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# THE BRIDGE REPAIR

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MISTY MALONE



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Misty Malone  
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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.  
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## Chapter 1

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**K**ara Kerrington was driving home after work, thinking back over the date she'd somehow just gotten herself roped into. She wasn't at all sure how it had happened, but she did know she had to find a way to get out of it. She knew her coworkers had good intentions and were trying to help, but she had to get them to stop trying to fix her up. She was tired of them setting up blind dates for her, and it had to stop. Everyone claimed to know exactly the type of man she needed, and just happened to know the perfect guy. Unfortunately, she hadn't agreed with any of them. Now two of her friends had gotten together and were sure this would be the one. From what they'd told her, she highly doubted it, but she always had a hard time telling her friends no, so once again they'd worn her down and in the end she'd agreed.

Today was Wednesday and she was supposed to go out with him Friday, so she'd have to come up with something quickly. For now, though, she tried to put it out of her mind. It was a perfect spring day, and she rolled her window down to enjoy the nice weather. She noticed some honeysuckle bushes in the front yard of a house that reminded her of the ones in her parents' yard.

She always loved them, and the wonderful aroma from them. Every year she would pick some for her mother, who always put them in a vase and on the table so they could all enjoy them.

She was lost in her memories and didn't see the yellow Mustang barreling down the road toward her until it was obvious he wasn't going to stop at the stop sign and was headed right for her. She instinctively slammed on her brakes as hard as she could, and cringed when she heard the squealing tires. She wished she had a newer car with anti-lock brakes when she felt herself spinning. That threw her head from one side to the other and made her stomach feel queasy. Just as she stopped spinning she saw a big yellow blob she assumed was the Mustang, and seconds later she heard a loud crash.

Her car was thrown about, and she was tossed around inside her car, but eventually it came to a rest. Things were eerily quiet after that, and time seemed to stand still. She heard a horn honk, and wondered why someone was honking their horn now, after it was over. She smelled the honeysuckle bushes she'd been admiring earlier. When her head stopped spinning she felt a sharp pain in her foot, and was about to reach up to rub her sore neck, when she saw the yellow car spinning out of control and heading straight towards her again. Before she could move she heard another screech, and felt another crash. That one knocked her forward and it felt like something exploded in her head as it hit the steering wheel, right before everything went black.

The next thing she remembered was waking up, still in her car, and a man was in her passenger's seat, leaning over her, holding something on her arm. "You're going to be okay, ma'am," he was telling her. "Can you tell me if you're hurting anywhere?"

"My arm hurts," she mumbled, still not fully awake. "And my foot."

Another man appeared at her window, and the man in the

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car enlisted his help. “Can you hold this on her arm, please? Hold it tight. I’m going to check out her foot.”

Several moments later she felt him feeling her foot, prodding gently. “Does this hurt?”

She shook her head. “No, not really. It hurts down lower.” She felt his fingers running along her foot, and then it felt like he hit it with a sledgehammer. “Ow!”

“Okay, okay,” he said soothingly. He appeared in the seat again and reached over to take the shirt he’d been holding on her arm. “I’ve got it again. Thank you.” Looking at her then, he spoke in a calm manner. “An ambulance is on its way. We’ll get you to the hospital and get your foot x-rayed and get your arm taken care of. Do you hurt anywhere else?”

“My head hurts.” She closed her eyes, but she felt dizzy and opened them again.

“Lay your head back against the headrest before you close your eyes. You won’t feel as dizzy or lightheaded that way.”

She tried that, and he was right; that felt much better. She tried to think back and figure out what had happened. She knew she’d been in an accident, and then she remembered a man at her window asking if she was okay. Then a guy, she thought it was the same guy, got in the car and started holding something on her arm. After he did that her arm started hurting. Her head still hurt, but she kept trying to think back, hoping to sort it all out.

