



*Sometimes it hurt more then we can bear. If we could live without passion maybe we'd know some kind of peace... but we would be hollow- Empty rooms shuttered and dank. Without passion we'd be truly dead*  
*Angel - Passion, Buffy: the Vampire Slayer*

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Chapter 1 - The Beginning.....          | 2  |
| Chapter 2 - The Wedding.....            | 3  |
| Chapter 3 - Lochloinn Castle .....      | 4  |
| Chapter 4 - Enid.....                   | 6  |
| Chapter 5 - Things Change .....         | 9  |
| Chapter 6 - True Love Found.....        | 12 |
| Chapter 7 - A Sad Return.....           | 17 |
| Chapter 8 - Love and Deception .....    | 19 |
| Chapter 9 - Confusion.....              | 20 |
| Chapter 10 - Enid's Return .....        | 21 |
| Chapter 11 - Our Decision .....         | 23 |
| Chapter 12 - Hunter's Joy.....          | 24 |
| Chapter 13 - Choices.....               | 26 |
| Chapter 14 - The Announcement.....      | 28 |
| Chapter 15 - Our Last Meeting.....      | 29 |
| Chapter 16 - Out of Fear and Love ..... | 30 |
| Chapter 17 - The Letter.....            | 33 |
| Chapter 18 - Worries.....               | 35 |
| Chapter 19 - Enid Returns.....          | 36 |
| Chapter 20 – The Keep Falls .....       | 37 |
| Chapter 21 – Parted Forever .....       | 39 |
| Chapter 22 – A Husband and Wife.....    | 41 |

## Chapter 1 - The Beginning

I was born in the fall of 1106, the daughter of a Scottish Chieftain. He and my mother loved one another greatly, or so I am told, so greatly that when she died shortly after my birth, he couldn't stand to have me near him. I was sent with my nurse to be raised by my aunt and her family. My aunt was too busy to be bothered with me since she had children of her own, so it was Nanna who did her best to raise me. I loved her very much she was everything to me; my friend, mother and confidante, she was always there for me. I was a headstrong child and wanted to learn all that I could, even the things that only boys learned, like weapons, reading and writing. I was able to learn all that I wanted to thanks to Nanna's friend Ian, one of the warriors at my aunt's castle.

In the year that I turned 14, my father sent for me to return home. I was very happy about this, believing that I was finally going to be home with my family and those that loved me. I was wrong. I returned home to find out that my father had arranged a marriage for me. My groom was the head of a clan our family had been warring with since a sheep raid many generations ago.

I was not happy about the upcoming marriage. I thought that I would be welcomed home and become one with my own family, that they would love me and accept me after all these years apart. I had little interaction with my father except for his speech to me about the marriage. He avoided me for most of my stay there, although one night at dinner he told me that I looked much like my mother. It was the closest he'd come to showing any emotion towards me. As far as my brothers, once they spent a few minutes satisfying their curiosity about me, they lost all interest. The whole family cared for nothing but using me as a pawn for peace.

The man that I was to marry was named Hunter Lochloinn. He was a tall, handsome man and about ten years older than I was. He had come to my father's castle with a dozen or so warriors but no women. Although he wasn't very friendly to most of the people at my father's castle, he was nice enough to me. I hoped it would be different once we were married. I hoped his wariness was due to being in an enemy castle, and that once we were away from there, he would warm up to me. He was nothing like my brothers though; he was learned, much more civilized than they were. My brothers were nothing but boorish louts.

## Chapter 2 - The Wedding

The wedding went on as scheduled and was surprisingly pleasant. Hunter insisted that his priest be the one to marry us and I was able to borrow a beautiful dress from one of my brother's wives. I tried to look my very best for the day, with the help of Nanna of course. You only get married once even if it is not what you want, and I was going to make the best of the situation. I was able to tell by the expression on Hunter's expression that he liked the way I looked.

After the wedding there was a huge celebration for us, and with lots of food, music and dancing. Even with the peace treaty that our marriage had sealed, Hunter seemed a bit wary. I was surprised that my father went to so much trouble for my wedding, although I'm sure that it was just a show of good fellowship. That evening my father insisted that we spend the night there in his home, as he wanted to supervise the bedding ceremony.

My wedding night was not the most pleasant experience. Nanna had told me the basics of what would happen, and the basics were what I got. Hunter, knowing this was my first time, was fairly gentle, but it still hurt, and I didn't exactly have much fun. When he was done, he checked to make sure there was a decent amount of virgin blood on the sheets before turning over and going to sleep. Then I rolled over to my own side and cried a little.

I'd known what to expect but I was still upset by it all. I guess that I was hoping for a more caring and loving husband. I knew that the love would come in time, or at least I hoped that it would, but I had wanted the entire experience to be more caring.

## Chapter 3 - Lochloinn Castle

The next day my father approved of the virgin blood on the marriage bed and we left to go to my new husband's castle. I was given a decent dowry and a few new dresses, which also caught me by surprise; I did not think that my father would spend that much on me, especially since he'd had so little to do with me for my entire life. It made me think that he might actually care for me after all.

The ride to my new home took most of the day and I spent the time traveling either alone or with Hunter. We didn't talk much at all, just little bits of conversation here and there. He was still pleasant to me, but I thought that would change when we got to his home. Instead, the closer that we got to his lands the more relaxed he became.

When we did finally get there I was rather impressed with it all. It was on the edge of a loch, very harsh looking and impregnable. The people there looked much healthier than those of my father's land and they all seem to like Hunter.

It was so different from what I'd grown up with, almost a complete opposite. It seemed an enjoyable place to live, although I did get a few disgruntled looks though from the people as we drove through the outer village. I got the feeling that they did not like me and that they thought I was untrustworthy. I knew that they would not greet me with a friendly welcome. Hunter had told me that I would have to work to gain the trust of the people because of the years of feuding between our clans. I felt as if I should apologize for what my family had done to the people there. If they only knew that I'd been raised in a different household so far away from my father that it was as if I wasn't even part of the clan, perhaps they would have thought of me in a different light.

As we got closer to the castle Hunter talked more to me about his family. His younger sister lived with him and his younger brother was away at court in Edinburgh. He went on to tell me that his parents were killed in a raid that had been led by my father. I felt terrible at that thought, and I was not sure what I should say, so I said nothing.

I think that he could tell that the closer that we got the more nervous and scared I became. He tried to reassure me that he would do all that he could to help me ease into my life there. I could tell that he meant it; he had a sincere look on his face and a small smile that he tried to hide from me. For the first time I thought that life in my new home would not be that bad after all.

The first few weeks there seemed to go on forever. It was a new place, with all new faces to learn, and it seemed that the holding was larger than my father's. While Nana had come with me, I was alone most of the time, because of the animosity that the people felt toward my family.

Hunter's sister was much like me in many ways, but different in that she seemed to lack guidance. Eventually she and I became friends and a few of the other women came to realize I wasn't as bad as they'd thought. By the end of the first month in my new home I was able to take over the day to day running of the castle as I had been trained to do.

Hunter insisted that I stay near the castle and when he was not around he had three of his warriors there to keep and eye on me. I later found out that he was worried that my father was going to try and take me back.

I suppose that I fell into a nice and easy routine during the first few months of my marriage. I didn't feel as if I didn't belong or as if I were in the way. Hunter was a good man

to me as far as husbands go. I knew that I could have done so much worse than him. He treated me fair and kind, and actually seemed to like me. My time with him in the bedroom had not changed though, it was what Nana had told me to expect and nothing more. I believed that it was just the way that the marriage bed was, but I kept hoping for something more.

Those months passed with much normalcy. Hunter was impressed and almost happy when he found out that I could read and write. It was rather unheard of in those times for a woman to be educated like that. He was however somewhat patronizing about the fact that I knew how to use weapons. He thought that I believed I knew how to use them, but he didn't really think that I could. He had much to learn about me yet. I felt that I had to prove to him that I was a stronger woman, not the meek type that sat around by the window doing needlepoint. I wanted to go down to the practice yards to prove myself to him but he would not allow it, he had said that it was no place for a woman to be.

## Chapter 4 - Enid

I had learned little of my husband's brother Enid at first. There were so many rumors going around about him it was hard to know which ones to believe. He seemed to be quite the ladies man and very handsome. He lived in Edinburgh, and it was said that he was having an affair with the Queen, one of her ladies in waiting or about half a dozen other noble women at court. I only believed about half of the rumors I heard, about Enid and other things. If I believed it all I would hate my own family more than I already disliked them. So many half-truths and total lies. It would seem that women would find more to do with their time than gossip.

My birthday came and as usual only Nanna remembered and made it special. It was something that I was used to, the two of us making things special. Not living with my own family, my Aunt was too busy with running her home and her own children to worry about yet another one. When Hunter found out that it was my birthday he apologized and seemed sincere about it. He wished me a happy birthday, gave me a kiss and a hug and then let it drop at that.

The end of September came a few weeks after my birthday and Hunter asked me to prepare a feast. Enid was returning that night and Hunter wanted to welcome him home properly. I made sure that I did my very best to make a good impression, and everything turned out beautifully. I wore the new dress that Nanna had made me for my birthday and Hunter commented on how lovely I looked in it.

Enid was late, but Hunter decided to start the feasting, believing that his brother would be along soon. As we sat down to our meal a man came in covered in dirt and grime from what must have been a hard journey. I couldn't identify him through the dirt, although somehow he seemed familiar to me. I thought at first that he was a peasant but the way that he walked in to the room and carried himself made me think that he was not. He seemed to be at home in the dining hall at least. As he strode across the room towards us carrying a package in his hands I knew that it must be Enid.

