

~ Home For The Holidays ~

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PART ONE

Tressa stared at the telephone in exasperation. Granted, conversations with her mother were never easy, but this particular one was bordering on insanity. "Mother," she argued.

"Now Tressa, it's on your way," her mother, Grace, stated firmly.

"We don't get along," Tressa fumed.

"Of course you do." Grace chuckled. "Now it's not too much to ask that you give your best friend a ride home for the holiday."

"She is not my best friend Mother!" Tressa was whining at this point. "She was when we were kids. Now she's my ex-girlfriend. It's safe to say that our friendship ended when we split up."

"And who's fault was that?" Grace snorted indignantly.

"Not mine," Tressa argued.

"Tressa," Grace cautioned her, "it takes two to argue. And I know that you were just being your stubborn old self and wouldn't admit that you were wrong."

"I wasn't wrong," Tressa growled.

"It simply broke my heart when the two of you split up." Grace sighed heavily.

"Mother, it was a long time ago," Tressa said, trying to find a way out of the discussion.

"Then it shouldn't be a problem for you to give her a ride," Grace stated, the smile clearly evident in her voice. Tressa's jaw dropped as she came to the realization that she'd been set up by her mother. "After all, Lindsey doesn't live that far from you and I would feel much better if you weren't traveling alone. Since her parents moved away, she'll be all alone for the holiday."

"Alright." Tressa finally conceded defeat, knowing that she wasn't going to win. Her mother was a master at laying on guilt trips. "Tell her to be ready on time."

"Why don't you call her? I have the number right here," her mother suggested.

"No." Tressa was firm. "I'll drive her but that's it."

"Anything you say, dear," Grace humored her. "I'll see the two of you on Wednesday."

After they exchanged their goodbyes, Tressa stood dumbfounded in her living room. The day hadn't started out badly. It was just an average day in her quiet life. Now she was driving her ex-lover home for the holiday. "Peachy," she muttered to herself. "Wait. Lindsey doesn't have anyone to spend the holiday with? She's single? No. Don't go there. She'll just drive you up the wall again."

PART TWO

After failing to convince her Mother that she and Lindsey traveling together was less than ideal, Tressa found herself constantly lost in memories of Lindsey. The energetic blonde and her family moved in next door to her family when she was six. They ended up in a fist fight the very first day. To this day Tressa was convinced that Lindsey had started the altercation. The following day, they made a blood oath to be friends forever.

It was always like that. One moment they were glued at the hip and the next they were fighting. Tressa never understood just how the little green-eyed monster could make her completely happy and completely agitated at the same time. How they ever became lovers was still a mystery to Tressa. Well, not a complete mystery.

Growing up together they shared everything. No small wonder that they also shared their first kiss long before either of them realized that they weren't really attracted to boys. They were twelve and had spent the day at the movies. Tressa couldn't recall what the film was about, only that she hated it and Lindsey loved it. It was some sappy romance that Lindsey insisted they see.

They were in Tressa's bedroom when the friendly disagreement became heated. Tressa recalled saying something about the fake-looking kiss the two leads had shared.

"Oh, how would you know?" Lindsey challenged the taller girl.

"Hey, I know," the brunette shot back, trying desperately to sound convincing.

"You do not." Lindsey laughed as she poked Tressa in the ribs.

"Do so," Tressa lied.

"Yeah right," Lindsey pressed as she stepped closer to her. "And who have you kissed?" Tressa swore she could see hurt in those emerald eyes.

"Well . . . I . . . Uhm . . . no one," she finally confessed. She was embarrassed by her admission and couldn't look at Lindsey. She felt the smaller girl step closer to her. Their bodies were almost touching and then, quite unexpectedly, Lindsey's lips shyly brushed against her own.

"Now you have," Lindsey said softly.

Tressa found herself smiling at the memory. It was such an innocent gesture. They didn't speak of the kiss until almost five years later. Tressa was aware that her interest in Lindsey had taken on a new dimension. It terrified her. It was a rainy night and Lindsey was sleeping over, something that Tressa had been avoiding for months. Dressed in long T-shirts, they were laying on Tressa's bed chatting quietly so they wouldn't wake her parents again.

"So are you going to the dance?" Tressa asked shyly, secretly afraid of the answer.

"No," Lindsey responded flatly. "How about you?"

"No," Tressa answered, trying to stop the smile. "I'm not really interested in anyone right now."

"Me either." Lindsey frowned as she shifted slightly closer to the taller girl.

"Why did you and Byron split up?" Tressa asked, curious since her best friend had been reluctant to talk about it.

"I . . . uhm . . ." Lindsey shrugged.

"What's up?" Tressa asked with concern.

"I just didn't feel anything for him." Lindsey shrugged again. "And he wanted . . . you know."

"Pig," Tressa snarled.

"And he kissed like a fish," Lindsey groaned.

"Eww!" Tressa grimaced. "I hate that. Paul was a good kisser," she admitted as she felt Lindsey stiffen beside her.

"Really," Lindsey muttered. "So why did you dump him then?" she asked in a bitter tone.

"I don't know," Tressa answered honestly. "He just wasn't my type. Just because he was a good kisser doesn't mean he's the right one," Tressa added, knowing that she had intentionally skipped over saying the right guy.

"What about me?" Lindsey asked quietly.

"What about you?" Tressa returned nervously as her heart began to beat just a little faster.

"How do I kiss?" Lindsey asked as she turned on her side and faced Tressa.

Tressa felt the warmth spread through her as she caught sight of Lindsey's firm body lying next to her. "How should I know?" Tressa managed to squeak out.

"Because we've kissed," Lindsey said with a smile and a wiggle of her eyebrows.