Little bits and pieces started coming back to her. Finally, she thought she had it all figured out. The man holding whatever it was on her arm was the same guy that showed up at her window and asked if she was okay. He said he was sorry, he hadn’t seen the stop sign. But she remembered smelling alcohol, so it must have been from him, and that’s why he hadn’t seen the stop sign.

As she came to that realization she heard a siren, and the man beside her squeezed her hand a bit. “The ambulance is

here. We'll get you to the hospital so we can get you feeling better.”

Two men and a woman were at the car and for some reason they were talking to the man in her car. Her head was starting to hurt worse and she didn't really hear or understand everything everyone was saying. They must have been friends, or at least known each other. The man was telling them to be careful of her arm, and saying things she didn't understand about some saline solution and other things, maybe drugs.

This man that apparently ran a red light and ran into her was telling them what to do, and even helping them get her onto a stretcher. She felt a quick pain in her arm, and they were talking about the I.V. being in. Now it sounded like he was planning on going to the hospital with her. She didn't want him near her, let alone going to the hospital with her. She was sleepy and groggy now, but she distinctly remembered her first thought when he appeared at her window was that he smelled like alcohol.

They took her out of the car and moved her to a gurney. She felt some new, sharp pain, and this same man tried to comfort her, calm her down. “We're almost done. Hang in there, ma'am, just another minute or two.”

That's all she remembered until she woke up again. This time she was in a hospital bed, and that same man that had run the stop sign was standing over her, talking to her. “Kara, can you wake up for me now?”

Her head hurt and all she wanted to do was go back to sleep so it would feel better. She shook her head, and wished she hadn't. It made her feel nauseous. She closed her eyes again and heard that same man talking to someone else. “She looks pale after shaking her head. We may have to give her the Phenergan Dr. Stone prescribed if needed for nausea, but I'd rather she wake up so he can get a better handle on her concussion first.”

Kara wondered whom he was talking to, or talking about,

for that matter, and why was he here? Her head hurt thinking about it, so she decided to stop thinking and go back to sleep. She tried, but the annoying man was rubbing her arm and talking again. “Kara, can you wake up for me, please? Just open your eyes for me; don't move your head too much yet, okay?”

The third time he asked she decided he wasn't going to let her sleep until she did, so she tried to open her eyes. They didn't want to cooperate. She tried again and he encouraged her. “That's it, Kara, try to open them. You can do it.”

Her head was telling her she shouldn't want anything to do with the man that caused her this pain, but his voice sounded so soothing, she found herself trying again, and her eyes finally opened. When her eyes focused, she was indeed looking at the man from the accident, but he was wearing a white coat, like a doctor. A nurse was standing beside him, and they were both smiling at her. “Good morning, Kara,” he said. “It's good to see you awake again. How are you feeling?”

She opened her mouth to say her head hurt, but nothing came out. He moved quickly. “Your throat is dry, I'm sure, from the anesthesia. I don't want to give you too much to drink yet, but let me give you a couple of ice chips. Use these to wet your mouth a little bit, and you'll feel better.” He brought a cup to her lips and she opened her mouth and allowed him to tip the cup up. She did as he suggested, and it did help her dry mouth and throat.

It looked to her like he'd been watching her carefully. “Don't nod your head yet because it may make it hurt more, but let me do this.” She felt him take her hand gently in his before continuing. “Now, if that helped a little bit, squeeze my hand.”

She squeezed, as he said to. She was surprised when he squeezed back, but more surprised when she felt a tingling. She wondered if he felt it, too, because he was looking at her with an odd look on his face. If he did, he recovered and continued on.

“Are you able to talk a little bit now? Can you tell me if anything hurts?”

“My head,” she whispered.

“Okay. Is that your main problem right now; your head?”

She whispered, “Yes.”

“Good. I'll tell you what's happened and why your head hurts if you're up to it. Are you ready to hear it now?”

She whispered, “Yes. Please.”

He smiled and patted her hand. “Okay. You were in an accident in your car. Do you remember anything about it?”

Having swallowed two more ice chips he gave her, she found it a little easier to talk softly now. “Yes,” she said. “I remember you ran a red light and ran into me.”