He walked to Hunter and handed the package over to him and greeted him in a friendly way before turning to me with a smile. He started to greet me as well but he stopped mid sentence and stared at me as if he couldn't believe his eyes.

As Hunter took the package from his brother he turned to me with a please smile and said, "I hope that you will forgive me for missing your birthday, milady. Please accept this gift as apology."

I was excited to say the least when he gave me the package. I had never been given a gift from anyone other than Nanna. I open it up and inside was a short sword. It seemed more decorative than functional and I knew that it was patronizing, but I suppose that he had meant well when he had commissioned it for me. I took it out of the box and admired it for a bit, holding it to check the balance. For an ornamental sword, it had been made well. I looked back at Hunter, "Thank you." I told him softly.

"I had a letter sent to Enid in Edinburgh to have it made for you for your birthday, I hope that you like it." Hunter told me as I looked back at his gift.

Enid interrupted us and apologized for his appearance, saying that he was going to go and get cleaned up before returning to have dinner with us. Enid and Hunter seemed to have a very close, easy relationship with one another, a relationship that I wish that I'd had with my

siblings when I was younger. After Enid left, Hunter told me that he would do better to remember my birthday in the years to come and that he hoped I would always like the gifts that he gave me.

A short time later Enid returned and I could not believe that he was the same man who had left. I think that he was the most handsome man I had ever seen. Hunter was certainly attractive, but Enid was so much more than that. Now that he was cleaned up he looked even more familiar to me and it took some time but I finally figured out why. When I was younger I'd had dreams about a man that looked just like him. Enid sat down next to my husband and the two of them spent the rest of the evening talking and getting up to date on all that was going on both here at home and in Edinburgh.

Enid spent a week at home and most of that time was spent with his brother. The whole time he was there he seemed to take great pains in avoiding me. The times that we did meet he was polite but cool and distant. The more that I saw him during the week that he was home the more convinced I became that he was in fact the man that was in my dreams.

The night before Enid left to return to Edinburgh I had another dream about him that caught me completely by surprise. I had dreamt that he was my lover and that we had the most wonderful sex. It was totally unlike the times that I am with Hunter. It was a pleasant dream and it gave me hope that my time with my husband could be better. The one thing that I could not figure out was why I had so many dreams about this one man. When I was younger I'd thought that I had created him in my imagination but finding out that he was real was a bit odd, and exciting at the same time.

On the day that Enid was to leave I was sitting in the main hall alone doing some needlework for a pillow. Enid walked in but he was about to leave when I saw him. I called out to him, stopping him before he got too far.

"Excuse me. I did not mean to interrupt your solitude. I will go," He told me as he turned once more to go.

"You are not interrupting me. May I ask a question of you before you leave though?" I asked him.

He seemed a bit wary but he turned back towards me, "Of course, milady."

I looked at him for a moment, remembering my dream from the night before and trying not to turn red in the face. "Why do you seem to avoid talking to me? Have I done something wrong or to offend you in some way?"

"Not at all, milady, it is simply that I have had much to catch up on. It has been nearly a year since I have been home, there has been much to attend to," he explained.

I looked at him questioningly. "Then why if I may ask do you avoid me?"

He paused a moment and then looked away from me, avoiding my eyes. "You must know you are beautiful, Cairistiona, and my reputation is not the best. I would not want Hunter to think that anything improper between us."

I blushed slightly at the comment because I was thinking about the dream that I couldn't seem to get out of my head. "Thank you, but I do not think that he would object to us talking to one another."

"I would not see your reputation tarnished. If you will excuse me, milady, I have much to do before I leave," he said as he walked towards the door.

I tried to say something but I realized that I wouldn't be heard. He left for Edinburgh and I did not see him for another year.

In that year I began to write the letters to Enid for my husband. I learned that Hunter couldn't read or write and that our priest was doing all the correspondence for him, but while the priest was gone he had things that he had to let Enid know about and he came to me. I helped him out and continued to even after the priest returned. Enid never realized that it was me that was writing the letters although he did comment on the penmanship being clearer and easier to read.

I learned a lot about Enid through the letters, his character and his honesty and the fact that all the rumors that I had heard about him were just that, rumors. I also continued to have dreams about him, some normal dreams and other where we were lovers.

My relationship with Hunter progressed into a friendship. He relaxed the guard over me and had his warriors assigned elsewhere. Still, there was no love between us though, not the love that a husband and wife should share. Our times in the marriage bed were the same, uninspiring, especially after the dreams that I had about Enid. The dreams were wonderful but at the same time I felt guilty about thinking things like that. One cannot help what they dream, right?



## Chapter 5 - Things Change

The day that Enid was to return home I learned quite by accident that Hunter had a mistress. I had overheard some of the guards talking and they did not know that I was around. I was greatly angered at learning this, and went to Hunter to confront him. I could tell by the look on his face that he was very surprised at my anger. He told me that mistresses are a fact of life and that I had no right to demand he stop seeing her.

I stormed off to my rooms, eyes filled with tears I would not allow to fall. When I got there Nanna was sitting quietly with her mending. I told her what has happened and she told me that it was best if I forgot about it. It did not help to talk to her about it, I was still angry. I did not understand any of it. Was this normal? Did all men have a mistress? Did she bear his children when I did not?

We had another feast in celebration of Enid's return. Hunter and their sister were both happy to see him back again. There had been some rumors that he was to be betrothed and he quickly discounted them, stating that he was in no hurry to get married.

Through the evening Enid again avoided meeting my eye, but I caught him looking at me a couple of times. I was still very upset at what I had found out that morning. Hunter leaned over to me to tell me that he would be back shortly and then he excused himself from the table. I'm sure that he knew that I was still rather upset and it did not bother him at all.

Enid looked at me with concern and asked, "Cairistiona, are you feeling ill?"

I turned to face him trying to hide the anger the best that I could. "No. I am well thank you."

He noticed my irritation and after that he said no more to me. I felt that I should say something so that he did not think that I was upset with him. "I'm sorry for the way that I acted. I'm just a bit.... upset." Before he could reply Hunter returned and took his seat in between us.

The night went on with Hunter and Enid talking, laughing and catching up. I sat there and thought over things in my head. I was still upset when I went to bed but I was not as angry as I had been.

The following day Hunter and I argued about his mistress again. This time it was he who got angry. He yelled at me, saying that I had no right to demand anything from him. He ignored my ire and left me there as he stormed off. I had many emotions running through my head at that point. I felt the need to get away and blow off some steam. I prepared myself and had a horse readied for me and then took off alone.

I rode fast and hard for a mile or more into the woods. As I was riding something spooked my horse and I was thrown in to a small river that flowed into the lock. My skirts were heavy and they dragged me down even as I tried to get my head above the water. The current was too strong for me to continue fighting and I went under for what I knew was the last time. As I did I felt a hand grab me by the hair and pull me upwards. Once my head was above the water I began to choke and sputter, trying to catch my breath. I felt a strong arm go around my waist and pull me to the shore. I was struggling to breathe and it took me a minute or two to realize that it was Enid who had saved me. I was surprised that he had done so, I had thought that I rode out alone.

Once he was sure that I was fine he picked me up and put me on his horse, leading it into the woods toward an abandoned cottage nearby. He did not say much on the way there, he seemed wary to be alone with me. It made me wonder what I had said or done to him to make him avoid me the way the he did.

As we moved through the woods he told me that he was glad that someone was there to save me. He'd seen me thrown from my horse. He went on to tell me that once in the cottage he would start a fire and then return to the castle for some dry clothes and a horse for me, as mine had run away when I was thrown.

The cottage was cold. Enid quickly started a fire and as he did it started to rain outside. Actually, storm was a better word for the weather.

"You do not need to start a fire. I can dry off and then go back with you on your horse," I told him.

He glanced at me with a look that told me he was not budging. "You are cold, too cold to ride through the woods in wet clothes. Besides it is starting to storm and I won't risk your health like this," he told me as he got the fire going better.

I glared back at him. "Then I will wait until I am dry enough and go back then. Hunter does not care anyway," I told him with anger in my voice at his brother's name.

"I'm sure that you are mistaken, milady," he said to me as he brought out a tartan and handed it to me. "I think that you should get out of the wet clothes so that they can dry."

Very adamantly, I replied, "I do not think so." I took the tartan and wrapped it around me as I removed the cold wet clothes.

He looked as if he wanted to ask what I meant but he did not. As he approached the door the wind began to howl and I realized that he was just as wet as I was. He paused in the doorway, obviously loath to go out into the storm.

I looked at him and said, "You are too wet, and you should at least stay until the storm lets up. It will give a chance to get to know each other."

He seemed reluctant at first but then agreed. He told me to give him the rest of my clothing and he would hang in by the fire to dry. He turned his back as I removed the heavy, wet clothing. I left my chemise on, knowing that it would dry quickly. He removed a few things as well and hung them to dry next to my clothes.

I grew weary of the silence in the room and had to ask him again, "Why is it that you avoid me? You don't seem to want to even talk to me."

He turned away from me and replied, "I don't avoid you."

I looked at him in amazement. "Yes, you do Enid."

He glanced at me for the first time and then quickly looked away. "I'm sorry that you feel that way, Cairistiona. I explained before why I felt we should not be found alone together."

"But you can't even look at me, why?"

He looked at me just to prove that he could. "Your beauty blinds me," he replied, obviously trying to make a joke, but sounding more serious than not.

The anger was rising in me again because of Hunter and I asked him, "Hunter does not care about me, you know that. Why would he even care, tell me that?"

He just looked at me. "Of course he cares for you, and he is your husband."

"Not really, he may care slightly, but there is no love in our marriage."

