

## CHAPTER ONE

Boston – Louisburg Square – September, 1897

They arrived at Louisburg Square in style. Ausable Hancock had arranged for an ornate horse-drawn carriage to pick them up. The coach was pure white with black trim and there was a white pinto horse with a black mane and spots to match. The coach gleamed in the sun as it transported them from the train terminal to Ausable's elegant, brick townhouse. Anna Tattersall was impressed. She thought how well the home suited Ausable. He was also strong and handsome. But this was the last place she had ever expected to be right now. Anna was from Fairfield, Connecticut, and was returning from a summer spent at the Tattersall's vacation home in the Adirondack Mountains. It had been quite a summer, one that Anna would never forget and that had changed her life forever.

Anna's sons, Paul, who was ten, and Sam, who was eight, had never been to Boston and everything was fascinating to them.

"We visited New York a few times," said Sam. "Boston looks nothing like New York. It seems much shorter."

"I think 'quaint' is the word, Sam," said Anna.

"I agree with Sam," said Ausable, chuckling. "New York is much 'taller' than Boston. Maybe it's because Boston is older than New York."

Sam nodded his head acknowledging this as a fair answer.

"Ausable, this house is so beautiful," Anna said. "So is Louisburg Square."

“It will be even more beautiful with you in it,” he whispered, not wanting the boys to hear.

Ausable Hancock was an Adirondack Indian whom Anna had met this summer, quite spectacularly, while climbing Giant Mountain alone when a sudden cloudburst struck. Ausable had saved Anna’s life.

“Come in. Let me show you all my home,” he said.

The house was four stories with rounded, bay windows. There was a narrow iron balcony on the second floor that spanned the front. Potted mums adorned the stoop. Just as they reached the top step, the door opened.

“Welcome home, sir,” boomed Frederick, Ausable’s butler.

“Thank you, Frederick,” said Ausable. “Allow me to introduce Mrs. Tattersall and her sons, Paul and Sam.”

“Mrs. Tattersall, it’s a great pleasure to meet you. Mr. Hancock has told me so much about you. And it’s wonderful to have you all here in Boston.”

“Thank you so much, Frederick,” said Anna.

“Please all, do come in,” offered Ausable.

They entered a mahogany-paneled hallway enhanced by a grand stairway and an exquisite brass chandelier above, illuminated with flickering gaslight that made the foyer seem to dance.

“This is lovely, Ausable.”

“I hoped you would like it.” Then to Frederick, “James will be along presently in the other carriage with Mrs. Tattersall’s maid and cook. They are bringing the rest of their belongings.”

“Very good, sir.”

The boys started running up the stairs. “Which one is our room?” asked Paul.

“I’ll lead you to it, boys,” said Frederick, as they disappeared up the stairs leaving Anna and Ausable alone.

“Let me show you around.”

They went into the parlor, which was appointed with very handsome furniture. Anna ran her finger along the top of a mahogany divan upholstered in forest green velvet. Over the fireplace, Anna noticed one of Ausable’s oil paintings of the Adirondack Mountains.

It was the mountain where they met. The Giant. There was a grand piano sitting in the large bay windows looking out to the exquisitely manicured square.

“I can’t believe I’m here. This is all so sudden.”

Ausable came up next to her, putting his arm around her. “I know, Anna. It’s been a terrible whirlwind. But hopefully, you can take some time and really think through all that is happening. I can keep the boys busy so you can be alone to think things out for yourself if you’d like.”

“Thank you,” she sighed. “That would be very sweet of you. Of course, if we are going to stay for a while, we’ll have to enroll the boys into school. The semester should start soon.”

“Let’s see how you all like it here first before we make any decisions.”

“You’re right. We only just arrived. There is so much reeling in my head.”

“Not to worry. Come see the rest of the house.” He led her into the dining room with a large table that could seat ten. There was a leaded-glass conservatory window with French doors that opened out to the rear of the house where Anna could see a courtyard of formal plantings, wrought iron benches, and a filigree iron table and chairs.

“My, Ausable, this is really all so splendid. Can we go out into the garden?”