"Oh well . . . that was just . . .," Tressa stammered as she tried to understand where this conversation was heading. ". . . well, that wasn't a real kiss. We were just kids."

"It was my first kiss," Lindsey responded tersely. "It may not have been some heavy groping session, but it was real, to me."

"Me too," Tressa admitted. "It was real." Lindsey smiled sweetly in response as she moved closer. It was the mischievous gleam in Lindsey's eyes that made Tressa take a chance. "But still I couldn't really say whether or not you're a good kisser. I mean, it was a long time ago and it was very brief."

"Oh." Lindsey smiled evilly. "So you would need more recent data before you could come to any conclusions?"

"Well yeah," Tressa said, urging her on.

"I don't know," Lindsey teased. "I mean, what if you're a lousy kisser? It would spoil the memory."

"I am not," Tressa sneered. "But I guess you'll never know. Your memories are safe. Hmmf," she groaned as Lindsey pushed her backwards and climbed on top of her.

"Are you challenging me?" Lindsey growled as she poked her in the ribs.

"No." Tressa giggled as the smaller girl's long blonde hair caressed her face.

"Good." Lindsey tilted her chin in defiance as she started to climb off of Tressa.

Tressa wasn't prepared to lose contact with Lindsey's body just yet. Reaching out quickly, she clasped the blonde's hips firmly. "I'm asking you," she said in a serious tone.

"What?" Lindsey choked out as she swallowed deeply.

"Kiss me." Tressa remembered how her voice trembled, fearful that she was about to lose her best friend.

"Why?" Lindsey asked in a husky tone as she lowered her body slightly.

"Because I want you to," Tressa answered honestly as she fought back the tears that threatened to overwhelm her. "Because I need you to."

Tressa recalled how she wanted to die right then and there. She trembled as she waited for her best friend to say or do something. Lindsey didn't say a word; she simply lowered herself so that her body pressed against Tressa's. Their lips were a breath apart, meeting shyly at first. Tressa recalled their first kiss. Then the feeling changed from innocence to desire.

Their lips melted together and then parted, inviting one another in for exploration. Tongues danced together as they moaned with desire. She remembered how her body arched as Lindsey's thigh pressed against her center. Tressa's hands moved up under Lindsey's shirt. The feel of her friend's strong back fueled her desire as their hips began to grind together.

Tressa felt Lindsey's wetness on her thigh as she thrust harder. Her hands slipped down under the elastic band of Lindsey's panties to cup her firm backside. They tore away from the kiss as the need for air overwhelmed them both.

She felt Lindsey's hands roaming her body as the blonde began to kiss her neck. Tressa recalled how her mind simply stopped functioning and her body took control. She pulled Lindsey's panties down further needing to feel more. She could smell their passion filling the room as they gyrated against each other. Lindsey's mouth was blazing a torturous trail down her neck. She felt the blonde pulling her shirt up.

For the first time in Tressa's life, her nipples ached with desire. She continued to grind her hips into Lindsey's firm body as her hands continued their exploration of the blonde's firm backside. Her shirt was now pulled up under her chin. Lindsey's mouth tasted the valley between her breasts. Tressa barely kept herself from screaming as her fingers dipped into Lindsey's wet curls.

Tressa couldn't believe how wet they both were. She was moaning as Lindsey's tongue began to tease one of her nipples. Uncertain as to what she should be doing, she simply followed her instincts as her thumb teased Lindsey's throbbing clit. Her teasing increased to match the sensual rhythm of Lindsey's tongue.

Their primal moaning seemed to urge them both to explore further. Tressa felt her underwear being lowered as Lindsey's fingers shyly explored her passion. Lindsey tore her mouth away from the delightful torture she was giving Tressa's breast. Their bodies arched as their throbbing clits rubbed together.

Staring into one another's eyes, there wasn't any fear or doubt as to what they both wanted. Legs parted nervously and their fingers fumbled until finding the other's center. Shy and uncertain, they entered one another. Wincing slightly from the sudden pain, they were driven by an uncontrollable desire as their fingers plunged in and out.

They climaxed in unison; their gazes turning inward as their first orgasm rumbled through their bodies. Tressa smiled as she remembered how they held one another in a tight embrace. They kissed and exchanged promises throughout the evening. "I'm glad it was you," Lindsey whispered tenderly in her ear.

"It was meant to be," Tressa reassured her lover.

Tressa found herself frowning at the memory. A few months later they split up after a silly argument. It was always like that with them. They got back together after starting college and came out to their families as a couple. They were surprised that neither set of parents seemed surprised by their revelation. It was a bit of a disappointment since the two had stressed over the decision to finally tell them.

Their families were happy and they were happy. They decided that once they finished school they would get an apartment together. It had been difficult since they attended different colleges. Both lived on campus and only saw one another on weekends and term breaks. During their senior years the strain of studying proved to be too much and the couple didn't see each other very much. In the end one-too-many canceled weekends led to a huge argument. It was the worse they'd ever had and things were said that couldn't be taken back.

Tressa still recalled how the fight ended. Lindsey had hung up on her. They didn't speak for weeks and Tressa was miserable. No one wanted to be around her and her grades started to suffer. Against her better judgment, she took her roommate's advice and went on a date with another woman. Life is funny. In fact, sometimes it's freaking hysterical. What were the odds that Lindsey would decide to visit her that night so they could talk?

Tressa and her date, Gwen, ran into Lindsey just as they were leaving Tressa's dorm. The talk turned into a screaming match. She had never seen Lindsey quite so angry before. Her long blonde hair flew wildly in the wind as her green eyes turned to fire. That night everything ended between them. Their romance and their friendship were forever ruined.

They hadn't spoken since. Until now. It was the day before Thanksgiving and Tressa was sitting outside of Lindsey's condo.

