right to the point.

“You know, he surprises me, more and more all of the time. When I spilled my water and went to the kitchen, Aiden came in and was tugging on my hair and asked if I remembered when we were together, he said *I should have taken you with me when I left*.”

“Really?”

“Then, there was Dimitris, standing there! He said something like “you had your chance” or something like that to Aiden. I expected Dimitris to either let Aiden have it or kill me, or both. But he didn’t. He said something to me later, that he likes it that Aiden wants me. What is that about?”

“It’s the *I’ve got her, you can’t have her* thing that guys do. Men hold that over each other.”

“Yeah, but I don’t think it was that with Mark. Of course, it was a different situation. It must have something to do with my *scent*. Dimitris seems to think that it’s some kind of magic potion.”

“Oh, yeah? I’ll have to try that!”

“Morgan! It’s nothing to play around with here! Men kiss women’s hands all the time, in European countries, don’t they? It could be dangerous!”



We looked at each other and laughed.

“When you stop to think about it, this is a hell of a subject for conversation, isn’t it?” I said and we laughed some more.

Dimitris and Andreas had to interrupt our laughing to introduce their brother. Andreas did the honors.

“These are our American Beauties. Morgana and Helena, this is brother Mattaios.”

We each held out our hands and Mattaios kissed them.

“Very happy to meet you.” He said with a very thick accent.

“What were you girls laughing about when we got here?” Andreas asked Morgan. She looked at me with a laughing smile and said,

“Nothing.”

“It must have been something, you two were really laughing!”

“Oh, we were talking about magic potions, and spells.” I said.

“That doesn’t sound too funny.” Andreas said.

Here was another of the Patakinis men who was new to us, but spoken of often. Mattaios. Tall, about 6’4”, well built, a little on the thin side, but a great frame and carriage. He’s dark like Dimitris with some resemblance, but not as square jawed as Dimitris nor like Andreas, but in-between with a nice cleft in his chin. His eyes are brown, not as dark as Dimitris or as large. Still, very good looking, with the graying temples. He seems very quiet and unobtrusive, almost shy. He works in shipping, out of Turkey, and his language skills in English aren’t quite up to Dimitris, but is understandable. Nothing to get in the way of communication. I heard that he speaks not only Greek and English but also Turkish and Albanian.

He came for Andreas, and they were talking mostly in Greek, so Morgan and I retreated back to our sofa corner and observed the reunion commencing in the dining area, just off of the kitchen. The only brother that we haven’t met is the rogue son Angelo.

Watching the brothers together was like looking back in time to when the boys would tease one another at the dinner table. It was like looking at an old family film, and seeing the past, these children are older, but still the children

they used to be. I was fascinated with watching. I couldn't understand a word, but the closeness they have was unmistakable. It was so heart warming. I wish that I could have filmed their reunion.

"What are you looking at?" Morgan asked me.

"It's fascinating to watch them. Look at that sexy thing in there!" I said to Morgan. "Tell me, is he as sexy as I think or am I on hormonal overload?"

"Oh he's sexy! He's dripping sexy. His brother ain't bad either!"

"Andreas?"

"Oh, yeah, him too."

"You mean Mattaios?"

"Hell yes, what a fox!" She said, trying to get a good look.

"Hold on, I think he's married and has something like six kids."

"Oh, I'm not serious, I'm just saying, that being married don't stop you from being a stone-cold fox!" She said.

"Close your mouth, Morgan, I think you're beginning to drool."

We both started to laugh at the ridiculousness of it all! We were in one of our crazy braid-pulling moods, the men were having their fun, so we had some laughs between us.

Rena was out on the patio with all of the old uncles and aunts, neighbors, and others who had dropped in. It was quite a responsibility she took on with this celebration. The next Name Day that I'm aware of here is for Stefano on December 27th. I think it might be Katie who will host it. All these celebrations and holidays are confusing to an outsider.

Mrs. Paolos was leaving and I wanted to thank her for putting us up at the Paradiso, and apologize for the disaster to the bungalow. I got Dimitris' attention and waved him over to me. He came to my side and gave me a big kiss.

"How can I help my Heart?" He said softly in close whispers.

"Dimi, Mrs. Paolos is leaving, will you tell her for me how sorry I am for the bungalow and how grateful we were for the room at Paradiso, and what she did for us?" I asked.

He took me by the hand to his aunt, and spoke Greek to this little white haired lady.

She said quite a few words in Greek to Dimitris, then took both my hand and Dimitris' hand. Dimitris said she wanted us to kneel for a blessing, so I knelt.

It was tradition, and something that touched my heart. It brought back many wonderful memories of my time with another friend and her family. The blessing of her grandmother, her friendship and the acceptance into her family; this lady's graciousness made me miss them and that time in my life, terribly.

I know that I had enough to drink and I was feeling sentimental, but Dimitris held me and I clung to him. I needed to cling to this man, for whom I had given up almost everything.

"Dimi?"

"Yes, my Heart?"

"I'd like to just sit here with you until I get back to normal," I said.

"Helena, this is normal. You are very sensitive, passionate person. You don't know this. This happens when Hellas come to outsiders. Find true self and all is new and different. Not drunk or lost of it, this is Hellas where everything has meaning. You will find passion for those you thought lost to you, I know this. There are things you will find in your heart, here in Hellas, you will find nowhere else."

"Atlantis?"

"Perhaps, is said. We will get you water, to feel better." He went to the kitchen.

I knew what Dimitris was saying, and in some ways he was right. I was looking at things in a new light, and even with the stress of the wedding, there was the onset of peace and contentment in accepting the decisions that had brought me this far.

I looked at the clock on the side table and saw that it was 1:45 am! No wonder I could hardly keep my eyes open. I got under the covers and slid my hand over the empty place next to me. After everything that went on with Aiden and the *magic potion*, I was exhausted. I was soon asleep.

## *Small World*



I awoke at 7 a.m. Dimitris didn't come to bed last night, so I imagined them still talking in the kitchen. I got dressed and went to get some coffee. There was no one in the kitchen even though the coffee had been made. The house was very quiet. Then...

"Good morning, is it Helena?"

"Yes, good morning Mattaios. Did you have a good night?" I asked.

"Too short, but good. And you?"

"I missed Dimi, you haven't seen him this morning, have you?"

"Dimi sleeps under stairs." He pointed in the direction of the hallway.

"I'll be back," I got another cup of coffee for Dimitris and was on my way out of the kitchen. As I went to have a look under the stairs, I put the coffee down on a box. There he was, sleeping on our furniture quilt. I knelt next to him, then reached over to move the hair out of his eye. A sleeping angel, I thought. I shouldn't wake him, but he might be more comfortable in bed. I leaned closer to him so that I might wake him gently.

"Aren't you waking me with a kiss?"

"You're already awake?"

"No, I wait for my kiss." He laid there with his eyes closed.

"Okay, Prince Charming, pucker up." I planted a gentle kiss on his lips. His arms came up around me as he rolled over, and kissed me as I lay in his place.

"I brought you some coffee," I said as I tried to point over to the box.

“You try to distract me from morning kiss! Very well, but only because we are here.”

“Why didn’t you come to bed?”

“Too late, you sleep. So I take refuge in our secret place.” He laid his hand on my cheek. He stood, and helped me up. I handed him the coffee.

“I missed you. I don’t like waking up when you’re not there. I’ve had too many mornings like that.” We made our way to the kitchen where Mattaios was having his coffee.

“You find my little brother! And she bring coffee for you, what a life!” Mattaios remarked. “You let Mattaios know of wedding.”

“Whole world will know,” Dimitris announced.

“Where is that lazy baby brother? He has Name Day, then sleep!” Mattaios muttered.

“I heard that!” Andreas said as he came into the kitchen. He poured some coffee and looked as if he hadn’t slept at all. He was pale and yawning.

“Too much Name Day for Andreas!” Mattaios said.

“Once a year is enough!” Andreas said.

“Morgan still asleep?” I asked.

“Finally asleep is more the case,” he said.

The men gave him that pat on the back and passive comments that men do when they think their comrade has triumphed. What’s with that, anyway? It must be a male thing, because it’s done in all cultures, like a universal language that all men understand.

“Another lucky Patakinis man,” Mattaios said. “I will tell all men in Turkey to come here for a woman. The gods do smile more here.”

“Good morning everyone, any coffee left?” Rena asked, and went to the pot. She topped off a couple of our cups and made a new pot of coffee.

“Everything went wonderfully, Rena, thank you for a great party,” Andreas said.

“You are most welcome. You still have all these gifts to open.”

“Later for the gifts, I need more coffee.”

“What is your schedule today, Mattaios?” She asked.

“I will leave at 11:00 a.m. Vessel to be here by then. Where is Stefano?”

"I don't know. He was right behind me. I'll bet he went to look at that fender in the daylight."

Morgan came into the room yawning, grabbed a cup of coffee and sat quietly next to Andreas.

The men decided that to go out for breakfast would be too ambitious. Everyone was tired. They got together in the kitchen and combined their efforts to make a magnificent breakfast. Mattaios came up with a rice side dish, which was very hot, very spicy and very good. Along with Dimitris' potatoes and eggs and Stefano's bacon and sausage, there was quite enough for all.

"What's this I hear, you know Aiden from back in California?" Andreas asked me. We had gone over this last night, so it was a surprise to hear this come up again.

"It was ages ago," I answered.

"He's worked with me for, oh it must be a little more than two years, or so. He's an okay guy, ambitious," he said.

"It is strange world. Is it not?" Mattaios said.

"You can say that again," I said.

"Well, then we should all get together sometime before we leave Karpathos." Andreas suggested.

I didn't say anything, and I hoped that the subject would be dropped. I looked at Morgan and was glad that she didn't add anything on this subject.

"Is that the guy who was on the floor talking to you last night? The one with the sexy mustache?" Rena asked.

Dimitris was at the sink and turned around to look at me.

"Yes, that was him."

"Oh, I didn't get to talk to him much, but he seemed very nice. Asks a lot of questions, you know, about Helena. I didn't get it at first, but now it makes sense."

"He ask questions?" Dimitris asked.

"Well, he wanted to know if she was from California and how long she's been here, stuff like that. He asked me something that I didn't know. I forget now, but I told him to ask Helena. You talked, didn't you?"

“He really didn’t say anything,” I said.

“I’ll bet he was a doll when you knew him. He’s pretty sexy now, you know?”  
Rena said.

“This is really good rice Mattaios. Nice and spicy. I like it!” I said.

“Efharisto. Thank you.”

Dimitris filled the juice glasses and then sat next to me.

“Aiden is curious,” Dimitris said.

“He sure is, but I didn’t know that he knew you, or I would have had some questions myself. For him, I mean.” Rena chirped.

“It was a great celebration Rena. I don’t know how you did it. So many people!” I said.

“That was nothing! We’ll have a huge one at Easter!”

I hoped that I had gotten her off of the Aiden subject, as it was feeling very uncomfortable for me.

“He’s not married is he?” Rena asked.

“He say he is divorced,” Dimitris stated.

“Oh that’s right, Dimi, you worked with him before, haven’t you? You probably know him pretty good yourself.”

“He is a good man, works hard,” Dimitris said.

“Helen, you should have heard what people were saying to Rena on the decorating,” Morgan inserted into the conversation.

“Yes, you should be getting more work from some of the guests, don’t you think?” I said.

“Maybe a little, but these weren’t the people that I want to show it off to. The University wives, they’re the ones with the money!”

I couldn’t help yawn in the middle of the breakfast.

“Oh, please excuse me, I’m so sorry,” I said.

“Helena is too tired,” Dimitris noticed.

“I really am, I’m sorry, what were you saying?”

“You boys made a scrumptious breakfast!” Rena complimented. Just then Andreas’ cell phone rang. He excused himself to answer it.

“Why was Aiden on the floor, Helena?” Rena asked.

“Rena, have you decided on the track lighting? I’d like to make a plan with

you when you're ready." Morgan said.

"The breakfast was a masterpiece, guys, thank you, now, I hope you will excuse me, but I am dead tired. Mattaios, it was wonderful to meet you, and I hope we'll see you again soon, and if I'm not up when you leave, I'll say bon voyage now." I went to Dimitris who was standing and took his arm. I leaned in and told him I was going to go lay down, and rest.

I got under the covers as I just needed to close my eyes. I wasn't up to the Aiden problem, and I certainly wasn't going to wait around for more questions. A few minutes later, Dimitris knocked on the door then came in.

"Helena." He entered and sat on the bed.

"I'm so tired." I sat up and put my arms around him, leaning my head against his shoulder. "I need to rest, but you should spend these few hours with your brothers." I looked at him, and he had that crease between his eyebrows that he gets when he worries. I ran my thumb along it as I held his face. "You're worried."

"How can I not worry? If you are in here, not with me? My mind is here with you."

"Oh, that it so sweet, but I'm just tired and need some sleep. I'll feel better in an hour or so. That's all I need."

"I want to sleep too, we cuddle." I had to smile.

"Don't you want to see Mattaios before he leaves?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Then go, he'll have to leave here at 10:30 a.m., so you don't have much time. Then come to bed when he leaves, and we'll cuddle. Okay?"

"You make too much sense for me. I have no arguments. I must do as you say. You rest," he said as he put his palm on my cheek, kissed me and left the room. I put the blankets over my head to block out the light and to try to get some rest.

"I don't know about you guys, but I'm not going to ask questions about Aiden in front of Dimitris," Morgan said.

"I thought Dimi knew all about it!" Rena said.

"I don't think that even Helen knows all about *it*, but I don't think that Dimi



should be riled up over it either.”

“Am I missing something?” Rena asked. “What’s the big deal? They knew each other in California, so they dated. It didn’t sound like it was a big deal to me.”

“Geez, Rena, she loved him!” Morgan said.

“Oh, wow, I didn’t know, I wasn’t thinking, I thought, you know, a casual date. I’m sorry,” Rena apologized profusely.

“What I don’t get is why he’d want to start something now?” Morgan wondered.

“Does he?” Andreas asked.

“Well, no, not in so many words,” Morgan answered.

“You girls, always thinking there’s more to the story than there is. He was probably put in an awkward position and just said whatever came to mind.” Rena said. “Men aren’t that deep; they don’t usually have that long of an attention span.”

“Rena, in America especially, it’s all games and how to ‘get over.’ The men are playing the angles, so I don’t know what motives this Aiden has, I just don’t think Dimitris needs to hear it all being discussed,” Morgan said.

“Aiden has always been a decent sort. We used to hang out on jobs, nothing strange about him,” Andreas commented.

“Geez, I’m not saying that he’s strange, he’s probably a decent guy, I’m just saying that back then, she was head over heels in love with him, and he left without a trace! She was messed up over him for a long time.”

“That long time ago, is past,” Dimitris said as he entered the kitchen.

“Dimi, I’m sorry, I didn’t want to start something,” Morgan said.

“Not something to start. He is good man, honest, hard worker. If he must talk to Helena, she will say ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ not Dimi!”

“Dimi, there are more problems from mind than from heart. Don’t give them legs.” Mattaios said.

“What does that mean?” Morgan said in frustration.

“The only problems here are imaginary unless you let them have life, encourage them,” Andreas said. “So best to leave them alone. Deal only with problem when it is one.”

"I've been trying to avoid this whole conversation, and I end up in the middle!" Morgan complained.

"It was my fault, Dimi. I was talking about how Aiden asks so many questions. I'm sorry," Rena said.

Morgan held her head!

"He was asking a lot of questions," Andreas agreed. Morgan peeked out from under her hands to take a squint at Andreas then shook her head in disbelief.

"It is normal to ask questions on one you do not see in long time," Dimitris said.

"See? So, not to get out of control. Is good!" Mattaios added.

"Yes, we must talk of Mattaios, tell us of your life in Turkey. How many sons do you have now?" Stefano asked.

The conversation turned to life in Turkey. Mattaios wants to move back to Greece, but not until he is ready to retire. Even though he can financially retire at any time, the extra time on the job will keep him occupied. Then as he says, he will learn new habits!

Morgan excused herself to let the men have their time together. She went to her room, but stopped by my door, and knocked quietly.

"Helen, it's me."

"Come in, Morgan."

"Oh man! Rena almost opened up a can of worms!"

"Let me guess, Aiden?"

"Yeah, then I tried to tell her that it might not be a good idea to talk about Aiden around Dimitris, suddenly there he is! And I'm the one talking! Boy, how the tables turn! This always happens to me!"

"This isn't going to go away quietly, I'm afraid," I said.

"You know what Dimitris said?"

"What?" I asked.

"He said that if Aiden needs to talk to you, you would say yes or no, not him! -Meaning Dimitris. When I heard him say that, so calmly, I thought, man! How many men would say that? Most of the men I know would want

to kill him or you! He trusts you. This is one special guy you've found. I hope you appreciate that!"

"I believe the men handle things differently here. That's what throws you. Just when you think you know what to expect, they fool you," I said.

"Andreas said something too, about Aiden asking questions. I'll see if I can find out what," she said.

"It doesn't matter, we'll never see him again; you might, I mean he does work for Andreas. There wouldn't be a reason for me to see him."

"Dimitris was very controlled. He didn't act like there was any big deal. He wasn't upset at all."

"Well, I kind of think they are friends, or at least were friends. I don't know. This could be hanging around my neck for long time. I hate the idea of their friendship ending because of me, but how would that work out anyway? 'Oh, Hi, come on in, have a seat and ogle my wife.' Can you just picture that?"

"Hell, yes," she said. "Men like to gloat, especially over a woman, so who knows what would happen."

"All we can do is wait and see, I suppose."

"But what if he approaches you, what will you do?" Morgan asked.

"Hopefully, that won't happen. I just don't want Dimitris ever to think that there would be a possibility of me with Aiden."

"The heart never forgets," she said.

"Don't say that! Especially to Dimitris. He doesn't have to keep that thought at the front of his brain."

"You mean you wouldn't ever be tempted?"

"There wouldn't be a reason to be tempted," I said. "It's like you said, it's the wanting what he can't have."

"You wouldn't even want to talk to him then?"

"What is this? You want me to talk to him?"

"No, never mind, I just wanted to know what he's after, curiosity! Hey, it's like a romantic mystery novel right here in this house! This is strange. Things have happened since we got here that could never happen at home. What is it about this place?" She questioned.

"I know, it's like what Dimitris said. *This is Greece, where the gods are still*

*active, and the wishes of the heart come true.* I thought that he was making this place sound magical, just to get us to stay here, but now I'm wondering," I said.

"I get surprised by things that just happen, every day, just out of the blue. I never even allowed myself to think about any kind of life, other than what I had, not seriously. Now look at me! I'm doing interior decorating! Who'd of thought? And Andreas! He's just so wonderful, and he actually makes me happy! You know how sometimes you feel like you just want to argue about anything, just to argue, to get a rise out of someone? I can't do that with Andreas. It's so infuriating. He'll sit there and let me rant. I get it all out, he's okay with it, I feel shitty for dumping on him, and I get mad because he won't argue back!"

"It's rather self-defeating, isn't it? I know what you mean, though."

"You didn't have any problems when Mark showed up, with Dimitris, I mean?" Morgan asked.

"He behaved very well. He was quite helpful and steadied my nerves over the whole thing; but I had to be sure that he wasn't in real close proximity," I explained.

"But he didn't give you a hard time about meeting with Mark? I mean, the idea of you meeting with the man you were living with, didn't cause a problem?"

"You knew he had a melt down on the second meeting? But he understood. I don't know what goes on in the heads of these men. They don't do the expected from our viewpoint," I said.

"Oh, I know. Well, I'm going to go to my room, I have no idea of what's happening later today. I'll see ya later."

"Okay."

Mattaios stayed another 30 minutes or so, then Stefano and Rena drove him to the docks.

I could feel Dimitris lay on the bed next to me. He cuddled up behind me and put his arm over me. He was very quiet and just squeezed in tight to a comfortable position.

"Helena," he whispered.

"Yeah."

"I have call today. Police. Rhodes," he said.

"When?"

"Tomorrow."

"Okay."

"Helena?"

"Yeah?"

"I know you stay, for this man. You give up *all* to be with Dimi. If Aiden need to talk, you will talk. I don't worry on this."

I turned onto my back, put my arm around his shoulder. He laid his head on my chest.

"There is no reason for me to talk to Aiden," I said as I soothed my hand over his hair.

"But if he has to talk, you talk. He is decent man, Aiden, he say how lucky to find one to give up all to stay. Not many do this, he say. Dimi, very lucky man." He turned his head to kiss my breast, his hand lightly stroked over my sore ribs. "He has deep regret over his mistake with you, so you talk. Is okay."

"Some people are more lucky in love than others," I said.