He looked away from me and said, "Love does not always come in a marriage, and you must know that. It is enough that you are compatible." He did not seem to believe the words that he spoke to me, but was trying to make me feel better.

"I am compatible with a great many people. I want more than just that, compatibility. I think that I deserve it, since he has it," I told him, almost arguing the point.

He still wouldn't look at me but answered, "I take it you heard about Liandran. I thought you seemed upset about something last night, but you must know that many men have mistresses. Most women appreciate that their husbands have someone to take out their... baser instincts on."

He seemed uncomfortable and almost angry, but not at me. He kept looking at the door and his clothes hanging by the fire like he was thinking about going out in the storm just to get away from me.

"I know that, but why would I appreciate it? He does not love me and how do I know if he does or does not love her? Our marriage is one of convenience. It was to help the feuds between our families and nothing else." I stopped for a moment thinking that I may have said too much. Then I began thinking about why he might avoid me so. "What is it about me that makes you act this way? I do not think that I am that awful to be around. Do you not like me for some reason? Please tell me."

He looked at me with a strange look in his eyes and then looked away again. "Most marriages are for convenience," he reminded me. "Hunter had been trying to talk me into marrying an heiress from near Edinburgh." He looked at me directly and his eyes were sad. "I will never marry. I would not bring to my marriage bed an empty heart, Cairistiona. Yet I cannot fill your bed as it should be filled." He walked closer to me and brushed a lock of hair from my face. "It is easier not to see you, not to hear your voice, not to..." Abruptly he turned and walked to the fireplace to check his clothes.

I stood up, not aware of the cold or the fact that I had lost the tartan on the floor. I walked across the room to where he was and looked directly in to his eyes so that he could see me and so I could tell if he was telling me the truth. "You can not walk away from me and not finish what you were saying. What are you talking about?" I tried to tone down the anger that was in my voice, thinking about his words. In my heart I knew what he meant but I wanted to hear it from him. "Please tell me, Enid, I don't think that is too much to ask," I asked him in a much softer, almost pleading voice.

## Chapter 6 - True Love Found

He looked down into my eyes, then down further to my nearly transparent camisole. He raised his hand and touched the skin of my shoulder above the neckline; a warm caress that sent hot shivers down my spine. "Do you dream of me, Cairistiona? There are nights that I dread closing my eyes because I know you are all I will see." Very deliberately he dropped his hand to his side, and his face hardened. "But you are married to Hunter, and no matter what I feel in my dreams, I know what I feel is wrong, but I still feel it. It is better if we don't see each other." He turned away from me and faced the fire.

I moved to where we could see each other and took his hands in mine. "You have dreamt of me? I have had countless number of dreams about you, and every time that I see you I remember one of them. And each dream is better than the last." I turned my face away from him; I did not want him to see the tears form in my eyes. "Those dreams are all that I have... all that I know of love... all that I want." I told him with a soft, sad tone of voice.

He moved to cup the sides of my face in his hands and made me look at him. "Not all, Cairistiona." He leaned down and kissed me gently and then straightened up and looked at me sadly. "Tell me that you love me. Say it once and I will never bother you again."

I gave him a small smile and all sadness left my eyes. "I do love you Enid, very much, and I will tell you every chance that I get. I don't want you to leave me alone ever. I want to be with you and no one else. You are the one that I think about all the time, you are the one that makes my heart jump when I see you... you are the man of my dreams, in more ways than one."

He rested his forehead on mine. "I wish that we could be together, my love, but it is not meant to be. You are married to my brother." He stopped for a moment and kissed my forehead before continuing. "Stolen moments," he said, pulling me in to his arms. "Can you live with that? I'm not sure that I can."

I looked him directly in the eyes and told him, "If that is the only way that I can be with the one that I love then it is my only choice. He has his mistress and is often gone."

I could tell that this was tearing at his conscience, as it was mine. It was one thing for a man to have a mistress, but for a woman to take a lover and be more in love with him than her husband was another. It could lead to the death of the both of us. It was a chance that I had to take, one that I wanted to. He looked at me and shook his head no, but he bent down to kiss me, his hands caressing my back through my chemise.

His kiss was all that I had dreamt of and more. His touch lit a fire deep in my stomach that I had never felt when Hunter touched me. Enid's lips felt sweet, warm and tender. I returned the kiss, wrapping my arms tightly around him and running my hands over his back. He pulled me closer to him and his kiss became more demanding, more passionate. I could feel proof of his desire for me pressing against my stomach. The heat of his skin rivaled the heat of the fire behind me in the fireplace.

We held each other tight, locked in the kiss forever it seemed. It was such a wonderful a feeling, I could not describe it any better. He pulled back from me, gasping. "Cairistiona, are you sure, my love? If we do this, we can never undo it." His hand was touching my neck; the warmth of his skin on mine was making me burn with need.

"I have never wanted something more in my life than to be with you," I told him in a low voice, keeping eye contact with him.

Slowly he undid the fastenings of my chemise and let it fall in a pool around my feet. He held my eye the entire time making sure that he did not frighten or offend me. Once my clothing was gone he ran the tips of his finger very softly from my shoulder to the side of my breast where he cupped it in his hand and ran his thumb across my nipple. He pulled me closer and kissed me as softly as he touched me.

I was not frightened at all, although I should have been. I had only ever been with one man in my life and it had not been the finest experience. All I knew was that this was what I truly wanted. I knew that it would be just like in my dreams. I knew that I loved Enid more than anything and that overcame all fears that I had.

Slowly, unsure of what to do, I undid the lacings of his pants. He moved back just a little so that the rest of his clothing could be removed. He pulled me to him and held me against his warm body and once again I could feel the hard length of him against me.

He looked down into my eyes and whispered, "I have dreamt of this moment, dreamt of the feel of your skin, but it was never this good." He bent a little to lift me off the ground and began to kiss my neck.

I had never felt so good in my life. The dreams with him were wonderful but this was a great deal better than I could have imagined. I held him close to me and moved my head so that he could kiss me better and then told him, "I know, Enid, I know."

He lifted me more and carried me to the bed and laid me down carefully and then lay down next to me, looking at my body and running his hand across my stomach. "You are more beautiful than I dreamed," he told me as he rolled closer to me and kissed me again.

I wrapped my arms around him and returned the kiss with as much passion as I could give, letting him know without words how much I loved him. His hands moved all over my body, touching me softly everywhere. He cupped my breasts and then slowly moved his hand between my legs caressing me, making me moan with pleasure. In return I began running my hands over his body. It was so warm, soft and yet hard from years of battle.

I was feeling nervous and bold at the same time. I kept touching him as he touched me and then my hands made their way between his legs as well and I took him in my hand. It was different touching him this way; I had never touched a man before, and the size of him surprised me. He let out a low moan as well. I thought at first that I had done something wrong for a quick second and then realized that he enjoyed my touch. His hands and lips roamed my body, leaving me at the mercy of his touch.

Just when I thought I could take no more, he moved on top of me, sliding inside of me. I realized that my body was ready for him in ways that it had never been for my husband. He pushed slowly inside until I had taken all of him that I could, and he moaned softly against the skin of my neck. He seemed to be having problems controlling himself. His hand shook slightly as he touched my body and kissed me again.

I wrapped my arms and legs around him and began moving with him, meeting his every thrust. He was gentle at first, but as the passion built he became a bit more aggressive. His hand moved between our bodies and his touch drove me over the edge. I threw back my head and cried out at the first orgasm I had ever felt. He kissed my neck and held me as I trembled in his arms. When I had calmed somewhat from the experience he began to move again, building the passion between us once more.

Every second that passed was better than the last, and I found the courage to become more aggressive in my movements. We kissed and touched each other, whispering words of love that drove our passion even higher. After long moments of ecstasy, he collapsed on my chest, being careful not to crush me with his weight.

We held each other close and I ran my hand gently across the side of his face, gazing into his eyes and conveying to him all that I felt for him in that one look. He had the same look on his face as well. He kissed me gently and moved to one side gathering me in his arms as he moved.

"I love you," he said softly against my hair.

"And I you... I always will too, Enid."

"I will always remember this, unto my dying day, even if I never saw your face again, I will always love you," he told me.

"I will make sure that you see me again. I never want to be apart from you." I meant every word that I spoke to him. I did not want to lose him. I knew that my life would not be the same without him in it.

"Cairistiona, we cannot be together, you know this. As much as I hate it, you are married to my brother. That cannot be undone, any more than we can undo what we have done here tonight. I must return to court." He paused for a few moments and then pulled me closer. "I should go there and never return."

"No, you can't leave me here alone. Please stay, Enid," I pleaded as the tears began to form in my eyes.

He pulled me closer until I was lying on his chest. "I must return to court," he told me, "but I will return. I can no more stay away from you than I could make the sun stop rising each morning."

"Why must you go back? We can run away together and be together forever, some place far away."

He lifted me by my shoulders so that he could see my face and I his. "You don't know what you are saying. The family depends on me to intercede for them at court. Your father..." he stopped and looked as if he were debating if he should say something or not, but continued. "Your father is trying to influence the king against us. If I am not there to intervene, we could lose out lands."

I knew what he said was the truth. There were so many more people that depended on the family for food, shelter and safety above all. I knew that there had to be another way, somehow. "Have Hunter go, he can take care if it all just as well as you," I told him, with the anger at my husband rising again.

"Hunter does not have the courtly skills needed to stay in the king's good graces. The king is my friend, and Hunter is needed here," he explained.

I had more tears now and they were falling no matter how hard I tried to stop them. "How can I go back to him when I love you so much and he does not love me at all or I he?" I asked.

He pulled me down so that I was lying on his chest. "You must, Cairistiona. And I must watch you go back to him, back to his bed. There is no other way."