His eyes grew and his eyebrows rose. He patted her hand gently again, and remained calm, still talking softly. “You're right that someone ran a red light and ran into you, but it wasn't me, Kara. I saw it happen, though, and came to your car right after it happened to see if you were okay. Do you remember seeing me there?”

“Yes. You're the one that ran the light and hit me,” she insisted. “And you'd been drinking. I could smell the alcohol on your breath.”

The nurse standing there looked shocked, as did another man who had come into the room and was standing back a ways. He came up closer to her now to speak to her. “Kara, I'm Dr. Stone. My understanding is that Dr. Sherman here was a witness to the accident you were involved in, and he went to your car to help. But he wasn't the other driver involved. I'd like to talk to you a couple of minutes about how your head feels. Are you up to that now? Can you answer some questions for me?”

She nodded, but winced when nodding made her dizzy.

The man from the accident tried to caution her. “Try not to move your head yet, Kara. It may make you dizzy or nauseous.”

“Okay,” she answered. Looking back at the new doctor, she



sounded insistent. “He was in my car, holding something on my arm, and he smelled like alcohol. I'm sure of it.”

Dr. Sherman started to step forward, but Dr. Stone stopped him. “Nick, let's step outside a minute.” He turned back to Kara a moment first. “I'll be back in a few minutes, Kara, and we'll talk.”

Once they were out of the room, and out of hearing range, Dr. Sherman addressed his colleague. “Phil, why didn't you want me to talk to her? I'm sure she's just confused. She did see me at the scene, and she's had a head injury, so —”

Dr. Stone interrupted him. “Nick, relax. I'm sure, too, her confusion is because of her head injury. She's simply confused. Your car is obviously not damaged, so I'm sure no one will accuse you of being the driver that caused the accident. And although you said the police did a sobriety test on the other driver and arrested him for DUI, if Kara keeps insisting she smelled alcohol on your breath it could cause a problem. There's nothing to say you couldn't have had a couple of drinks, as well. You weren't at the hospital or your office, after all.

“True, but I was on call, so I didn't have anything at all to drink.”

“I believe you completely. I'm just a little concerned about your insurance. If I were you I would go downstairs to the lab and have blood drawn to prove you don't have any alcohol in your system. We can talk to the chief of staff about this if you want, but since she made that statement once she may repeat it. Especially since the nurse that heard her say it is the biggest gossip in the hospital. If anything ever comes of it a blood test taken right now would put an end to it real quick.”

“But it's been well over two hours since the accident,” Nick said. He thought a minute, then sighed and agreed. “But you're right. If I was even close to the legal limit then, a blood test would still show at least a small amount four hours later.” He sighed and shook his head. “Miss Kara Kerrington and I are

going to have a talk about her part in my day off once she's feeling better."

Dr. Stone laughed. "You were off today?"

"I didn't have any office hours today because I'd planned on going to the Continuing Education seminar today and tomorrow. When that was canceled yesterday, I told Dr. Smith I'd cover for him as the orthopedic surgeon on call today so he could spend more time with his wife and their new baby. I was hoping it would be quiet and I'd actually have a few days off. When I saw her foot, though, I knew she needed surgery, and I knew I'd be the one they called, so I went from the scene of the accident straight here."

Dr. Stone smiled as he nodded. "And you're still here because? We both know the nurses could take care of her after the surgery, and they'd call you if there was a problem."

Nick actually blushed a bit, but answered honestly. "I'm not sure exactly. I just felt like I needed to stay here with her for a little while."

Dr. Stone just chuckled. "She is pretty, Nick. I hope it works out for you. Now go get that blood test just in case, while I talk to Miss Kerrington."

Nick shrugged his shoulders. "Yes, she is pretty. I guess we'll see what happens." He was shaking his head as he headed to the hospital lab.