"Yes!" He agreed, and kind of laughed.

"What's so funny?"

"I think of all those who lose. I won!"

"You are funny, Mr. Patakinis!"

"Did you sleep?"

"No, just rested. Dimi, can I ask you something?"

"Yes, my Heart, what is it?" He put his head on the pillow and looked into my eyes.

"What time will we leave tomorrow?"

"Early, maybe ten in morning," he thought.

"Did they say that they arrested anyone?"

"Did not say."

"Do you think the documents that my sister sent will be here tomorrow?" I asked.

“Tomorrow? No, maybe later. Mail in no hurry to islands.”

“Oh, well then I won’t worry about them.”

“No, not to worry on that.” He said, and kissed my forehead. We laid on the bed for a few minutes in silence, then I said,

“Did you ever wonder why I lived with someone for so long, and after such a short time here, decided that I would marry?” I asked.

“I do not question,” he said. “What is it, you worry?”

“I don’t want this to go away.”

“Go away? What you say, Helena?”

He leaned up on one elbow and looked at me. He put his other hand on my sore rib and got that worried look on his face.

“I don’t want this, what we have, to go away. The way I feel about you, the way you make me feel, I don’t want it to fade away into a distant memory.” I said.

“Helena, Helena,” he put his arms around me and held me tight. “S’agapo! Never will it go away. Do not worry. You will marry me. We will be happy for always.”

“I wish we could just get to a normal life!” I said.

“What is normal?” He asked. “How is normal, Helena?”

“Normal would be having our own place, sending you off to work in the morning with a kiss, coming home in the evening and having dinner. Doing the yard or gardening, feeding the chickens and dogs and making love in our own bed!”

“Chickens?” He said with a little laugh. “You mean chickens, with feathers, chickens?”

“Yes, chickens,” I said. “What?”

“You surprise this man, every day.”

“I’m just saying that I’m tired. We came here in a vat of confusion and frustration. We’ve been having things happen, one thing after another. We’ve been staying in Rena’s home and living out of a suitcase. I just want normal. I want us to have a normal life.”

“Soon, Helena. When papers come, we go to civil marriage. It take one week. Then I surprise you.”

“Surprise me?” I said. “You could surprise me by telling me it won’t take a week after we get the papers.”

“They will need Greek translation, take time.”

“We could hop a plane, go to Las Vegas, get married and be back here within three days. How does that sound?” I said.

“That would be good if it could be, but it cannot.”

“There’s got to be a quicker way,” I said.

“Quick not always best,” he said. “The wait, more than inconvenience, is to make one appreciate more. No value in easy.”

“I know, it’s just so frustrating. I want to get it done, now.”

“The American way?” He asked.

“I guess so, I’m sorry,” I said. “I know I need to be patient.”

“Yes, we relax, and good things come.” He said and rested his head next to mine.

“For someone who likes to get things done, you have a lot of patience,” I said with a sigh.

“Three o’clock we get air shuttle to Rhodes,” he said and gave me a kiss on the wrist. “Pack, get ready, we go.”

“I thought you said that we wouldn’t leave until tomorrow.”

“If we leave today, stay night at house then go to police. Less hurry in morning.”

He got off of the bed and winked as he went out the door. He went back to the kitchen and announced our departure.

“Rena, we have wonderful Andreas Day.” He said and gave her a hug and a pat on the head. “We leave for Rhodes on next air shuttle. Police want to see Morgana and Helena in morning, so, Morgana could come with us or rush in morning.”

“You got a call from them?” Andreas asked.

“Yes, women need to come to talk with them,” Dimitris said.

“I hope this is going to be the end of it!” Morgan said.

“Good! You can get all your belongings ready for Athens.” Andreas said.

Morgan and Andreas said their temporary good byes at the dock, and we were off to the airport.

Morgan and I were both glad to get back to Rhodes and apprehensive at the prospect of having to go to the police again. We both were pretty quiet on the way home, just too tired and the travel only added to it.

“Tonight, we cook on fire pit. We have ribs, chicken or fish. We have good cook-out.” Dimitris said.

“I’ll check the freezer,” I said and went to the utility room. I opened the freezer and was searching the packages in a daze. Dimitris came in, then put a few of the packages on the clothes dryer.

“Ah, here it is!” Then he closed the freezer. He took my arm and said,

“You must not worry. Relax, you too tense. It is over soon enough.” I looked up into his kind eyes and said,

“You must be pretty tired of all this. The problems, the constant emotional support you have to give me? It seems like I’m a lot of trouble for you.” I said.

“Is over soon.” He said, putting his arms around me, backing me up to the freezer and kissing me passionately. “Life like ocean, not always calm, but passes. This will pass, too.” Then he popped me another couple of quick kisses. “Now, we get to defrost!”

“Dimi, do you want some coffee? I could make a pot,” I asked.

“More in mood for wine. Warm up the blood with wine,” he suggested.

He went to the kitchen to get the wine and glasses. When he came back the phone rang.

“That was Andreas. He will arrive in one hour.” Dimitris sat next to me and took a sip of wine, and let out a deep sigh.

“Are you very tired? I can cook the meat if you want to rest.” I said. He put his arm around me and drew my head to rest against his cheek.

“Efharisto, Helena, but no, I will prepare the cooking.” He said in a soft voice.

“You don’t think I know how to cook.” I smiled, but I was serious.

“No, you may be good cook. I do this cooking, always have done so, so I continue. Is okay?”

“I’m glad that you like to cook. I just feel a little useless while you’re always



doing everything. It's not that I don't like cooking, it's the cleaning afterward, the dishes and all that entails, that gets me down," I confessed.

"Well," he exhaled deeply, "you will not have to do that, Dimi will, and you will do other things that make you happy."

"I look at you, and you are a wonder to me. Now, I don't want you to get a swelled head on this, but it's hard for me, still, to realize just how wonderful of a man you are, and I fall deeper in love with you every day."

Dimitris actually blushed a little. He put down his wine and surrounded me with his arms. He buried his face in the crook of my neck and said,

"Oh, Helena." He held me tightly as we sat on the sofa. I heard him whispering, but couldn't make out what he said, whether it was Greek or not, I don't know. I could feel his heart beating, and he smelled so sweet.

"S'agapo, Dimi, is that okay?" I asked, in hopes of getting a response. He didn't seem to want to let me go.

"Is more than okay." He said and kissed me sweetly and passionately.

"If I light coals now, will you stay to watch coals for cooking when gone to get Andreas? Morgana will be here with you, but you must lock door behind me." He said as he thought about having to go to the docks to pick up his brother.

"Yes, I'll watch them."

## *The Break-in*



**I**t was again like old home week when the men came in. Andreas had a large bag of fresh shrimp that we would cook tonight.

Andreas and Morgan were in the living room by the fire, snuggling under an afghan.

“Come, join us by the fire Helena,” Andreas said.

“It’s so cozy in here, it really feels good,” I said as I stood in front of the fire.

“Yes, after Island hopping, a good fire feels good,” Andreas said. “Where is that brother of mine?”

“He’s getting ready to put the meat on the barbecue.”

“I haven’t heard that word in a while,” Morgan said, “barbecue.”

“Dimi!” Andreas said. “What time do we have to be there tomorrow, 10 a.m.?”

“Yes, ten o’clock. All finished with this police business, I hope,” Dimitris said. “If you watch meat, I go fix shrimp.”

“Sure, tell Morgana to come out, please, Dimi?” Andreas asked.

“I wanted to peel the shrimp, but I wasn’t sure you were going to fix them without the skins, shells or whatever they’re called,” I said to Dimitris.

“Yes, we shell the shrimp. Come, you help Dimi, eh?” He said.

“Look! Look at Morgan and Andreas. They look happy. I’m glad they got past their rough spot.”

“Yes, they are doing good,” he said as he whipped together a basting sauce.

“Are you getting hungry?” Andreas asked Morgan.

“Yes, but I don’t know what this Tofu will do once I put it on the grill.”

“Where is Dimi? I can move over the meat to make room for the shrimp or the Tofu, but I’m not sure about these ribs.” Andreas said.

“Your brother answered the door, he must have gotten held up,” I said.

“I’ll see what’s keeping him.” Andreas then suddenly had to answer his phone.

“Yes, yes, okay. No, I’m not sure you should. Okay, hold on.” Andreas came over to me and handed me the phone. “I’ll check on Dimi, this call is for you, Aiden.”

I had nowhere to hide and no excuses. I had to take the call. I wiped my hands and took the phone from Andreas.

“Hello?”

Morgan was giving the “uh-oh” look and I didn’t know what else I could do, but be vague and short on the call.

“What is it? I thought.....” I said.

When I turned toward the house, Andreas was coming outside and I could see someone else inside the house with Dimitris.

“No, I really can’t. I don’t know. Thank you, yes, I’ll try, you too. Bye.” My attention was not on the phone call. I clicked off the phone. As Andreas approached me, I handed him the phone and said,

“Where’s Dimi?”

“Camilla is here,” Andreas said.

When I went to the patio door, I could hear her voice. She was speaking in Greek, but it didn’t have the tone of a neighborly visit. I hesitated to go in, even though I didn’t know the contents of the conversation, it seemed to be one-sided and in hushed tones.

I gathered up some steam and headed inside. Dimitris was wrapping the fish in foil while Camilla was talking to him, playing with his hair and leaning against him.

“Excuse me, I just need to get some bottled water,” I said as I hurried to the refrigerator and grabbed a couple of bottles.

Camilla stepped a foot or so away from Dimitris and suddenly said in a loud, obnoxious voice,

“Hello again! Helena, isn’t it?”

“Yes, Camilla, how are you?” I acknowledged her in bored monotone as I tried to sidestep her on my way out of the kitchen. Dimitris looked at me. I smiled a little, and I said:

“I’ll take the wine also.” As I reached across Dimitris, he sneaked in a kiss under my ear, and I left the kitchen as quickly as possible.

“I made an excuse to go in there of needing water, so, do you need some water Morgan?”

“She has been drinking,” Andreas said, looking toward the kitchen.

“So she feels the need to visit Dimitris?” I asked.

“She doesn’t give up easily,” he said.

“How long has she been hanging around Dimi?”

“She’s always been around. More so lately, it seems,” Andreas added.

“Okay. I wish I could understand what she’s saying,” I uttered, but Andreas made no comment. I went to the end of the patio near the grill and sat with Morgan.

“She’s got a lot of nerve. What are you going to do?” She asked.

“About Camilla? Nothing,...yet.” I said in an anxious tone. “Dimi will handle her if he wants to.” Andreas looked up. I think he could tell that I wasn’t too happy about this.

“Who was on the phone?” Morgan asked although she was aware of it being Aiden. “What did he have to say?”

“The usual,” I said, being preoccupied with the kitchen, I didn’t pay attention to the questions or the answers that I gave.

“He wants to see you?” She asked.

“He wants to talk,” I said. “Andreas, I hate to ask you, but would you rescue Dimitris for me. Please?”

Andreas put down the fork and started for the kitchen when Dimitris came out carrying the fish.

“How is our meat doing?” He asked as he came outside.

“It won’t be too long, the coals are hot enough,” Andreas answered. “Where is Camilla?”

“She finally leave,” he said as he put the fish next to the grill and wiped his hands. He came over to me, putting his hand on my shoulder and said, “I am sorry.” He bent down to kiss my forehead. I didn’t say anything.

“If nobody else is going to ask, I guess I will. What did Camilla want?” Morgan asked.

“She is sad, lonely, she drinks tonight,” Dimitris said.

I didn’t bring up the subject of Camilla or Aiden, as they seemed to have faded from the topic of conversation.

“Helen, come to my room for a minute, I want to give you some things before I move and lose them. It’ll only take a minute,” Morgan said.

I got up from the table, taking some plates and trash with me. Dimitris took the trash from my hand and said,

“I will throw out.”

I followed Morgan to their room and sat on the bed. She closed the door and went over to the box by the dresser.

“I came across these when I was packing and thought you might want to keep them.” She handed me an envelope with the pictures that she took on our first trip to Karpathos when I got sick, and of Dimitris.

“Oh, I haven’t seen all of these. Thanks.”

“What’s with this Camilla? She’s after Dimitris, and you haven’t said anything! And what’s with Aiden? I don’t get it, you’re letting all this go on around you, and you act like you don’t even give a shit,” she railed.

“I don’t know. I don’t want to cause a big scene. It should be up to Dimitris to get rid of her. If I say something, then it’s the same as adding fuel to a fire, it’s the reaction from me that she’s looking for, and then you would hear all the tongues in town wagging, all the way up here!”

“Yeah, but are you going to say something to Dimitris?”

“I may, at some point. I want to give him time to handle the problem. If he lets it go on too long, I’ll have plenty to say!”

“You’ve got more patience than I do, I’d let her know, and him!”

"It's the same thing almost with Aiden, I expect to be given enough space to handle any problem that comes up, not that there will be one."

"What did he say?"

"Well, he calls, but he doesn't say anything, I think he's just curious to see if he's still got it," I said.

"Does he?" She asked.

"Under any other circumstances, yes, he does. But not now, not since Dimitris. I can't let myself get into a situation, you know? Can you think of a worse scenario for me, being in the middle of two Scorpios? I have enough problems controlling myself with one!" I said and we laughed.

"I don't know if I'm supposed to tell you, and Andreas never said not to, but Aiden has called for you on Andreas' phone three times that I know of, since the party."

"Oh, great. Will Andreas say something to Dimitris?"

"I don't know. I'm surprised that he handed you the phone. I think he's getting tired of him calling."

"I don't blame him, it's not up to him to put Aiden in his place. Next time give him my number."

"Yeah?" She asked.

"Do you see any other way?" I asked. "You'll probably have him at your house, do you want to have him bugging you?"

"Here we are, out on the other side of the world, and this is what we run into! When my mother was our age I always wondered why she'd have so many boyfriends. I thought that once you hit a certain age, you just blend in with the background!" Morgan said.

"I know, it's like, maybe when you're older all the things that seemed to be so inhibiting don't mean anything. Getting past all that trying to "fit in." It's liberating! But with Aiden, I think it's got to be some kind of ego trip. He's known Dimitris for a few years now. He doesn't seem concerned about their friendship if he's sniffing after me! No pun intended!"

"I don't know how you can keep your cool with all of this, plus the wedding."

"I really do envy you, moving to Athens, getting away from everything and getting your life back on an even keel. Right now I feel like I am ready to

implode,” I said.

“I guess I’ll go back out, maybe I can hear something useful in the Camilla story.”

“Thanks for the pictures.”

After dinner, I went directly to our room and started the shower. I brushed out my hair and got in with shampoo in hand.

“Where is Helena?” Dimitris asked.

“She’s taking a shower,” Morgan said.

“She is not happy about Camilla,” Dimitris said.

“Can you blame her?”

“Camilla is sad person. She means no harm.”

“You are blind! She’s trouble, Dimitris.”

“She does seem to stir things up.”

“Well, you let her stir things, by not telling her to get lost,” Morgan said.

“Morgana!” Andreas scolded.

“What? He needs to know! You can’t be nice or polite to people like Camilla. You have to tell her. She’s going to cause problems if you don’t.”

“He will handle this, let’s finish moving your boxes, okay? Tomorrow will be a long day.” Andreas told Morgan.

Morgan took her cue to be quiet. She was disgusted that she was fluffed off and not listened to. She left the patio muttering to herself.

When I got out of the shower, Dimitris was laying across the bed with all of the pictures spread out over the quilt.

“Hi! What are you doing?” I asked.

“I look at pictures.”

I went over to the dresser, took my hair out of the towel and brushed it out.

“These photos, too sad,” Dimitris said.

I sat on the side of the bed facing Dimitris and picked up a few of the pictures.

“I never saw most of these before. I had no idea that I caused you such pain. I’m sorry Dimi, I’m really sorry.”

He sat up and hugged me tightly and said,

“This was most terrible time. I almost lose you then.” He buried his hand in my wet hair. “You will be all wet without towel,” he said and got up to put the towel around my shoulders.

“I should get dressed so that we can go have our dessert by the fire,” I said.

He stood up and looked at me, assessed what I was wearing and said,

“No, you look fine.” He put his arm around my neck and whispered in my ear, “we will sit by fire, have dessert and dry hair. What you think?”

“That sounds good.”

“Okay, you take brush, we sit with Andreas and Morgana.”

“Well, Dimi, a cookout was a great idea!” Andreas said.

“Yes it came out good,” Dimitris answered.

“Now, dessert by the fire, a perfect ending to an almost perfect night,” I said.

I looked at Dimitris and then I glanced at Morgan. She picked up on what I meant.

I got up and took the dessert plates into the kitchen. Then bid my good nights to Morgan and Andreas. I think Dimitris was a little surprised that I made a sudden exit.

When he came in, I was sitting in bed, and getting ready to turn off my bedside lamp.

“You go to bed so early,” he said.

“Yeah, I’m pretty tired and tomorrow, there’s so much to do. How about you? Are you tired?” I asked.

“Not so much. Too much coffee, I think.”

“Do you want me to rub your back?” I asked.

“You would do this?” He asked.

After ten minutes of massaging, I kissed his cheek, got off of him and covered him up. I turned off the light and kissed him goodnight.

“Every day you are gift to me,” I heard him say into his pillow.

Morning came and as the clock ticked toward 7:30 am. it was time to get out of bed and start this busy day.



When we arrived at the police department, Andreas and Morgan were already waiting in an inner office.

“Hi! How long have you been here?” I asked.

“Seems like forever,” Morgan said.

“It’s only been fifteen minutes,” Andreas commented.

“Did they tell you anything?”

“No, nothing. Just to wait,” she said.

When the time came, the officers separated Morgan and me, then we viewed the suspected candidates. I expected to see the shorter stocky-built man, but he was not amongst the men. I had only seen the tall thin man twice, briefly and although I wasn’t sure of one man in the lineup, he looked familiar. Not being sure, however, I could not say definitely that this was one of the men.

Morgan did, however, pick a man out of the lineup. We were told that with the sketches I made and Morgans identification, the man would be detained.

We were stuck in a room while our witness statements were being prepared, with the usual official bureaucracy. It took three hours for us to get our freedom from the process of justice. When we came out to the lobby, Dimitris was standing by the exit, looking out the lobby window. He turned and walked up to me, put his arms around me and said,

“This over now, yes?”

“We’ll have to wait and see,” I answered.

We piled into the car to take Andreas and Morgan to the Athena. It was time to wish them a Bon Voyage.

“Be sure you call me and let me know how it’s going! Okay, Morgan?”

“Okay.” I gave her a hug and said

“I’m going to miss you!” And I hugged Andreas too.

“You call if you need Dimis’ help!” Dimitris said.

“We will, and take care of yourselves.”

We stood on the dock, Dimitris untied the Athena for Andreas’ launch of this beautiful vessel, and they were off to Athens and a new life. Dimitris put his arm on my shoulder as we waved the Athena farewell. We stayed until she was out of the harbor.

“Come, Helena, we go home now, we pick up land barge tomorrow.” Dimitris walked me to the little car and we drove home. We weren’t talking much during the drive, just thinking to ourselves, I guess. We were tired and it was sad seeing them go to Athens. Dimitris got out of the car when we reached the driveway, then came around to open my door. As he held out his hand for me I looked up at him and said,

“It’s going to be quiet around here.”

“For a while, yes.”

I got out of the car and I could hear the drone of a motor running somewhere close by. I didn’t pay much attention until it roared by, leaving us in a cloud of choking dust.

“Oh, geez! I’m getting dirt in my eyes! Some people don’t have any regard for anyone else.” I started choking.

“We go inside,” Dimitris said, then unlocked the door.

“Dimi! Look, we’ve been robbed!”

Dimitris came over to me and took my hand. He lead me outside and we called the police.

“Has this happened to anyone around here before?” I asked.

“Never.” Dimitris was hard to read. He was angry but calm.

“I’m so sorry Dimi, what a mess. It looks like a hurricane went through here.”

“The police will look, then we clean. We see what they take.” I hugged him and we waited.

By the time the police came and went through the house with a very rudimentary examination, we were allowed to enter the house to scan things and report anything missing. The obvious things missing, TV, VCR, DVD, were taken and other small items of quick-cash value. Other than that, it was hard to tell with all of the mess. I didn’t have jewelry and other valuables here, so they weren’t an issue, but the things that might have been Dimitris’ mother, or other small items of value, I didn’t know. It took us until 10:30 pm. to clean most of the broken glass and trash that used to be whole. Every drawer was emptied onto the floor, cupboards emptied, books and mementos, all on the floor.

I completely stripped the bed and laundered all of the linens, as everything had been soiled and trodden on. The dressers were void of their drawers and apparently, one was missing completely.