"I know that I must and I will, but with a heavy heart," I told him, defeated and sad. "I wish to keep meeting you like this though."

He did not say anything at first and when he did I could hear the tears in his voice. "I know that we should not, but I cannot bear the thought of never touching you again, never kissing you." His hands smoothed down my back, caressing my skin softly.

"Then you agree to meet me again?" I asked him with hope in my voice.

He rolled to one side, his hands moving on my body, making me squirm with passion. "I would die if I never felt your skin again," he whispered as his hand moved between my legs. "If Hunter learns of this, I just might." He began kissing my body, moving downward on the bed until he was between my legs. I went to stop him, sure that he should not do that, until his tongue touched me and I was lost to passion once more.

I said his name softly as I touched his shoulders and ran my fingers through his hair. I could not believe that it was possible to feel like this. He kept with what he was doing to me by means of his hands and mouth. The unfamiliar sensations drove me over the edge. When I calmed a little he moved on top of me, his body was warm, hard and demanding inside of mine. I wrapped my self around him and kissed him.

Our passion rose as I became less nervous and more aggressive in my movements with his. He rolled to his back and I was astride him. This too was new to me. I was a bit tense at first but it did not last long when I realized how wonderful it felt. I kept eye contact with him all the while, wanting to make sure that what I did was right. He held my hips, guiding me in my movements until I was used to them and then he moved his hands so that he touched me all over my body again. I could tell that he enjoyed this a great deal. Neither one of us could hold back the fervor that we felt for one another and we both ended together and lay gasping in each other's arms.

We kissed for a long while, not wanting to stop, knowing that we had to go back. "Remember this moment, my love," he whispered, looking deep into my eyes. "Remember that he cannot touch what we have together, no matter what happens."

"I know that Enid. It still makes me sad to have to leave you and go back. I will hold all the memories of today with you and the ones yet to come very close to my heart. I love you very much and that won't change," I told him, trying not to cry again. I wanted to be strong about this.

He looked upset, but yet he smiled at me and that smile made my heart leap. "On my life, I will always love you, Cairistiona." He kissed me and then continued. "The storm is fading. If we do not return soon, they will come looking for us."

"Why are you upset? Have I done something to cause it?" I asked him.

"No, my love," he replied softly. "It is just that I have never hated my brother before this day."

I looked at him and told him, "I am sorry. It is too bad that my father forced me to marry Hunter instead of you."

"I wish that it had been me, my love, but we must not dwell in what we cannot have. Think only of the love that we share and be happy."

"I will. Promise me, Enid that we will be together like this again," I said, looking deep into his eyes, pleading.

"I promise."

I could tell that the promise that he made to me was a hard one considering how close he was to his brother and he did not like making Hunter the fool. But I knew that he loved me and would do what he could for me.



## Chapter 7 - A Sad Return

We got dressed and left. The air was still cold but it had stopped raining. We rode on his horse back to the keep. I relished the feel of his hand on my waist, knowing that this was the most that we would ever be able to touch in public. I did not want to return home to what I knew was waiting for me, a life without love. Love was what I wanted and had found with Enid, and life would never be the same after today.

When we got back he dismounted and lifted me down as Hunter called out my name from the steps. We both explained what had happened and Hunter accepted the story and thanked his brother for saving me.

Hunter took my arm and led me up the steps and told me that I needed to change into dry clothing and get something warm to drink. I took one last gaze back at Enid, letting him know by my glance that I loved him and he returned the look, before I went inside. Hunter led me upstairs and called for a maid to bring me some warm wine. He was very kind and attentive. He pampered me, something that he never had done before.

"I was very worried about you. I did not know what happened to you or where you were." Hunter told me. "I am glad that you had Enid to watch out for you."

"There was no need to worry. I think that I would have been fine." I stopped for a moment or two and looked at him, "I'm sorry for taking off like I did, Hunter, it was just that I was so upset I had to get away."

"I too am sorry for the way that I acted. It's just that I thought you understood that many men took mistresses. I would not want to subject you to some things. That is why I have her," he told me as if I should appreciate the fact that he had a mistress.

A maid brought me a dinner and some warm, spiced wine that Hunter had asked for. He stayed with me and made sure that I ate and was warm enough after I had changed my clothing. I asked after Nanna and he told me that she was probably in her room and that it was rather late and she would be asleep. I so needed to talk to her, but it would have to wait for another time.

I decided to turn in for the night. I knew that I would sleep well after the wonderful afternoon that I had with Enid. I was wrong. Hunter wanted to stay in the bed with me. It was horrible, to have him on top of me, not caring about my needs and then rolling over when he was done and going to sleep. I rolled over to my own side and cried softly to myself, careful so that he would not hear me.

Enid was to be home for a week, but he stretched it out to two. We managed to meet half a dozen times and each time that we met we vowed our love for one another and made love. Every time was better than the last. Hunter was no more demanding than he was before, so I assumed that he was still seeing his mistress on the side.

At the end of the two weeks Enid had to go back to court and the last visit that we had together was very intense and emotional. He swore that he would not forget me and would return as soon as he could.

Over the next few months, Enid came home several times for short visits. Hunter was surprised at that but he never suspected anything. I met with Enid at the cottage in the woods, finding the love and passion in his arms that I missed immensely when he was gone.

There were plenty of rumors going around by this time about the fact that I was not with child yet. Many were saying that I was barren. I was beginning to believe it myself. As far as I knew Hunter's mistress did not have any of his children either. I had seen her a few times with a few of the other women from the village. She was pretty and seemed so happy and stress free.

## Chapter 8 - Love and Deception

During one of Enid's visits home Hunter had to travel to a clan member's home and was expected to be gone for several weeks. Nanna helped to spend an entire day with Enid. She did not approve of what I was doing but she did not want to see me get caught and I knew that she wanted me to be

"Nanna, you must know how happy and in love with him I am," I told her, joyous because Enid and I were going to spend the day together.

"I know, my dear, and I am happy for you of course, but you must be very cautious. Hunter would be within his rights to have you killed for what you are doing, and with his own brother." She explained to me.

"I know that. But he does not love me. He had a mistress and he sees her almost more than he sees me," I tried telling her.

She just shook her head at me and went on with helping me get dressed.

Enid and I spent the day in the cottage and walking through the woods by the loch. It was a very little traveled area so we were sure not to be caught. It was the best day that we had together. I did not want it to end when it did. I wanted to spend the night sleeping in his arms.

Enid returned to court before Hunter returned and by the time my husband came home I was pretty sure that I was with child. I was so happy about it. I knew that it was Enid's child. He was the only man that I had been with in the time that I could have gotten pregnant.

I went to Nanna, unsure what I should do. I was scared and happy at the same time. She of course was very concerned and told me that I had to sleep with Hunter the first opportunity that I had so that he did not suspect anything. I agreed to what she said although reluctantly. I had to act as if I had missed him, which I had but not in that way.

Hunter was a bit surprised about my initiating sex, but he was enthusiastic about it and he even took a bit more time with me than he normally did. He actually took the time to touch and caress my body. It was all right but nothing like it was with Enid and it made me feel disloyal to him. My body responded to what Hunter was doing and he was slightly surprised and was a bit more diligent in his attempts to arouse me. Physically it was working but mentally I was not there. I did not move under his touch when he entered me in one swift move, he felt more aroused than he had ever been. He felt more like Enid and that made me feel even worse. And as usual when he was done he rolled over and went to sleep, leaving me feeling more alone than I had felt since before Enid and I declared our love for one another. I cried myself to sleep again that night.

## Chapter 9 - Confusion

Things returned too normal more or less, except that Hunter was more likely to touch my body than he had before. I still exchanged letters with Enid, it was all that I had to look forward to other than our child. In one of the letters that I had sent out I told him that I had to talk to him in person and that it was extremely important. He sent word that he would be home soon and asked to tell in a letter, which I did not. I could not take that risk.

I had to talk to Nanna. I was an emotional mess. Hunter was being more attentive than ever. I was very much in love with Enid. And I was pregnant with Enid's child.

"You know, Cairistiona, that it is possible to find happiness with a man even if you do not love him," she tried to explain to me.

"I know that, Nanna, but what am I to do? I love Enid with all my heart and soul. I love him as I should love my husband." I stopped for a bit, looked at her and then continued, "I am happy with Hunter and I think that I would be even more so if I had not found out about his mistress and fell in love with Enid. But I cannot change that now, it is too late." I looked away from her with tears in my eyes. "I care for Hunter and perhaps even love him, but it will never be the same as it is with Enid I'm afraid."

Nanna walked over to me and held me as I cried.

## Chapter 10 - Enid's Return

On the day that Enid was to return I stood on the castle's battlements looking out over the loch. He did not come. Each day I waited for him there, wrapped in a plaid. The waves were tall and the wind blowing was cold. I was frantic with worry but somehow I had managed to hide it from Hunter.

Finally a week later I saw a movement on the edge of the loch, almost too far to see. instinctively I knew that it was Enid. I hurried down the stairs and by the time that I reached the stables he was there. His horse was tired and stumbled as one of the pages took the horse from him. Without a word I followed him into one of the stalls and when we were out of sight he pulled me into his arms and kissed me. It was everything that I remembered. Too soon he pulled away, always cautious that Hunter might find us together.

"I've missed you," he whispered to me.

"And I you," I replied, unable to keep the worry from my face.

"What is it?" he asked, taking my hands.

I had to tell him. "I am with child."

His face lost all expression and in the dimness of the stable I could not read his eyes. "Have you told Hunter?" he asked me.

