

Wanderlust

By Helen J. Dixon

The bedroom was normally her sanctuary, yet lately it had become a prison. Lorraine lay on her bed, watching the pelting downpour outside the window. Tossing and turning, she simply couldn't relax enough to fall asleep. She thought the rain, usually a peaceful lullaby, would be helpful in dealing with her insomnia. But this night, it just kept her awake.

Bolting upright, she realized what it was which was keeping her awake. She needed Patrick. Needed to feel his arms about her again. When the weather was this disruptive, their lovemaking was just as intense. His fingers moving along her skin, relaxed muscles that yearned for his stroke. Her body responded to his as if they were one person. She loved the taste of him, the thrill that went through her when she kissed his face, his arms, his thighs, everywhere. The sighs and moans of contentment, which emanated from both of them, drowned out the sounds from the tempest outside. In the calmness of that embrace, she always felt secure and could comfortably drift off to dreamless sleep. With these images in mind, Lorraine threw off the covers, put on a sweat suit and sneakers, grabbed her wallet and keys and went out into the night.

Walking along the sidewalk, she didn't avoid the puddles, but jumped and splashed into every one. Hadn't done this since she was a girl and she believed the water on her skin would cool down the heated ache of longing she so palpably felt deep in her heart. She continued walking, not particularly caring in which direction her feet were taking her. When Lorraine stopped, she was at the Amtrak train station.

It was three in the morning and here she was, soaked to the bone at the station. What the heck, she mused. Why not buy a ticket and go see Patrick? So what if he lives a few hours away and wasn't expecting her? So what if she didn't have a change of clothes? There was no way she was going to feel whole until she was in the presence of her emotional advocate. Emotional advocate—she remembered when he first uttered that term to her. It was a rainy day in the park and she was on a bench, weeping. He ran past her, but retraced his steps to make sure she wasn't hurt. He sat down next to her and she told him her life story—right there in the mist and fog of the morning. She told him of her trauma—the man who had befriended her and, after years of confidences, abused her in the most personal way. She told this stranger with the kind eyes and the deep voice of her self-loathing. He wrapped her wet body in his warm embrace and held her. Lorraine, rocking there looked into his friendly eyes and saw kindness and empathy; not pity, but the knowledge of a kindred spirit. They sat there for an hour, just talking and he brought her from the brink she had been hovering on for some time. They left the bench and went for coffee and that's when he told her she had nothing to fear—that he was her emotional advocate and would always be there to help her through any crisis she would experience. After they finished their coffee, they exchanged phone numbers and addresses. He put her in a taxi, and kissed her lightly on the nose. And just that quickly, he'd been a permanent fixture in her life ever since.

That's it, I need my advocate now, she said to herself. She went to the ticket window and brought a round trip ticket. The train was leaving in a little bit and she had to run to the platform to catch it. Since it was so late, she had the train car to herself most of the trip. Three hours later, she arrived and took a cab to his house. She arrived, looking much like a drowned cat. Lorraine rang the doorbell and waited. Patrick appeared shortly and opened the door.

"I couldn't stay away another moment, Phil. I so desperately need you. Sorry for just showing up," Lorraine said when she saw his astonished but pleased expression on his face. He stepped toward her and pulled her inside.

"Lorraine, I can't believe, after all this time, you still don't know how to come in out of the rain."

The End

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