

Ride Your Heart 'Til It Breaks  
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Three Excerpts

#### EXCERPT ONE

November 1994

Stan shrugged, picked up his horn case, and headed for his car. He threw the bag into the trunk, then turned down the path to the bay. He found the bench where he and Carrie had talked after the shows and sat down. He watched the ferry skim across the black water toward the lights of Coronado where the island glimmered against the night sky like a golden mirage.

“Get over it,” he told himself. Women came and went in his life all the time. He rarely felt anything but relief when the latest had had enough and walked away.

But Carrie haunted him. He could see her sometimes emerald, sometimes gray eyes looking up at him on stage, and her smile of delight when he hit a particularly high note as if he had done it just for her. And some nights, he had belted out the big ones to impress her.

And then there was the way she made love. It was different with a woman who loved you. Passion and fire. The way it had been with Deanna. At least, before the drugs took over her life.

He watched the ferry dock on the other side of the bay. One a.m. That should be the last run. He wondered what Carrie was doing. Probably at work in that black hole of a law firm. She had risked everything in the most important year of her career to save Harry and the club and Stan’s gig. And then he’d pranced in with Lara to drive Carrie

away.

Across the bay, Stan could see that the ferry had made its last run. He got up slowly and headed up the path to his car. The aching in his heart had deepened. Tomorrow was Sunday and his day off. He wondered what Carrie was doing tomorrow.

## EXCERPT TWO

December 2007

The jet sped east through the darkness, but Karen was back in the lift in Stan's building as it creaked upward toward his loft. Her nostrils were full of the cool salty breeze, sweeping over her hot arms and face, damp with perspiration and desire. And she could smell the familiar dark, masculine scent of Stan, the mixture of sweat and sex that surrounded him after hours of performing.

Sometimes, Karen reflected, as she listened to the big jet engines labor, life brings you to a split second when you suddenly understand everything is about to change forever. In the twinkling of an eye, as you stand poised on the edge of the inevitable, you pause to burn into your memory what life is like at that moment – the moment before change engulfs you. That sliver of time before the future arrives to transform your life forever is as tiny as an atom, yet as wide and deep as a black hole in space. You stand poised for less than a breath upon the rim of this vast knowledge that all the events of your life have happened for only one purpose: to bring you to this moment of irrevocable change.

### EXCERPT THREE

November, 1994

Through her tears, she watched Stan vanish up the path toward the parking lot.

Go after him. Fight for him, her heart said. Show him you won't desert him.

Show him it's safe to love you.

He had already left when she reached her car. She drove the few blocks to his loft at Fourth and G. By some miracle, there was an empty meter in front. She got out and hurried up the steps to ring the bell.

Answer. Please, answer, she prayed. Her breath came in short, harsh sobs as she stood waiting for a reply from upstairs.

None came.

Karen rang the bell, more insistently this time. She counted ten seconds and rang the bell again.

Then suddenly the iron security door swung open, and Stan was there. Without a word, he pulled her inside and into his arms.