I smiled at him and shook my head no. "I wanted the baby's father to be the first to know," I said softly. Joy lit up his features and he pulled me close to kiss me again. I returned the kiss and hugged him close to me. I was happiest there in his arms.

He held me close and kissed me before pulling away. "This is not safe, can you meet me at the cottage?" he asked me. I did not get to answer him because I heard Hunter calling for him. Enid gestured for me to hide and the he walked out of the stall to go talk to his brother.

I hid and listened to what they were talking about, although I could not hear much other than Enid say that he was hungry and that he would talk to Hunter on the way to the kitchens. When they were gone I left, taking great care to make sure that I was not seen by anyone. I went to my room to get a warmer cloak so that I could meet with Enid and then went towards the kitchens to see what I could over hear.

I stood off to the side of the kitchen door and listened to them talk. I learned much in the little time that I was there. My father was dead and my oldest brother, the dumbest and most violent one, was in charge of the clan now. He was at court demanding that Hunter's lands be handed over and that I be returned to them. The rumor was that my brother had bribed the church into having my marriage annulled since there had been no children and he planned to marry me off to a man that I knew to be quite repulsive, violent, and thought to have killed his last two wives. I knew that I should have been upset about my father's death, but I wasn't. I really had not even known the man. As for the thought of being returned to my family, well I knew that I had to tell Hunter that I was pregnant and then let him think that the child was his. I had no other options.

I walked into the kitchen with the premise of telling Hunter that I was going for a walk and pretending that I did not know that Enid was home. When I went into the kitchen Hunter took my hand and kissed my cheek, pointing out that Enid had finally arrived. I nodded to and greeted him, I saw him eyeing my stomach as he greeted me and asked about my health. I

could see the pain in his eyes at seeing Hunter touch me. With that look I knew that I had to tell Hunter alone so that I did not cause Enid anymore pain.

Hunter looked at me like he had something to say and didn't want to. "Cairistiona, I have some bad news about your family." He paused a few seconds before continuing, "It's your father, my dear, he is dead."

I tried to look sad, but how could I feel it about a man that did not care for me. "How did it happen? Who is in charge now?" I asked.

Enid was the one to speak up first and he explained, "Your father took ill with pneumonia and passed away peacefully. It is your oldest brother that is in charge now"

He sounded worried almost as much as Hunter looked it. "Why do you both seem so worried? What is it that you are not telling me?"

Hunter patted my hand and said, "There is nothing you need be concerned about, my love. We will handle any problems that arise.

"There is a reason to be concerned, Hunter. I didn't know my brother well but I know enough of him to know that he is very mean and violent. You are my family as they are. I want to know."

They glanced at one another and again it was Enid who told me what was going on. "Your brother wants an annulment for your marriage to Hunter because there are no children and then he will marry you off to another man."

I already knew this but there was still anger and worry on my face. "That cannot happen!"

"It will not," Hunter assured me, taking me into his arms. "God willing soon you will conceive and he will not have grounds for his foolish notion of marrying you to another. I could not bear to lose you."

I avoided the look that I knew Enid would have on his face for it would be too painful for me to see. "I have some things to which I must attend and then I think I will take a walk to think things through." I turned to leave in hopes that Enid would know where I was going.

My husband seemed to have a puzzled look upon his face, I believed that it was because of the loving way that he was acting towards me and I was just leaving. For him that was a big thing, he was not a very outward emotional person. This was one of the first times that he expressed that he loved and cared for me. It made me feel awful and guilt wracked. He kissed me on the cheek, we hugged and then I left.

## Chapter 11 - Our Decision

I snuck off to the cottage and about a half an hour later Enid arrived. When he got there he just stood in the doorway looking a bit awkward. I ran to him, threw my arms around him and kissed him. He took me into his arms and pulled me close to him and held me tightly against him.

I kissed him again and pulled back enough so that I could talk to him, "I am sorry about what happened back at home. I don't know what to do now."

He touched the side of my face. "You must tell your husband that you are carrying his child," he told me and that statement took him a great effort to say. "Your brother will have to back down when it is known that you are with child."

"I don't know if I can. I know that I must though... there is nothing saying that my brother will back down for sure," I said

"He will have no choice, his grounds for annulment are gone." He gathered me close again. "A child," he murmured. "When?"

"Our child, Enid. In about six months I believe," I told him with love in my voice.

I could tell by the look on his face that he was thinking things over and then some of the tension that he has left him. "Our child," he affirmed, and then got tense again. "Our child grows in your belly, and I must stand aside and with my brother to claim it as his own." He moved away from me and went to stand by the fireplace.

I watched him go with a look of sadness on my face and then walked over to him and put my arms around him, "Enid, I am so sorry. I love you with all my heart and I never meant to cause you any pain."

He took me in his arms and buried his face in my hair. "I wish that I had the strength to walk away from you, but God help me I cannot."

"I don't want you to ever. I want to be with you always." I pulled back a bit. "Someday our child will know the truth, I promise that, when the time is right."

He kissed me passionately, and rested his hand on my stomach possessively. I put my hand on top of his and the other around him tightly.

We spent the next few hours together, wrapped in each other's arms, pretending that the rest of the world did not exist and that it was just the two of us. Once again we proclaimed our love for each other and for our unborn child.

As we were getting ready to leave I said to him, "I don't want to cause you any more pain, so I will wait to tell Hunter after you leave. I know no other way to do this."

"No, you should tell him tonight, as soon as possible. I leave for court in the morning. I'll be able to take the news of the child back with me," he explained.

I knew that he did not like this any more than I, but it was what had to be done. With a sad face I replied, "I will do that if it is what you want me to do."

He nodded and gave me one last long kiss before we set off back to the castle separately.

## Chapter 12 - Hunter's Joy

When I returned it was about an hour before the evening meal and Hunter was in his study. I decided that this was the best time to go to him, if there was one. I knocked and went into the room a little. "Hunter, may I talk to you for a minute? It is rather important."

He looked up and seemed pleased to see me. "Of course, what is it?"

I walked over to him, very scared and nervous. "Hunter, I am with child. I have not been able to tell you because I wanted to make sure that I was."

I could see the joy bloom on his face. "Cairistiona, you are sure?" When I nodded he took me into his arms and hugged me close to him. "You have made me the happiest man alive," he told me, and then he kissed me, softly and passionately at the same time.

I returned the kiss, but I was so very sad. I pulled back from him, but still in his arms and I wrapped mine around him. I asked softly, shyly but needing to know, "Hunter, do you love me? You have never told me."

He smiled down at me, still looking very happy. "If you must ask, then I have not properly shown my love. I will have to do better." He picked me up and twirled me around until I was dizzy. "I love you Cairistiona Inghean Domhnaill Lochloinn. I love you." He carried me to the chair that he was sitting in and sat down with me in his lap. He reached inside the neckline of my dress and cupped my breast as his lips moved close to mine. "I love you," he said again just before he kissed me again.

The guilt that I felt at that moment was overwhelming. I did all that I could to not cry. He loved me, and what made it so hard was that I loved him as well. It was not the same all consuming love that I had for Enid, but I loved and cared for my husband. I did not know what to do. I wanted to be with Enid so badly, but how could I do this to Hunter? I did not want to hurt either one of them and I knew that in the end all of us would be hurt. I did not see how it could end well for anyone.

I returned the kiss and the thought crossed my mind that maybe I should forget Enid and try with Hunter. He continued to kiss me, his hand left my neckline and he began to pull up the skirt of my dress. His hand was warm on my leg when I heard a cough from the doorway. Hunter quickly pulled his hand out from underneath my dress and turned to see who was at the doorway behind us. He lifted me to stand on my feet when he saw who it was.

It was Enid, his face was a blank mask. "You wanted to see me, Hunter?"

Hunter looked at him with a smile on his face and said, "Cairistiona has given me the most wonderful news, my brother." He took my hand and kissed the palm of it. "She is with child. I'd never put any stock in the tale that a woman had to feel pleasure to conceive, but now I know it to be true."

Hunter was looking at me so he could not see the look of rage that briefly covered his brother's face, but I saw as plain as day. The blank mask returned quickly and he attempted to smile and told us, "A child is good news indeed."

I said nothing at all for fear of breaking out in tears. I avoided looking at Enid for I did not want him to see the look of hurt that I had on my face as well. I excused myself and said that I would be with Nanna. Hunter kissed me softly and as I passed, Enid offered his congratulations with stiff words. I looked him directly in the eyes this time; mine filled with



tears and I could only nod in response to him. He took half a step or so as if to come after me but stopped himself.

## Chapter 13 - Choices

Once out of their sight I ran the rest of the way to Nanna and threw myself sobbing into her arms. She held me and soothed me as best as she could until I calmed down enough to tell her the whole story.

When I was done she offered me some advice. "You must follow your heart, but you are not married to Enid. God wills that a woman only love her husband. I know that you love Enid deeply and he you, but only you can choose your path."

"But I don't know what to do," I told her, as the tears run down my cheeks. "I don't love Hunter as I love Enid. I want to be with Enid."

She held me for a while longer. "You cannot my child. You are married to Hunter. Until death parts you, you cannot be with anyone else."

I calmed down a bit, but I was still weeping, as it was hard to stop. I could not stand to be apart from Enid, but there wasn't a good fix for any of this.

"You must stop crying now, child," she said to me. "It is not good for the babe."

I regained my composure the best that I could and then made an excuse to leave and went to talk to Enid. I knew that I should not go to him but I had to. I could not just let him leave like that. I knew that he had a million things going through his head and not many of them were right. When I got to his rooms he was washing up, half dressed. My heart skipped a beat at the sight of him. When he saw me he quickly pulled on a shirt and looked at me warily.

"I must talk to you alone," I said to him quietly.

