

Prologue

Gray Stone & Heartache

Who doesn't dread a funeral? Especially if the individual buried is the person you planned to spend the rest of your life with. Have children with. Grow old with. How do you recover? How do you replace someone irreplaceable?

This isn't a game of football. There are no substitutions. Only starting over. Is it possible to do that? To start over? If you allow yourself to let go, perhaps.

People do it all the time. If they find the inner strength to move on with their lives. If they allow their hearts to love again, no matter how guilty that makes them feel. Maybe. Yeah. Maybe.

A lone figure stood at the foot of a grave. His face hidden by the umbrella which failed to keep him dry. Crystal droplets bounced off his broad shoulders covered by a black trench coat. The color matched his emotions.

The young man glanced away from the headstone and gazed at the carefully manicured lawns, taking in the variety of flower arrangements placed at the foot of innumerable graves. Resting places for those no longer part of this world. Special someones who shared their lives with those left to mourn.

He stifled a deep-seated, anguished sob. Tear-filled eyes continued scanning the premises. Eyes devoid of hope, joy and a

future he planned to share, to experience...with her. He didn't want to be there. Who the hell would? Cemeteries are so final. So ending. Solemn monuments to life's finale. His eyes returned to the grave.

The staggering impact of her name etched in rock would not leave him. A year slipped past since her death. It still shocked him. How many times had he read the inscription embedded on the gracefully crafted headstone?

Sara, storms were always in your eyes.

He could not believe her body was there. He didn't want to believe. Yet, there he stood, blankly staring at the humbling truth. He found it difficult to speak. Raw emotion flooded his pleasant, captivating voice.

"I can't stop feeling guilty and unfaithful when I'm with someone else. I have to get on with my life I know. But how, Sara? How? I miss you. I miss you."

He kissed his fingertips and lovingly placed them on the coldness of the gravestone. Allowing himself another moment to grieve, he turned and walked away. He could scarcely do that, stopping in the middle of the cemetery to curb tears flooding his eyes. So many shed with so many more to come. And he knew it.

As if to underscore the gloom piercing his spirit, rain poured from the dark clouds of a brooding sky. Shadowy billows which mirrored those enclosing his crumbling heart. He gathered

the will to put one foot in front of the other. To leave though he wanted to rest beside her for eternity. While he struggled to go, lightning flashed. Thunder roared. Ray Griffin dreaded what was ahead of him. Life without Sara.

Be it good times or bad, happy or sad, absolutely nothing in life remains the same. The only constant is change. For Ray, and for someone he'll soon meet, someone very special, change is on the way. Not all of it good. Not all of it bad. Not all of it happy. Not all of it sad. But one thing is certain. Their hearts will be challenged. Such is life and love.