“Helena,” Dimitris called.

“Yeah, I’m coming.”

“Are you okay?” he asked.

“I’m okay, how about you?” I asked and brushed the hair from his eyes. He held me tight like he feared something might happen or had happened to me.

“Dimi, I’m okay, it’s all going to be okay,” I tried to reassure him. He just held me and rocked me.

“I will take you away from here,” he said as he nuzzled his face into my neck.

“Come, we should go to bed, we can do this tomorrow. Come, Dimi.” We went to bed and held each other until we were asleep.

I woke up and could hear a muffled voice talking from a distance. I felt behind me for Dimitris, but he wasn’t in bed. I looked out of the bedroom door to see him at the end of the hall, in the living room, on his cell phone.

I put on my kimono and went to the kitchen to pour some coffee. I waited for him to click off, and tell me what was happening.

Dimitris came up to me, put his arm around my waist and kissed me on the cheek.

“Good morning, my Helena,” he said and refilled his cup. “We will box things today, tomorrow movers will come.”

I felt flattened. This lovely home had been violated, and in the back of my mind, I felt it was my fault. Down deep in my bones, I knew all of this had something to do with the little picture of a child.

“I’m so sorry, Dimi.”

“Yes, I am sorry too. We move, earlier than expected, but we were to move anyway.” He was trying to be cheerful. “So, we get busy.”

Since everything was pretty much a mess, it seemed like the perfect time to pack things. Dimitris found some twine and boxes. We were tying books and packing everything we came across.

“Dimi, honey, would you get the suitcases? They should be in the garage,

that's if they weren't stolen." He dropped what he was doing to go find the luggage.

"I put in bedroom," he said as he carried them in. He tried to be so cheerful in everything that he said, but his eyes betrayed his joyful exterior. It breaks my heart to see this, and I am hoping that this will soon be a distant memory.

"Efharisto, Dimi," I said in my feeble Greek tongue. He dropped the luggage and wrapped me in his arms.

"S'agapo, Helena, I love you so much, do not worry on this," he said and looked into my eyes. I soothed his cheek with my fingers and said in a whisper, "I'm so sorry."

"We will pack clothes, then put in car. We drive with dogs to the docks. It will be an adventure, Helena."

"What time will we get the ferry?" I asked.

"We will see," he said as he piled more tied books into the corner. "We watch movers, then we go."

I washed clothes and linens and blankets before I could make up our bed. Everything to be packed was freshly laundered. I gathered piles of folded clothing to put into the luggage, placing stuff in every zippered pocket I could find. The small roll-away suitcase had an outer pocket, which I opened to place letters and stationery. When I put my hand inside, it was already occupied, by the little picture! The root of all the evil that has followed us. I was sure of it!

"Dimi!" I called. "Dimi!" I called again to him. Then I thought, maybe I should just destroy it before it ruins us.

"Helena, what is it?" He asked as he rushed back to the bedroom. I was sitting on the bed amongst the clothes and suitcases. He looked at me from the doorway, and I showed him the framed photo in my hand. He came to me and took the photograph from me.

"This," he said. "I think this gone."

"It was stuck in the pocket of the roll-away. I guess I put it there to get it out of our way, just until we knew what it was. I forgot all about it."

"What does this little picture know?" He asked as he turned it over. "We will look at it more close. Look to see if it is worth the trouble it carries." He

took my hand, "Come."

We took the photograph to the kitchen table where the light was bright. Dimitris brought to the table a knife, pliers, and a sheet of newspaper and spread it out to cover the work area.

Before plying his skill to the back of the photo he carefully brushed all remnants of dust from around the entire object. He pulled out a magnifying glass from a box that held all of the desk items and examined the backing of the frame. Very little was found there. The year "1958" written in pencil was barely legible even under the magnifying glass.

There were small nails around the back to secure the cardboard backing. He carefully pulled out each nail, one by one. He inserted the knife's tip to loosen the backing, which had been weathered and stuck, from years of neglect. The old cardboard was crisp and crumbling with the movement it was expected to make.

The photo itself was bubbled and partially stuck to the glass. Embedded between the photo and the backing was what appeared to be an old baseball card in its cellophane wrapper.

"And what we have here, Helena?"

"Ooo, let me see!"

"I need tweezers."

I got him a pair of tweezers from my purse. He carefully removed the cellophane packet from its bed in the backing of the photo.

"This not baseball card," Dimitris said.

"What is it?" I asked. While Dimitris was examining the cellophane pouch, I picked up the glass which had the photo itself adhered to it. I was looking for anything written on the photo. It was discolored and there were lines and little smeared words, which could not be deciphered.

Dimitris carefully removed the cellophane. The paper that was folded over onto itself, several times, was crisp with age.

"This, very fragile. Probably nothing, but we are careful with it," he said.

He carefully unfolded the old paper. It looked like whatever had been written on it had smeared a duplication of itself onto its folds.

"Can you make out what it is?" I asked.

“Is very difficult, but see this?” He was pointing to the bottom of the paper.  
“Look like name.”

“That first letter is an ‘A,’” I said.

“Yes, and this looks like a ‘D’, then could be ‘A, N’...something after that.”

Dimitris looked up and took a step back.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Uh, Helena, I think we bring this to Stefano.”

“Why, what is it?”

“This name, A. Deischant, infamous in Cyprus crime. This is problem for us.”

“Why, will they think we are involved? Is it important? I mean, I don’t understand.”

Dimitris came to me, putting his arms around me he said

“You could have been killed. We must get this to Stefano. Carefully, wrap all in paper, not to cut yourself.”

I did what I was told, as Dimitris called Stefano. The conversation was in Greek, so I knew that this was something important. Dimitris had that worried look, more than ever. I put the wrapped package in a brown paper bag. When Dimitris got off of the phone, I asked again,

“Dimi?” He took me by the hand and sat me at the table. He leaned against the table as he held my hand.

“Helena, you have found trouble with photo. This dangerous beyond what you know. Stefano will come here, take this away,” he said.

“When is he coming? Can’t we drop it off tomorrow when we...?”

“He is here in almost 60 minutes, he takes helicopter.”

“Geez! What is this?” I asked.

“Come, we still pack.”

We did as much packing as we could, and used everything we could to pack it into; trash can liners, lidded barrels, even gunny sacks. We were getting desperate for boxes.

“Dimi, we’re out of boxes, do you want to see if there are any at the market, or I can run to the store real quick?”

“No, we stay here. After Stefano come, we go get boxes. You will not be

alone,” he said. “No more alone.” He took out his cell phone and called Stefano once more.

“We meet Stefano, come, take little photo.”

We got in the land barge and drove to meet Stefano at a small airfield by the beach. When Stefano landed, he came over to the car. Dimitris and Stefano were speaking Greek, very hurriedly, very intense. He didn’t unwrap the photo, he took it and ran back to the helicopter, then was gone.

“So what’s going to happen now?”

“Now, we get boxes, and finish packing,” Dimitris answered as he started the car.

“With the photo, Dimi, what will Stefano do with the photo?” I asked.

“We will go to Stefano’s, he tell us more then. Now, get boxes, okay?”

We packed until we could hardly stand anymore, but Dimi continued non-stop. It was getting late so I made some Pitas from the leftovers that we had.

“Sweetie, come and eat something,” I said. Dimitris washed up and came to eat. “You look tired, Sweetheart, can’t we finish this in the morning?”

“We should do all tonight.”

“Most of it is done, except for the rest of the kitchen and our clothes. You need some rest. I don’t want you getting sick.” I said.

“Okay, this time you win!” He reached over and patted my hand. “I feed dogs, then bed.”

The night was not restful as we fought to slip into the dark veil of sleep. When daylight broke, I finally was sleeping well but awoke when Dimitris got out of bed.

“Are you up already?” I asked with a sleepy yawn.

“Much to do, time not to waste,” he said in a soft voice. “Are you up?”

“Okay, I’ll get up.”

Dimitris made the coffee and I collected the toiletries from the bathroom, separating the important articles to go into the car with us. It didn’t seem like Dimitris and I had much time to really be together yesterday. With the turmoil all around us, it left us physically and emotionally drained. We spent

the day in pursuit of boxes and the filling of them. Today would be another day of blind activity, and we were already pushing ourselves to exhaustion.

I was sitting on the bed putting on my shoes when Dimitris came in with my “WUF” cup in hand. He handed me the cup and put his hand on my shoulder.

“Cup not broken.”

“Thank you, I need this.” I took his hand. “Here, sit a minute, Dimi.” I rubbed my hand across his back. “What time do we expect the movers?”

“Ahh, that is good,” he said in response to my hand on his back. “I will call at 8:00 am., maybe they also have boxes.” He turned to me and said, “Let me see eye.” I turned toward the light. “Is looking much better.” He was visibly tired, lack of sleep, worry, and physical strain was showing on his face.

“I don’t want you to help the movers with the furniture. You’ve got driving ahead of you today, besides the rest of all this!” I said, gesturing to the boxes that were everywhere.

“But.....”

“But nothing!” I interrupted. “You can supervise, but I don’t want to see you carrying furniture.”

“Ah, you say I sit and watch!” He said with a sigh.

“Dimi, you’ll have enough to do, you don’t have to do it all. Let the movers earn their wage.” I was trying to be supportive.

“Yes, yes, lots more to do.” He agreed, then stood. “Better to start now.”

The movers didn’t show up until 11:30 a.m. Dimitris, by this time, had everything packed except a few things in the refrigerator, the freezer contents, and the dogs. He was frustrated at the slow appearance of the hired help.

By 3:00 p.m. we were following the moving container to the cargo vessel. Once the container was loaded, we took the dogs cages and luggage out of the land barge, then it too was loaded onto the cargo ship. We were helped by a very nice young man with loading the dogs on the ferry, which would take us to Karpathos.

Once we were launched, we were able to finally relax. Dimitris got comfortable in the corner with his feet up and I was able to lay across with my head on his chest.



“Ah, my Heart, we finally rest. You did too much work! Look at hands.” He looked at my broken nails and scuffed knuckles. “Where is ring?”

“I’ve got it on a chain around my neck. I didn’t want it to get damaged.” I sat up and pulled the ring out of my neckline.

“Here.” Dimitris reached behind me and opened the clasp. “Let me put on.” He put the ring back on my left hand and kissed my fingers.

“You are such a romantic,” I said to him as I kissed his cheek and leaned against his shoulder. He put his arm around me.

“You make Dimi this way,” he said.

“No, I think you’re a natural born romantic.”

He hunched up his shoulders in a questioning manner. I patted his chest in a comforting gesture and closed my eyes.

My cell phone started ringing which was unexpected. When I answered it, it was for Dimitris.

“It’s for you, Stefano,” I said.

Dimitris took the call, then dug into his pocket to look at his own phone. Apparently, his cell phone was not charged.

“Stefano say my phone is dead. He will meet us at dock.” Then he handed the cell phone back to me.

“We’ll need to find our cell phone chargers. I think it’s in the land barge in a box with the toiletries.”

“Yes, I will need it,” he agreed.

“You can hold on to mine if you want,” I offered. Dimitris leaned back and said,

“Rest while you can, my Heart.”

When we arrived, Stefano was there to help load the dogs and our luggage into an older station wagon that had obviously been a utility vehicle in the dig fields. Covered with dust, inside and out.

“Hello! Please excuse the dirt, I tried to clean it off, but it’s impossible. How are you doing?” Stefano asked.

“As well as we can be, under the circumstances,” I said. Once the dogs and luggage were loaded, we were whisked off to the house.

“Have you found anything on our little photo, Stefano?” I asked.

"I have, but we'll wait to discuss this. I am waiting for a call on it at any time," he explained.

Rena came running up as we drove up the driveway.

"Dimi, Helena, what happened?" She said as she hugged us both. "How much was stolen? Do you know who did it?"

"It's a mess, Rena."

"Come in, you look like you could use some rest," she offered.

Once the dogs were settled and our bags put back in our room, we went to the kitchen where we could talk and Rena served Ouzo and Tarelli.

Stefano came in with some notes and sat down at the table.

"Before you get into that, tell me about what happened!"

"We came home to a ransacked house!" I said. "They took most of the electronics and what else, I'm not sure. But they went through every room, every drawer, cupboard, and closet. The only place they didn't go is in the laundry room and parts of the garage. I think they were just leaving when we got there!"

"What about jewelry?" Rena asked.

"I didn't have anything here to take, I don't know what might have been in Dimitris' things."

"You have had a lot of bad luck lately haven't you?" Rena said.

"I think you'll know why you've had some of it. At least I suspect the reason why," Stefano commented.

"What do you find, Stefano?" Dimi asked.

"You were right about this photo. It's not the picture itself, but what you found when you opened it. I scanned everything, front and back in high resolution, and faxed it to a colleague at the University. He is examining these and will call if there is any reason to pursue an investigation," Stefano said.

"What is it that you suspect?" I asked.

"Dimi was right, the signature is that of Alain Deischant," Stefano confirmed. "The photo itself may be important, but the paper, that is where the important information may be hidden. Because of the condition of the paper, which looks to me to be from a magazine or periodical of some kind, is not good, so it must be handled in an archival manner. This may take some time, but

*The Break-in*

these may be pieces of a puzzle that has long been missing! You may have discovered something that could be the answer to many prayers in Cyprus.”

## *More Than Meets The Eye*



**I**'m sorry, I'm not familiar with this Alain Deischant. Who is he?" I asked. Stefano began to tell me about this purveyor of Cypriot antiquities. "Major icons, artifacts, and mosaics were stripped from the churches of Cyprus after the Turkish occupation in 1974. This Alain Deischant was the kingpin in the distribution of some of the antiquities looted during this time. Many pieces had re-appeared in private collections, then more were seized after Deischant's arrest in Munich in 1998. After the end of the Turkish occupation and the looting of Orthodox churches, some 15,000 to 20,000 icons and dozens of major frescoes, mosaics and thousands of other religious pieces were never recovered.

"When they arrested Deischant, the police found 14 cases and packages of icons, frescoes and the Mosaic of St. Thomas from Kananaria. There were statues, coins, pottery as well as \$16,000.00 and 200,000 guilders (\$100,000.00) in his apartment and the basement of his home.

"Many of the items looted have never been recovered, but we are hoping that the little photo may have information leading to the recovery of more of these priceless objects."

After I heard this news, everything seemed to make sense. I was stunned! I was very much in shock at the scope of importance this innocent little photo may have.

Dimitris wasn't as shocked as I was, perhaps because he was aware of who this Deischant person was, but when he saw my reaction to this information and the implications, he grabbed my hand and looked into my eyes.

"Helena, this is *good* news," he said gently and reassuringly.

"Is it?" I was still trying to digest what Stefano said. "This would mean that there's the possibility that I've tripped over an international theft ring. The thugs involved in our little mishaps, are they trying to get the information that is hidden here?"

"Yes, this will fix thug problem. If it is anything useful, it make news, thugs go away," Dimitris said. I know he was trying to simplify this but I think his wishful thinking was only that.

"How long before you know something from your colleague?" I asked apprehensively.

"If I don't get a call by 6:00 p.m. I will call again in the morning," he said.

"Thanks, Stefano, we really appreciate this," I said. "If you'll pardon me, I think I'm going to take a shower. I'm filthy," I said and retreated to the bedroom.

A shower never felt so good. I thought about the danger that I had subjected everyone to, but where would it end?

When I got out of the bathroom, Dimitris was waiting for me.

"Oh!" I said. "You startled me."

Dimitris came to me and took me by the shoulders.

"You must not worry on this, we find out what is, and it's all over. No more problem."

"Maybe it'll explain a lot of things," I told him.

"Yes," he agreed.

"There should be plenty of hot water left," I said.

"Yes, I shower," he said, gave me a peck on the cheek and went into the bathroom.

"Helena? Helena?" I heard from a far distance, then I felt his face against my cheek. "Helena, you sleep in wet hair."

"Oh. What?"

“We take nap. You feel better,” he said.

“It would be rude to just ignore Rena and Stefano. Maybe we should wait. Have an early dinner then go to bed. It’s only a couple more hours. I can manage that,” I said.

“No nap, sure?”

“We’ll go to bed early though,” I said as I kissed this lovely man.

“No like this butterfly clip.”

When we came back out to the kitchen, Rena was making a Turkish bread and had a leg of lamb already in the oven.

“Feel better? I thought you might be napping!” Rena said.

“I really needed that shower. It’s amazing how much dirt you can find when packing up boxes.” I said.

“Oh, I know, have you seen the loft room?”

“Yeah, I saw it.” We both laughed.

“Where Stefano?” Dimitris asked.

“I think he went back to his office,” Rena answered. “Dimi, bring him a cup of coffee, would you please? He’s been crying for one!”

“Have you heard from Morgan?” I asked.

“No, but I figure it’ll take her a week to settle in, then I’ll call if I don’t hear from her.”

“Stefano,” Dimitris said. “Coffee.”

“Efharisto! I’ve got some news for you. I talked to Professor Kanakaras in the Antiquities Forensic Laboratory. He thinks there is more to this than what the faxes are showing. He wants to examine the originals. Now, from a legal standpoint, the picture and all the rest of it belong to Helena.”

“I get her, you tell to her.” Dimitris left the room and came into the kitchen and took my hand.

“Come, Stefano has news,” he said.

“What did you find out?” I asked as we entered Stefano’s den.

“The faxes indicate further investigation is needed to determine the full extent of the information held within your find.”

I looked at Dimitris. He held my hand and we waited for the rest of the news.

“Professor Kanakaris thinks the original items need to be examined, and then tests that will help us to read the writing. It was so badly deteriorated that the originals need to be seen. Faxes only give an indication of the possibilities of the original pieces. Now, legally, these items belong to you. To let them out of your possession without a binding legal document to protect both you and the find is not wise.”

“So what kind of document should we have, besides a declaration of ownership?” I asked.

“There should be some provision to rights of found goods. Now, this is a touchy business. The artifacts are protected as belonging to the Cypriot government, but the photo is not an artifact, therefore it needs to be protected. The Cypriot Government had filed suit on the loss of goods looted, but depending on if anything comes of this, any suit already filed may or may not prevail.”

“Can we make up a blanket provision on the right of ownership, on the photo and this information, or should we wait and see if this isn’t a wild goose chase?” I asked.

“We can make a quick declaration of ownership on the items submitted for examination and rights to the results of the testing. That would give you time, and an idea of what you might be dealing with. However, I must tell you, the University will want some provision made for their involvement, which we can determine after we see the test results,” Stefano said.

“I would want a provision of secrecy. A provision that would cover the items that we have, the results of the tests, and any copies of anything relating to the items and tests. Is there such a thing as an oath of silence?” I joked.

“Not in so many words,” Stefano said. “But yes, I have some documents that the University uses in these cases, we’ll need to customize for this incident, but I’ll work on it for you. It shouldn’t take more than a day or two, they’ll need to be signed with witnesses by you and the University.”

“What about now, will all this hold up the testing?” I asked.

“Well, yes, but if you sign a power of attorney, I can sign anything for you,” Stefano mentioned. “There are some very rudimentary tests that I am able to perform, but I think this is better left to forensics. You don’t want any

mistakes and have them accidentally destroyed.”

“That would be best.” Dimitris agreed.

“Thank you.”

“Is that everything?” Dimitris asked.

“For now, I think so. Before you leave, I’ll have the power of Attorney for you to sign,” Stefano offered.

“Until tests, put items in safe!” Dimitris said.

“Would you be able to watch the testing? I mean, you’re familiar with all of this. Also, I’d like to preserve the photo, as much as that is possible, given the circumstances. I’d like to have it back.”

“We’ll do what we can; I’ll see when I have the signatures if I am allowed to oversee the testing.”

I walked around the desk to give Stefano a hug.

“Thank you so much, Stefano.”

“Efharisto, Stefano,” Dimitris said to his brother and patted him on the shoulder.

“Oh! Rena, something is smelling so good!” I said as I entered the kitchen.

“That’s the lamb. It’ll be out of the oven in another hour. Would you like an Ouzo and Tarelli?” She asked.

“Yes, please! My mom used to make Tarelli before she became ill. It used to be a Christmas tradition at home.” I said.

“Helena, I go see to dogs,” I heard Dimitris announce from the patio door.

“I’ll go, too; excuse me, Rena.” I went out to the patio behind him.

The dogs were tied just off of the patio porch. Dimitris let them loose to run. They had been cooped up for so long that they ran wild for a few minutes.

Dimitris put his arm around me, then touched the hair corralled in the clip.

“Hair still wet,” he laughed.

“What are you laughing at?”

“Wet hair, remind me of Paradiso, first time I kiss my Helena.” He planted his lips on my shoulder and was nibbling his way up my neck to my ear.