PART THREE

Tressa tapped her fingers nervously on the steering wheel of her Subaru Forester. "Okay, I really should go up to the door and ring the bell," she encouraged herself. She failed to make a move other than to start tapping her foot. "Come on, Tressa. You're acting like a baby," she chastised herself. "It's not like you haven't spent time with an ex-lover before. Of course, Lindsey isn't just any old girlfriend and things ended so badly between us." Her focus shifted to the empty street she was parked on. "I wonder how pissed Mom would be if I showed up without the blonde? Ugh," she groaned as she banged her head against the steering wheel.

She was beginning to enjoy the sensation of smacking her head on the steering wheel since it

was preventing her from facing Lindsey. A loud rapping on her window disrupted her self-inflicted abuse. She blushed deeply, not needing to see who was rapping. Tressa swallowed hard as she sheepishly turned to face those taunting green eyes. As she was turning, she silently prayed that Lindsey had grown old and fat.

Tressa's eyes widened with delight when she saw the familiar smirk. Lindsey looked incredible. She wasn't old or fat. She was . . . a woman. Somehow Tressa had expected the young girl with the strawberry blonde hair, the girl next door she had gone to summer camp with. Instead she found a beautiful blonde with short hair glaring at her. "Oh no." Tressa grimaced. "I know that look. She's pissed."

Tressa reluctantly lowered her window.

"You haven't changed a bit." Lindsey smirked. "You want to tell me why you're sitting out here banging your head?"

"It feels good when you stop," Tressa growled.

"Uh huh," Lindsey muttered as she rolled her eyes. "Come on in. I'm just about ready."

"You're not ready yet?" Tressa barked. "Some things never change," she groaned. "I'll wait here."

"I'm going to need some help." Lindsey sighed as she rolled her eyes once again.

'I hate it when she does that,' Tressa groused to herself. Her anger dissipated as she noticed that Lindsey was supporting herself with a pair of crutches. "I'm sorry. I didn't notice," she apologized quickly as she raised her window. *'That's because you were too busy checking her out. You're an idiot,'* she admonished herself as she turned off the engine.

Trying to regain her dignity, she opened her door and attempted to step out, failing to realize that her seatbelt was firmly in place. Lindsey chuckled as the tall brunette struggled to free herself. Finally free from her restraints and thoroughly embarrassed, she stepped out of her SUV.

"Laugh it up, Blondie." Tressa tried to sound intimidating. She failed of course.

"Did you get taller?" Lindsey inquired.

"No," Tressa groaned. "Everyone looks tall to you. What happened?" she asked, pointing to the crutches.

"I don't want to talk about it," Lindsey snapped. "Sorry, it's a long story."

"Fine." Tressa backed off, sensing that it was in her best interest to do so. "Well, it explains why you need a ride," Tressa threw in, hoping to ease into a friendlier realm.

Lindsey simply grunted as they made their way up the walkway. She struggled with the doorknob until Tressa finally opened the door. Allowing the smaller woman to enter first, Tressa

was more than a little curious about just how Lindsey injured herself.

Tressa took a moment to look around the spacious condo. "Good thing you're on the ground floor," she noted.

"The bedroom isn't," Lindsey sighed as she pointed to the couch that was covered with blankets.

"You still get cold at night," Tressa uttered before she could stop herself, "Sorry," she added quickly, blushing slightly.

"Bite me," Lindsey snorted.

"In your dreams," Tressa shot back.

Lindsey ignored her as she tried to gather up her overnight bag. A sudden barking startled Tressa and two paws landing on her back sent her crashing to the floor. Two blue eyes and the smell of doggie breath assaulted her as she struggled to free herself. "Yuk," she complained.

"Ziggy," Lindsey commanded. "Come here, boy. Come see Mommy." She whistled for the dog.

"Yeah, go see Mommy," Tressa gasped as she freed herself from the large husky.

Tressa stood as the large dog raced over to his owner and danced around the injured woman. "Well, now I can see how you got hurt," she commented as she tried to brush off the white doggy hair covering her black jeans.

"Ziggy wouldn't hurt me," Lindsey cooed to the large mammal. "Would you? He's just a puppy."

"Puppy?" Tressa looked at the beast in wonderment. "You're insane."

"Don't listen to her," Lindsey continued. "You're Mommy's baby, aren't you?"

"And he's not very good at protecting you," Tressa pointed out. "He didn't even bark when I came in. I could have done anything to you by the time Lassie here showed up."

"In your dreams," Lindsey scoffed. "He was locked up. He must have broken through the gate . . . again."

Tressa had cleaned away as much of the dog hair as she could before she felt something else rubbing against her. Looking down, she found a small orange tabby winding around her legs, placing more hair on her dark clothing. "Does everything around here shed?" she grouched.

"Rufus," Lindsey called for the frisky feline. "Get away from the mean lady. You don't know where she's been." Lindsey flashed an amused smirk at the grimacing brunette.

"Hold on. You have pets." Tressa's blue eyes widened fearfully.

"Very good, Sherlock," Lindsey countered as she stood balancing herself on her crutches. Unconsciously, Tressa moved to help her.

"I was just wondering, if you're going to be gone for a few days . . . ," Tressa began hesitantly. "I mean, they're not coming with us, are they?"

"No," Lindsey reassured her. "My neighbor's going to look after them. I don't usually spend this much time away, but I can't drive myself and your Mom's allergic."

"No, she's not," Tressa said in disdain. "She just doesn't like animals."

"She kept you around for eighteen years," Lindsey added playfully.

"Keep it up, Skippy, and you'll be riding back home on the luggage rack," Tressa warned her.

"Hi ho," a friendly voice called out as Ziggy began to bark furiously.