He turned away and I could tell by his movements that he was hurt deeply. "Why?" he asked.

There were tears forming in my eyes again. I was torn over all this and I think that he knew. He glanced at me and nodded. "This isn't the best place, unless you want your husband to know the truth." He seemed a bit cold towards me because he was trying so hard to hide his hurt.

"Maybe I do," I told him a bit defiantly

He looked at me in surprise. "He would be within his rights to kill us both, are you sure that's what you want?"

"I think that it would be better than what I am feeling now," I replied in a low, sad tone of voice. I was confused, lost, hurt and more all at once.

"Cairistiona," he whispered, taking a step towards me. He stopped and shook his head. "It's not my right to question what happens in your marriage bed. I know how passionate you are, and my brother is a handsome man." He walked closer and started to reach for me, then rubbed his hands on his pants instead. "I know that he loves you as well, Cairistiona. What man would not? Please tell me you know that you love me more than he and I hope you know that I love you more than I he ever could." His voice was low and urgent sounding.

"Oh Enid, I know that you love me more than he and I hope that you know that I love you more than I he. I love him, but in a different way. The feeling for him just don't compare to what I feel for you."

Tears filled his eyes and he looked again like he wanted to touch me, but he knew that this wasn't the place for it. "I have no choice but to believe you. If I thought you had lost your love for me, I would die."

"What Hunter and I share in bed is nothing like what we share at all and never has." I paused and looked at him sadly. "I could never stop loving you."

Slowly he reached out and touched the side of my face. He started to say something, then stopped and then began again, letting his hand fall. "Meet me at the cottage early tomorrow. I will stop there on my way to Edinburgh."

"I will be waiting there. Can you take me with you?"

"My love, I wish that I could."

"We could leave together, forever."

He paused for what seemed like a long time, with a look of love and loyalty warring on his face. Finally he spoke, "Not tomorrow, love. Let me make some arrangements. The next time that I come, we will leave together, I swear it."

I knew that a look of hope shone across my face. "Thank you, oh thank you, Enid. Until tomorrow."

## Chapter 14 - The Announcement

That evening at dinner, Hunter announced my pregnancy. There were great cheers and happiness from all that were there. Of course there were a few whispers between some of the women. I knew that they had to be talking about Hunter's mistress. I let my gaze fall away from them. I did not need that thought to upset me more than I was already, although I was trying my best to act happy. I knew that Enid was very upset as well. He didn't talk a lot to anyone and he drank too much.

Hunter, on the other hand, was very proud, and very caring towards me. He was more open with his affection and love for me that evening as well. It was a great change in him from the way that he normally acted towards me. Not to say that he had been mean or ignored me before, it was just that he was so proud and happy about the baby. He was touching me on the arm, kissing me lightly, or smiling at me.

When the evening was over and we retired for the night Hunter wanted to make love to me. I went along with it, even though I was so torn up over seeing Enid the way that he was and knowing that it was my fault this night.

Hunter was very loving, caring and took the extra time to make me happy in our love making. Over the past few months he had learned what I liked and made sure that I enjoyed myself. Still, it was not like it was when I was with Enid, it never would be... how could it?

When we finished he held me with his hand on my stomach, much like the way Enid had earlier. It nearly broke my heart to be like this with him. He talked about the baby, if it would be a boy or a girl and what we would name it. Eventually we fell asleep in each other's arms.

## Chapter 15 - Our Last Meeting

I woke before dawn to get ready to meet with Enid at the cottage. I manage to get out of the keep and to the cottage without being seen by anyone. When I got there Enid was there waiting for me, pacing.

I went right into his arms, and hugged him close and kissed him. He returned the kiss with much passion before pulling back and looking into my eyes. After a moment he lifted me into his arms and carried me to the bed, where he began to remove my clothes.

It was not long before we were both lying naked in each other's arms gasping for breath, proclaiming our love for each other. I have never been happier than I was in his arms. He held me close to him as we talked about leaving together. It was getting later in the morning as I could see that the sun was just about rising.

"I have to go. I will write when I have made the plans to come back for you," he told me.

"When will that be? Do you have any idea what we are going to do?" I asked him. I was worried and excited all at the same time.

"A few weeks, at least," he said. "I have friends in France; perhaps we can go to Paris."

"Then I will see you before our child is born?" I asked him. That was very important to me, I wanted him there when our child was brought into the world, although I didn't say this out loud.

"My love, you will see me before your belly swells with our child." He kissed me and then got up to dress. I remained in the bed watching him, committing his every movement to my memory. When he was finished he sat down on the edge of the bed near me. "I will count the hours until we can be together again." He stood to go.

Hurriedly I got up to give him one last hug and kiss before he left. "Enid, I love you more than anything, you have to know that. Please never forget or doubt my love for you."

"I will not forget, my love. I will return as soon as I can. We will be together, I swear it."

"I will be waiting for you," I told him as I began to get dressed. I knew that we would be together soon and that would work out. It had to. I stayed in the cottage a few minutes after he left as he had asked me to, just to be sure that no one saw the two of us in the same area. When he was out of sight I sat on the bed and cried silently.

## Chapter 16 - Out of Fear and Love

I waited a half an hour after Enid was gone, crying the entire time, before getting up to leave. I dried my eyes and headed for the door but just before I reach it, it bursts open. Hunter was there, looking angrier than I've ever seen him. His eyes swept the room, and then settled on my tear-swollen face.

"You seem surprised to see me, wife," he growled, stepping into the hut and closing the door behind him. I tried to speak, but he wouldn't let me. "I went to see Liandran this morning," he said as he walked toward you menacingly. "She told me I was not the only one who had taken a lover."

I backed away from him, frightened, but he followed me closely.

"I understand now why Enid has been coming home so often," he continued as he stalked me across the room. "Why he smiles when you walk in the room." I stopped when my legs hit the edge of the bed, and Hunter stopped very close to me. He took my upper arms in a bruising grip. "You have made a fool of me, wife," he hissed, "with my own brother." He shook me a little, not hard, just enough for me to feel the leashed violence within him. "And how can I blame him for wanting you? Your full breasts, your supple thighs?" His hands tightened a bit more and he lifted little off my feet. I tried to speak again, but again he spoke over my words.

"Do you wonder why I visited my mistress this morning?" he asks, his voice tightly controlled. His eyes are hot with anger, and with hurt. "I paid her off, sent her away, and in return she ripped the heart from my chest." He set me down and raised a hand as if to strike me. I shrank away as best as I could given his hold on my arm, but the blow did not fall. "I could beat you until you could not walk, wife, even kill you, and not a man in Scotland would stand against me." He made a visible effort to control himself, his hold on my arm loosening. He spun me around and I could feel his fingers on the fastenings of my dress.

"My brother has had something from you that I have not, I think," he told me as he pushed my dress off my shoulders. "But you are my wife, and it is my right to have everything that is yours." I could feel the cool air on my shoulders and breasts as he pushed my clothes downward. "I will see you as he has seen you. I will have what you have given to him and more, wife, it is your duty, and I will see to it that you obey me."

The fire had died down, and the air was cool against my skin as my clothing fell to the floor. Hunter ran his hands down the skin of my back gently, and I could feel his hands trembling. "The scent of your sex with my brother lingers in the room," he growled, putting an arm around my waist and pulling your back against his chest. His other hand reached for my breast and squeezed, almost too hard.

"Did play the whore well for my brother, wife? Did your body weep with passion until you covered your lover with heat?" His voice hardened even further. "You will do the same for me and more," he vowed, turning me to face him. His hand tangled in my hair and he tilted my head back so that I looked up at him.

By now I was crying. "Tears for your lover, wife?" he said, wiping them with one finger. "I will make you cry for me, wife. Forget my brother, for you will never see him again." He bent closer, and just before our lips met, he whispered, "You will love me, Cairistiona." He kissed me hungrily, pulling me to him so closely that I could feel his belt buckle digging into my skin. While he was very passionate and aggressive, I could tell the effort he was making not to hurt me.

Hunter assumed that I was crying for Enid, he never thought that it was out of fear and hurt. Now that he kissed me I pulled back slightly to take my chance to speak. I looked deep into his eyes and with as much honesty and sincerity as I can muster I told him, "Hunter, I do love you, that is why I cry."

He stopped and looked down at me, a little suspicious. "If you love me, why did you sleep with Enid? Why have you made the fool of me?"

"I did not think that you cared for me at all until recently and that was why you had a mistress. I was just there to help keep the peace between our families and nothing more." I was trying so hard to control the tears. "I'm sorry for what I have done, I know that does not mean much or even help, but I don't know what else I can say, Hunter. I honestly love you," I told him as the tears began to fall.

Tears filled his eyes as well and he brushed my tears away gently. "I am sorry, Cairistiona," he whispered. "I did not know I could feel this way for you. I hate that he has touched you, loved you as I have." His hand slid from my hip towards my breast. "I understand now the jealousy that you felt over Leiandran, but she is gone now."

"As is Enid." I paused a moment of so and moved my hands so that they were on his arms. "What can I do to make this up to you, my husband?"

"Give me what you have given him, Cairistiona," he whispered, his voice bordering on pleading. "I have always felt you hold back when I touch you, even when your body shakes in release." He pulled me a bit closer. "Love me with your body, Cairistiona, give me what you have withheld."

I reached up and pulled him closer to me as I wrapped my arms around him and kissed him. We stayed locked in each other's arms kissing for a very long time. We eventually sat down on the bed and I looked at him. "I have wronged you greatly, Hunter. I am truly sorry; I can see it in your eyes, the disbelief in my words. I can only prove to you through my actions now that I do love you." At that I pulled him closer to me and kissed him very passionately, running my hands over his back and down his legs.

