

## Chapter One

Cassie boarded the plane quickly not wanting any more confrontation with Graham. She hated leaving like that and hated the way she was feeling. She knew Graham was hurt and because she loved him the way she did it felt worse. But she knew she needed to go, she needed to be with Damion to figure things out. He didn't even know that she had feelings for Graham as strong as she did. Settling into her seat, she let out a sigh and took in a deep breath. She hated planes and was terrified of the whole idea of Africa. Then she considered once she landed and that scared her more than the plane ride. What were the people really like? Would the parents take to my teachings and would the children like me? It would be so hard to see Damion too. Although it has only been a couple months, it has seemed like forever. Had he changed in his looks being over there, or will he still look the same. There were so many uncertainties ahead of her and that was not her strength.

The plane ride was uneventful until they switched over. Once in Europe Cassie met the other teachers and they were able to talk out their fears and ideas ahead of them. Cassie called her mom while waiting to board the next plane and they chatted a little more, which made her miss them more. As they were entering Africa Cassie began gathering her things together and the letter Graham gave her fell out. Cassie picked it up and decided to read it.

Dear Cass,

I'm writing this letter or note to you while you are lying here sleeping. You are so beautiful here and I hate the fact that you will be leaving tomorrow. Be as it may though I want you to know this. When it rains it will remind me of you. Although 2000 miles away is so far I will still walk out in the rain and kiss it just for you. It never fails me, the rain will always come and I will always love you. So next time you see a storm on the horizon, please don't fear, it's just heaven doing me a favor of taking you my kiss. Walk outside and kiss the rain whenever you need me. Take care and be careful and I will see you when you get back in six weeks.

Love always, Graham

Cassie folded the letter with a smile. Then she looked outside and was a little downhearted. It was overcast and raining and seemed so strange, so distant. While landing Cassie began to wonder if she made a mistake. She wasn't sure if she could handle all this without her friends and family. She held the letter a little tighter praying for strength as the plane rolled to a stop. Gathering their things and heading off the plane into the airport Cassie took one last deep breath. This was it, no turning back now. Once inside Cassie looked around for Damion knowing he would be the one to pick them up. Before long she spotted him hurrying towards her and her heart began to speed up with excitement.

"Cassie, I'm so glad you are here," Damon said, giving Cassie a big hug.

Cassie hugged him back glad to feel his embrace and knowing he was alright.

"How was your trip?" Damion continued, standing back to look at Cassie yet keeping her in his grip. "Let me look at you."

Cassie laughed as she indulged him. "The trip was nice, pretty uneventful."

"Good, I'm so glad you decided to come. You don't know how many nights I prayed God would find a way to send you here and now here you are."

"I'm here but I think I left my courage and spirit behind in Michigan."

"You will feel better once you are settled in. Although it's not America, Africa is a beautiful country in need of God. So these lovely ladies with you must be Lori Hunt and Jeannette Wilkins," Damion said, shaking their hands.

"How do you do Pastor Del'Canto," Lori replied smiling politely.

"Please call me Damion; we are all in the same service, here to serve our God."

"Okay Damion," Lori blushed.

"Now that you're here we should go get all your bags and supplies loaded and head out. There is still a long drive ahead of us. Vencil could you give us a hand," Damion called to one of the regulars. He then said something in African and then turned back to the ladies. "Ladies this is Vencil, he has been one of my right hand men helping me to get around this land. Vencil this is Lori, Jeanette, and my lovely lady Cassandra."

Everyone shook his hand then headed to the baggage.

“Damion, I don’t think just the five of us can get all the packages the conference sent by ourselves,” Cassie said as they walked.

“We received those packages the other day already. I knew we wouldn’t be able to make it all in one trip so I sent some of my help to pick it up then.”

“Okay,” Cassie smiled looking at Damion. He seemed to be at home there and seemed to be in such control like he had been living in Africa all his life. He looked the same but yet was different in the way he carried himself.

“What are you thinking?” Damion noticed Cassie’s stare.

“Nothing really. I was just noticing how happy you seem here.”

“I have settled in nicely but I seem so happy because you are here now. You don’t know how much I have missed you,” Damion said, taking Cassie’s hand.

Cassie took his hand and smiled. Maybe this was a good idea to come after all. When they got outside it wasn’t raining so they loaded up the van quickly before it started again.

“Okay ladies let’s get in and going. Unfortunately what you see around you won’t last. Once we’re out of the city there is pretty much just land with villages in-between. We’ll be in our village in about four hours.”

Cassie was surprised about how long it would take them and settled in for the long drive. Vencil was driving so Lori and Jeannette sat up with him so Damion could sit beside her and could catch up and things. Although wet Cassie was surprised how hot it was outside. “What is the temperature right now?” Cassie asked.

“Probably around 120\*,” Damion said, as she looked at him stunned.

“I guess you would be glad for the rain to cool things off.”

“It helps at times,” Damion paused. “So tell me, what’s new back home. I know we talked but not as much as I wished we could have.”

Cassie wasn’t sure where to start. Do I tell him the things I have been doing that involved Graham or just talk about little stuff?

“Well, I’ve been writing on my books and as of late preparing for this trip. Before I got called here I was making plans to go to New York to visit my family and spend the summer in classes. My weekends have been spent visiting friends and your family. Other than that I was busy with school.”

“I knew all that, but what were you doing in the evenings. Tell me you did not lock your doors never getting out once.”

“What’s with the third degree,” Cassie accidentally snapped.

“Whoa, I didn’t think I was giving you the third degree. Cassie, are you not telling me something?”

Why did he have to be so perceptive? “No, I’m sorry. It has just been a long flight and this step has been very stressful. I didn’t mean to snap.”

“I’m sorry,” Damion put his arm around Cassie. “We have plenty of time to talk later, for now you should just rest and try to get some sleep before you get to jet lagged.”