

PREFACE

She looked out across the sunlit wood as a slight wind tugged at her nightshirt. The sound from the modest creek was loud and, as she closed her eyes, it was as if she were surrounded by waterfalls.

At once, the smell of dark roast swirled under her nose.

"Coffee's ready for ya," he called from inside the cabin.

"Just a minute," she replied. "It's beautiful out here!"

He met her on the wooden porch with a red porcelain cup. "Two creams, three sweeteners, just the way you like it."

Their smiling lips met as she received the cup from his hand. He wrapped one arm around her waist as they sipped their caffeinated beverages and breathed in the clean mountain air.

Suddenly, she set down her coffee, pulled away from his grip, and ran to the edge of the creek. He followed in close pursuit and pulled her in close to him. In a slight misstep, they tumbled into the water, crystal clear with a slight chill.

Laughing, they sat up and scooted back to the edge. He looked in her eyes and their lips met again. In one Earth-stopping storm of lips and teeth, birds merrily chirped and fed their young, the water flowed to countless tributaries, and life around them went on.

Through the beautiful actions of requited love, they ignored reality while they had the chance. She would have to leave in a few hours and he would be alone, once again, not knowing when their hearts might beat in sync.

With no regard to their visibility, he pushed her shoulders into the mud and clay and thrust into her. They moved together, entwined like the brush around the creek; tangled, forbidding. And like the brush, getting out of this would be complicated and tiresome.

The birds didn't even bat a wing.