

“I know what you’re thinking. You’re not very good at hiding it.” She turned around and kissed me.

“So where are we going?”

“I’m not telling,” she smiled. “You’ll find out.” We walked down to the car, and she got behind the wheel. I had always found it intriguing to see drivers of other cars. Whenever there was more than one adult in the vehicle, it would almost always be the man driving and the woman in the passenger seat. I loved to drive. In fact, one night on the way home from work, I picked up Vicky from a conference and I felt like driving. Several hours later we ended up in a park in a strange city, watching the sun setting over a large lake. But I was equally thrilled being the passenger, with Vicky driving. I loved watching her and looking around at the people and houses that zipped by outside the car windows. I got in the passenger seat. I had no idea where we were going. While Vicky was pretty good at hiding secrets, I was usually able to find out, either by luck or by logic. In this case, I hadn’t a clue. She drove us out of town on a county highway. The last time we went this way was to go to a wedding. The windows were down, and the spring air was fresh. The sun was out, occasionally ducking behind very few puffy clouds. After a long dark winter, the green of the grass and trees was so bright it looked almost out of place. We passed the round church. We barely talked, instead enjoyed the drive. The road had been damaged by the plows, and potholes hastily filled until permanent repairs could be made, which would probably never happen. I always felt bad for the road crews that had to clear the snow off the roads in the winter and fix the roads their plows had destroyed in the summer. I imagined it must feel like mopping with the faucet open.

“You didn’t have me pack, so were staying local, right?” She just smiled. Of course, she could have packed for me. Some clothes, a new toothbrush, I didn’t need much else. Vicky looked proud. She was in complete control and obviously enjoyed it. I never classified her as a control freak, but being as intelligent as she was, I could imagine it would be difficult for her to let someone else take charge. At the same time, she was intelligent enough to realize there was a lot of satisfaction

to be had when safely being led by others. The wind was blowing back her dark hair, but every now and then a strand got in her face and she had to sweep it back. I trusted her completely and watched her as she drove us to the unknown destination.

“You’re staring.”

“I can’t help it. You’re beautiful.”

She smiled more. “Thank you.” She quickly glanced at me, then shifted her eyes back to the winding road. After a few more miles, and going around a traffic circle that hadn’t been there last year, she slowed the car. We approached the very hall we had been at just a year ago for the wedding. The parking lot was half-filled, and Vicky found a spot by the edge of the lot. The hall was located on a small peninsula that reached into an otherwise round lake, a favorite spot for celebrations. When the sun set, the orange glow was doubled by the water’s reflection, and often the lights inside the hall were dimmed to take advantage of nature’s spectacle. “We’re here.” She turned off the car and got out. I followed her as she walked toward the front door. Before we got in, she stopped and turned to me. She looked at my face and stared into my eyes. Her blue eyes pierced me. Her smile warmed me. “Matt?”

“Yes?”

“Do you love me?” She was serious. I had told her many times I loved her, but rarely as direct, and never as the answer to a question.

“Unequivocally.” Should I return the question?