“Of course,” he said, opening the doors. “After you.”

Anna stepped down into the courtyard and looked around at all the well-manicured topiaries in large stoneware pots. She walked around the circular flower garden in the center toward a bench at the back under a small shade tree and sat down, looking somewhat despondent. Ausable came and sat with her.

“Anna, you seem melancholy.”

“I think I am, Ausable. This has all been very trying with Will and it’s catching up with me.”

“I understand, my love. Do you want to talk about it?”

“Not now. I just want to try to relax for a little while,” she said, laying her head against his shoulder. “Just sit with me like this. It feels so right. And it’s so peaceful out here.”

"Mother, look. We're up here," Sam called, waving, from a third-floor window.

Anna swiftly pulled her head off Ausable’s shoulder and sat up straight.

“This is our room,” yelled Paul.

Anna smiled and waved, then aside to Ausable, “Well, it was peaceful for a moment. Why don’t you show me to my room?”

“I’d be happy to.”

He took Anna upstairs to a bedroom on the second floor. It was a soft yellow and looked out over the courtyard. There was a large four-poster bed with a set of steps to climb into it. An oversized cherry wood bureau with an attached mirror stood on one wall opposite a matching wardrobe closet. A small dressing table sat next to the fireplace. Another of Ausable’s paintings hung over the bed.

“I love your painting of Porter Mountain and the Twins. That’s the view from Idlenook.”

“I placed that there especially for you in the hope that you would someday come here. I wanted you to feel at home.”

A tear came to Anna’s eye, “I’m overcome.”

“I’ve got another surprise for you,” he said, opening a door next to the wardrobe. “This is the water closet.”

Anna stepped into the room. There was a large copper bathtub, sink, and toilet.

“We have running water and each bathtub has a small gas furnace to heat the water for a luxurious hot bath.”

“I think I’m going to like it here.” She saw another door. “Where does that door go?”

Ausable opened it and stepped through. Anna could see a large, red room.

He smiled. “This connects to my bedroom.”

“Oh, I know I’m going to like it here.”

She ran into his room, put her arms around him and kissed him.

“I’m rather exhausted. Before I see the rest of the house, I think I would like to take advantage of that hot water bath, if I may.”

“Of course. I’ll have my maid, Amy, draw a bath for you,” he said and went down the hallway.

Anna looked around Ausable’s room. There was a grand canopy bed with red drapes all around to close during the cold winter months and there were large windows with a small wrought iron balcony overlooking the square. On the opposite wall was a massive

wooden wardrobe. One of the doors was halfway open. Anna peeked in and saw Ausable's beautiful, hand-tailored suits and shirts. She took in the scent. It was the familiar aroma of balsam and pine needles. They smelled like the Adirondacks that she loved so much. They smelled like him.

Anna thought back to the first time they had met, many years before. It was a brief encounter on Anna's first visit to Keene Valley as a young girl. She had found a smoldering campfire and doused it just as a young Ausable came back to do the very same thing. She had never met an Indian quite like him. He was well spoken and she discovered he liked to paint. He gave her one of his paintings before he left and she had kept it all these years as a wonderful reminder of the magic of the Adirondacks. To think, years later, he was the very same man who would save her life in that terrible storm. Mud and debris had washed down Giant Mountain with Anna in it. She was sure her life was over until a strong grip grabbed onto her just in time before she passed out. They were trapped on the mountain for several days as all trails had been swept away and Anna had broken several ribs that Ausable expertly wrapped. She owed Ausable her life. It took some time to discover they had met before. But it didn't take long until Anna fell in love with him. And he with her.

They had been together several times at his camp in the woods before Anna saw Ausable in town dressed in this fine clothing she was looking at. She already knew what a wonderful man he was on the inside.

Ausable returned and found Anna lost in thought. "Anna?"

"I'm sorry. I was being inquisitive. You have such beautiful clothing."

"You can look at all that you want. I have no secrets from you."

Anna smiled and gave him a little peck on the cheek.

"Amy will be up presently."

"Wonderful. I'm looking forward to a long, hot bath. While she is readying that, can you take me up to the boys' room, please?"