“Mmmmm” you smell good. Hair still wet!”

“What do you think about all this? The investigation?”

“I am thinking let Stefano handle,” he said.

“Yes, I know, but I was thinking maybe we should just sign it all over to the University, except that I want the photo. What do you think?” I asked.

“I am kissing you and you are thinking of little photo, what am I to do with you?” He smiled. “It is not ‘we’ to sign, it is ‘you’ to sign,” Dimitris said.

“That’s... but what do you think about it?” I asked again.

“I say wait for tests. Then you know what to do,” he said and resumed kissing my neck.

“I don’t want this to cause us any more problems than we already have had. If something were to happen to you, or Rena or Stefano because of it, I’d be responsible and I couldn’t live with that.”

“Shh, you worry about what if’s. Not to worry on now,” he said.

“We have to think of these things when we’ve had this kind of bad luck. Right?”

“We worry when tests all back, huh?” He looked into my eyes. “Now, I go make salad, so we eat soon, then think about bed.”

“What about the dogs?” I asked.

“We let run. Feed after dinner. Come now.” He held out his hand to me.

“Rena, you cook too good! I eat too much!” Dimitris said. He cleared the plates for Rena and asked who wanted coffee.

“Not me, thanks, I won’t sleep if I do,” I said.

Dimitris got the dishwasher going, then saw me standing in the entry to the kitchen.

“Helena?” He said as he came up to me. I was just staring, too tired to concentrate on anything.

“Yeah,” I said once he stirred my attention.

“I will feed dogs, wait for me.” I watched him walk out to the patio and get the dogs tied and fed. His sexy walk mesmerized me!

“Come.” He took my hand, picked up his jacket and put it around my shoulders. We walked through the house and out the front door. He put his

arm around my shoulders as we walked down the driveway.

“Is there something wrong?” I asked.

“Nothing wrong. Just want to walk, look at stars. Is beautiful night,” he said. “I know you tired, so we only go to end of block. Fresh air is relaxing. Are you too cold, my Heart?”

“No. It is a beautiful night. What time will we be leaving tomorrow?” I asked.

“Well, we sleep, we get up, we see,” Dimitris said as we turned around and made our way back to the house.

“Do you know what I love about you?” I asked.

Dimitris got a big grin on his face, hugged me a little closer and said

“You tell Dimi.”

“You are so optimistic about everything,” I said.

“Oh, not everything.”

“Mostly, you can usually show me the bright side of things, especially when I’m worried about something. Not everyone is that way. And I love you for it, among other things,” I said.

“What other things?”

“I think you know,” I said.

“You tell me later,” he whispered in my ear as we went into the house.

“Thank you, Rena, for such a wonderful dinner, one of these days you’ll have to show me how to make Turkish bread!” I said.

“Thanks! I can show you next time, just remind me. It’s really simple.”

“Now, I’m afraid I’m going to have to go to bed. I’m dead tired. Good night,” I said.

I no sooner closed the door to the bedroom when Dimitris came in.

“We go to bed,” he said.

“You can stay up if you’re not sleepy, I don’t mind,” I said.

“We go to bed together, Helena.”

Dimitris turned on the lamp by the bed as he got in, I turned off the overhead light and got into bed too. As I cuddled up to Dimitris, he put his arms around me. He took my hair out of the clip and carefully brought it down.

“Hair still damp,” he said.

"I'm too tired to care, Dimi," I said with my head resting on his shoulder.

"You still have to tell me."

"What? What do I have to tell you?"

"All other things you love on me," he said. I had to laugh!

"I can't tell you every little thing I love about you! It would take me all night," I said.

"Tell me something and I tell you something."

"Okay, I love your eyes."

"Yes, something else."

"Well, I love the way you walk, your shoulders, the way you call me 'my Heart,' the way you whisper to me in Greek, the way you make me feel safe."

"What else?"

"Uh, let me think, I love the way you worry about me getting sick, the way you are able to be objective in a situation. I love the little things, the smallest little unimportant things you remember, and how you have accepted me for who I am, what I am, without judgment. I love your honesty, openness, your lack of pretense. I could go on and on. Every day I find more things to love about you."

"Okay, my Heart, you are tired. I will let you sleep," he said, then kissed my forehead and said, "we sleep."

I couldn't believe the time! I woke up at 11:30 a.m. after going to sleep about 8:00 p.m. I felt behind me, Dimitris was still there! He took my hand and I rolled over.

"You're still in bed?" I asked. "How long have you been awake?"

"Maybe two hours," he said.

"Why? Why did you stay in bed? Are you getting sick?" I asked.

"I stay to be with you, watch you sleep," he said.

"Was I snoring?" I asked. He laughed.

"No, not snore."

"Why did you let me sleep for so long?" I asked.

"You tired, you sleep."

"I guess we should get going now, huh?"

“First I tell you things.”

“Dimi, let’s do that tonight, okay, we really need to get going,” I said.

“Tonight,” he said a little dejected.

“It’ll give you more time to think of something,” I said.

He pinned me back on the pillow and gave me a most sensuous kiss.

“I need no time, I know.”

“You’ll remember then, you can tell me tonight or while we travel today if you’re good!”

“Helena, you are killing me! You make me wait!” He made that growling sound and I knew that I was in trouble. He rolled over on top of me, kissed me and pulled me over on top of him, growling all the while. He made me laugh! “Okay, but I am very good today!” He said, and I kissed him. “No, no, I will be good first, so now we get up.” He rolled me off of him, kissed me on the cheek and got out of bed. “Let’s get up now!” He said as he shook the bed.

We finally emerged from the bedroom in time for lunch.

“Gee, I thought you two died in there! You must have really been tired. I know how much work it is to move, so I fully understand,” Rena said.

“We were exhausted, still exhausted I should say!” I said.

“I make lunch,” Dimitris announced.

“Oh, great, thanks!” Rena said.

“Where is Stefano?” I asked.

“Oh, he’ll be here when he gets hungry, he’s in his office.”

“Isn’t it time to eat?” Stefano said as he entered the kitchen. “Ah! I have the Power of Attorney....”

“Don’t start that now, Stefano, we’re getting ready to eat,” Rena said.

“Well, when we go down to the docks we’ll stop for the signature. We might want to leave a little earlier,” Stefano said as Rena gave him the evil eye.

“We’re eattin’, Stefano!” She spoke through gritted teeth.

“Dimi, you need help in there?” Stefano called.

“No, is ready.” Dimitris brought in the lunch as we dropped the subject of signatures.

We said our goodbyes to Rena and Stefano, having signed the Power of

Attorney and outlining other things that pertain to the little photo. The dogs were aboard the ferry along with our luggage. We got comfortable in a nice lounge seat, then we were on our way.

I sat back and put my feet up, closed my eyes and took in what my senses would allow. The scent of Dimitris' cologne, the sound of people, the drone of the engines, were all so familiar.

"Helena." He stroked his hand along my arm. "Now I tell you things."

"Okay," I said, and I snuggled up and listened. He began in a hushed tone.

"I love how you worry about this man spend too much money. The teasing of 'is good,' make me laugh. Your sharp forks! You worry about me to keel over, funny, Helena! The way you take care with little photo, the rubbing of back when you did not have to do, your scent, I go crazy! The way you make me behave myself, like the furniture moving. Your hair, your see-through dress...too sexy, I like! You play with dogs too, and chickens. Your jealousy with Camilla, and..."

"Wait a minute! You like me being jealous?"

"Not to interrupt, my Heart," he said and tapped my wrist. "Your little jealousy is good. Shows you won't want Dimi to stray one day."

"You don't want to try to make me jealous! I was holding myself back since I'm new around here. I can get really jealous under the right conditions, so you don't ever want to see that!" I said.

"Ahh." I saw a light in his eyes.

"I can be volatile, Dimi, believe me, that's something that I don't want you to see."

"Not to worry on that," he said. "I have other thing to tell." He sat up. I had to sit up from leaning against him, so I guessed that what he was to say, was very important to him. "We spend night with Andreas and Morgana. Then they drive us to Patras. We live in hills of Agia Thekli," he said as he pulled out a photo from his jacket. "I want this to be surprise wedding gift to you." He showed me the picture of a house.

"What is it? This house? Did you buy this house for us? Oh, Dimi, it's so, so beautiful! I, I...!" I was dumbstruck! From the picture, it looked like a brick colonial house. The front looked new and it appeared to have several rooms

or buildings added on to the back, but the picture did not show it well.

“When did you do this?” I asked.

“When we work on construction project, for Andreas, this was project, for you.”

“I can’t believe you did this! My God.” I looked at him; his sweet face, then I hugged him. “Dimi, I don’t know what to say. I just don’t know what to say. It might take awhile for it to sink in, I’m numb!”

“Do you like?”

“Oh, Dimi, you know I do, I just can’t believe it.”

“Why not believe? Is true, I never lie to you,” he said so seriously.

“You’re going to make me cry, Dimi, and I’m doing good, so far, not crying. I won’t see it until tomorrow?”

“Yes, we go there tomorrow.”

I threw my arms around him, and said,

“What am I going to do with you? Never in my life would I ever expect something like this!” I said and wiped my eyes. “Tell me about it, where is this?”

He told me all about the house, that it was a bed and breakfast or rooming house at one time, so it’s got a lot of rooms. It’s on the island of Kefalonia. The foundation and all of the fireplaces had to be completely replaced, that’s where most of the “project” was, and the reason that Dimitris, Stefano, Andreas, Aiden, and a few others were gone for so long. He wanted it for a wedding gift.

“You have room for studio, Dimi have lab, room for family to visit! Has old olive grove, chickens can come. You like! Have Morgana decorate,” he said.

“Where have you been all my life, Dimi?” I said, then gave him a big kiss and hug. “Let’s get some coffee, okay?”

We got up to go to the coffee bar, then it hit me.

“Dimi?” I said, “if you were working on the house, that was before you wanted to marry me!” I said.

“Oh no, this after Dimi decide you will marry me,” he said as we sat with our coffee.

I looked at him, he smiled and put his head to mine and said,

"You are thinking. You are thinking this man had house already." He said with a smile. "No."

"Well, when did you decide all this?" I asked. As I looked into his eyes, he smiled and turned his head like maybe if he looked away, the question would go away.

He put down his coffee, then cupped both of his hands around my hand.

"I decide after picnic. You say to me, 'if you can cook you have to marry me.' It was good idea to my head," he said. "Then after we talk, you have wet hair, I decide 'I will marry her.' I put in escrow next morning."

"Just like that?" I asked.

"I decide, it is done."

"But that would have been the Monday that we went to Karpathos the first time," I said. "Right?"

"Yes, that day was late to Paradiso, you did not answer phone, I worry you sick." He said and kissed my hand.

"So, that's why you were late?"

"Yes," he said. "I see house at end of summer, in September. I look. Needed too much work. Andreas say to fix up. We talk on this on Athena, after Valley of Butterflies."

"But I had only just met you. I was here only five days at that point. How did you know that I would marry you?" I asked. He looked into my eyes and I felt that electricity going through me that he does and he said,

"Because I look at you and feel, here." He put his hand on his heart. "You and I connect together. Perhaps in other life, you were mine. I make it so now."

"You had it in your mind before I got sick, before Karpathos?"

"I think yes," he said.

"So, almost from the beginning, you set out to make me fall in love with you. But, you've been single, avoiding entanglements, free of relationship problems. Then suddenly, on impulse, you buy a house? What made you so sure that I would stay? I worry about you, Mr. Patakinis."

"Now you are thinking this man is crazy. He will run like headless chicken someday!" I had to laugh.

"I'm really going to have to keep an eye on you, aren't I?" I said. Dimitris put his arms around me and took a big deep breath.

"We keep eyes on each other."

"You've been keeping a lot of secrets from me."

"Not secrets, only surprises. I had thought to buy house Germans occupy, I show to you. But we leave Rhodes instead." He said as he stood and took my hand.

We walked to the upper deck and let the wind whip us. The sun would be setting soon. I was looking forward to having a place that we can settle into and this had enough room for family visits, which was really exciting.

"I should probably call Morgan. When do you think we'll get there?" I asked.

"Should be three more hours to Piraeus. We call after two more hours, better connection."

We ran a fairly uneventful voyage and I was glad to see our destination in sight. Once in the harbor, we got the dogs and luggage then waited for Andreas.

"This brother of mine keeps us busy!" Andreas said as he came up behind the bench on which we were seated. "Helena, hello!"

We greeted Andreas and I asked about Morgan. "She's home, I came from the job with the Crew-Cab. The only thing I could get with enough space for the kennel cages."

"And where is this truck, little brother?" Dimitris said.

Andreas spoke in a low tone with his back toward me.

"The only truck is Aiden's, he'll be here in a minute. I didn't have time to get another truck." Andreas said to Dimitris.

"We make do, is okay," Dimitris said to Andreas.

"Hello!" Aiden said and shook Dimitris' hand.

(Oh, geez! I'm bound to a life of unexpected embarrassments!) "Hello, Aiden," he grabbed my involuntary hand and kissed it.

"You're looking well."

The men hauled the kennel cages and luggage down to the truck. There



was quite a chill in the evening breeze and getting into the truck and the protection from the wind was my main concern.

"I'm sorry Helena," Andreas said softly as he opened the door for me.

"It's alright," I said.

Dimitris and I sat in the back seat of this huge truck. All my jackets and sweaters were packed so a cotton shirt wasn't much protection against the chill and the wind. I cuddled tight to Dimitris to keep warm.

"How are you and Morgan getting along?" I asked Andreas.

"Fine! She is making a home for us, it's wonderful!"

"She's done a lot to that place. You should see how good it looks," Aiden commented.

"Dimi, the dogs, did we bring food for them?" I asked.

"No. Andreas, we must stop at market for dog food." He turned to me, and said,

"I did not remember, thank you, my Heart." Then kissed my temple.

When we stopped at the market, Dimitris checked on the dog's condition. They were cold but in good spirits. Andreas and Aiden were talking while they waited at the tailgate.

We had a change of plans when Andreas said he could not take the dogs.

"I'll take them for the night." Aiden volunteered.

"No, I don't....," Dimitris started.

"Dimi, they can't stay, I'm sorry, but I forgot about them. It's not allowed." Andreas lamented.

"They'll be alright, I have a yard for them, they'll be fine," Aiden said.

We went to Aiden's house and he showed Dimitris the yard. He agreed to let them stay, at least they would have a place to stretch and run around. When we got to the condo, I was very impressed with it. Morgan had told me about it, but it was more beautiful than I imagined.

When we walked in, it was like going back to the middle ages. Tapestries, Oriental carpets, and velvet drapes.

"Thank you, Aiden, to do for us," Dimitris said, with a handshake.

"I have to get going, I'll call you in the morning," Aiden said to Dimitris.

"Call this number," Dimitris said. "My cell is dead, so call this one."

I wondered about giving out my cell number to Aiden.

“Hey, how are you, I heard about the house. That’s too bad,” Morgan said.

I told Morgan all about the robbery, the little photo, and the investigation.

“Didn’t Stefano say it could be dangerous? Geez! I can see why there would be people still after it, especially if there’s a clue to the whereabouts of the rest of the loot. It could be worth millions in the right hands, or rather in the wrong hands!”

“Did you know that Dimitris bought a house for a wedding gift?” I asked.

“Yeah, I knew about it,” she confessed.

“How did...oh, did Andreas already tell you?”

“I knew about it a long time ago, but I was sworn to secrecy!”

“How long have you known?” I asked, just out of curiosity.

“Let me see...it was when you were so sick. It came out then. Have you seen it yet?”

“No, I guess you and Andreas are taking us to Patras, did you know that?”

“Andreas told me we would be going somewhere.”

“Did you know that Dimi, when he bought the house, it was before we went to Karpathos? That was like only five days after we met him!”

“See...I told you!”

“What?” I asked.

“You said he had his eye on me and I said something like “not hardly.” I knew there was something, even then.”

“Okay, so you were right,” I said. “How are you and Andreas doing? It looks like you’ve been busy the last few days!”

“We’re doing really good. Oh, guess what? Amy is coming for a visit for Christmas, it’s definite! She already has her reservation!”

“Wonderful! I’ll bet you’re excited, she’s coming alone isn’t she?”

“Yes, thank God!” She said. “Aiden has been here quite a lot. He’s helped Andreas with hanging the tenting and tapestries for me. He’s still asking about you.”

“Did you ever ask him what he’s up to? I mean, what does he want?” I asked.

“Yeah, I tried to get him to tell me something, but he doesn’t like to give

many answers, a little evasive. He did go on and on one night about how stupid he was, and how great it was with you, and that he can't get you out of his mind, now that he's seen you again. Then he said one thing, about after you broke up. He said that after he left, he was coming back for you because he felt so bad about how he hurt you when he left. He said he got in an accident and broke his neck. He was in and out of hospitals for a year, then in some kind of cage brace, he had to wear for another year. He said he thought he saw you once or twice in Riverside, but you were always with someone, so he didn't say anything."

"That's too bad about the accident. I did think that I saw him twice, and one of those times, he did wear a brace. Huh! Strange how things go. So what about now, what does he want now?" I asked.

"He might just want to apologize," she said.

"He did that already, at the party."

"I don't know. I hope you won't take this the wrong way, but I never figured you for a vamp! I mean the type of woman that men can't forget. You know what I mean?"

"I'm not. Not in a good way, anyway!" We laughed! "Circumstances, Morgan. This would never happen in real life. We're not in a place where real life is happening to us. It's the circumstances that surround us here. Once I mentioned Atlantis to Dimitris. "It is said," he told me, some regard Hellas as Atlantis, or close enough to where it used to be. It's insane, isn't it?"

"I don't think so anymore," she said. "You know, Aiden is a pretty nice guy, a little on the quiet side, but he talks to Andreas. He doesn't really open up to me. I haven't known him very long, maybe that's it. Andreas gets him talking, though."

"I'm pretty sure he was an only child, maybe that has something to do with it?"

"Maybe, I found out that he's been married three times! He has two sons, both of them are wasteoids from what he says. They still live in Washington state."

"Interesting...I was trying to remember, but I really can't remember much about him, except that he's a knock your socks off passionate guy! I remember

that!"

"Well, he must remember more about you, he's not going to go away. He kept sitting there, smiling then he'd say something about how "hot" you still are and how he wishes he'd have found you first, and that he doesn't think that Dimitris is suited for you."

"What does he do, just sit here and have true confessions?" I asked.

"No, they would be watching some stupid game or playing cards with the guys, and drinking a little," she said. "He's going to wait until Dimitris screws up, then step in...he didn't say it in so many words, but that's what it boils down to."

"I don't get it," I said.

"I think it's what you said before, the perfume."

"Oh, it can't be that," I said. "You haven't mentioned that to Andreas or Amy?"

"No. No one. He said, now I only caught part of it, but he said something like 'smells trigger memories.' I don't think that Andreas knew what he was talking about, and Aiden doesn't know that I know anything, so he was just kind of thinking out loud, maybe."

"He said that?" I asked.

"Yeah, if he sits for a while and no one says anything, he'll bring you up in some context or other."

"What does Andreas think of this, of Aiden talking about me, his brother's woman?"

"I haven't heard him say anything that I can understand, he talks low so that I don't hear. I don't think he listens to it anymore, and it is getting old."

"Do you know if Andreas has said anything to Dimitris?"

"I heard him say something in the beginning, but I don't know what Dimitris said to him because Andreas hasn't said anything more about it."

"This is weird. He said something to Dimitris about Aiden talking about me, and Dimitris hasn't done anything to keep Aiden away from me, obviously..."

"Obviously!" Morgan said.

"Well, what is Dimitris up to?" I asked. When I saw them coming toward the kitchen, I changed the subject.

“You have been busy with this place, I remember some of these tapestries, and candle holders,” I said.

“It’s been so much fun, I wish you could have come with me to buy some of this stuff, it’s kind of lonely by myself.”

“Well, we’ll be a lot closer now that we’ll be in Patras. Dimi said to see if you want to help me decorate? And since there’s a ferry, we should be able to get together more often than if we were still in Rhodes.” I said.

Morgan showed us to one of the extra bedrooms.

“Your room is this one, it’s where I dumped all the extra stuff until I get organized, so, I hope you don’t mind the mess. The bed is comfortable.” Morgan said.

“It is wonderful Morgana, efharisto,” Dimitris said.

“Thanks, you guys, we’ll see you in the morning,” I said.

“I did not know of Aiden being here. I am sorry.” Dimitris said.

“There’s nothing to apologize for, it was nice of him to help us out in a pinch,” I said.

“Are you tired, my Heart?” Dimitris asked.

“Yes, I’m pretty tired, it’s been a long day.”

