



Excerpt from *Another Time, Another Place*

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Walking along the old and narrow cobblestone path at Hadley Castle, Tessa's mind started drifting away from the breathtaking sights she had been enjoying and reality, once again, came crashing back. She had all but put Scott, Libby, and the rubbish that came along with them into the farthest reaches of her mind.

That was until now.

The deep orange of the sun setting behind the magnificent remains of the castle and the warm late summer breeze drifting through her long auburn curls did little to deter the depressing thoughts that entered her mind. The menacing images rebuilt in her mind just as the storm clouds on the horizon filled the evening sky.

How could she not have known that Libby slept with Scott? Why had Tessa convinced herself that she couldn't live without him, and then put up with his mind games for nearly three years? Those were the questions that plagued her whole trip.

"I'm not that kind of person," she murmured aloud, instantly glancing over her shoulder to make sure that no one had heard her. It was nearly closing time and only her tour bus was left at the site.

Leaving Scott and Libby behind was the best thing for Tessa. Her dinner with Mrs. Mann and her brothers the night before was wonderful medicine for her soul. It was as if she was finally home, and her trip to the castle today was nothing short of magical.

The forecast that morning had been filled with doom and gloom. The local television stations predicted a full day of thunderstorms, but, as luck would have it, the skies cleared nicely that afternoon and made for fewer tourists when she finally made the trek to her castle. She wouldn't have as much time to spend there, but she would have less distraction.

It was the same castle that she had dreamed of time and time again . . . or at least it was about eight hundred years ago. The dreams only visited her occasionally, but the thoughts crowded her mind daily. As she reached out to touch the stone wall earlier in the courtyard, her mind flashed to one of her more vivid dreams and she could almost see the lush, green ivy that had once covered it entirely . . .

A loud clap of thunder shook Tessa back to reality and a glance to the west told her that the storm was rolling in quickly. She began running toward the safety of the castle, tripped over a large rock and tumbled roughly to the ground. A quick check of various body parts revealed no blood, but she did find that her tan colored cotton sundress was now covered with grass stains. Worse yet, the laces that cinched the bodice closed had come untied and she was about to expose herself. Her gaze shifted suddenly to the uneven headstone near her left foot—the culprit that had caused her to stumble. Somehow, she had ended up in an old cemetery. The fall had left her nervous and shaky. The dark gray clouds that now churned overhead didn't exactly help to calm her either. Her eyes slipped back to the headstone. Somehow, she knew whose name was engraved in the granite without even seeing it. Carefully, she brushed away the vines and dirt to expose the letters to the fading sunlight. Despite the fact that she knew what she would find, the reality still shook her to her very soul. She read the name aloud.

"Theresa Brookshire," she whispered. "Dear Lord in heaven, it can't be . . . the little girl from my dreams."

Tessa bounded to her feet. Her head swam and her stomach churned with the abrupt movement. Ear splitting cracks of thunder and blinding bursts of lightning were enough to make her cringe, driving her mind quickly back to seeking the castle walls for shelter from the storm. Her wobbly legs carried her on a zigzag path as she fought to stay coherent. The rain pelted her as she entered the courtyard, quickly soaking her thin dress. Though it was summer, a chill in the evening air became more evident now that she was drenched.

One corner tower, which still stood in most of its grandeur, was just ahead and would be an ideal place to wait out the rain. Tessa ran across the immense courtyard toward its safety.

She didn't make it. A deafening boom shook the earth beneath her feet and a bright, shimmering glow engulfed her. Every muscle in her small frame seized just before her world faded to black.