"Of course. Their room is right above yours."

They went into the hall and up one flight of stairs. Indeed, the boys' room was identical to Anna's, but with two beds. Paul was lying on the bed reading and Sam was on the floor playing with a wooden truck he had won this summer at a circus ring toss game.

“Is everything to your liking boys?” Ausable asked as he and Anna entered.

“This room is great,” said Sam.

“Mother, did you see there’s a washroom with running water?” asked Paul.

“Yes, I have one, as well.”

“And there’s hot water in the bathtub, too,” said Sam.

“Now you won’t have any excuse not to take a bath, will you, Sam?” Anna asked.

“Do I have to?” Sam asked.

“It will be fun, Sam,” said Ausable. “I’ll show you both how the gas furnace works.”

“We can run the furnace?” asked Sam.

“Oh, boy,” said Paul.

Ausable went into the washroom followed by an excited Sam and Paul.

“Just be careful, boys, and don’t blow up anything,” Anna called after them.

“Don’t worry, Anna,” Ausable called, chuckling.

Anna picked up a few clothes they had already tossed about the room and folded them. She sat on the bed and thought of her husband Will. She had only just left him after years of them drifting apart. The boys thought they were in Boston for a visit and had no idea they might be staying here permanently. Of course, Anna hoped Will would grant her a divorce, but she couldn’t be sure at this point. She had left in such a hurry after Will, in a callous, drunken rant, exposed all their secrets in front of everyone they knew during a society dance in Keene Valley. Will accused Ausable of debauchery and seducing his wife away from him and told them all that Anna had betrayed her marriage vows with Ausable. It was an unpardonable display in public and Anna was humiliated. She knew Will had to be very hurt to act like this and she felt for him, but he had hurt her, too.

He’d had an affair with her arch-rival, Margaret Bancroft. Margaret always had eyes for Will, ever since they were children. She resented Anna for ‘stealing’ him from her. Knowing that Anna and Will’s marriage was foundering, Margaret went to New York, where Will was working, and sought him out to seduce him. He was in a very susceptible state and succumbed. He had been seen kissing another woman by a man Anna and Will knew. Not knowing it was Margaret, the man returned to Keene Valley with the news which spread quickly, gossip being the number one activity among the elite in the small

hamlet. Anna came to the irrefutable realization that Will wasn't the man she had known all these years.

She had rediscovered herself because of her wonderful Ausable. He gave Anna her life back. She was happy again. She was stronger and knew what she wanted. She wasn't going back to a loveless marriage. It wouldn't be good for her. Or her children. What example would that set for them? Growing up in a home with parents who didn't love one another anymore. Anna knew she would have more challenges to face being in a relationship with an American Indian. But at least she was in love. Truly, she was. And Ausable was wonderful with her sons. As a lawyer, Will was always off working in New York and sometimes Boston, but rarely home. Both boys enjoyed spending time with Ausable and he would be a good influence on them. She, of course, would want Will to see his sons whenever he or they wanted. If he came to Boston for business, they would be here to see him. She had so much to work out, but Anna was ready for a fight if it came to that. She had left Will a letter explaining her feelings and what she was doing. She'd given him Ausable's address and hoped to get a letter from him soon so they could begin to discuss the terms of their divorce.

But first things first. She craved that restful bath. The boys were excited to feel the hot water circulating in their tub, slowly getting warmer and warmer. Sam was actually eager to take a bath. Anna went downstairs to her room and found Amy with Millie, Anna's maid, who had arrived with the valises. Amy was showing Millie how to work the water furnace. Millie, never one for new contraptions, stood back several feet from the furnace, not sure what to make of it all. Anna tried to assure her it was perfectly safe, but she could tell Millie was going to take some time with this. Amy reassured them both by saying she'd be happy to draw Mrs. Tattersall's bath whenever she required one. Anna thanked Amy and asked Millie to help her undress for the bath. Amy sprinkled lavender-scented bath salts into the water and Anna slipped into the warm, delectable bath. It felt tranquil and pacified her. Ah, she thought as she savored the soft, soothing water. It helped take her mind off things, for a little while.