“Okay, get into bed, I turn off light.”

We slept in another strange bed. We had such an exhausting day. Moving is no fun and I’m hoping I’ll never have to do it again.

## *Kefalonia*



**B**y 4:00 a.m. the wind had picked up. The noise from canvas awnings flapping in the wind was enough to disturb my sleep. I turned over to put my arm around Dimitris. He held my hand to his heart and I was able to go back to sleep for another couple of hours.

I felt Dimitris stir, as I was still curled up behind him. He turned and looked to see if my eyes were open, then he kissed my hand, and got up. When he got out of the shower he asked,

“Are you getting up, Helena? We will have to leave early, are you awake?”

“I’m up, can I get a shower first?” I asked in my yawning state of sleepiness.

“Yes, if you wish, but no wet hair, too windy.”

By the time I got out of the shower, the coffee was on and Andreas was cooking.

“Something smells good!” I said.

“Helena, come sit,” Dimitris said and summoned me to his side. “Morgana has done much in short time. Do you like?”

Andreas brought coffee to me.

“Thanks, yes, it’s starting to look very nice, very...Medieval.” I said. “Do we know what time we will get to Patras?”

“We should leave by 10 o’clock,” Andreas said.

“Morgan, you’re coming, aren’t you?” I asked.

“Hell, yes, I wouldn’t miss it!”

Dimitris kissed my hand and said,

“We will need to pick up dogs, Aiden may want to talk.”

“Okay Dimi, you keep bringing this up, it’s not a problem. I’m okay with it, are you sure that you’re okay with it? I don’t want to go against any feelings you may have with this. Tell me, are you really okay with me talking to Aiden?”

“Is okay, not a problem,” he said. I looked at him and tried to figure out what the idea is about me talking to Aiden.

“What is it, Helena?”

“What is it that you’re not telling me?” I asked.

“What you mean?”

“Aiden, what’s this about me talking to him, what does he have to say? Why should I care what he has to say? Are you testing me?”

“Testing?”

I just looked at him. He’s just so cute and acts so innocent, and I felt that if I pursued this I would be making myself angry at him.

“Maybe we should get this show on the road, after another cup of coffee,” I said.

We all piled into a rental van; a large rental van that would accommodate the dogs and luggage and all of us. Andreas and Dimitris went to get the dogs as Morgan and I stayed in the van.

“What’s the latest with you and Dimitris?” Morgan asked.

“Everything is fine, I’m hoping that Aiden won’t present a problem. Also, we expect Rena to call anytime now, about the documents being sent,” I said.

“Are you excited, seeing the house?”

“Oh, I can’t wait! I’m a little nervous.”

“Well, you’ll get settled and it’ll feel like home,” she said.

“I still can’t believe he bought this on the day before Karpathos. Isn’t that pretty impulsive?”

“That is definitely impulsive,” she said.

“Morgan, I hate to let this thought come into my head, and I feel bad that it has, but I wonder sometimes if one of these days Dimitris is going to lose

his temper, I mean really blow up! You know how these guys act on their feelings; they aren't shy about showing emotion. What do you think? Am I getting paranoid?"

"You're just letting this Aiden thing get to you," she said.

"I think I'd like to see him totally lose it, just once at me, before we get married," I said.

"Why?"

"I'd like to know how bad the worst could be. No surprises, I'll know."

"Helen, you create more worries than there are. He's been wonderful, hasn't he? I mean, even with having Aiden here, has he acted jealous, suspicious or possessive?" she asked.

"He's been great. I worry a little about that, why is he so great with it? Shouldn't he be a little jealous or at least protective? I don't know, Rena must be right, it takes a while for us outsiders."

"You know, I've come to the conclusion that every day is new, appreciate it for what it is. Go with the flow, Helen, don't make ripples!"

"You're right, a new day a new philosophy. I shouldn't feel like I'm walking a tightrope."

"Here they come, don't you love to watch them move? There's something about the way they walk, am I nuts?" Morgan asked.

"God no; you know that I love to watch Dimi walk. He's got the sexiest walk; he's got a cute butt!"

"He does!" Morgan said.

"Hey! You keep your eyes on Andreas's butt!" I said, and we laughed.

"They're both pretty sexy, in different ways. Andreas has that cool sexy saunter kind of walk, where Dimitris has that swagger. Strong, confident with a bit of a twist." Morgan observed.

"That twist! Ooh, man! And those broad shoulders, woof!" I said. We both were laughing! Even when we were teenaged, we didn't talk like this.

"It's too bad we don't know someone who could snap up Aiden. He's pretty sexy too," Morgan said.

"Shh, here they come," I said.

"Hello ladies," Aiden greeted us. "Ready?"



"It'll be a nice change," I said.

"You're welcome to come in for a drink, coffee or something."

"No, we've got a container to catch up with," Morgan said.

Dimitris got in, sat next to me and put his arm around me. Andreas got into the driver's seat, then we left for Patras, a small city on the North end of Peloponnese.

"I'm getting sleepy again," I yawned. "I thought we were driving there."

"Ferry, just to cross channel. Here, you lean on me. Take sleep."

"You're on the wrong side, we have to trade seats." We managed to go from one side to the other so that I could have Dimitris on my left side. He leaned into the corner so that I could lean against him. I was always just on the edge of sleep, but it was a comfort to be in his arms.

Once we disembarked in Patras, Dimitris called the cargo shipper. Our shipment wouldn't be unloaded and delivered until tomorrow.

"Great. We won't have any furniture, or is there furniture already?" I asked.

"No furniture, I am sorry Helena, I wanted it nice for you." He said with great disappointment.

"It's okay, Morgan will help me imagining what to do and where the furniture will go. It might even be better, this way we can see the rooms and figure things out. It's good." I said.

"Is good?"

"Yes!" I said and kissed him.

"Well, where will you sleep?" Morgan asked.

I looked at Dimitris.

"We stay in town tonight, don't worry. Container delivered in morning."

"What about the dogs?" I asked.

"They be okay," he assured.

We found a nice hotel near the ferry in Patras. After an early night, we all met in the hotel lobby in the morning, where it was set up as a complimentary breakfast buffet.

"Hi, how did you like your room?" I asked as we spotted Morgan and Andreas eating breakfast.

“A little small, but we slept okay,” Morgan said.

“I don’t know why they have to put such hard beds in these hotels! I felt like my bones were drilling a hole in cement!” I said.

“Where’s Dimi?” Andreas wondered.

“He’s taking the dogs for a walk, but he should be back in a few minutes.”

“This harbor is nice, so many colorful boats,” Morgan commented.

“There’s Dimi! Grab some breakfast, Sweetie.” I said as I was fixing a bowl of yogurt and cereal.

“We must be at the docks in twenty minutes.”

“Where are we going? I thought we were waiting for the cargo container.” I didn’t understand. Dimitris sat next to me and started eating. He took my hand and held it on his thigh, under the table. I waited for him to say something.

“We take ferry to Kefalonia.”

“What?”

“You will see.”

I looked over to Andreas and Morgan. They had grins on their faces and knew what was happening.

We made the short ferry trip to this island north-west of Athens. We had to wait for the rental van to be unloaded, but then we were on our way.

There were many small harbor inlets along the road we took. It seemed like we were skirting the island and catching sight of the most amazing coastline. When we turned on what looked like a one lane road, we followed it past beautiful pastures with sheep grazing. The western side of the island seemed rocky and arid, although there were some wild bushes and trees.

After we drove the winding road for several miles, it seemed that we had crested the hills and found a beautiful valley, green with older trees, old olive groves, and newly set orchards.

When we pulled over we could see that the container was already delivered. Unfortunately, it sat in the middle of a very small front yard.

“Here it is, what you think Helena?”

“It’s beautiful! The picture doesn’t show how big it is!” I turned to Dimitris, “It’s so beautiful, you did good, Dimi.”

Dimitris gave me the key and Morgan and I went inside.

The two-story colonial had a huge living room with fireplace, large dining room, a couple of bedrooms, decent sized kitchen with room for a table or nook and a huge bathroom with a nice ball and claw tub. The second floor had four bedrooms two baths, a stairway to the attic.

“This place is huge!” Morgan commented.

“Lots of space, that’s one thing it has!” Andreas said.

“We will find use for it. Soon it will be too small and we need more space, you will see!” Dimitris said.

I wrapped my arms around him and gave him a big kiss.

“You have overwhelmed me, Amore Mio,” I said.

“That is good,” he said. “Tomorrow we will get container empty and work, work, work!”

“You’ve got enough room to put up your whole family!” Morgan said.

“Dimi, we’ve got to get back, I’ve got to work tomorrow, and the last ferry is at 5:30 p.m., so we’d better hurry,” Andreas said. “I’ll send over a couple of the guys from Igoumenitsa. They can help with the furniture, three guys enough?”

Andreas and Morgan drove back to the ferry.

We opened the container and had to remove boxes that had shifted and fell onto the Volkswagen. Luckily they were small boxes and did no damage to the little car. We got the dogs settled for the night, then we went to an Inn for dinner and a room to sleep. By the end of the day, we were ready to get into bed and watch some tv, which we hadn’t done in ages. We were both so tired that we fell asleep with the TV on.

In the morning we went back to the house. The container was still waiting.

“Where do we start?” I asked. “We’re going to need help.”

Dimitris came to me and put his arms around me from behind, with his head over my shoulder, he hugged me and looked at my hands.

“You work too hard. Your hands are all scuff up and dirty. These are hands of artist, not farmhand. Andreas sends help, you will only unpack boxes in

house,” he said. “Come, sit here.”

“Dimi, wouldn’t it be less work if we take the boxes out of the container, put them in the land barge and cart them to the utility building so that they are out of the way of the furniture? Then we can go through the boxes as we need to, a little at a time.

He stood and took my hand and said,

“That we do, much less work!” He pulled me up and wrapped his arms around me, rocking me and said: “Oh, Helena, what I do without you?” When the crew of Andreas’ men came, it was Aiden and two young men from his latest job in Igoumenitsa. Dimi instructed them on the new procedure for moving the boxes, and it was good that they brought a large truck.

“I will be back, I go get food and water. We need to eat.” Dimitris said. He left for the market while I was sorting through boxes.

“Aiden, what are you doing here?” I asked. It seemed odd that Aiden would be one of the men chosen to come here.

“I was in the north anyway, so I volunteered. This is quite a place isn’t it?”

“I know that you worked on this place with Dimitris,” I said.

“Oh, where is he?”

“He’ll be back, he went to get some food,” I said.

He started to walk away, then turned and said: “you’ve got dirt on your face.” He came closer and said,

“Wait... here.” He brushed the dirt off of my cheek and by my eye which still had traces of yellow bruising. He held his hand there and looked at me in a dreamy way that I remembered from a long time ago. Then he said in a soft voice

“God, it’s been a long time.” I was almost mesmerized, and before I realized what was happening, Aiden drew me near to him and he started to kiss me. My heart was pounding, but I came to my senses.

“Aiden, stop, stop.” I weakly said. I turned from him and asked him to have the men bring the rest of the small things back to the utility building. “Then the furniture can go into the house.”

“Helen, I.....”

“Please Aiden, just do the job.” I walked to the other side of the pile of boxes

and watched him walk out to the front of the house.

What's wrong with me? This could ruin everything if it's not controlled. Morgan was right. I knew it all the time. The heart never forgets. I kept working but now he planted that seed in me. He would invade my thoughts and I had to stay away from him. I continued to take loads of boxes and shuffle them from one place to another.

Dimitris came home with some sandwiches and bottled water. The few groceries he bought were put into the kitchen.

"Helena, you are doing too much heavy work. Men will do furniture and heavy things." He kissed the top of my forehead and headed out to the container. He directed them where to put the furniture.

Once the boxes were out of the way, the furniture went into the house fairly quickly. There wasn't near enough furniture to fill this place, so there was no problem getting things out of the container and then into the house.

"What time is the ferry? They'll need to get back." I suggested to Dimitris.

They did have to get the ferry back to Igoumenitsa. Dimitris brought in the men and gave them each 100EU. Then he poured them each an Ouzo. We all stood in the center of the living room in a circle. Dimitris made a toast.

"To my beautiful bride, a house with much happiness, and thanks to my friends who help us." We all tapped glasses for the toast. Aiden looked at me during the entire thing.

Dimitris and Aiden were talking and laughing. I curled up on the sofa and leaned against its wing. I was so comfortable. Dimitris saw me and brought the conversation with Aiden over to the sofa. I sat up as Dimitris sat down.

"Helena, Aiden tells me he will take Camilla to theater. Is good!" He said. He was happy, he had that spark in his voice like it was the answer to our problem.

"Camilla?" I said in disbelief. This woke me up.

"Yes, they meet on Andreas Day. Is good?" he asked.

"Yeah, good." My enthusiasm was lacking in this response. Dimitris looked at me and said to Aiden

"Well, you must tell how it goes. Thank you for help."

“Don’t mention it, if you need any more help, you have my number.” He bid us both goodbye and then left.

We were now alone, exhausted, and still had to put things away. As we looked around the utility building there was so much to do, it would be at least a year before I will get to all of the boxes.

“There’s no electricity back here, Dimi, I’ll have to wait.” He got up and reached behind a huge post and flipped the breaker switch, then the light came on.

“Ahh, that’s better!” I said.

“Bed is ready for covers, and linens are at top of stairs. Refrigerator getting cold.” He said in an exhausted tone. He sat next to me on a large box and put his hand on my knee. “It will be good, take time. Your hands get all rough. All this should have been done before, I am sorry.” He leaned over and kissed my cheek.

I took his face in my hands and kissed him deeply.

“Dimi, you are so special to me. I never want to lose you.” I said as I looked deep into his dark eyes. He looked at me like he knew there was something behind what I said, but he didn’t press me on it.

“You will not lose, Dimi always here,” he said.

“I’m going to make the bed, find the towels and see if I can get our clothes unpacked.” I stood and gave Dimitris a big kiss. He was still sitting and put his arms around me and rested his head against my chest, and said something in Greek.

“Come on,” I said softly. “We’ve got things to do.”

By the time we got to bed, we were both dead tired. Everything was a mess and we only found a few of the missing items that we were looking for, such as our cell phone chargers. We had our blankets, sheets, and pillows, but couldn’t find the plug for the electric blanket.

By morning I was freezing to death!

“What is it?” Dimitris asked. He turned over and saw that I was almost shivering. I put my ice cold hand on his cheek. “Are you sick? Do you feel bad? What is it?”

"I'm freezing, why is it so cold?" He tried rubbing my arms and making sure that the blankets were covering me.

"Is any better?"

"I'm going to get up and get dressed and put the coffee on. Don't we have any heat?"

"I can light fire," he said. The sun wasn't quite up yet and I knew how hard he worked yesterday.

"No Dimi, you go back to sleep, I'll make coffee and I'll look for the electric blanket control. You sleep. I'll be back in a while." I kissed him on the cheek and got up.

I put on my robe and grabbed some clothes from the box by the door and went out of the bedroom. I felt a cold breeze coming from under every doorway. I went from room to room looking for any open windows and then closing the doors behind me. I closed every door I could find on my way to the kitchen.

I sat in the kitchen area waiting for the coffee, just looking at my surroundings. In the dim light, I could see a mountain of things that had to be done. I drank a cup of coffee to warm me and I put on some thick socks. I found Dimitris' jacket hanging in the broom closet. I put it on and thought I'd go out to the utility building. I had seen a pile of wood that had been stacked there for maybe fifty years. In one of the boxes that hadn't been brought into the house was a burlap gunny sack full of plastic kitchen containers. I emptied it out into the box and used the gunny sack to haul some of the wood back into the house.

I hoped that a fire in the living room hearth would take the chill off the house. After tending my fire for a half an hour, the chill was finally beginning to turn to warmth. I pulled the sofa at an angle to catch more of the heat while I defrosted! My hands had gotten numb with cold as I was getting wood, and it was taking quite a while to warm them up.

I had enough firewood to last for a few hours. I hoped that when the sun rose, that it would warm things up. I took a quilt from the pile of furniture padding. Armed with a fire in the fireplace, a hot cup of coffee and a furniture quilt that left a lot to be desired, I parked myself on the sofa. It was so toasty

that even the dank smell of the furniture quilt didn't stop me from falling asleep.

I woke up hearing the clanking in the kitchen. I had a cozy down comforter over me and the fire was still blazing.

"Dimi? Are you in the Kitchen?" I called.

"Yes, my Heart, more coffee?"

"Yes, thank you." I sat up and saw that although the sun was up, it wasn't going to be a warm day. It was gray and overcast.

Dimitris came in with a hot cup of coffee for me. I moved over so that he could sit next to me.

"Efharisto, Dimi." Dimitris smiled, even though my poor language skills were in many languages. When it comes to not speaking anything other than English, my butchering of languages is nondiscriminatory.

"You did this?" He asked with his arm around me.

"What did I do?"

"You build fire, go find wood and carry all in here?" He asked.

"It was freezing in here, so, yes, I confess, I did it."

"Why you do not get me up? Dimi should make fire for you. You don't go out and carry wood. No!" He insisted.

"Great coffee, Dimi," I said and smiled at him. He started to growl. "Dimi, I've got hot coffee, so be careful."

"Helena, you are killing me! You must not kill Dimi."

"The fire feels good, doesn't it?" I asked.

"Where you go to find wood?"

"There was a pile in the utility building."

"How you carry all this wood? Give me hands," he looked at my mutilated hands and nails, which were a wreck from all the packing and moving.

"Helena, tsk! Look at this!"

He finished his coffee, poured me another cup and went into the bathroom. He came back out with a small container of warm water, a face cloth, and hand soap.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"We take care of hands," he said.



He soaked the cloth, wet my right hand and washed it gently. He took the towel that he had over his shoulder and gently dried my hand. Then he took my left hand, removed the ring and washed this hand too. He pulled a tube of hand creme out of his shirt pocket and massaged it into my hands.

“Dimi, you don’t have to do this; it feels good, but you don’t have to do this for me.”

“You wreck hands doing too hard of the work. Then run out in cold morning for firewood. I do this for you,” he said in a soft voice.

“May I ask a favor, Dimi?” I said.

“Yes, of course, anything,” he said as he massaged my hand.

“Would you help me to keep Aiden away from me?” I waited for his reaction. “I realize that you’re friends and all, and I don’t want to come between friends, but I could use a little help.”

“Does he bother you?” He asked.

“He makes me uncomfortable, and I would just rather not be around him.”

“He says good things on you,” he said.

I got up from the sofa. This isn’t going as I expected. I stood in front of the fireplace to warm my hands, and stall for a little thinking time. Dimitris stood behind me, his arms wrapped around me and put his face next to mine.

“He is sad man, Helena. We be nice.”

“Dimi, he wants to be too nice,” I said.

“Did he talk, get out all old times?”

“I don’t know what he’s saying, Dimi, but you two are friends, and I can’t be in between the two of you.”

“What you want me to do?”

“Don’t leave me alone with him,” I said. He kissed me on the neck and said, “Anything you want, Helena. He say he really like Camilla.” I almost choked.

“Good, that’s good. He won’t have to worry about a lack of conversation,” I said. “I mean she has a lot to say.”

“She does talk!” He said with a smile. “Mmmm.” Dimi made sounds that vibrated against my neck, then kissing my neck between these vibrations as we stood in front of the fire. It felt good, after this touchy conversation. His passion built very quickly. His hands slid under my sweater. He was speaking

Greek in passionate nibbling of my neck, and I couldn't take it anymore. I turned around to face his eyes, his lips. He was intense with emotion. He moved me back to the sofa and made love to me. It had been a number of days and we were both desperate for each other. He was saying things in my ear that I didn't understand, but it didn't matter, I wanted to have all of him, and let him consume me. He made moves that I never knew before, and at the end of the dance, the fireworks exploded all around me! This initiation into this house was all-encompassing and complete.

"I've missed you, Dimi. You've been with me all this time, and I've missed you."

He kissed me with a burning urgency that spoke more than words. He was breathless and laid his head on my shoulder to catch his breath. His Greek was a foreign, breathless whisper. His eyes were closed as his hand came up to my cheek, his fingers spread through my hair and his thumb wiping my tear from my face. I stroked his forearm which rested on my breast as the chill of the waning fire whirled around us.

"We need to get dressed," I whispered. He lifted his head and his dark eyes were penetrating my soul. Neither one of us wanted to move, but the chill in the room had become too much to ignore.

"I will fix this for you," he said.

We put more wood on the fire, and decided right then, that although the stone floor was beautiful, it added to the cold dankness that crept in from under doors and window casings. It would have to be covered with carpeting.