"See, he barks." Lindsey nudged her. "Hey, Joel." She waved, weaving slightly on her crutches. Tressa reached out to steady her, surprised by the sudden sensation her body was experiencing. Tressa took one look at the slender dark-haired man swishing into the condo. "Oh yes, he looks like a dangerous character. Let me guess. He's a florist?" Tressa teased quietly as Lindsey glared at her.

"Hi there. I'm Tressa," she introduced herself brightly as she offered her hand.

"Joel Mathers." He accepted her hand warmly. "My partner and I live next door. Bob and I run a little flower shop just around the corner," he explained as he stooped over and scratched Ziggy behind the ears.

"Hee hee," Tressa chuckled softly as she winked at Lindsey.

"So, how do you know the blonde bomber here?" Joel inquired innocently enough.

"We grew up together," Tressa answered quickly as Lindsey chewed on her bottom lip.

"I'm glad that she won't be traveling alone after everything that's happened," Joel added solemnly.

"Joel," Lindsey flared.

"What happened?" Tressa demanded with concern as she turned towards Lindsey.

"Tressa?" Joel blurted out suddenly as he stood. "Not *THE Tressa*?"

"Excuse me?" Tressa inquired.

"Joel," Lindsey threatened.

"Uh . . . uhm . . .," Joel stammered.

"Let me guess, " Tressa started in a cocky manner. "Tressa, her ex-girlfriend."

"Something like that." Joel blushed. "Just add lying, cheating and a few other words that I really don't care to say in mixed company."

"Oh my freaking God," Tressa cried out. "We were separated."

"No, we weren't," Lindsey argued.

"Yes, we were," Tressa countered.

"Please, we had a little spat," Lindsey flared.

"Spat?" Tressa choked out. "You hung up on me and didn't talk to me for weeks."

"So you ran out and got a new girlfriend," Lindsey sneered.

"I didn't end up going out with Gwen," Tressa protested.

"Gwen?" Lindsey sneered once again. "Was that the bleached blonde's name?"

"Oddly enough, having you show up and call her a slut kind of put a damper on the evening," Tressa growled. "And I wouldn't bring up hair coloring if I were you. I seem to recall that you weren't quite so blonde the last time we saw each other."

"You suck," Lindsey shot out.

"You suck," Tressa retorted, realizing just how lame it sounded.

"Okay," Joel stammered nervously. "I'll just be on my way." His retreat was blocked by the bickering women. Standing there, the florist simply shifted from one foot to the other.

"I hate you," Lindsey snarled.

"I hate you too," Tressa snapped back as she reached down and grabbed Lindsey's overnight bag. "Is this it?"

"Yes," Lindsey fumed.

"Let's go," Tressa demanded as she stormed out the door.

"Thanks a lot, pal," Lindsey groaned at Joel.

"Have fun." He shrugged sheepishly.

PART FOUR

Tressa and Lindsey drove in uncomfortable silence. Tressa finally turned on the radio just to listen to something other than Lindsey grinding her teeth. She flipped through the stations trying to find something other than a boy band or Brittany Spears to listen to. As her quest continued, Lindsey glared at her. "Oh for god's sake, pick something," the blonde finally snapped out as she swatted at Tressa's hand.

"I can't find anything I like," Tressa explained, feeling the tension rising once again.

"Do you have any CD's?" Lindsey inquired in a snotty tone.

"Yes," Tressa retorted. "But I'm not in the mood for any of them."

Lindsey ignored her comment and began to rummage through Tressa's limited collection. "Look, Blu Cantrell. A whole CD about being cheated on." Lindsey smirked at her.

"For the love of God," Tressa groaned. "It was over ten years ago. Let it go, will you? And I didn't cheat on you."

"I know, but I just love watching that vein bulge in your forehead." Lindsey laughed.

"You must since you've been doing that since the day we met," Tressa concurred as she finally settled on the local oldies station. "This okay?"

"Yeah," Lindsey agreed as she returned the CD to its compartment between their seats. "Nice car," she added quietly.

"Thanks," Tressa answered with sigh of relief. "Do you want to tell me what happened to your leg?"

"Nope," Lindsey answered flatly. "Hey, do you remember that time in high school when I sprained my ankle?"

"Oh yeah." Tressa smiled at the memory. "Come on, Tressa. Let's climb over this fence. It's not that high." She laughed as she mimicked the blonde. "And you were right, it wasn't that high."

"Not for you, stretch," Lindsey groaned indignantly. "What was I thinking?"

"You weren't," Tressa added. "What I remember most was you falling out of the back of my car a few nights later."

"Lord," Lindsey groaned. "You would remember that. Sex in the local cemetery, talk about romantic."

"Hey, we were young," Tressa argued, "and we didn't have anywhere else to go. I can still picture you butt-naked, laying on the lawn, pleading with me to help you up."

"You, as I recall, were too busy laughing at me," Lindsey pouted.

"It was funny," Tressa responded in a matter of fact manner.

"It was." Lindsey chuckled lightly.

"Did you just agree with me?" Tressa gasped.

"I guess I did," Lindsey responded in amazement.

For the first time since her mother's telephone call, Tressa was finally feeling at ease about this situation. "So what have you been up to?" Lindsey inquired. "Your Mom hasn't been very helpful over the years. I know you got your Masters degree."

"Actually, I went on from there," Tressa explained proudly. "It's Dr. Frayler now. I have a PhD in ancient history. I teach at Boston College."

"Wow," Lindsey answered in surprise as she batted her emerald eyes. "You were the one who always hated school."

"Not anymore." Tressa smiled. "I love what I do. I also travel to dig sites when I can. It's amazing."

"So what happened to accounting?" Lindsey pried.

"I hated it."

"I know," Lindsey responded in agreement.

"After we split up," Tressa began slowly, "I really took a hard look at my life and decided that I needed to be happy. And I found something that made me happy."