His body responded to my actions and he moaned softly as I touched him. I was never this forward with him before and I could tell that he liked it. He put his arms around my waist and cupped the side of my face with his other hand. "We have wronged each other, wife, but right here, right now it is only you and me," he said in a controlled voice, tears falling from his eyes. I had never seen him cry before and it just about killed me to see it now. "Let us begin again, here and now, on the ashes of our past."

"Alright Hunter, we begin over here and now," I told him before I threw my arms around his neck and kissed him.

He smiled through his tears. "Let us pretend we were just wed," he whispers, caressing my bottom lip with his thumb. "We married for love, and this is our first night together."

I had tears falling again, although this time it was not out of fear, but out of happiness. Happy that he was not as mad as he was before, happy that I was really loved by him. I was sad as well that I had to lose Enid and his love forever. I knew that I had to make the marriage with Hunter work. I did love Hunter, not in the same way that I loved Enid, but I did. I considered myself very lucky, he could have done so much to me and he would have been within his right to do so. "Hunter, make love to me, please. I promise to make you happy, you will never have to take another mistress as long as I live."

We made love for a long time in the bed that I had just shared with Enid. I tried to push the thoughts and images of him out of my head. My life was not to be with him, and I knew that now, even as much as I wanted to be with him I couldn't. I had made my choice and I was sticking with it.

When we were finished he held me close and buried his face in my hair, breathing heavily. I ran my hand through his hair and kissed his shoulder, very softly. He sighed at my touch; he remained still and held me close. I didn't stop what I was doing, but I asked quietly, "Hunter... are you alright?"

He seemed as if he did not hear me so I pulled back. "Hunter?"

He looked up at me and I could see the pain in his eyes as he was trying to hide it as he smiled at me and smoothed my hair back over my shoulder. "Did I please you, wife?" he asked, his voice sounding almost too normal.

"You should not have to ask me that, husband. But if I must tell you, then you did... many times." I told him in a soft, shy manner. I was nervous and even scared, even though I knew that I shouldn't be. "I sense that there is something wrong though, tell me what it is."

He smoothed the other side of my hair over my shoulder, not meeting my eyes. "It is nothing. We are beginning again, and I will not let so beautiful a moment be spoiled by questions about the past."

"If you want I will answer you questions," I told him in a sad tone of voice and a sad, distant look in my eyes, as if apologizing.

He gathered himself and looked at me, smiling sadly at me. "No questions, wife. It matters not if you love me more or less, if I pleased you more or less, or even in the child that you bear is mine or his." I could see the pain fill his eyes at that comment, but he seemed to push it back and kissed me softly.

The tears began to form in my eyes again as I wrapped my arms around him and held him tight. Through my tears I told him. "I love you, Hunter, please believe me. I honestly do." I was so very close to sobbing at that point and I couldn't help it.

He calmed me and kissed the tears away from my eyes. "I love you, wife," he whispered against my skin. "If you swear to love me and be true to me from this moment on, I will do the same. If the truth is never spoken, the past cannot harm us." His touch was tender, loving and I could hear the honesty in his voice.

"I promise all that and more Hunter. I want to make a life with you as we should have from the beginning." I was trying to calm myself. It was hard though with thoughts of Enid still there. I felt awful as to what I had done to him that day, but I pushed those thoughts away as best I could. I had to right the wrong that I had done to Hunter, no matter what.

"We will, my love," he vowed softly. "From this moment on there is only me and thee, and our child within you." He kissed me gently as his hand caressed my stomach tenderly.

I thanked him and returned the kiss, which only ignited our passion once again. This time we took our time with each other; there was no desperation in our love. As we laid there together I was left with a feeling of regret for having to tell Enid that I had changed my mind about leaving Scotland with him, but also the knowledge that I was doing the right thing and working out everything out with Hunter.



## Chapter 17 - The Letter

I never attempted to contact Enid; I didn't know what to say. I loved him deeply and knew that he felt the same for me and every time I felt our child stir within me I felt a deep pang of regret for what I did to him. I knew that eventually I would have to tell him that I made the choice to stay with Hunter; I also knew that decision would wound him so deeply that I kept putting off telling him.

Hunter never mentioned his brother's name in my presence again until the day came when a letter from Enid arrived. Hunter brought me the letter and as he handed the paper to me I knew immediately that it was from his brother.

"Would you like me to read it aloud," I asked him hesitantly.

He looked down at me with a soft look. "I brought it to you because I was unsure if Enid had written something... more personal in it to you. And because of that I didn't want to take it to the priest."

I knew that he must have known that Enid and I had shared a personal correspondence while he was gone from the castle. I opened the letter and read it out loud, leaving nothing out. It tore my heart out as I read the words Enid had written for me and me alone.

The first part was business that pertained to Hunter and the fact that he was worried that my brother would try something now that he plans had been foiled, but the second half started out with him telling me that he had the plans made for us to go to Paris together. He expressed his love for me, and the hope that he would soon see me and feel 'our babe' move within me. My eyes filled with tears as I stopped reading. I looked to Hunter to see if he wanted me to continue with the letter.

Hunter looked down for a moment and then smiled at me sadly as he placed a hand on my growing belly. "He is mistaken," he told me softly. "It is out child you carry, unless you have changed your mind?" His eyes had a very vulnerable look in them, but I knew that he was trying very hard to trust me.

"Yes, husband it is our child that I carry within me," I tell with a smile as I put my hand over his.

Hunter smiled, trying to hide his relief from me, but I still saw it. "Continue with the letter Cairistiona."

I finished the letter which said that Enid would be returning home in two weeks time and that we were to leave the second night that he was home. Again, he declared his undying love for me and said that he hoped to hear from me soon.

I remained silent for a long moment, forcing the tears to not fall in front of Hunter. He knew that Enid would always be in my heart and that my love for Enid was unbreakable, but I tried to not let it show. I had hurt him enough and couldn't do it anymore. I slowly folded the letter and handed it to Hunter.

He took the letter and set it aside, then he took my hands in his and kissed them gently. "I have not sent any word to Enid since he left," he told me softly. "If you wish I will send word that you have changed your mind, but he may not believe me."

"The decision it up to you."

"I trust you," he told me honestly. "It may be better if the words come from your hand, rather than that of the priest, in more ways than one, but if it hurts you to do so, I will take care of it."

"I will do it. Tis better that way. If you wish I'll read it to you when I'm done."

He cupped the side of my face and kissed me gently. "There is no need wife. We've made our vows. Send word to my brother, then come to bed." He kissed me once more and left me alone to write Enid a letter.

I sat there at the desk staring at the parchment that I pulled out to write my letter to Enid on. I didn't know how or where to start, my heart was breaking. I knew that I had to do the right thing, but I loved him so much and it hurt me deeply that he would never hold me in his arms again, and that I would never hear him whisper how much he loved me as we lay in each others arms.

The tears fell in an unstoppable stream, staining the parchment, as I dipped the quill in the ink pot.

I told him everything, starting when Hunter found at the cottage shortly after he left. I told him that Hunter's mistress told him that he could find me there with you when he went to tell her that he would not see her anymore, that Hunter was extremely angry so much that I feared for my life at the time. I continued on to tell him that I loved him very much and that nothing would change that, but that there was nothing that I could do to be with him, no matter how much I wanted it.

I must have apologized a million times as I told him that this was not how things were supposed to end and not how I had wanted it to either. I asked that he forgive me and not be angry with me. I let the letter dry before folding it and sliding it into the envelope and sealing it with wax and the Lochloinn crest. I left the letter on the mantle and headed up to bed with Hunter.

As I climbed the stairs I wiped the last of the tears from my face. When I entered the bedchamber Hunter was there lying in our bed. He smiled at me and acted as if nothing was wrong, but I'm sure that he knew that I had been crying as my eyes were red and puffy. I undressed and slipped my sleeping shift over my head and then slid into bed next to my husband.

Hunter silently wrapped his arms around me as he kissed my forehead. He knew that I needed to be held and comforted that night more than anything else. He told me how much he truly loved me and our child, he spoke of our future together and how happy he was.

I fell asleep that night with his hand resting on my belly and my head on his shoulder.

## Chapter 18 - Worries

Since the time Hunter came to the cabin he had become rather affectionate to me, both in public and in private and he took every opportunity to show and tell me how he felt about me. Things had really changed with us and he had made me happier than I ever thought he could have, but at times my thoughts wandered to Enid and deep love that we shared, but could never do anything about now.

Over the next few weeks we received a few letters from Enid, all of them very straightforward and informational only and nothing of any personal note to me or Hunter. The news that he did send was disturbing, he was worried about my brother's plans and that he had begun raiding the border between his land and Hunter's.

"Hunter, why don't I visit my family and see if there is something that I can work out with them?"

Hunter looked at me as if I were out of my mind. "I absolutely forbid it! You are carrying our child and I'm sure that you would not fare well in their care."

"I agree," I told him softly. "But I am worried about the raids, Hunter, they're going to get closer to us."

"I know and I am too," he told me as he laid a hand on my ever growing belly. "I will figure something else out."

## Chapter 19 - Enid Returns

The next few weeks passed with the raids continuing at a steady pace and my brother was heading straight for Lochloinn Castle.

The day Enid returned I was close to 7 months pregnant and was in the solar embroidering a blanket for the baby. Nanna came rushing in to tell me that Enid had been spotted racing his horse along the loch and that Hunter wanted me to meet him in the bailey, which was an area between the inner walls and the keep.

I quickly set aside my work and rushed down to meet Hunter, who was waiting for me as he paced. He greeted me hurriedly and kissed my hand and before I could get a word out we could hear Enid's horse racing through the yard and Enid yelling to the guards to close the gates and sound the alarms.