"Today I must turn on gas. We get heater to work. When do you find cell phone chargers?" He kissed the top of my head and picked up our cups. "When cell phone is charged, not to forget to keep with you." He said as he checked the charge on them. "I bring more wood. You will not do things to make me scold!"

"The charger was in the bottom of the suitcase," I said.

"Helena!" Dimitris called.

"I'm in the kitchen," I said as I unpacked dishes.

"Rena call with news. Package of documents is there. The documents

arrive!" He hugged and rocked me in the kitchen. "We go get them, take to Athens today!" He said with excitement.

"Can it wait until tomorrow? There is so much to do here, I'm really not up to going anywhere today. There isn't enough time to drop everything that has to be done here and go all the way to Karpathos and then to Athens! Isn't there a courier service that will bring them here?" I asked.

"Yes, but take another day. Come, sit." Dimitris made me stop what I was doing and sit at the table. "We get papers, take to Athens for translate, then home by 6:00 p.m."

"I don't have the strength for it, Dimi, I'm over my head here with things to do. I haven't slept good so I'm exhausted. If I don't get things done today, we're going to spend another night freezing our butts off!"

"This is true, but also important we get papers," he said. He had such a serious face. It took all the strength I had left to stand my ground and say no. Dimi crouched down next to my chair and took my hand. "Helena, we want this for wedding?"

"Of course we do, but Dimi, Sweetheart, I'm so tired, if I see another sea taxi or ferry, I'll scream! Do you think that maybe Rena will meet you with the papers in Athens?"

"I will not leave you alone, but must get papers." He was fairly insistent, and I could not help but placate him in some way.

"Do you think Rena would bring them out?" I asked, and as the words left my lips I realized how ridiculous it was.

"No, she cannot," he said. "Maybe she will meet this man in Athens. I call. Also must call someone to stay here with you."

"I can stay here alone, I've got too much to do to be entertaining anyone. If you insist on it, get someone who can help me." I was weakening and at the point of caving to his wishes to go with him.

"Yes, may be possible," he said and took his cell phone out to the front porch, where reception was better.

I went back to unpacking the kitchen utensils and glasses. I heard the front door close, then Dimitris came in to report the news.

"I call and you will have help. I will go get papers from Rena, I stop in

Athens, then I return fast!"

"Who did you get to come out?" I asked. Dimitris reached out to me and wrapped his arms around me.

"Do not be angry with Dimi."

"No! Dimi, you didn't!" I looked at him as he held me at arms distance.

"There was no one else. He will help," he said.

"What is wrong with you?" I heard myself say. "Why would you do this? Do you know how this hurts me?" I asked. I tried to get away from him but he had a firm grip on me. He is beginning to know me too well.

"I do not do to hurt you, Helena. Is only for few hours, you will be safe, get things done."

"I'd be safer here alone," I said.

"He will not bother you."

"This is a conspiracy. I think you and Aiden have planned to find out just how much I can take in the name of love," I said.

"What you say?" He asked.

"Okay, if this is what you insist on doing, fine!" I wondered if he was naive, or was so sure of me, more than I was of myself. Could it be a test of my fidelity, or what? I couldn't tell him that I'm not as strong as I pretend. Even though I love Dimi with all my heart, Aiden could tempt me, to my regret. This was a man I fell in love with, just as I have with Dimi. But even though he broke my heart, I don't know how long I would be able to trust myself around him, especially if he put the moves on me. "You know that by telling him to come to keep me company while you are gone, is an open invitation for him to try something," I said.

"He will not try to have you."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"He will not!"

"Do you remember the party for Andreas? My 'perfume,' do you remember what happened with Aiden?" Dimitris looked at me, and I could almost see the wheels turning in his head.

"He will know I will kill him," he said very seriously.

"Don't say things like that," I warned.

“What? You would not want I kill this man?”

“I don’t want you even thinking about killing anyone! Because if you are capable of killing anyone, you might want to kill me, sometime.” I said.

“I never could kill you,” he said as he hugged me, and had a big smile.

“It’s a dangerous thing you want to do, Dimi, I don’t understand you! I told you before that I was in love with Aiden at one time, and that he wants to talk, why are you tempting fate? Why do you think I asked you to not leave me alone with him? Do you think I am playing with you on this? I’m not. This is not a game. He is not playing a game.”

Dimitris still had a clamp on my wrist as he went to a chair and pulled me to his lap.

“Sit, Helena,” he said as I sat on his lap.

“I must go, get papers to translate. You must not be alone. I do not forget these things you say, also not forget your bruises, the danger. I will keep you safe. You will not be hurt again! I must trust Aiden, I talk to him. You must trust Dimi. Aiden is good man, he will not hurt you. He will be sure you are safe. He talks, yes, but you will remember that you will marry me. Everything is okay. S’agapo, Helena.”

“If you say so, alright. When will he get here?” I asked.

“He is on ferry now. We go to ferry, you drive little car with Aiden home.”

He stood, put his arms around me and kissed me. He looked into my eyes and gave me another more passionate kiss. He forced his hand down inside my jeans then collected the moisture that his kisses released. He sent me into a realm of anticipation. He released my jeans to fall under gravity’s influence then maneuvered me to the mattress on the floor near the stairs where he completed his mission. I couldn’t believe how fast this happened. We hurriedly dressed. Dimi brought his hand to his face and with a devilish look he said,

“I will have you with me until I return.” He gave me a seductive, passionate kiss and whispered, “Come, we must go.”

We got to the ferry just in time to see the passengers disembark. I walked Dimi to the dock, where Aiden got off and greeted us. As Dimitris had to board, he gave me another passionate kiss and got on the ferry.

“Call me!” I yelled. He put his hand up to his face, smiled and was gone.

## *Trouble In Paradise*



“Hi Aiden, are you ready to be put to work?” I said in a vague tone.

“This won’t be work,” he smiled.

“Come on, get in.” We drove the little car to a Kafenia a block away. “I need to eat something, are you hungry?”

“Sure, I could eat something,” he said. We ordered some Pitas and sat at a table.

“Did Dimitris tell you why he wanted you to come here today?” I asked.

“He said he didn’t want you to be alone. I lucked out!”

“That’s all he said?”

“Well, he said he wanted to be sure you were safe.”

“I see. Do you know how I got my black eye and other bruises that I had at the party?” I asked.

“I asked Rena about that. She said you got mugged, but I thought Dimitris did it. Did he do that to you?”

“No, Dimitris didn’t do it. Morgan and I were mugged, and as it turns out, these people are likely part of a smuggling ring of Cypriot artifacts. Big time thugs. This is why Dimitris is afraid of leaving me alone. They also are the likely candidates that robbed our house.” I took a deep breath.

He tried to take my hand on the table, but I pulled away.

“Don’t worry, I’ll watch out for you until he gets back,” he said.

“Thank you, Aiden, that makes me feel a little better.”

After eating we drove back to the house with the usual chit-chat about bad drivers and jaywalkers.

“What can I do now to help you?”

“We’ll need to go out to the utility building. There are some heavy boxes. I’m not sure what’s in some of them. Dimitris has a lot of books. On second thought, I’m going to make some coffee. I’ve got to think on this. I think you might be able to bring in a few of these boxes to the kitchen if you would.” I was being overwhelmed with the mountain before us.

“Sure,” he said.

I made the coffee and as I set about to unpack and put away kitchen pots and pans, Aiden sat and talked about his sons. Three marriages that for some unknown reason ended in divorce. His sons, one from the first marriage and one from the second, apparently have no regard for money and a distaste for education and work. The third marriage didn’t last long enough to barely remember. He started traveling when he started working in the oil fields. First in Alaska then Kuwait. He met Andreas on a job in Albania and has worked with him since.

Then the subject of “us” came up when there was a lull in the conversation. It was only a matter of time for it to come up, so I let him go with it. He began with how he kicked his own ass for leaving me the way he did without a word of explanation. Aiden had some legal problems in California at the time, so he left in a hurry to join his family. Then he repeated the saga of the accident and his broken neck.

“So, what was so important about your leaving, that you felt you had to talk to me about it?” I was putting odd items away in the top cupboard over the Microwave oven. He came up behind me and took a platter out of my hand to put it in the high cupboard for me.

“I wanted you to know that I realize what an ass I was. It’s probably the one big mistake that I’m still paying for.” He turned around and was standing right in front of me. Too close to me to feel comfortable.

I looked up at him and realized he was serious. I backed away saying,

“Thanks for that, it was hard to reach up to that cupboard.” I turned to the sink for some water.



"I know what you're feeling when I look at you. I feel it too." He came closer to me. "If you could just....."

"Aiden, don't say anything more." He was touching my hair. When I turned from the sink he was standing in front of me, trying to woo me into a kiss.

"Aiden! You're supposed to be Dimitris' friend. Do you do this to all your friends?"

"Helen, we were pretty hot together, do you remember?" He had his hands on my shoulders and was looking into my eyes. Wherever I turned my head, he was there.

"It's not going to happen, Aiden," I said.

"Well, I'm not going anywhere. So how did you meet Dimitris? His taxi, is that right?"

"I'm sure you know all that, Dimi has talked about it, hasn't he?" I asked.

"Yes. But I don't usually pay much attention when a man talks about women. Not unless it's, ahem! You know, about sex."

"So, I guess that Dimitris didn't talk about sex when referring to me?" I asked.

"No, he'd only say, 'my Helena' this or that. He was always smiling. It made me want to hit him!"

"What?"

"He's too cheerful, can't stand being around him when he gets like that."

I had to smile to myself. It restored my faith to know that he didn't talk about our intimate relationship.

"How long have you known Dimitris?" I asked.

"We worked on several of Andreas' projects. I think I met him on my third project. So it's been about two years ago."

"Was he driving taxi then?"

"Why he does that, I don't know. It's not like there's any money in it, but he did meet a lot of chicks"

"Aiden, I would appreciate it if you could look around for firewood. There is some in the utility building but there might be other piles around. Could you bring some in? We're going to have to light a fire soon. We don't have any heat yet."

“Sure, I’ll see what I can find. Is there a wheelbarrow anywhere?”

“I don’t know, you’d have to look. There’s a bunch of old machinery in the far building. Maybe in there.”

It was a relief to have him away from me. Then my cell phone rang, it was Dimitris.

“Hello, my love, where are you?”

“Hello, Helena! Athens.”

“Is everything okay, I mean is all of the paperwork there?” I asked.

“I think is okay. We should have duplicates, but this may be okay.”

“I hope so, I should have had more than one of each made,” I said.

“I am thinking if needed, American Consulate may certify with originals.”

“Oh, that would be wonderful.”

“Where is Aiden?” He asked.

“I sent him to get more firewood; we might need it if you get home late,” I said.

“Does Aiden behave?”

“Pretty much,” I said.

“What is it you do not say, Helena?”

“Well, he had to tell me some things, and he did try to get cozy, but I put him in his place. So it’s nothing to worry about.”

“What you mean cozy?” He said.

“He just gets too close. When he tries to do something for me, he gets too close and friendly. It makes me nervous. It’s not anything important, I’m keeping him busy with things to do outside. Where do you want to put the oak bookcases? I’ll get Aiden to move them.”

“Better to wait on that. Have Aiden connect washer and dryer in laundry room,” he said.

“We have a laundry room? Where is it?” I asked.

“Other side of kitchen, Helena!” I could hear a laugh in his voice.

“I thought that was a coat room.”

“Okay, is that all?”

“I miss you, when are you coming home?”

“Ah, my heart, should not be until 6 p.m.”

“Do you want Aiden to stay here that late? I’d like to send him home earlier.”

“I will call you soon, you will bring Aiden to ferry then.”

“S’agapo Dimi.”

“S’agapo Helena.”

I went downstairs to see the progress of the woodpile.

“Gee, you found quite a lot of wood!”

“There’s plenty out there. The other side of the outbuilding has a stone smokehouse. There’s a pile there, must be 2 cords.”

“Terrific!” I said. “Here, let me show you how to stack it. This is a mess!”

“Nope, can’t let you do that, Dimitris orders. He doesn’t want you doing this,” he said.

“Okay, well, can I bring you a cup of coffee?”

“Yes, thank you.”

I poured some coffee and brought it in. I handed a cup to Aiden. My cell phone rang. It was Morgan. I sat on the ottoman near the fireplace.

“Hi kiddo, what’s up?”

She began to tell me about her progress on decorating the condo, and how sweet Andreas has been. She’s been really busy. I asked her if she has talked to Rena about the project. She had talked to her and made arrangements to finish the fireplace after the new year.

As I was talking, Aiden was stacking the wood. I scooted the ottoman over to the coffee table to make a note of the art supplies that she may need for the project when I felt my hair comb falling out of my hair. I reached up to grab it before it fell out completely, and found Aiden’s hand there. I looked up and he was hovering over me, handing me the comb that fell. When I took the comb from him, he grabbed my head and gave me a very long sensuous kiss on my lips. I dropped the phone.

“Aiden,” I tried to say with his lips on me. I tried hitting his arm and slapping his shoulder. He finally released his grip. “Aiden! Stop kissing me!” I yelled. I stood up and almost tripped over the coffee table. He grabbed my arm, which saved me from falling. I wrenched my arm out of his grip and regained my composure. “What the hell was that all about? Are you crazy?”

“Come on, Helen, Dimitris didn’t send me here for no reason.”

“Get out!” I said.

“You don’t mean that it’s cold outside,” he said.

“Get out!” I said. “Ohhhh!”

I was so pissed off that I went out to the utility building. There were boxes that I could investigate to see what goes where. It was getting really cold, and I couldn’t stay outside, so I picked a box and brought it in. Books, naturally, but I had to do something.

“Where were you?” Aiden asked.

I put the box down and went to the stairs where my sweater was laying over the banister. I put it on and said

“Dimitris would like you to connect the washer and dryer unless you have *better* things to do!”

I walked past him to go out again. He caught my arm and stopped me.

“Don’t be mad, I don’t want you mad at me. I’m sorry,” he said.

I looked at the grip he had on my arm then he released it.

I went out and got another box. I was furious! Unbelievable! I carried this box in and went out again. Being pissed off gave me an abundance of energy.

I went out and brought in a nightstand that can be used in one of the bedrooms, a rocking chair, a couple of lamps and an end table.

“The washer and dryer are set up,” he said. “Look, you’re taking this the wrong way.”

“And what way should I take it? Let me see, something like ‘hey, here’s a chance to get laid, I should go for it before it’s too late.’ Something like that?”

“What are you saying?”

“What are *you* saying?” I had to calm down. I went into the kitchen and got a beer. I walked out to the living room to start the fire going. I found my cell phone on the floor still open! Oh great! There was no one on the line.

I started to put wood in the fireplace when Aiden came in.

“Here, I’ll do that,” he said.

I sat on the sofa, had my beer and looked at the time on my cell phone. It’s finally 5:00 p.m. I was hoping that Dimitris would call so that I could take Aiden out of this house.

“Tell me, Aiden, what is your take on the reason Dimitris sent you here?” I asked. He turned to me and said

“I don’t think you really want to know,” he said.

“I really *do* want to know.”

“He wants to know that you aren’t just marrying him for his money. Also, these guys over here would do *anything* to marry an American. But he knew about us, and that I still have feelings, so he must want me to see if I can, well, maybe he wants to know if you really love him.”

“Anything else?”

“From when I laid my eyes on you at the party, I’d forgotten all those feelings. You stirred memories in me, I feel like I’m 20 years old again. No one ever did that to me. There’s so much we’ve missed.”

“Aiden, you can never live your life again. No one can bring back your youth. You’re a sexy, handsome man. Grow up and find someone you can love more than you love yourself,” I said. He didn’t like what I said, but I was tired, having a beer and he asked for it. “You know that Dimitris will hear of this,” I said.

“What, are you going to get him pissed at me?” He stood over me. “He knew how I felt about you, so he didn’t call me by accident. He expects something to happen. I know you feel it, and I want it to happen, so why are you fighting it? Just let it happen and see what we missed.”

The front door burst open, then Dimitris grabbed Aiden and pushed him up against the wall. I couldn’t hear what he said but it looked like he was going to choke Aiden!

“Dimi! Dimitris!” I tried to get his attention.

“You will go from this house, not to speak to Helena, ever! You touch her... I kill you.” He threw Aiden off of the wall toward the door. Aiden went out the front door, then Dimitris slammed the door behind him.

Dimitris was a raging storm! He turned to me with a wild look in his dark eyes. He came up to me as I was standing in front of the sofa.

“Sit!” He barked. I thought he was going to do something to me. He frightened me. He reached for my banged up, mutilated hands as I brought them up to defend myself. He kissed them as he fell to his knees.

“Helena, my Heart, forgive Dimi.” He put one arm around my waist and his other hand on my cheek. “Helena, you were right. Dimi wrong on Aiden.”

“I thought you would never get home!”

He took a deep breath and exhaled. He took my face in his hands and kissed me gently.

“What I do to you, Helena? Can you forgive this poor excuse for man?” He kissed my hands again and looked into my eyes.

“It’s okay, I’m okay.”

“No, is not okay, you tell me to keep him away, I do not. I put you in danger of man not to be trusted. You warn me, and I do not listen.”

“Are you getting hungry? Would you like to go out and eat? We don’t have much in the house to fix dinner with.”

“You confuse Dimi. I put you at risk and you want to feed me,” he said and hugged me tightly. “Yes. We go eat something.”

“Good, I feel like fish.”

Dimitris gave me a gentle kiss and then his dark eyes searched my face for any stray emotion that I didn’t reveal in words.

“Close doors and lock. I put out fire. We go.”

Dimitris brought out the big barge and had me sit next to him. We found a little dark restaurant, nice and secluded, with a nice booth in a far corner. We ordered a drink before our meal, they lit the candle on the table and it was the romantic little hideaway that we needed. Dimitris put his arm around me and placed my hand on his heart.

“Tell me about the papers, how did everything go?” I asked.

“They are to translate them, so is good so far. Copies will be made, all is okay. One week, we pick up.”

“That’s the best news we’ve had all month! How did you get home, and how did you know about Aiden?” I asked even though I didn’t want to bring up his name again.

“Andreas call me. Said you on cell with Morgana and phone drop, some commotion, so I come.”

“How did you get home?”

“Hydrofoil from Athens. Then ride with young boy on Vespa from docks.

We buy Vespa! Fun!”

“There you go again, buying things!” I said.

“Just thinking.”

“Yeah!”

I was so glad that Dimitris came home when he did. I didn’t expect such an explosive entry, but the whole Aiden incident could have gotten real ugly if he hadn’t.

“Are you okay? I’ve never seen you so upset.”

“Are you okay, my Heart?”

“I’m fine.”

“Then I am fine also.”

“No, Dimi, you were really upset, you scared me.” He had a sad look on his face and didn’t look at me. “Dimi, thank you for coming home when you did.”

When the waiter brought the drinks to the table I said,

“A toast.” I raised my glass, Dimitris raised his and I said, “to one week!” I tapped my glass to his and turned to look into his eyes.

“One week.” We sipped our drink then he took me in his arms and kissed me, this time with deep emotion.

“Helena, why you stay with Dimi?” He asked me as we hugged.

“What? Because I love you. Now, we’re going to have a nice dinner, and if you can be charming, I might have to let you be bad.”

He looked up and with a sparkle in his eyes, he laughed. He hugged me laughing and said,

“Oh, Helena, I will be very charming.”

We had a wonderful dinner and Dimitris was charming. He was healed! We were back on track with the important things that were going on in our lives.

We talked about the possibilities that the other buildings may have, and made mental notes on what we need for the house. Getting Dimitris to think about anything but Aiden was the goal, and going over the needs of the house seemed natural.

“What do you think of us going home and you fixing the heater?” I asked.  
“We will need heat! Yes, we go.”

We weren't going in the direction of home and I had to ask why.

“Where are we going? Weren't we supposed to turn at the corner?”

“I show you,” he said. We went through several blocks in the downtown district then he parked. “Come, look,” he said and helped me out of the barge. We walked up the block of shops until we came to the one that he pointed out to me.

“Here. Come here, you look, buy for civil marriage.”

We were standing in front of a beautiful window display of wedding dresses and other formal wear.

“Dimi, do I want a formal gown for a civil ceremony?” I asked.

“You look, find any you like. Buy beautiful dress.” We stood at the window for a few minutes. I looked at Dimitris, he was looking at me, and I thought, how lucky can a woman be to find someone so sweet? He had his arm around my neck, and whispered in my ear, “S'agapo.”

“It's getting late babe, let's get going, you've got things to do when we get home.”

He gave me a smooch on the cheek, then we got in the car.

“I was just thinking, we need to have our mail forwarded from Rhodes. We left so fast, it didn't cross my mind until now.”