"Did I make you unhappy?" Lindsey asked in a serious tone. "I know things between us were always a bit of a roller coaster ride."

"It was never dull." Tressa smiled. "No, you made me happy and I lost that. Maybe I needed to so I could grow up. For the first time, I was really on my own; you weren't there to fall back on. I realized that I needed to be happy with me and not just because I had you in my life."

"I think I understand," Lindsey said softly. "When you were gone, I kept telling myself to pick

up the phone and call you, that I needed you. And I did need you, but I needed to stand on my own two feet more. Plus the reason I would freak out so much was that it was all so final."

"I don't understand," Tressa questioned her statement.

"We were so young. Just twenty-one and thinking that this was the person I'm going to spend the rest of my life with. It scared me to death," Lindsey explained. "There was so much I wanted to do with my life. We had been together on and off since we were teenagers. Every once and awhile I would think of that and completely freak. Usually I took it out on you."

"Isn't being an adult great?" Tressa responded with a snicker. "So what have you been up to?"

"I own a little antiques shop on Newbury," Lindsey said. "It does well and I get to travel around looking for items to stock."

"Shopping." Tressa laughed loudly. "You turned your favorite pastime into a career."

"Well, not my *favorite* pastime." Lindsey winked at her.

"I thought you were a stock broker?" Tressa inquired in a confused tone.

"I was," Lindsey explained. "I hated it. But I did make a truckload of money before I got out. It turns out my timing was perfect. Just after I left, everything went into the toilet. I opened the shop about two years ago."

"Why here and not New York?" Tressa asked as she weaved in and out of traffic. "That's where you were living. At least I thought that's what Mom said."

"I needed a change," Lindsey muttered bitterly.

"Uh huh," Tressa responded. "What did she do?"

"It's not what she did, it was who she did." Lindsey confessed in a tired tone. "I swear I have the worst taste in women."

"Thank you." Tressa laughed lightly.

"I didn't mean . . .," Lindsey stammered, quickly waving her hands frantically. ". . . not you . . ."

"It's okay," Tressa reassured her as she grabbed one of Lindsey's hands and squeezed it tenderly. "I know what you meant. I hope." She smiled and gave Lindsey's hand another squeeze. "If it makes you feel any better, I haven't had that great of a track record either. If there's a nut job within a fifty mile radius, I'll date her."

"Right," Lindsey snorted in disbelief. "Ever had one run you over?" she said quietly.

Her comment wasn't quiet enough. Tressa's heart pounded as she squeezed Lindsey's hand tighter. She hadn't realized what she was doing until Lindsey cried out. "I'm sorry," Tressa blurted out as she released the frightened blonde's hand. The SUV swerved and car horns blared out in anger. Tressa grasped the steering wheel tightly and pulled off the road.

"Tressa, don't . . . ," Lindsey began to plead with her.

Tressa couldn't believe what she was hearing. She was fuming as she turned to her former lover. "Is that how this happened?" Tressa shouted as she pointed to the cast on Lindsey's leg. "She ran you over with her car?"

"No," Lindsey responded quickly.

"Oh." Tressa relaxed slightly. "I'm sorry," she muttered as she tried to steady her breathing.

"She ran me over with my car," Lindsey added quickly.

"What?" Tressa just stared at her. Something in the way Lindsey flinched convinced her to calm down. "I'm sorry. I'm not angry with you. It's just that . . . a part of me will always care. You know?"

"I know." Lindsey patted her thigh tenderly. "Trust me. I broke up with her the first time I realized that she was a big wacko. Unfortunately she doesn't take rejection well. It put a hell of a dent in my car."

"This isn't funny," Tressa choked out as she fought back the tears.

"Trust me. I know." Lindsey's eyes fluttered shut as she gave Tressa's thigh a slight squeeze.

"I'm going to kill her," Tressa muttered angrily.

"No," Lindsey said firmly as her eyes flew open. The sight of her tears broke Tressa's heart. "The police are handling this. I've got a restraining order and Joel has been so far up my backside that I think we're dating."

"Are you certain there's nothing I can do?" Tressa offered, feeling helpless. Lindsey started to cry softly. Without hesitation, Tressa unbuckled her seatbelt and did the same to Lindsey's. She wrapped the smaller woman up in her arms. Rubbing her back gently, she allowed Lindsey to simply cry. The sobs finally ceased but Tressa still held onto Lindsey, the scent of her shampoo filling her senses.

They parted slightly and Tressa reached up to wipe away the few remaining tears from Lindsey's cheek. Lindsey smiled shyly as she grasped Tressa's hand in her own. Tressa smiled in return as Lindsey's thumb stroked the back of her hand. What happened next was a complete surprise. Tressa didn't think; she simply reacted. It seemed completely natural. She brushed her lips against Lindsey's and then lost herself in the warmth of Lindsey's lips which responded to her

touch. Lips parted as their tongues began a gentle exploration. Their bodies pressed closer as their tongues danced together.

Lindsey moaned as Tressa's hand cupped her breast. The passionate sound snapped both women back to reality. They separated instantly and stared at each other in confusion. Green and blue eyes blinked wildly as both women tried to comprehend what had just happened. "What the hell was that?" Tressa finally blurted out.

"Has it been that long?" Lindsey countered.

"Lindsey?" Tressa gaped at her. "I uhm . . . I don't . . . I mean . . . hell. I don't know what I mean. Less than half an hour ago we hated each other in the same manner we have for the past ten years. That I can handle."

"Relax, Tressa," Lindsey sighed heavily. "Look, it just happened. Let's not make a big deal out of it."

"Right," Tressa agreed, her senses still reeling from the passionate embrace they'd just shared. "You're right. It was just . . ."

