

Sunset and a Sweet Tea

Jackie walked into the restaurant, frazzled from the eight-hour drive. She wanted to get out to the patio and order. Nothing else, just order. The sun was starting to set over the Pacific. As she watched the waves crash against the shore with their rhythmic timing, and she started to let it all wash over her. She was glad to be here. Away from him. Done with men.

As she ordered her food and sweet tea, careful to make sure the tea was like home (sweet with actual sugar added while the tea was hot), she was startled to see what she thought she saw. It couldn't be, but unless she was sleeping, it was. Her old high school flame was coming up out of the surf looking like he did back then. She had fallen for him once. Once upon a time that was too far back to really remember. Surely, he wouldn't see her. If he did, he shouldn't recognize her because she had changed too much.

She watched him walk up to the bar to order. While he was standing there, their eyes met. He got his drink and walked over to her table. "Hello. I'm..."

"D-Derek." She stammered. I know.

"Have we met before? I feel like I know you." Derek's eyes opened wide as recognition suddenly hit him. "Jackie?! Is that you?"

"Yes, Derek. It is me. It has been a while, huh?"

"I'll say. Can I join you?"

"Sure." Jackie was feeling more frazzled than ever now. More confused than she had ever been. *"What am I thinking?!? I just left a guy because he broke my heart. Tell him to Go Away!"*

As the evening wore on and her defenses wore down, they drank sweet tea and talked about old

times. The sun was about to set, and he asked her to go for a walk, so they started walking on the beach. All her old, buried feelings came crashing down on her like the waves crashing onto the rocks out in the surf.

“This is too good to be happening to me. What have I done to deserve a second chance with him? I must be dreaming.”

As she walked in the surf holding her shoes in one hand and her tea in the other, he stopped. “Do you want to give this a try? Us, I mean?”

Tears went down her cheek and his hand gently wiped them away. “Why are you crying?”

“This is so sudden. So...out of place. I don’t think this is right. For me, I mean.” “What seems to be wrong about it? Are you married??

“No.”

“A nun?”

“No.”

“Ok. You’ve stumped me. Why is it wrong?”

“Well, for one, I just got out of a relationship, and for two, I shouldn’t get involved with you again. You broke my heart once, as well!”

He pulled her to himself and gave her a kiss. “I won’t break your heart again. I promise.” The sun was dropping below the horizon and the sky was deep blues and yellows and oranges and purples. In short, it was perfect. He was purrfect.

She could feel his tongue licking her cheek over and over. “Stop! That’s rough!” She woke up with a start, heart pounding and head racing. Wow! What a dream!

Her cat continued to purr quietly, looking up at her, ready to be fed.