Dr. Stone went back in to talk to Kara. He was concerned when he saw her and the nurse whispering. He knew that nurse liked to gossip. He quickly stepped over to the bed, effectively interrupting their conversation. "Okay, Kara, let's talk about how you're feeling."

"My head hurts," she said, "and if I move it much I get dizzy."

"Anything else that hurts?"

"My leg or foot, but it's not bad. I'm confused, though, Doctor. Could you answer some questions for me?"

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“Sure, if I can. What would you like to know?”

“That guy that was just here, the one that hit me; is he a doctor?”

“Kara, that man is a doctor, but we’ll talk about him in a minute. Let me tell you what’s happened the last few hours first. How much of the accident do you remember?”

“I remember seeing him in a Mustang, blowing through a stop sign. Then he was at my window asking if I was all right. Then I saw him in the car with me and he was holding something on my arm.”

Dr. Stone glanced over at the nurse, who was paying close attention to what Kara was saying. He was glad Nick was getting the blood test. It was the quickest and easiest way to put any gossip to rest. He looked back at Kara and tried to put the issue to rest for now. “I can tell your head’s hurting, so don’t worry about that now. We can talk more about it when your head feels better. Dr. Sherman is the man that was in here, Kara. And yes, he is a doctor. As a matter of fact, he’s the orthopedic surgeon that operated on your foot just a little while ago.”

“He operated on me?”

“He did,” Dr. Stone confirmed. “You had four broken bones in your foot. Two of them were misaligned and needed surgery, and as luck would have it, Dr. Sherman is the orthopedic surgeon on call today in the emergency room. You’re lucky, Kara, because Dr. Sherman is an excellent surgeon.”

“But he’d been drinking! He operated on me drunk!” She tried to sit up, but immediately grabbed her head.

Dr. Stone gently laid her back down on the pillow. “Calm down, Kara. It’s okay. Dr. Sherman was not drunk when he operated on you.”

“How do you know? He was at the accident.”

She again tried to sit up, but Dr. Stone stopped her. “Kara, calm down. Listen to me a minute. You banged your head in the accident and you have a concussion. That’s why your head hurts,

and why you're getting dizzy and nauseous when you move much.”

“A concussion,” she said, as if trying to understand.

“Yes,” Dr. Stone confirmed. “A concussion is a head injury and it can cause confusion. It can make you remember things differently. That's not your fault; it's from the concussion.”

“But I know I saw him. He was at my window asking if I was okay.”

Dr. Stone sighed, a bit frustrated. “Kara, you'll have to talk to Dr. Sherman about what happened out there, but please try to keep an open mind about this. From what I'm told, he called 9-1-1 and the police came to investigate the accident. There was a man there that said he was driving the other vehicle that was smashed up and had obviously hit your car, and that car was registered in his name. My understanding is that man had been drinking, and the police took him to jail. Dr. Sherman was a witness to the accident and went to your car right after it happened to see if you were okay, and he says he stayed with you until the ambulance brought you here.”

Kara looked at the doctor, and he could tell she was considering his words. “For right now,” he suggested, “why don't you just keep an open mind. I'm sure as your concussion starts to heal you'll remember things a little differently. Some things will be clearer to you. Some things you'll remember the same way, some things differently. That doesn't really matter, though. I'm more concerned about you and how you're doing right now. I'd like to do a few simple tests to see how your eyesight is, and your coordination. Is that okay?”

He waited until she agreed before taking a flashlight from his pocket. “For starters, I want you to follow this light with your eyes.” She cooperated while he did a few simple tests. Afterward, he relayed his results. “Okay, the good news is I think you'll be fine. It will take a few days of healing before you start feeling back to yourself, though, so rest will be very important. We're

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going to keep you here for a couple of days to watch it and make sure it doesn't become a problem, but I think in a few days you'll be feeling much better. Dr. Sherman is going to be following your post surgical care for your foot, as well. Now that I know you don't have a more serious head injury I can give you something to help your headache, and I'll give you something for your nausea.”