"I swear - if you say it was just one of those things, I'm going throttle you." Lindsey rolled her eyes. "That line has been done to death."

"Well, it was." Tressa snorted as she turned the radio up. "And I hate it when you do that."

"Do what?" Lindsey said, sounding exasperated.

"Roll your eyes at me like I've sprouted antlers or something," Tressa snarled as she buckled her seatbelt. "It was just a kiss."

"Another original sentiment," Lindsey huffed as she also buckled her seatbelt and folded her arms across her chest.

"Hey, I just felt sorry for you," Tressa lied as she turned on her directional and put the SUV into drive.

"Yeah, right." Lindsey chuckled. "That's why you tried to cop a feel?"

"I did not," Tressa protested as she pulled out into traffic.

"Whatever." Lindsey rolled her eyes and changed the radio station.

"I can't believe that I let my mother talk me into this," Tressa complained as she reset the radio.

"Grace said this was your idea," Lindsey piped in.

"My idea?" Tressa gasped. "Why would I volunteer to drive you to my parents for the holiday? You broke my heart."

"You broke mine first," Lindsey snapped. "And your mom said you didn't want to drive alone."

"Oh yeah, that sounds like me," Tressa snarled. "I swear I'm going to wring that old woman's neck. Why are you spending the holiday with my family?"

"Because my family's going to be there," Lindsey pointed out.

"What?" Tressa sputtered as she tried to understand what was happening. "Mom said you were all alone for the holiday!"

"What the hell are you talking about?" Lindsey responded. "I usually fly down to Florida and see my folks. This year they decided to fly up to see my brother and his family for a change. They also wanted to spend time with your folks. They get together all the time. I swear I don't know why they sold the house to my brother."

"I don't like the sound of this." Tressa grimaced. "I seem to recall another time when they pulled something like this. You know, that Christmas right after we split up."

"And then there was that other time and the time after that." Lindsey groaned. "You don't think they're still trying to get us back together, do you?"

"After all this time, why would they do this?" Tressa could feel the tension rising. "It never works. We either don't speak or yell at one another."

"Or one of us shows up with a date," Lindsey pointed out.

"We probably shouldn't tell them that we were making out." Tressa chuckled.

"I wasn't making out with you," Lindsey complained.

"Yes, you were."

"No. I wasn't," Lindsey argued. "You kissed me."

"Oh, and that's why your tongue was in my mouth?" Tressa snorted sarcastically.

"Reflex," Lindsey protested. "I wouldn't talk Miss Grabby-Hands. By the way, you're taking the long way home you know."

"I know how to drive to my parent's house," Tressa defended herself.

"Yeah, the long way," Lindsey added flatly.

PART FIVE

The drive to Tressa's family home continued in much the same fashion. They argued about which exit to take, where to stop for gas, and Tressa's driving in general. All in all, things were back to normal. Except Tressa couldn't get that kiss out of her mind.

It was dark and very late when they finally arrived with the last leg of journey spent in silence. Both women were exhausted from trying to piss the other one off. Tressa pulled the Forester up to her parent's crowded driveway. She got out and stretched, then made her way over to the passenger side and assisted Lindsey out of the SUV. "Looks like everyone's at my house," she commented as she handed the crutches to the smaller woman.

"Time to face the music, I guess." Lindsey sighed as she balanced herself. "Or I could just go over to my brother's and go to sleep," she suggested.

"No way," Tressa chastised her. "I'm not going in there alone. Come on and no whining."

"I could always pretend to be in pain," Lindsey suggested.

"I'll keep that in mind if we need to make a quick break for it," Tressa agreed as they worked their way up the walkway.

They walked in and were instantly surrounded by their families. Lots of hugs and questions bombarded them. The two women found themselves huddled together, trying to answer everyone at once. "Yes, I know we're late," Tressa answered her mother tensely. She shot an amused look over at Lindsey who seemed pale all of sudden.

Without hesitation, Tressa wrapped an arm around her shoulder. "I need to sit," Lindsey whispered quietly to her. Tressa nodded in understanding and led the smaller woman over to the sofa. Taking the crutches, she assisted Lindsey down onto the sofa. She helped her remove her jacket and propped her leg up on the coffee table. "Are you alright?" Tressa asked her gently. Lindsey simply nodded in response. Her ashen complexion told a different story.

"What is it?" Tressa asked as she glared at the others to give them space.

"My Dad," Lindsey choked out.

Tressa scanned the room and found the normally outgoing Mr. Stevens hovering in a corner, glaring at the cast on his daughter's leg. "Something smells good, Mom," Tressa said loudly in order to get the people surrounding them talking once again.

"I've been cooking all day." Her mother began to prattle on as the rest of guests joined in about this and that.

"They know?" Tressa asked Lindsey in a soft comforting voice.

"Yes," Lindsey squeaked out, chewing on her lip. "I feel like such a failure," she whispered.

"You're not." Tressa hugged her. "She did this. Not you."

"Thank you." Lindsey hugged her in return.

Tressa and Lindsey noticed Mr. Stevens heading out the back door. "I'll talk to him," Tressa reassured Lindsey as she stood and made her way through the crowd. Stepping out into the backyard she trembled from the cold. She quietly approached the tall silver-haired man who was like a second father to her. "Hey, Mr. Stevens," she called out carefully.

"Did she tell you?" he asked, keeping his back to her.

"Yes."

"I'll going to kill that Denise," he spat out.

"So that's her name." Tressa sighed as she stood next to him. "Fine. I'll hold her down."

"I'm serious." He turned to her, anger filling his eyes.

"So am I," Tressa responded honestly. "But Lindsey asked me not to. So I won't. The police are handling it."

"She hit her," he explained. "That's why Lindsey broke up with her. I mean, I give her credit for not getting sucked in like a lot of women do."