I grabbed Hunter's hand and held it tight. I knew my face had a frightened look on it when I asked, "What's happening?"

"I don't know," he told me. "Stay here." He let go of my hand and started down the steps as Enid vaulted from his horse.

I moved closer so I could see and hear them better and it near broke my heart to see Enid. I did not believe that seeing him would be so difficult. Enid was explaining that my brother was coming to attack the castle and that he rode ahead to warn us and, if Hunter would let him, help defend the castle.

I moved down to stand between the two of them and looked at them both with a scared look. Hunter nodded to his brother, told him to see to the walls to which Enid agreed. It was only then that he looked at me and nodded politely. I could see the pain in his eyes, but there was nothing that I could do. I knew that he had resigned himself to not having me. He broke his gaze from me and clapped his brother on the shoulder and strode off towards the walls.

Hunter took me into his arms. "Ready the keep," he told me. "Fear not, all will be well."

There was nothing that I could say. I hugged him tightly and kissed his cheek before I ran off.

I took off into the keep and upstairs to my room, the only weapon that I could use was the short sword that Hunter had bought me years ago. As I left my rooms I began to call out orders to the servants to prepare for battle. They all began to run around gathering the children and elderly to a safer place within the keep as Nanna and I started to tear strips of linen for bandages.

As our preparations were just about finished I could hear the battle break out on the walls, and the death cries of men. My face went white with fear that Enid or Hunter may be one of the men out there dying. I dropped what I was doing and rushed to the windows and looked out, there were too many of my brother's men for the walls and gate to hold.

Nanna came and pulled me back from the window. "There is nothing you can do, m'dear." She gathered me in her arms and let me weep silently for a while.

"I can't lose them both, Nanna. I just can't!" I cried.

"You won't, m'dear. The good Lord will make sure that one of them is always by your side to love and protect you," she told me as she comforted me.

## Chapter 20 – The Keep Falls

We eventually went back to work and didn't say much more. It was several hours before my brother's men broke through the outer wall and when they did I could hear Hunter yelling for everyone to fall back to the inner wall. There was what seemed like a long moment as the rest of the men yelled and ran for the inner walls, helping those who were injured.

I could not see Hunter or Enid out in the yard with the other men as I watched and it worried me. Once the area was secure I heard Hunter call out for me as he entered the keep and I ran to him. He was dirty and wore the blood of his enemies, but he was not injured other than a few scrapes and bruises.

Hunter quickly pulled me into his arms and kissed me. We broke apart and he smile down at me, "You're carrying the sword I gave you. Use it well to protect your self and the babe." He let his hand rest on our babe as he kissed me gently one last time before running off to battle.

Again the walls were overcome and then men had to fall back into the keep and by this time Hunter was wounded, a flesh wound to his arm. Enid was also there by his brother's side, with a much more serious wound to his side that he refused to let anyone look at.

Everyone was worried even though my brother's number were much less than they were before, and Hunter assured them that the keep was strong and believed that it could be held.

I was pacing the floor from one wounded man to another trying to help where I could when Hunter came to me.

"I want you to leave with Enid and some of the other warriors. You need to gather the women and children and leave through the secret exit in the castle," Hunter told me.

I shook my head and replied, "No, I won't leave you here alone!"

Enid was there at his brother's side. "I am not leaving brother. I will stand and fight to protect our home until the very end."

Hunter sighed. He knew that he could not stop his brother from helping him protect the keep and he also knew that I would refuse to leave no matter what. He gathered me in his arms and told me that he loved me. It was brief, but I saw Enid turn away with a hurt look on his face. I knew it was from the pain of his injury to his side and his heart.

I left Hunter's side and went to Nanna. "Please, Nanna. I am very worried about Enid's injury and I know he won't let me look at it. He's always listened to you, go look at it... please."

She looked at me with a soft look in her eyes and nodded. "I will see what I can do."

Nanna made her way through the men over to Enid, but before she could begin to speak, the doors of the hall were forced open. The men nearest it rushed to hold it, but force of the intruders was too strong. Quickly the battle began again in the main hall of the keep and our men were strong and prevailed. More of the intruders died than the defenders, but it still looked as if it were a losing battle.

As the battle went on and moved more into the main hall Hunter cried out for me to go. Before I could even move I saw my brother in the fight head straight for me.

Fear immediately took over and I was paralyzed in the place that I stood.

He got through the melee easily, and laughed at the sword in my hand as if there was nothing that I could with it that would cause any harm.

His laughter only caused me to become angry rather quickly. Soon, we were engaged in battle, and Enid saw. He tried to make it to my side, but something happened along the way that I didn't see and he didn't make it to me.

I managed to hold my own against him, but I was tiring fast and I knew that I couldn't win with strength alone. I backed towards the stairs where I would have an advantage over him with some height. We continued to fight and eventually I prevailed with my sword to his chest. I slumped on to the steps holding the bleeding wound on my shoulder with one hand and my stomach with the other as I cried.

## Chapter 21 – Parted Forever

Once I recovered I realized that Hunter was at my side. He had been wounded a few times, and was bleeding from a wound to his scalp. I began to fuss over his injuries, but he was more concerned with mine and the well being of our child. He let me know that the rest of the intruders had been fought off and those who didn't perish were being imprisoned. He also told me that Nanna had managed to get the women and children in to the secret tunnel and that they were safe.

We were interrupted by one of Hunter's warriors, who was carrying a body towards us. He laid it on the table and even through all the blood on his face I knew that it was Enid. My heart shattered into a million pieces and tears filled my eyes as I rushed to the table.

I stumbled as I went to Enid and Hunter was there to catch me, and he gently tucked my face into his chest. "My brother," he whispered. His voice caught with emotion.

Hunter held me and soothed me the best he could and told me to go to Nanna who had materialized at my side, he passed me off to her with a kiss as he moved towards Enid.

I didn't want to go with Nanna; I wanted to be with Enid but she held me tightly in her arms as I cried. Hunter made it to Enid's side and cleaned the blood from his face; I could see the tears in Hunter's eyes.

Suddenly I realized that Enid was not dead, at least not yet, as he reached up and took Hunter's hand in his own. I began to cry uncontrollably and was able to get out of Nanna's comforting arms. She let me go, but stayed at my side the entire time.

Enid looked up at me and then looked over at his brother, and then with a glance at my swollen belly. "Brother," he whispers softly. "I am sorry...."

I ripped the hem of my skirts to stop the bleeding as I cried. Enid's hand moved to rest on my belly and I put my hand over his. I slowed the bleeding, but I knew that it wasn't going to help.

Hunter grasped Enid's hand strongly, and smiled down on him. "There is nothing to forgive, brother."

I turned to look for Nanna. "Nanna! Get me some bandages, quickly."

"It won't help m'dear." She told me as she tried to pull me away but I wasn't leaving Enid's side.

Enid looked at me again as he let go of his brother's hand and took both of mine in his. He held them together with the small strength that he had left.

I leaned down to kiss his cheek and then lips ever so gently. Then I whispered to him, "I will always love you..."

He smiled at me weakly and returned the sentiment. He then took my hands and placed them in Hunter's and then put his over both of ours. "May your marriage be blessed with love," Enid whispered to us. "May your child grow strong and as wise as his mother."

"I will take care of them both," Hunter vowed. He leaned closer to Enid, but I could still hear what he said. "One day your child will know how brave and strong you were, and how much you loved his mother."

I cried as I leaned down to give Enid another kiss and whisper goodbye to him.

With a final squeeze of our hands, Enid's life slipped away. Hunter bowed his head, crying, and then took me into his arms.

I held on to him as if were my lifeline, as if I never wanted to lose him.



## Chapter 22 – A Husband and Wife

After a few moments Hunter began to call out instructions to his men to start cleaning up and reinforcing the defenses. He turned to Nanna and asked her to see to the dead, especially Enid and asked her to take special care with him.

Hunter lifted me into his arms and carried me to our bedchamber, where he sat down on the bed with my still in his arms.

“Promise you’ll never leave me,” I told him.

“I would never leave you, my wife. I love you and the baby more than anything and I will always be with you.”

“I hope that you forgive your brother and I.”

He kissed me gently. “I have forgiven you and Enid a long time ago.” He kissed me again. “There is nothing to forgive anymore.” He assured me that he loved me and that all would be well.

Eventually I stopped crying and calmed down. “I want to tend your wounds and won’t take no for answer.”

Hunter laughed as he set me on the bed and went to pour water from the pitcher.

We spent the next few hours alone, cleaning each other’s wounds and comforting one another.

In the following days we buried our dead with a special service for Enid. That day was hard for both Hunter and I as he watched his only brother be buried and I watched my deepest love and the father of my child be buried.

Time passed and I grew large with Enid’s child and I visited Enid’s grave often to leave flowers and tell him of our child. Sometimes Hunter comes with me, but usually we go separately.

Hunter and I became even closer as the next few months passed. And soon I gave birth to a healthy son, who Hunter named Enid. I had never seen him so happy as the day our son was born.

Nanna was overjoyed to have another child in the house to take care of and spoil. Life was wonderful; and I had my family there with me everyday.

Within a year of young Enid’s birth I found out that I was pregnant again. This time we had a daughter and Hunter was thrilled.

I never once forgot Enid or our love, and while I missed him terribly I knew that I had made the right choice. It was hard to forget Enid as his son looked exactly like him, I was thankful for our child and cherished the short time that we had together even though it was wrong. Hunter rarely spoke of his brother, but when he did, it was as if the bad stuff never happened.

The rest of our lives were filled with love, joy and happiness. Hunter and I remained true to each other for the entirety of our marriage.