He turned to the nurse and ordered some medication, then made a notation on Kara's chart. Once the nurse left he turned back to Kara. “Try not to think too much or worry about Dr. Sherman and the accident, Kara. All the evidence says he was just a witness. His car doesn't have any dents. There's even a man that confessed he was the driver. I'm sure you don't want to get Dr. Sherman into trouble here, accusing him of driving drunk, if it wasn't him. In a couple of days your head will be doing much better. Then if you still feel sure it was him driving, you can do something about it if you choose. But as your doctor for this concussion I have to suggest you wait until then, and don't push your brain to remember things right now. Your brain has an injury and it needs to rest so it can heal.”

Again he could tell she was considering his words carefully. “Okay, Doctor. Thank you.”

The nurse came back into her room shortly after Dr. Stone left. She had two syringes, which she emptied into Kara's IV. “This should help you feel better, Kara. One's for your headache, and the other should help keep you from feeling nauseous or dizzy when you move your head.”

“Thank you.”

“You're welcome. I hope it helps. You've had quite a day, what with the accident, seeing a man at the accident you thought was drunk, and then finding out he operated on your foot.”

“Yeah. Dr. Stone says the concussion may have me confused, though, and I may have seen both men at the accident and have them confused. I'm thinking he may be right.”

“Maybe. But you saw what you saw, and I wouldn't just take his word for it. I'm sure one doctor is going to cover for another doctor.”

Kara's eyebrows rose. Was this nurse suggesting Dr. Sherman was drunk? “Maybe, but Dr. Stone said a man admitted he was driving, and the police arrested him. What Dr. Stone said makes sense. I could have seen two men at the accident and now I'm getting them confused.”

The nurse opened her mouth to say something, but before she had a chance, they heard a voice from the doorway. “I think he may be right, too.” Dr. Nick Sherman walked into the room, putting his white coat back on as he did. “That's kind of the nature of concussions, Kara. But don't think about it too much and tax your brain right now. It's been injured and needs to rest, just like your foot.”

He moved closer to her to check on her. “How are you feeling by now?”

“Better,” Kara said. “At least I feel like I'm awake now. The last time you were here I think I was about half.”

“I would agree with that,” he said with a smile. “They'd just brought you up here from post-op and you were just waking up.”

“Yeah, I was pretty groggy yet.”

“So now that you're awake, is your foot hurting?”

“No, not really. Are you sure you did surgery on it?”

Nick chuckled and patted her hand. “I'm quite sure.”

“Then shouldn't it be really hurting?”

“It would be if we hadn't given you the pain killers.”

“But I thought the nurse just gave me something.”

“She gave you something to target your headache from the concussion. I gave you something for your foot right after surgery so you wouldn't wake up in pain. I'm glad to hear it's working.”

“It is. Thank you.” Nick watched as she looked from him to the nurse, and back to him. He thought she looked a little uneasy, like something was on her mind. He looked over to the nurse, as

well. “Stella, did I interrupt you, or keep you from doing something?”

“No, Doctor. I came in to give her the two injections Dr. Stone ordered. I'm finished.”

“Okay, good. I'm going to stay and talk with Kara a few minutes, but I didn't want to hold you up from your other work.”

“No, I'm done. If you don't need me —”

“No, I won't. I'm just going to talk to my patient a few minutes.” Nick waited until Stella left before turning back to Kara. “Okay, what did you want to say, or ask?”

“How did you know?”

Nick just grinned. “It's part of my bedside manner. A good doctor knows when something's on his patient's mind. I don't want you overworking your brain right now, so why don't you just say what you're thinking?”

“Okay,” she said hesitantly. “I do have a couple of things to say, or ask. First, when you were putting your coat on when you walked in just now I saw a band-aid on your arm. Are you okay?”

He looked confused, and she pointed to his arm. He took his coat off and saw what she was referring to, and chuckled as he ripped the band-aid off. “I just had a blood test, is all.”

He threw the band-aid away, and when he came back to her bed she looked concerned. “Are you sick?” she asked.