"It's an easy trap to fall into," Tressa agreed. "I know women, gay and straight, who fall into that cycle and can't get out. But Lindsey did. I think she needs to know that you don't think less of her for making a poor choice in a partner."

"I don't," he protested. "I'm just so angry."

"For now, you need to let that go," Tressa explained. "Trust me, I understand how hard that is. I went ballistic when she told me. When did it happen?"

"Eight weeks ago," he explained. "She hid it from us at first. My God, two months and she's still in a cast."

Tressa wrapped a comforting arm around the older man's shoulders. "I never understood why the two of you didn't work out," he said after a brief silence. "No parent is prepared for a child telling them that they're gay but your parents and us, we just knew. The two of you seemed to be perfect for each other."

"We drove each other up the wall."

"I know." He smiled.

"We weren't ready for the commitment," Tressa answered sincerely. "We were just too young."

"I saw you in there." He smiled again. "You still have feelings for Lindsey."

"Mr. Stevens, I will always have feelings for Lindsey," she explained warmly. "For most of my life, she was my life. But that was a long time ago."

"And now?" he pushed. "You don't feel the same?"

"No." The moment the response crossed her lips she knew it was a lie.

Tressa's chest tightened as Mr. Stevens looked at her in disbelief. "I think I'll go inside now and say hello to my daughter," he said with a knowing smile. Standing alone in the cold night air, Tressa felt her world crumbling. *'No. No. No. I am not, repeat, NOT still in love with her. It's just being together again. That kiss meant nothing. Just hormones. I'll always care for her. Why shouldn't I? She was my best friend. I lost my virginity to her, for Pete's sake! That certainly doesn't mean that I'm . . . that I'm in love with her. I'm in love with her.'*

"Oh, crap," she whimpered aloud. "This is not happening," she admonished herself as she walked back to the house.

"Jarrod. . ." She heard Lindsey's voice pleading. "Now what?" Tressa muttered as she stepped back into the living room. The look on Lindsey's face was amusing.

"Tressa, dear." Her mother approached her tentatively. "Perhaps you should get your bags from the car."

"Okay." Tressa shrugged. "I'll just run Lindsey's bags over to Jarrod's."

"Well . . ." Her mother paused. "Lindsey is staying here."

"You going to love this one," Lindsey spouted off.

"There's really no room at Jarrod's what with his parents staying there," Grace explained.

"No big deal." Tressa shrugged, still not understanding what was going on. "I'll put her things in the guest room."

"No, dear." Her mother stopped her. "Your sister and Matt are in her old room."

"Okay," Tressa said slowly, still not grasping the situation. "She can take the other guest room, my old room. I'll crash on the sofa down here."

"Well . . .," her mother began again.

"Well what, Mother?" Tressa cocked an eyebrow.

"The boys are sleeping down here." She motioned to Tressa's nephews. "But you should put Lindsey's things in your old room," her mother continued.

"Mom?" Tressa started slowly. "Where am I sleeping?"

"Your old room," her mother stated cheerfully.

"Uhm, isn't that where Lindsey's sleeping?" Tressa inquired as her lips curled up in suspicion.

"Why yes, dear." Her mother smiled at her innocently.

"And doesn't that room still have the same small double bed?" Tressa continued.

"Yes, dear," her mother responded with the same innocence.

"Are you insane?" Tressa finally asked.

"No, dear." Grace smiled at her. "Now, go get your things. It's getting late."

"Mother, I am not sharing a bed with Lindsey," Tressa stated in a calm yet firm tone.

"Sweetheart, I don't see the problem," her mother admonished her. "You two slept in that bed for years. Certainly you can survive a couple of nights."

"She's my ex-girlfriend," Tressa pointed out.

"I know that." Her mother stood her ground. "Now, go get the bags."

"We used to have to sex in that bed," Tressa threw out for shock value.

"I'll pretend I didn't hear that part." Grace smirked. "Get the bags or you're sitting at the kids' table tomorrow."

"Alright," Tressa groaned as she stomped off.

"That's it?" Lindsey interjected.

"I'm not sitting at the kids' table," Tressa muttered as she walked out the front door.

Tressa retrieved their bags and brought them up to her old bedroom. She tossed her coat onto a chair and returned downstairs. Everyone said their good nights and left. Lindsey simply sat on the sofa with her arms folded across her chest glaring at Tressa.

"Come on. The boys need to go to sleep," Tressa said finally.

"I knew they were up to something," Lindsey muttered as she allowed Tressa to help her up. "Thanks for whatever you said to my Dad."

"No problem." Tressa shrugged as she handed the crutches to Lindsey.

Lindsey fumbled trying to make her way up the staircase. Finally, Tressa wrapped her arms around the smaller woman. She took her crutches in one hand and tossed the blonde over her shoulder. "You've gained weight," Tressa complained as she carried Lindsey up the staircase. Lindsey squealed and swatted her throughout the entire journey.

PART SIX

Once she reached her old bedroom, Tressa flung open the door and tossed the crutches inside. Stepping into the room, she spun around and closed the door. "I'm getting dizzy," Lindsey complained.

"You were born that way," Tressa countered as she made her way over to the bed.

Tressa deposited Lindsey on the bed carefully, afraid of damaging her leg. The effort ended with Tressa laying on top of Lindsey. "This won't be so bad," Tressa offered, fighting the sudden urges her body was feeling.

"Yes, it will," Lindsey responded in a low tone. Her green eyes twinkled in the dim light.

"It will be fine," Tressa reassured her as her nipples suddenly hardened. Lindsey ran her fingers through Tressa's long black hair.

"There's a slight problem," Lindsey said softly.

"What problem?" Tressa asked as her body unconsciously pressed closer to woman beneath her.