“Yes, we must do that.”

“Is there any news on the job you were looking at, the research job?” I asked.

“Maybe after Holidays, then pursue.”

“Remind me to call Morgan tonight.”

“Do you want to tell me?” He asked.

“What?”

“What this Aiden do, you drop phone.”

“Can we talk about this after we get home?”

“Why you no tell now?”

“Because it wasn't a big deal, and I don't want you to get upset,” I said.

“If nothing to upset over, tell me now.”

After seeing this man upset, I was reluctant to have him get enraged while



behind the wheel. I also didn't want him to think that by my reluctance to talk about it, that I was hiding anything.

"He tried to kiss me. It was a surprise, I dropped the phone. I yelled at him and he stopped." I said.

"Why he do that? What he say?"

"He didn't say anything. He came up behind me when I was on the phone." I said.

"What he do before this?"

"He was lighting the fire."

We pulled up the driveway. Dimitris came around to open the door for me, I took his hand as he helped me climb down out of this monster.

"It is going to be really cold tonight!" I said as Dimitris opened the door.

"Yes, I fix heater, but first, light fire," he said.

There were empty cardboard boxes in the corner of the room, which I picked up to take outside. I put them into the garden solarium, temporarily, so that I wouldn't trip over them in the kitchen.

The solarium was a haunted-looking dismal place in the shadows of evening. Many dead, dried up plants and crumbling vines that swayed in every nuance of breeze, potting tables, and wood earthen boxes littered the glass-enclosed room. I tossed the boxes off to one side of the room and closed the door quickly. The shadows can live in that room for tonight.

The other boxes and crumpled newspapers were put just outside the kitchen door. When I opened the back door, there appeared to be a manila envelope wedged under the door. I tossed the boxes and picked up the envelope. In the light of the kitchen, I could see that the envelope wasn't sealed, there was no name, address, or any markings of any kind.

I peeked inside, I just thought that this might be something from the estate agent or perhaps some other papers with something to do with the restoration. I was not prepared for what I saw. I withdrew the sheets of paper. I saw pictures printed off a computer, of Dimitris, enjoying himself with several women. I couldn't look further than the first two pages.

I had to convince myself that this is nothing to be upset about. I never expected Dimitris to be a saint, and these photos may have been taken years

ago, although it would be hard to know for sure as Dimitris still looks the same as when these were taken.

I started to fill the bookcase. I couldn't get the images out of my mind. I felt like my heart was being wrenched right out of my chest. I went back into the kitchen. The envelope hit me in the face as if I had been slapped. No matter how hard I tried to ignore it, my eyes subconsciously returned to it.

I turned around in an effort to divert my eyes. The coffee was there waiting to be poured and as I turned my head I caught sight of my "WUF" cup. The pain that shot through my heart was more than I thought I could bear. This pain in my heart, over this, that might be ancient history, was shooting thoughts of doubt through my mind. Doubts about the decisions I've made and am about to make. Am I rushing into more than I know?

As I looked at the blue chunky piece of ceramic, I thought of all the sweet things that the mug represents, as the tears were rolling down my cheeks.

"My Heart, coffee is ready?" He put his hands on my shoulders and kissed the back of my neck. When he saw my face, he knew something was wrong.

"What has happened?"

I went to the envelope and handed it to him. When he opened it and saw the pictures, I heard him saying something under his breath in Greek. I walked out of the room. I felt like I needed to get away, to think, without any interference or distractions.

"Helena," he called. He stood at the kitchen doorway and watched me walk out the front door. It was nearly dark, the night chill was descending and I only had on a lite sweater. My mind was scattered and I didn't know what I was doing anymore. I knew that I had to sort this out with Dimitris, but I had a hard time getting control of myself. I know that this probably happened a long time ago, and I didn't even know him then, but every time I close my eyes I see these images. I needed to be alone, to think.

"Helena, Helena," he called after me.

I was a few blocks from the house. The cold night air kept my mind fairly clear, although it did nothing for calming my emotional state. I told myself that it is nothing to be so hurt over, but it did no good. I didn't want to have

Dimitris see me like this either. I started to doubt what I thought I knew about him. I was beginning to question my gut instinct about him, our relationship, and everything that led me to this place in my life. I began to not only carry this sword that was in my heart but a feeling of dread was hovering over me.

“Helena.” Dimitris came up behind me. “Helena, stop! Stop!” He stepped in front of me and grabbed my arms to stop me. I was in a daze, my mind bound up in questions, hurt and uncertainty. “Helena.” He put his arms around me. “Helena, you must come home. Too cold for you, come now.”

We walked back to the house, he had his arm around me. He started to speak.

“Please, Dimi, don’t. We can talk later, I don’t want to hear anything about it now,” I said.

“Helena.” I stopped walking and looked at him.

I glared at him, hoping he wouldn’t approach me. He removed himself from my path, and I continued back to the house. When I entered the living room I went directly to the fireplace. I was cold, my eyes dripping and nose running. Dimitris came up behind me, handed me some tissue and rubbed his hands up and down my arms. He went to the kitchen, poured coffee and brought my cup to me. He didn’t say anything as he handed it to me. I couldn’t look at him, then he sat on the sofa in silence. Every time I took a sip of coffee I saw the “WUF” cup, and that brought more tears. I hated this situation, I needed comfort from the one who could not comfort me.

The time we spent there seemed like an eternity. We were hoping that our second night in this house would be a warm restful one. It may be another cold night; a sleepless, cold night.

What bothers me is that I have started to re-examine other things that seemed insignificant in a new light. Perhaps I have been too hasty in my decisions. Maybe Dimitris isn’t everything I thought he was or worse, there might be more that I’m only now seeing a small part of. I could not set aside the pictures. Perhaps they were taken in a lapse of judgment. But his behavior about Aiden also weighed on my mind.

I wiped my eyes and nose. When I turned, Dimitris sat up. His eyes were so sad and worried, that it too, stabbed my heart and the tears silently flowed

from it. I went up the stairs to the first bedroom. I grabbed my nightgown and kimono and went into the shower. The hot water, as hot as I could stand it beat down on me. I hoped and wished it would wash away my heartache. I let it rain down on the back of my head, down my hair and back. I stood in its glory until the water ran cold. I dressed wrapped my hair in a towel then descended the stairs to the fireplace.

Dimitris was pacing the floor with the envelope in his hand. He was going to come to me, but my reception of him said “no.” I moved the ottoman in front of the fireplace, then sat there letting my hair down to dry.

The fire was warm and made me sleepy. I didn’t want to stray too far from its warmth. I scooted the ottoman over and made myself as comfortable as possible laying on a throw rug in front of the fireplace. I heard Dimitris go toward the kitchen, but he returned to the living room dragging the mattress from the bedroom down the hall.

“You cannot be on floor, here, I put mattress.”

He placed the mattress on the floor in front of the fireplace.

“This better,” he said.

“Thank you.” I could see the hurt in his eyes, as much as I tried not to look at them. I laid on the mattress, and with his kindness, he covered me with a blanket. I couldn’t help but cry for my naive stupidity, for Dimitris, for both of our pain in this.

Dimitris loaded more wood on the fire. I assumed that he went upstairs for a shower or to go to bed, but when he returned he turned off the lights and brought me a pillow. He softly said

“Here, to put...”

He lifted my damp hair and put the pillow under my head. He brushed my cheek with his hand. I took his hand and pulled him to come lay with me. I held his arm at my waist and he curled in behind me. I was still silently shedding tears and Dimitris was softly saying something in Greek in my ear. I kissed his hand and placed it on my heart.

“I will fix this,” he said.

“Shh.” I silently cried myself to sleep.

When I woke up I had my head on Dimitris' shoulder, his cheek resting against my forehead. He was holding my hand against his chest and his other arm beneath me, holding me tight against him. The fire had gone out during the night, and the cold chill was creeping in around us. When I stirred, I must have awakened him as he stroked my arm and patted my hand that was still on his chest. He kissed my hand and said

"I make a fire."

I pulled the blanket up over my mouth and nose then turned toward the fireplace. I watched him build the fire. He was still in his stocking feet but braved the cold stone floor to go to the kitchen to make some coffee. Once it was on, he quickly came back to the fireplace to put on more wood. Then he came back to the mattress, got under the blanket and curled in behind me. He put his arm over me from under the blanket, then made a cold, shivering sound.

"Burr! Is cold!" He said as he snuggled his face into the back of my neck. I could feel his warm breath, inhaling and exhaling through my hair.

"Coffee is ready soon."

As I breathed into the blanket it warmed my frozen nose. I wanted to put it over my head. I felt like the life had been drained out of me. I was totally numb to emotion. This should be the time to talk, but I was not going to be the one to open the door for it. As sweet as Dimitris can be, I would not look at him until he opens a real conversation.

"Ah, coffee." He quickly went to pour it. I kept my eyes closed when he returned, so he put the cup close to me, on the hearth.

"Is hot," he said. "Drink, warm you up."

I slowly lowered the blanket from my face, leaned up on my elbow to reach the cup, my WUF cup. I took a sip, it was Dimitris excellent brew. I lowered the cup to hold it in both hands to warm them. I had my back to him as I half laid, facing the fireplace.

"I will fix heater today."

I continued to drink my coffee. Dimitris moved my hair from the side of my face to the back.

"Helena? Do you not talk to me?"

I was beginning to feel. My emotions were defrosting along with the rest of me.

“Helena, put down cup.”

I put the cup down on the hearth. He pulled me back to lay flat and now I had to look at his dark eyes. He leaned over me and put his fingers against my cheek, to keep me from turning away.

“We talk on this, these photos, eh?”

I felt a tear roll from the outside corner of my eye.

“Helena.” He picked up my head and shoulders and cradled me as he rocked.

“I am sorry you see these pictures.” He said into my ear. “Was long time ago, I drink too much, go wild.” He kept rocking me and said something Greek in my ear. “Dimi not go crazy again.”

I brought my hand up to touch his shoulder. He loosened his grip on me and laid me back down on the pillow.

“Dimi, I never thought you were celibate before we met, but seeing these pictures hurt me, deeply. I don’t know if I can ever get those images out of my head. I’ll think of you, and I’ll see those pictures. Who would do this? Who would want to do this to us?”

“I don’t know.”

“Who took the pictures?” I asked.

“Was drunk, don’t know, don’t remember. So much sorrow for you to see pictures.” He leaned over to kiss me, but I wasn’t ready for that yet.

“No, don’t,” I said. “May I ask you something?”

“Anything, my Heart.”

“How long ago were these pictures taken?”

“Years, maybe.”

“Did you do this a lot? Party, get drunk and have orgies?”

“Not orgies, drunk, not too often.”

“What did Andreas tell you to make you come home early yesterday?” I asked.

“He say Morgana talk with you. You say something she not understand and phone drop on floor.”

“When he told you this, what did you think? How did you feel?”

"I think he hurt you, I come home. I think you in danger with Aiden."

I turned and reached for my cup. The coffee was almost cold, as was the fire.

"I'd better get dressed." As I opened the blanket to get up, my exposed leg had opened my kimono. Dimitris slid his hand inside to slide it off of my shoulder. He planted a sensuous kiss there, then moved his hand to my leg.

"Don't Dimitris, please," I said. He looked at me like he didn't know who I was. It was a strange look, an awakening for him to the possibility that what has happened goes much deeper than what he thought. He pulled the kimono back up on my shoulder and backed away to allow me to get up.

I went upstairs to dress. I needed some time to think, and I was depressed. I put my makeup on, my jeans, a turtleneck sweater, and a dark brown suede poncho. I felt a little better just being dressed.

Dimitris was putting another log on the fire. He looked up at me and watched me come down the stairs.

"You go somewhere?"

"May I have the keys to the car?" I asked as I was putting on my suede gloves.

"Yes, of course, do you want Dimi to come?"

"No." My voice cracked when I answered him as I felt I had a knot in my throat. He handed me the keys to the bug.

"You shop today? Buy dress?" He asked although he knew the answer. There was so much to think about, and I know that the receipt of the pictures was not Dimitris' fault, but it did awaken in me more questions that I didn't think were important before.

I walked up to Dimitris, I looked into his eyes and I kissed him. I touched his cheek and I left before I cried again. I got into the car, and as I drove away, I saw Dimitris standing in the doorway watching me leave.

I drove to the docks, when I got out I noticed that I'd have to wait another 45 minutes for the ferry. I thought this might be a good time to call Morgan since our last call was interrupted, but I searched my purse. I forgot my cell phone. I needed my phone, but wasn't going back for it.

As I strolled the shops I had time to sort my thoughts, calm down and try

to put things in perspective. I took out a notepad and wrote down some concerns I had, questions for Dimitris and some requests of him as well. I had one last cry because I knew with all of the pain and questions, I couldn't leave.

When I got back to the house, I honked the horn as I pulled up the drive. Dimitris came out and caught me as I opened the passenger side door.

"Helena." He said as he took my arm and turned me away from the car. He wrapped me in his arms saying, "You come back. I think you not come back!" I didn't respond. I finally had gotten control of my emotions.

"Let's get these groceries into the house." I grabbed a bag, then he took it from me.

"I take." He brought in all of the groceries. I put them away as he brought them in. He came up behind me and put his arms around me.

"We need to talk," I said. He took my hand, then led me to the living room. He had a nice fire going and had moved the sofa and coffee table to take advantage of the heat. There also was an overstuffed chair, which I drew closer to the coffee table. I sat in this chair to give me some distance from him.

Dimitris brought us coffee then sat on the sofa. I didn't know exactly how to begin.

"Dimitris, I can't be angry about things that happened before we met. Someone sent these pictures to cause trouble. It's mean and cruel, but it does bring into focus other things; things that neither of us thought of since we met. So, I have to ask some questions and I hope that you won't be insulted by them or take offense, and will answer them honestly."

"Yes, I answer." He said.

"These pictures, they weren't taken that long ago, were they? Can you tell me how long ago it was that this happened?"

"Not sure of when," he said.

"How long has it been since you've gotten that drunk that you didn't know what happened by the next day, or woke up in a strange place? How long ago did you have relations, sexual relations before you met me?" I asked. My emotions were building at this question. I had to know, although I didn't



want to hear the answer.

“Maybe, six months.” He said a little embarrassed. “But it was.....”

“I don’t want any details, Dimitris, please. Have you ever been arrested?”

“No. I have not,” he said. “Why you ask this?”

“I’ve been thinking that perhaps it would be better to wait. Maybe we don’t need to rush into this marriage.”

“But, you will marry me! This we do. I tell all of what I know on this,” he said as he reached over to touch my knee.

“I want you to take a blood test. I want you to be tested for HIV and any other STD’s that they may deem appropriate. I will do the same for you.”

“I will test, for you, I will test.”

“I think that I should stay with Rena until our blood tests come back.” This was very hard to say, I barely wanted to think it. The look on Dimitris’ face spoke to me everything that he wasn’t saying.

“No, Helena. Why you do this?”

“I think it’s necessary.” I felt the knot developing in my throat. I was feeling so crushed by this whole aspect of my life. I could not live with him with this turmoil within me, and couldn’t leave without making it worse.

He came over to my chair and crouched in front of me. He took my hands and looked at me.

“Please do not do this, Helena. My Heart, S’agapo.”

I pulled one hand free from his. I had to turn my head to wipe my cheek. I had to be strong in this decision. I hurt terribly inside. I wanted to put my arms around him and forget everything, but I couldn’t. I may never forget those pictures of him, cavorting with several females in one photo, and in the congress of intercourse in the other. I’m glad that I did not look at the rest of them. These two were enough.

I stood, Dimitris stood, then I had to sidestep by him to pass. I went to the fireplace to warm my hands.

“Do not go to Rena, stay here. I will not touch until tests clear. I will promise this.” He said and held my shoulders at a distance where he looked into my eyes.

“I have to go Dimitris. I have to go,” I said.

His head dropped and he sighed.

"I'm going to take this time to think about your temper and find out more about you. It bothers me that you came in and charged at Aiden without knowing if he even did anything to deserve it. You've made me wonder if I ever really knew you. I thought I did."

"You want this man's attention?"

"What I'm saying is that when you got here, I was glad and relieved that you were here. But your violence, when he didn't hurt me. It frightens me that you may be more violent and jealous than I realized. You haven't shown me that you are all that jealous, so I'm not sure how volatile you can get. If you get insanely jealous and are violent, I won't marry you." I heard my words cut through the air and back into my heart. I didn't let myself even think those thoughts and yet they came out of my mouth. It was like someone else had taken over my mind and body and I was watching somewhere on the sidelines. I found myself taking off his ring. I placed it in his hand and said: "give it back to me when I return."

"Oh, Helena, no, do not do this." He tried to put the ring back on my finger. He held my left hand. I placed my right hand over his hands and with my heart breaking I said,

"Keep it until I come home." I went upstairs and packed some clothes. I didn't have much more than what I brought originally with me, so it didn't take that long to be ready to go. Dimitris was waiting for me at the bottom of the stairs.

"Please, Helena, do not go. I will sleep in outbuilding, you will not see me, but do not leave."

"I have to go, Dimi. If I don't leave, I won't stay away from you, and I have to, so I have to go."

He grabbed me and held me, breathing hard and sighing. My tears were here again, and I could not speak.

"I cannot let you go." He whispered in my ear and started kissing me.

"Stop! Stop, Dimi." I cried out. I was dying inside and he was making it worse. I knew as well as he did that if I let him continue kissing me, I wouldn't leave.

I started for the front door. I was looking around for anything I might want to take with me, or maybe have forgotten. I was so flustered that I couldn't think of what I was doing.

"Take cell phone," Dimitris said, as he handed me my phone, still attached to its charger.

"Would you mind if I leave the bug at the docks?" I asked.

"I will take you." He then took my suitcase. He put it in the back seat, then came around to open my door. I took a last look at the house, and without thinking, I said

"It could be so wonderful." Dimitris put his hand on the back of my neck, which brought me back to reality.

"I can no let you go, Helena. Please do not do this."

I got in the car, he stood there looking before he closed the door. He drove me to the docks, and although I didn't say anything, Dimitris would ask, again and again why I was going.

He took me to the loading ramp, stopped and dropped my bag. He engulfed me in his arms and I had to let him kiss me goodbye. I found myself getting lost in his kiss. He took my face in both hands and kissed me deeply, and gave me a bit of his soul. The ferry horn blew and it signaled the time for leaving.

"Please .....no," he said as he backed away from the ramp. The men from the ferry took my bag aboard as I followed, then I stood watching the ferry pull away from the dock. It felt like I was being torn apart.

In taking this ferry, I had never felt more alone. I felt like I was in mourning, my mind was detached from my body, and it floated somewhere out of focus. I was in a daze as I sat on the deck watching Kefalonia in the distance. I took out my cell phone and dialed Morgan. I asked her if there was any way that I could stay with them for a few days until I get things straight. I didn't go through the details on the phone but wanted her to pick me up at the docks.

As soon as I clicked off, my phone rang, it was Dimitris.

"Hi, Dimi," I said.

"Helena, this house is but a shell without you." He cleared his throat. "Turn around to come home."

I heard some strange sounds coming from his phone.

“Where are you?” I asked him.

“I sit at office of doctor clinic for blood test.”

“I’ll go get one tomorrow,” I said.

“Not necessary. You do not need one,” he said.

“Don’t you want to know if I’m clear of STD’s?” I asked.

“I know you are clear. How long you stay away?”

“How long to get back your blood tests?” I asked.

“I find out. My heart, I cannot go to house. I will not sleep. I need my Helena.” I didn’t say anything. “Helena, I am not perfect man. But I am man. I get jealous of men touch you. I no want you afraid of this man. I take care of you. Do not want you afraid of Dimi.”

“I’m sorry Dimi, you’re breaking up, I can’t understand you,” I said and clicked off. I didn’t have a bad connection, I had to stop talking to him, as the longer I listened to him, the weaker I would get. I want him to understand that if he should run amuck again like this, that I wouldn’t stand for it. I know it was selfish and unreasonable, but I hurt so deeply, maybe deep down I wanted him to hurt too.

I walked over to the coffee bar and got a tall Greek Coffee. I could splurge and not feel guilty. I found a nice table where I could sit and think.

I finished my coffee and although I felt comfortable, I felt odd not having something from the bar on my table. I waved the barkeeper but had to go to the bar myself, to try to place another order. I stood at the bar a few minutes, still keeping an eye on my suitcase.

A very tall man asked me if they had my order yet. I told him no, that they seem to be busy.

“Let me get a drink for you. Sir! Barkeep!” He got the attention of the attendant then asked what I wanted to drink. “Would you like to try a Martini? They are quite good here. Two Martinis, dry.”

“Yes, dry,” I said.

