

Excerpt – Keeper's Watch – The Wind

Nine days had passed and Jeremy's concern over sitting idle in the same place left him feeling vulnerable and naked. There was no way he could keep their identities a total secret now that the accident occurred and he was confident that whoever ran them off the road could possibly still be monitoring their movements as inconspicuously as possible.

He was glad that Beth's injuries proved less than feared and she suffered only a fractured rib. Her massive bruising was beginning to fade still; she looked like a patchwork quilt from head to toe as she continued to heal.

He moved to her bedside and carefully sat down on the edge of her bed and gazed upon her face, as she lay tranquil in sleep.

After he discharged Beth from the hospital, he moved them into the double room they now occupied and intermittently went back to both the crash site and where the SUV was stored to retrieve as much of their gear and belongings as possible while she recuperated. He was concerned more for her safety than his own. The revelation he was now in love with Beth only heightened his concern for her safety.

Funny how the only connection he ever wanted with a woman was of the horizontal nature and the emotional bond between him and Beth left him with a sense of trepidation. He was a man who liked to maintain control over any situation. What was going on between them was like treading on foreign soil. The last thing he ever desired was sticking around long enough to find out he was mired knee deep in emotional entanglements.

The woman before him, no matter how hard he tried, he could not release her from his mind or his heart. He loved her independent nature, quick wit and intuitive mind.

Despite her petite frame, he adored the way she sparred with him, stood up for what she believed and thought was right.

He wanted her in the worse way ... wanted her beneath him, her legs wrapped tightly around him as their bodies melded together. He wanted her beside him, in his life and a part of his world.

"You're looking at me like I'm a choice cut of meat," she spoke in a raspy voice.

Jeremy's smile was radiant as he shook the carnal thoughts from his mind. He leaned in and tenderly stroked her cheek with his thumb.

"As a matter of fact I could devour a steak right about now," he chuckled.

Beth made a face at him despite his remark.

"That's not what you were thinking?"

He tapped her nose with his finger.

"So you can read minds now," he replied as he shifted on the bed to hide the bulge in his pants from her view.

"Get your mind out of the gutter woman. You're in no shape to make good on such thoughts."

"Me!" She squealed, as she slowly rose to a sitting position, grunting softly from the discomfort she was still feeling. "You're like an open book, Steele."

"After everything we've been through, don't you think it's about time you start calling me Jeremy?"

The sincerity in his voice silenced her and his brow lifted in surprise when she did not readily reply.

“Wow ... how hard can it be?”

“It’s ... not.” She hesitated as she played with the fringe of the beige coverlet on her bed to avoid looking at him.

Jeremy grasped her chin and forced her to look into his eyes.

His voice was low and husky.

“Say my name.”

She opened her mouth slightly to respond and hesitated. She reached to move his hand from her face and their fingers entwined. Her tongue slowly ran along her bottom lip drawing his attention.

He stared at the trail of moist sheen it left and his breath caught in his throat. She had slipped into one of his shirts earlier to sleep in and he watched as she nervously ran her finger along its neckline. He loved the way it hugged the seductive curves of her breasts.

When he gazed up into her eyes, he read the wanton desire reflected in their depths and he reacted like a moth drawn to a flame.

A low growl escaped his throat and when his lips captured hers, it was as if a magnetic pull had drawn them together. He wanted to devour her whole but his mind kept telling him to go slow, be gentle. He knew her ribs were still tender and he did not want to hurt her, but could not deny the hunger that only coupling with her would quell.

She was like hot, liquid lava in his hands and the pleasure it ignited deep within him nearly made him howl. He never expected her to be so willing and desirous and he marveled in the velvety smoothness of her skin.

“I want you ... all of you,” he whispered against her ear as he cascaded slow, tortuous kisses down her neck and along her shoulder.

She cupped his face between her hands and looked deeply into his eyes.

“What is it about you? My mind screams no but my body,” she wiggled seductively beneath him making him groan, “says yes.”

“We’re a match Princess ... a match made in heaven.”

She lowered his mouth to hers and whispered, “Or hell,” and moaned when he rotated his hips and his hardness massaged the sensitive area between her legs.

She let her defenses slip away as his kisses devoured her mouth and his touch heated a seductive path up the insides of her thigh. She gave in to that primal need she had caged for so long; let his kisses take possession and his body take control over them both.

In a matter of minutes, they were naked and when his hand closed over her breast, she shuddered. Her heart pounded against his palm so violently she feared it would break through her chest and spill out onto his hand. It had been far too long since she had lain with a man. Panic, apprehension and elation consumed her. She knew there was no turning back and it was as if he felt the trepidation flowing through her veins.

His voice was husky and his eyes reflected the heated passion searing his brain as he rose himself above her.

“If I continue, you’re mine,” he rasped.

His eyes were demanding as they focused on her. Cool air shivered over her bare skin from the open window beside the bed. Slowly his palm grazed up her neck and gripped her hair as he watched and awaited her reply.

Her voice was but a whisper as she answered, "Then take me."