“No, not at all,” he assured her. “A certain patient of mine accused me of being drunk while performing surgery. Although that's something I would never do, Dr. Stone thought it would be a good idea to get a blood test to clear it up once and for all. This way in case anyone else hears about it and questions it, the blood test should put an end to the issue.”

Kara looked away from Nick's face and spoke quietly. “I'm sorry. Dr. Stone said I may remember things differently in a couple of days, and I hope so. I didn't mean to get you in trouble if it wasn't you. But it seems like I remember it clearly.”

“I understand, Kara, and I'm not upset. I'm a doctor and although head injuries aren't my area of expertise, I know the basics of how they work. I'm more interested in your foot, though. Dr. Stone probably told you we're going to keep you here a couple of days?”

“Yes, he did. Is that really necessary?”

Nick smiled a rather sad smile. “Sorry, but yes, it is. I don't want you to put any weight at all on your foot for a couple of days, and I'd like you to keep it up, like it is when you're in bed. Dr. Stone also wants to watch for possible problems from the concussion, so you're kind of stuck here for now.”

“Can we compromise? Maybe I could stay tonight, and go home in the morning?”

Chuckling, Nick shook his head. “Sorry again, Kara, but no. Maybe Saturday.”

“Saturday? Not until Saturday? Absolutely not!” She paused, deep in thought. “What's today, anyway?”

Nick put his head back and laughed at his adorable patient. “Saturday's out of the question, but you have no idea what today is. You're obviously one feisty little lady, Kara. And for the record, today is Wednesday. We'll talk tomorrow, but I'm thinking you can probably go home Saturday. For right now, though, I have a few more suggestions.”

“Will they get me home earlier?”

“Probably not, but they may make you more comfortable while you're here.”

“Okay, I guess I'll have to settle for that for right now. What are they?”

“Since this happened before 5:30, I'm guessing you haven't had any dinner. You missed the wonderful cuisine our cafeteria sent to all our overnight guests while you were with me in the surgical suite, but if you'd like I can call down and have something sent up for you.”



“A doctor with a sense of humor. Cool,” she said with a grin. “So what are my choices; jello or pudding?”

“This hospital keeps up on the latest trends. You could also have yogurt.” After they both had a bit of a laugh he got more serious. “I do want you to keep it light this evening since you just had surgery, but tomorrow you can go back to a regular diet as long as you're not having any nausea from the anesthesia. I'll see what they can find for you downstairs. If you're hungry maybe I can find a turkey sandwich to go with your pudding.”

“That actually sounds good. I forgot to eat lunch today.”

“You forgot?”

“Yes. I got busy and never thought about it until it was almost 4:00. It was too late then.”

Nick frowned. “Maybe I'll have to have the dietitian come talk to you while you're here about the importance of not skipping meals.”

Kara looked at him for several moments. He looked very serious. “I just skipped one lunch, for heaven's sake!”

“So it's never happened before?”

“Well,” she stammered, “maybe once or twice.”

“How often do you skip lunch?”

“What? I don't know. Not often.” For some reason the stern expression on his face had her making a full admission. “Maybe once a week or so.”

“That's not good for you, Kara. Especially for you. You look like you could stand to put a few pounds on that tiny little body of yours. I don't want to dwell on that, however. Just be sure to eat healthy meals.” Before she had a chance to object, he went on. “The other thing I wanted to suggest is that you call and let someone know you're here. You blacked out at the accident scene, and the EMS people said you never came to on the way here. The nurse said you didn't have a contact person listed in your wallet that she saw, so no one's been notified that you're

here. Is there someone — a husband or boyfriend — that's worried about you.”

“No, just my cat. She's probably getting hungry. I'll call my neighbor and ask Annie to feed her. Do you know where my phone is?”

He pulled it out of his white coat pocket and held it up. When she looked at him accusingly, he explained his actions. “These have a way of coming up missing from accident scenes, so I put it in my pocket for safe keeping, to be sure you got it back.”