The gentleman came to my table with the drinks.

“My name is Ahmed Sahj, I am here from Egypt. You are traveling alone?”

“I’m Helena, I am off to Athens, visiting a friend.” I gave him my hand to shake on introduction. He kissed my hand.

This man was very, very tall. My guess would be six foot six or seven. Very articulate, businessman. Dark hair and eyes, dark complexion, somewhat distinguished. He wasn't so much handsome as he had a commanding presence; suave.

"You are American?" He asked.

"Yes, I am."

"And you are a long way from your home. Do you not find the Greek islands beautiful in the winter?"

"Oh, yes they are, very beautiful."

We continued this generic conversation for twenty minutes. I had finished my drink and declined another. I tried to excuse myself from this encounter, but hints were ignored and I was afraid of having to be rude. My cell phone rang and it was the excuse I needed to take my leave of this gentleman.

"If you would excuse me, I have to take this call. Thank you for the drink, Mr. Sahj."

"Dimi," I said.

"Hello, my Heart, I am missing you beyond belief."

"I'm missing you too."

"Then come home."

"What is it, Dimitris?"

"Be sure all is okay. I take tests today, results in one week." He said in a sullen tone.

"Thank you, Dimi," I said. "Did you find out who sent the pictures?"

"Not yet, but I will find."

"Good, that's good. I want you to know that whenever I think about the photos, it breaks my heart, but I am bothered by your temper, too. Mark was violent and I lived in fear whenever he drank. I don't want to go through that again, and you weren't even drunk."

"I fear for safety for you. I react. Did not intend to scare my Helena."

"I know you didn't, Dimitris."

"How can I prove? What must I do to fix?"

"Think about postponing the wedding. I need some time."

“Tell me, my Heart, have I lost my Helena?” He spoke in a most defeated voice.

“Will you call me when you get the results of the tests?”

“I will find one who makes you unhappy. One with photos.”

“You know that the only reason someone would put these pictures in an envelope and hand deliver them is to break us up. Who would have the pictures of you and want to separate us, Dimi?”

“I will see.”

“I’ve got to go now, I can hardly hear you.”

“S’agapo,” he said, and the connection was lost.

After I lost the connection, I wondered about how I had let down my guard and let Dimitris into my soul. I found myself a dark corner where it was quiet and I wouldn’t be bothered, just so that I might try to sort out my feelings. My heart had been ruling my head, I rejected logical thought and let the ache that was in my heart tell me to return to Dimitris, love him and never let him go. But my head was telling me to wait, wait for the tests and ask more questions.

Both Morgan and Andreas were there to meet me at the docks. They were together, happy and everything that I thought Dimitris and I should be.

“What happened?” Morgan asked.

“We’ve been sabotaged!” I said.

“Did Aiden cause all this?” Andreas asked.

“No, at least not entirely.”

Morgan had a room ready for me, and although I appreciated it, I wanted to go home.

“Do you want a cup of coffee?” Morgan asked.

“That would be great.”

We all sat at the dining room table.

“I’m glad you’re here, Andreas, because there are some things I’m hoping you might tell me, that will make it easier for me to sort things out,” I said.

“You’re not wearing your ring!” Morgan said.

“Yes, well. I guess you know about Aiden?” I asked. “What did Aiden say

about what happened? Have you talked to him?"

"He said Dimitris threw him out of the house after he asked him to come over and help out. He said Dimi asked him to stay with you, is that right?" Andreas asked.

"That's all he said?" I asked.

"Yes, he wouldn't say much more than that."

"Andreas, I know that you love your brother and want to say the right things that won't make things worse than they are, but if you can be as honest with me as you can, it would help," I said.

"Sure."

"I have to know about Dimitris. Does he have a violent temper? I know that everyone has a point they reach where they lose their temper, but I need to know, does he have a short fuse, and does he get violent?" I needed to know this.

"Dimitris has a temper, but it takes a lot for him to lose control. I won't say he gets violent, but you know when he's angry," he said.

"Is he the insanely jealous type, I mean, is he jealous enough to show he cares or is he so jealous that I would end up having to walk around with my eyes lowered for fear he would think I was looking at other men? Do you understand what I'm saying?" I asked.

"Yes, I understand, and I would have to say that Dimi is normal, he's not one to try to control you. Did he do something to make you wonder about this?"

"When he heard from you, he dropped everything and came home. He burst through the door and pinned Aiden against the wall. I thought he was going to choke him! He threatened Aiden and threw him out of the house."

"That might have been my fault. When I was talking to you, it sounded like Aiden attacked you!" Morgan said.

"What did you hear?" I asked.

"Well, suddenly your mouth was muffled and it sounded like the phone dropped. I heard you say something like "stop Aiden!", or something like that, then I lost the connection," she said. "I kind of panicked because I knew about you and Aiden, I thought he might have grabbed you, so I told Andreas to call

Dimitris. What happened anyway?"

"Aiden tried to kiss me, and I just told him to stop, and he did, but he said some things that I know were lies. He probably wanted to justify his behavior. He seemed to think that Dimi wanted him to try something just to see if I really loved him."

"Dimi would never do that," Andreas said.

"I know. I didn't believe him. I was really relieved when Dimi came home when he did, but he was so forceful, he scared me. That's when I started to wonder about how he is when he loses his temper."

"When I told Dimi that Morgana thought you were being attacked, I might have accidentally provoked him, and things got a little out of proportion. But I know my brother, he would never hurt you. He just wants to keep anyone else from hurting you. I'm sorry if this has you wondering about your safety with Dimi," he said.

"So is everything okay now?" Morgan asked.

"Not exactly."

"Let's get more coffee." Andreas poured our cups.

"Andreas, does Dimitris go off and get drunk when he has problems? I mean does he get blitzed to the point where he doesn't know what he's doing?" I asked.

"What? No, he doesn't drink that much at all. He used to go out and party and I suppose he got drunk. But that was a long time ago. Why?" Andreas asked.

"I found an envelope wedged under the back door. It had pictures of Dimitris in the middle of an orgy! The pictures were very clear, obviously, it was Dimitris. I only looked at two pages, I couldn't look at the rest of them." I said.

"How many pictures were there?"

"I don't know, they were printed off of a computer. There may have been six sheets. There might have been a letter in there, but I didn't look. Now, I told Dimi this, I can't say anything about what he did before we met, but seeing the pictures really hurt me. Now, when I close my eyes, that's what I see."



"I can understand that," Andreas said.

"It made me think though. Maybe I haven't been thinking straight since I met him. After seeing those images, I've asked Dimi to take an HIV-STD test. He did that today. This, on top of the violence question, I couldn't stay with him. My emotions are all over the place, and the orgy? Who knows if he's contracted anything? Of course, that's a little late for me now, but I needed to know."

"Who sent the pictures?" Morgan asked.

"There was nothing on the envelope, so I don't know."

"That's mean!"

"Whoever sent them is trying to put a wedge between Dimi and me," I said and wiped my eyes.

Andreas got up from the table and went into the living room, then made a call on his cell phone.

"I was wondering if I can stay a few days, but I'm not sure now. I wanted to stay away from Dimi until the blood tests come back, but even if he has contracted something, it's too late for me now." I said.

"I know you're worried about it, but I think they can tell you right away if the blood has antibodies to HIV, have Dimitris call and find out."

"I haven't been able to talk to him. I've been too upset. I kept losing the connection on the ferry." I said.

"You should have a good connection here, or you can use the landline," she offered.

"Have you heard anything from Aiden since this happened?" I asked.

"No, he talked to Andreas, but I haven't seen him," Morgan said.

"Well, I guess I'm going to go to bed. Thank you guys for putting me up. I'll see you in the morning."

I was awakened in the middle of the night by a strange dream. The only part that I remember was that I was being rolled up in a rug. I thought it was because of the house being on my mind. I tried to get back to sleep, but I could only think of Dimitris. I felt better since talking to Andreas and Morgan, at least now I know that the information that he had when he came home that day was not entirely right, so he was not totally to blame.

I thought that if I could read, I might be able to get sleepy enough to drop off. I turned on the light. The voices I heard seemed to get closer to the door. It sounded like it might be Dimitris, but I couldn't be sure as they were talking in hushed tones.

I thought I heard a very soft knocking. Then a soft voice saying, "Helena."

I opened the door and welcomed Dimitris into my arms. I couldn't do this anymore! Being with Dimitris was all that mattered to me, no matter how much I struggled against it. He wrapped his arms around me and he was saying something that I didn't understand. I couldn't be angry at him, I was so happy to have him with me.

"Helena." He said as he frantically kissed me all over my face and neck. I was so happy to see him here, I could forget everything when I'm in his arms. He pulled away from me and held me at arms distance. I wiped away the moisture from my cheeks.

"Come, sit." He said as he led me to the edge of the bed. We both sat on the bed, as he held me, I wiped away the tears. He wanted to talk.

"Helena, this man could not stay in house without you. I am sorry for all. I forget you so sensitive, I am sorry for photos and for hurt. I can not lose you." He said with his hand holding my face to look into his eyes. "You were right, to have Dimi take test. Should have done before this."

"Dimi, I am in so much pain over this, but you aren't entirely to blame." I put my arms around him and held him tight. The comfort I found in him I've come to depend on. His presence strengthened my spirit. I was alive with Dimi.

"Get some sleep now." He opened the bed for me, then started to leave.

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"I will sleep in living room. I will not bother you."

"No. Sleep here. I need you, Dimi." I said.

"You will not keep your hands off me." He smiled and then came to bed.

"This whole thing got way out of proportion, and I overreacted. I'm sorry." I said through my tears.

"It was wrong to lose temper, I scare my heart?" He asked.

“Yes, but I understand now, you had the wrong information, so it wasn’t your fault. I didn’t mean for any of this to happen. The photos, Dimi, they hurt me more than you can imagine, and I know that they are old, and I shouldn’t let them bother me. I tried to let them go, I really did, but every time I closed my eyes, I’d see them, and you.”

“I will find who did this.”

“This was a cruel, malicious thing. Whoever did this wanted to break us up. That’s why someone would do this, to hurt us.” I said. “With my emotions all over the place, I’m afraid I overreacted,” I said.

“No, you did not overreact to this. It was meant to hurt you. I find who did this.” He said and held me in his arms.

I have tried to tell myself that this is all old news and that the past is the past, but my heart carries such pain from it, that it may take me awhile to put it completely behind me. This is where the mind does not rule the heart. I understand the communication problem with the Aiden incident, and that the pictures were not current events. My mind knows this, I tell myself to forget about it, it’s old news, but my heart doesn’t speak the same language.

As I laid in bed with Dimitris’ arms around me, his breath against my neck, I was comforted by having him here with me. I could not sleep. My mind kept going over all the events that led me here. I must have stepped on someone’s toes, someone who hates me this much to want to make me miserable enough to leave Dimitris and the island.

My worry over the blood tests seemed to fade in importance next to the pictures. I worry for Dimitris since he was never tested, but since I may have put myself in a bad position in this, I would have to live with the choices I made. Until I came to this island, I had never had reason to even think of STD’s as a possibility for me. I had never had one and didn’t ever expect that I ever would. I had no plans of having a relationship. Again, my heart took over when it came to Dimitris and my mind was left somewhere out in left field.

When I awoke I felt better than I had in days. I had become numb to the pain in my heart. Slowly, I let the problems go. I knew there was nothing I could

do about what has passed. Unless the blood tests give us bad news, we'd be okay. I had to put the pictures out of my mind. I couldn't let them in, not only was there the hurt and pain but the anger, too.

Dimitris was still sleeping, his head next to mine, his arm over my waist. His hair, black and tousled. I reached and gently caressed his arm. He woke up with a smile. His hand at my waist pulled me tightly as he reached to kiss my cheek.

"Good morning, my Helena," he said. "This will be a glorious day!"

"I think it will be too." I agreed.

"I think you were bad Helena, you just cannot keep hands off Dimi! What am I to do with you?" I just smiled.

"Come here," I said, as I hooked my finger at him.

He moved closer and I had to put my arms around him and kiss him.

"Did you fix the heater, or did you play hooky?"

"Hookie? What is hooky?"

"It's when you have a job to do and tell your boss that you are sick, when actually you're not sick at all, just to avoid going to work."

"Oh, I see." He kissed my hand and started to get up.

"Hey, wait a minute, you didn't answer my question," I said.

"Heater need new part. We order part, pick up later."

My cell phone began ringing and that gave the conversation of heater parts a respite.

"Hello?" The connection was very raspy and the low voice was intermittent. "Hello.....I can't hear you." The voice faded away and all I could hear was a series of beeps, like Morse code. I clicked off my phone and then it hit me. This voice, what little I could hear sounded like the short phone call I received before. It too was a mass of interference. It must be a wrong number.

"Dimi, is there anything we can do about the pictures?" I asked.

"If this person does again, we are ready to find him."

"At least we can watch for something to come up, secrets don't stay hidden too long around here, they get spread pretty quickly," I said.

“We will wait.” He said and put his hand over mine.

“I was wondering, did you get the message that I left on your phone last night?”

“I get when I come to Karpathos.”

“You went to Karpathos?”

“You say you stay with Rena, I go there, then find message.”

“Oh, I’m sorry. I tried to call you from the ferry, but I couldn’t get a signal.”

“I know, my Heart, I try to call you, too.”

“When are we going home?” I asked.

“We will see. Now, dress, I make breakfast.”

By the time I got dressed and was ready, Dimi was cooking and Morgan and Andreas were sitting at the table reading the newspaper.

“Good morning! How is everyone?” I said.

“We’re good. It sounds like you are better today!” Andreas said.

“I am wonderful today,” I said. I went up to Dimitris and sneaked in a kiss on his cheek while he was at the stove. I grabbed a cup and poured some coffee.

“Helen, I may need your help with the gold leafing, would you mind? I don’t know that much about it, do you think you could give me a hand?” Morgan said.

“Sure, I don’t mind. How soon do you want to get started?” I asked.

“Well, I wanted to start after the Holidays.”

“No problem, given any unforeseen bombshells that might land between now and then!”

“I hear ya!”

“I hate to break up the party, but I have to go to Kos today, and I am running late.” Andreas kissed Morgan and put his hand on the back of my shoulder and said,

“Dimi and I will find out who did this, with the pictures. I hope you’re okay now.”

“Thanks, Andreas, I’m fine.” I wasn’t fine, I saw those pictures every time I closed my eyes. My mind would go over them again and again, and I could feel myself gaining anger, and resentment toward Dimitris. I didn’t want to

feel jealous, and yet there it is, doing its damage.

“Helen, do you think Aiden was trying to attack you, you know when you dropped the phone?” Morgan asked. She brought me to a state of awareness that I seemed to fall out of when I submerge my mind in those images.

“No, he tried to kiss me in the kitchen, and I dodged that bullet. We had talked about the breakup and he couldn’t see why we shouldn’t pick up where we left off, more or less. He was building a fire when I was talking to you. I felt my hair comb start to fall out and when I went to grab it, his hand was already getting the comb. I looked up when he handed it to me, that’s when he kissed me. That’s the muffled voice you couldn’t understand, I was sitting on the ottoman talking to you and he just swooped down on me. I couldn’t move! When I think of it, it’s really kind of funny. He startled me more than anything. I didn’t realize I had dropped my phone, I guess I was too flustered and ticked off!”

“So, now you’re laughing about it?” Morgan asked. “So, I guess Aiden isn’t the bad guy after all.”

“Well, no, but he was getting a little testy just before Dimitris came in, I wasn’t sure what Aiden was thinking. You know that he told me that Dimitris didn’t want him to come over for ‘no reason’. In other words.....”

“Yeah, I know about *in other words*,” she said. “You don’t think he really believes that, do you?”

“Who knows, there was something else he said about Dimitris too, I have to think of what it was; oh, yeah, he said that Dimi, well not just Dimitris, I think he said ‘these guys would do anything to marry an American lady.’ Do you believe this?”

My phone rang again. The number displayed was unfamiliar but I answered it anyway.

“Hello? Hello?”

“Helena?” The voice sounded far away.

“Yes, who is this?” The interference blared in my ear and the voice became distorted.

“Helena, you must travel with care....” The voice faded, then the interference faded and there was left only those beeps. The message that I thought I

heard went through my mind, and the voice! I've heard it before. Did I hear correctly? Maybe that wasn't what was said? I looked at the phone. "Hmm."

"If that were the case, they would have been snapped up a long time ago," Morgan continued.

"Oh, I know. You should have seen Dimitris' eyes when he threw Aiden out! He turned to me with a wild, crazed look in his eyes! He really scared me! I thought he was going to hit me."

"What did he do?" Morgan asked.

"He was really devastated by what happened, that he didn't listen to me about Aiden. I think they were pretty good friends, and Dimi didn't want to believe that Aiden would try anything. Where is he, anyway? We've got to leave soon." I said.

"Helena, are you ready?" He asked as he entered the room.

"I was wondering where you were. Okay, Morgan, we've got to go, so if you want to call," then I whispered, "I won't drop the phone."

"Okay, if you say so. I'll see ya later."

We grabbed a taxi and headed for the docks. I sat with my arm through Dimitris' arm.

"Helena," Dimitris said.

"Yes, Dimi?"

"You must not run away from Dimi anymore. I think I go mad!"

"I wasn't running away from you necessarily, it was more like getting away to think. I get upset and I can't think, especially when you're near me. I can't put things in perspective where you're concerned." I said in my defense. The warning to "travel with care" suddenly gave me an uneasy feeling. I looked around for anything or anyone suspicious.

"But I cannot fix if you run away."

"Next time I get upset with you, I'll take a soak in the tub. Okay?"

"Better," he said and kissed my temple. "Helena?" I seemed to be off in thought.

"Yes."

"Will you still marry me?"

“Yes, Dimi.” He hugged me and snuggled into my neck.

“Then you must put on.” He pulled out the ring and put it back on my finger. He kissed it and said “there!”

Even though we were smoothing over a big bump in the road, in the back of my mind there was still that little piece of doubt. As much as I tried to put the pictures behind me and move forward, it was still eating on me.

The life here could be Utopian if it were not for finding the photograph of the child which seemed to be the root of our bad luck. Now this warning which I still wasn't sure about, has put me on edge. I will have to tell Dimitris about it, but I want to wait until the Civil bond is complete and all the stress that goes with it is over.

I still scan my surroundings whenever we leave the house, praying that we don't run into those thugs again. It wasn't over, and as much as I wish I had never seen the little picture, I knew it would raise its ugly head again, and unless we get to the cause of the danger we found, we would be living in the shadows of its threat.

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The Shadows of Rhodes continues in book two, *The Gods Have Smiled*. More information on what the little picture contains, the danger surrounding it and the consequences of digging for answers become clear, while Helena and Dimitris find more stumbling blocks to the happiness they seek.



## About the Author



### *Georgina Antoinette*

I met my current husband thirteen months after becoming a widow. I had already written *The Shadows of Rhodes*, but it has evolved into the volume we have here. I cannot blame or credit my experience with Mad Cow or CJD as it is known, for my unexpected foray into the literary world, but after the fight was lost I found a person who came out a little stronger. Me.

I had dabbled with writing before, just for my own amusement, but perhaps the lack of inspiration kept it as only a way to pass the time. After reading about the looting and destruction of religious icons in Cyprus, I found a story that inspired the creation of my novels.

I never would have imagined that I'd be able to put pen to paper and come up with a story like this; or a book length story of any kind.

I now live in a small colorful town on the Pacific North-West coast of Washington state, Hoquiam, with my husband Harry, a German Shepherd named Barkley and a cat, Henry. Life here in Hoquiam is calmer and quieter than where I was born and raised in Southern California.

This is the first ebook in the series, previously released under the title *The Little Picture*. Do to the length of *The Shadows of Rhodes* it had to be issued in a series. As the story continues in ebook 2, we find Helena and Morgan confronted by unsavory men, and the danger they present cannot be ignored. Trouble in relationships stems from the intrusion of old loves, and the danger that pursues them. Although feelings run deep, doubts begin to creep in.

*The Shadows of Rhodes, Book I*

The author recognizes that the reader may have questions and welcomes them along with comments and reviews of this book. You may contact the author at: <https://www.georginaantoinette.com> Facebook: [www.facebook.com/rhodesdreams](http://www.facebook.com/rhodesdreams) or by email at: [ginatoinette@yahoo.com](mailto:ginatoinette@yahoo.com)

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# Glossary



## Glossary

Efharisto - Thank You

Kafenía - Restaurant, coffee shop etc

Kalimera - Good morning

Kalispera - Good evening

Kefi - One's uncontrollable joy

Meyedes - Appetizers

S' agapo - I Love You

Taverna - Tavern/pub