"This," Lindsey said as she reached up and kissed Tressa.

Tressa's eyes fluttered shut as their lips met. Her heart pounded as Lindsey's tongue played with her bottom lip. Tressa parted her lips and greeted Lindsey's tongue with her own. Bodies pressed together as they explored the warmth of one another's mouth. Their passion ignited as the kiss deepened. Breaking apart, they stared deeply into each other's eyes. "That's the problem," Lindsey said with a smile as she ran her fingers along Tressa's cheek.

"Oh that," Tressa responded huskily. "I don't think that will be a problem."

"Why?" Lindsey encouraged her.

"This is why," Tressa answered in a sultry tone as she recaptured Lindsey's waiting lips.

Once again the kiss quickly deepened as their bodies melted together. Their tongues danced together as they unbuttoned one another's blouses. They parted briefly to discard their shirts. "Should we be doing this?" Lindsey asked.

"No," Tressa responded as her fingers traced a feathery trail down Lindsey's neck.

"Do you want to stop?" Lindsey gasped as her body arched from Tressa's knowing touch.

"No," Tressa answered her as she cupped Lindsey's breast.

"Good," Lindsey groaned as her nipple became erect.

Tressa smiled as she lowered herself, carefully placing her body between Lindsey's thighs. "Is this okay?" she asked as she began to suckle Lindsey's nipple, tasting the lace of the bra that still covered it.

"Yes," Lindsey moaned as her hands slid down Tressa's back.

Tressa pressed her body further into the smaller woman's as her bra was unclasped. Feeling Lindsey's palms teasing her breast, she reached underneath the blonde and undid her bra. Pulling the material aside, Tressa began to circle the rose-colored nipple with her tongue. Her hips thrust as Lindsey started teasing her nipples.

Tressa shifted forward as two hands moved down her body and clasped her backside. Hungrily she suckled Lindsey's nipple, teasing it with her teeth and her tongue. Lindsey squirmed beneath her as she moved to taste her other breast. Tressa continued to tease and taste one nipple before returning to the other and then back again.

Tressa's wetness grew as Lindsey unzipped her jeans. The feel of Lindsey's hand slipping down past her panties drove her wild. "I need you," she whispered against the blonde's exposed flesh. Lindsey began teasing her clit as Tressa's hips gyrated wildly. Lindsey continued to tease her as she tried to pull Tressa's pants down further. "Tressa," she gasped. Tressa halted her movements and looked up fearfully, worried that it was too much too soon. "Baby, I really want us to be naked right now."

"Okay." Tressa smiled as she rose up and tossed off her bra.

"I need help," Lindsey confessed as she continued to tease Tressa's nub.

"Oh," Tressa gasped, "then you need to stop doing that for a moment." Lindsey pouted as she removed her fingers from Tressa's wetness.

Tressa stood and undressed herself as she watched Lindsey licking her fingers. She whimpered as she watched. Finally free of her clothing, she climbed back onto the bed and carefully undressed her lover. She took things very slowly, tasting Lindsey's exposed flesh along the way.

Finally she slipped her lover's underwear carefully down her firm thighs and past the cast on her leg. "You are so beautiful." Tressa nearly cried at the sight of Lindsey lying naked before her.

Lindsey blushed at the comment as Tressa began to kiss her way up the blonde's legs. Carefully she placed herself between quivering thighs, moving Lindsey's legs across her broad shoulders. The musky scent filled her senses; at that moment Tressa needed to taste this woman. She needed this more than she needed to breath. She blew a gentle breath through the blonde curls. Her tongue dipped in as she tasted swollen lips. Lindsey was so very wet and Tressa wanted to drink in all of her. She licked and teased as her lover pressed against her mouth. She held Lindsey tightly as she dipped her tongue into her center, plunging in and out while her thumb circled her lover's clit.

Feeling Lindsey's thighs quivering around her, she pulled away. Lindsey whimpered then moaned as Tressa began to suckle her clit, teasing it as she had her nipple. Playfully she pressed two fingers against her warm center. As she felt Lindsey nearing the edge, she entered her. Plunging in and out, Tressa took her slowly at first then slowly increased the intensity while keeping a steady rhythm.

Lindsey buried her face in a pillow to mask her screams as she climaxed. Tressa held her as she rode out the waves of passion. Slowly she removed her fingers and began to taste Lindsey once again. "No you don't," Lindsey gasped from above her. Tressa looked up to find herself mesmerized by the sight of emerald orbs twinkling down at her. Lindsey's face was flushed with passion and love. "Tressa, I need to touch you."

Tressa smiled and nodded shyly. She moved up the bed and, while holding the headboard, she lowered herself to her lover's mouth. She shivered as Lindsey's mouth pleased her, drinking in her wetness. Her lover suckled her throbbing clit as she entered her. Tressa bit down on her lip to muffle the sounds of her desire. She almost banged her head into the wall as the orgasm ripped through her. Holding the headboard tightly, she allowed Lindsey to continue pleasuring her. The second climax came quickly.

Once she could breathe and move, she helped Lindsey under the covers and climbed in next to her. They wrapped themselves up in one another's arms only to start kissing and touching again. Hands quickly sought out the other's wetness and they rocked together as their hands cupped each other's center. Climaxing in unison, they buried their screams of ecstasy in a sensual kiss.

The following morning they woke holding one another. They agreed not to overanalyze what had occurred the night before. They also agreed not to tell anyone so their families wouldn't get their hopes up. Once they got home, they would explore the reawakening of their feelings. Thanksgiving dinner proved to be difficult. They enjoyed the meal, but enjoyed the stolen touches more. Eventually they snuck off during the football game and began their exploration.

THE END

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~ Home For The Holidays series ~

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