“Thank you,” she said.

“Not a problem,” he assured her. “No husband or boyfriend?”

“No,” she said hesitantly.

He punched some numbers into her phone before handing it to her. “I put my cell phone number in under Nick, just in case you need anything.” He smiled as he gave her phone to her. “I'm Nick Sherman, by the way.” He held his hand out to her.

She reached out and shook it. “Kara Kerrington. Nice to meet you, Dr. Sherman.”

“Nick.”

“Okay. Nick.”

“I'll let you get some rest now and see if I can get you some dinner.”

“Will you be back in later tonight?”

He'd turned and started for the door, but her question stopped him. “Do you want me to, or do you want to rest?”

“I'd like to talk a few minutes, if you have the time.”

“Then I'll be back. You rest now.”

“Okay,” she said, yawning. “I am kind of sleepy.”

“Anesthesia will do that to you,” he said with a chuckle before he left.

Kara closed her eyes and thought about Dr. Nick Sherman. She wanted to talk to him about the accident. He didn't look the

same here as she remembered from there. Of course, there she was probably somewhat in shock, and she was in pain, and she admitted she'd been knocked out, was temporarily unconscious.

She didn't remember him looking as handsome as he does now. He was a tall man, over six feet, she was sure, and built more like an athlete than a doctor. She had to smile at that comparison. She'd always pictured a doctor as an old short, fat man. Dr. Nick Sherman was definitely not that. And she definitely didn't remember his sexy smile at the accident. Now, the dark blond hair and blue eyes, she must have been in a lot of pain to not notice those.

She was thinking back to the accident when she drifted off to sleep. When she woke Nick was sitting in a chair next to her bed, while the nurse, Stella, was checking her IV. She looked over at Nick, who smiled at her. "How are you feeling?"

"Better," she said after several moments. "My head doesn't hurt as much."

"That's good. Any pain from your foot?"

She shook her head. "No, not really." After a moment she added, "And it wasn't even painful when I shook my head just now."

"I'm glad to hear that. I brought you some dinner. Are you hungry?"

"Yes, I am," she admitted. "But first—" She paused and glanced at Stella, who was checking her blood pressure. She thought a moment. "Yes, dinner sounds terrific, once the nurse is done."

Nick saw her hesitancy, and walked over to look at Kara's chart. "Everything looks good, Stella. Anything you want me to take note of?"

"No, her vitals are good."

"All right, good. I'm going to stay and visit a few minutes and check her foot. I'll be here if she needs any help with her dinner, and I'll call you if I need anything for her foot."

“Okay, very good, Dr. Sherman.” Stella gave Kara a final instruction. “Remember to push this button if you need anything, my dear.” She turned and left.

Nick waited until Stella was out of hearing distance, then moved closer to Kara and again spoke quietly. “Okay, what did you want to say or ask this time?”

Kara giggled. “You have a good bedside manner, Dr. Sherman.”

“Nick. Thank you. What do you want to talk about?”

“What kind of car do you drive?”

Nick's eyebrows shot up and he studied her a minute. “A black Lexus SUV.”

She nodded, and paused a moment. She looked at him and quietly asked, “Do you have a yellow Mustang?”

“No.”

He watched her as her head dropped. A couple of tears fell from her eyes, and he had to listen carefully to hear her. “The guy that ran into me today did.”

Nick was sitting on the side of her bed in an instant, pulling her gently into his arms, her head against his chest. “I know he did, Kara.”

“I'm so sorry, Dr. Sherman.”

“Nick. You don't have anything to be sorry for, honey. It was the concussion.”

“But you had a blood test and everything, all because of me.”

He chuckled softly as he tried to comfort her. “That's not a big thing to me, Kara. Really. I am glad to hear you remember it that way now, though. I hoped your memory would come back on that. It makes it a lot easier for me to ask you out for dinner now, once you're released.”

“I'm sorry; what?”

“I'd like to take you out for dinner, get to know you a little. Could we do that, please?”