

She Left Me There

By Nancy Martz

She left me there, and she had never looked more beautiful than when she walked out on me and closed the door behind her. My chest felt heavy as if the bottom was dropping out of my world. Maybe I had asked for this as she said, but I hadn't expected that it would be this immediately strange and lonely and overwhelming without her. I was full of regret and only wanted to get out that door, chase after her, and find a way back to the past when I was alone with her and the sole object of her attention and devotion. But something in me knew that it would be futile, and that nothing would ever be the same again. Still, I was going to try.

As I struggled to make a plan, I thought longingly about all the times I had watched her as she cooked for me, as she cleaned my house, as she picked up after me and washed and ironed my clothes, and as she smiled at me lovingly and took me into her arms for snuggling and kisses. Maybe our life together was just too good to be true, but I never once foresaw the desperation I would feel without her.

I should have grabbed her and forbid her to leave without me, but now here I was staring hopelessly around the room at people who were all blurs as they sipped their drinks. Some of them looked back at me with the same sad faces I must have had. Others looked away and chatted aimlessly with those around them. It looked like a couple of the guys might start a fight.

I saw my chance to slip out the door without making a scene. It was a big house, and I had forgotten exactly the way out. Wrong way, back step, down the hall, right turn and down steps and around the corner to the ostentatious wood, glass, and iron double doors. I pushed on one of them, but it wouldn't budge. Then suddenly I saw my sister's face out the door's window, but she was gone in an instant though I yelled for her to open the door from the outside.

Oh Lord, I felt tears rushing, and a terrible ache in my heart. Then I felt a gentle hand on my shoulder, and there was the other woman; she bade me to take her hand and return with her. She said my older sister was at recess and my mother had gone home. It was my first day, and the other kindergartners were waiting for me and had saved me some milk and graham crackers.