

# FROM: Becky -- FOR: Matt -- With Love

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*\*Becky's given Matt her body and love. What else can she give before he goes to war?*

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FROM: Becky -- FOR: Matt -- With Love by Rumples Foreskin DEDICATION: To those who serve, and those who love them. I was halfway between Macy's and totally broke, sitting in the mall's tacky excuse for a food court, and trying to gag down a tasteless salad with low-cal dressing. Piped-in Christmas carols competed with the noise of wall-to-wall shoppers. I kept asking myself how I ever let my mother con me into getting dressed and driving into town with her the day after Thanksgiving, the busiest shopping day of the year. I'm usually the slow shopper, but somehow I'd finished before she did. This upheaval in the natural order didn't seem to faze her. "Now aren't you glad you came along?" I conceded the point with a weary nod. You see, my mother is always right. Not sometimes or most of the time, but always. Trust me. She checked her watch. "Why don't you wait for me in the food court, honey? I'll only be a few more minutes." Our shop-a-thon had cost me more than just maxed out credit cards. My back ached, my feet throbbed, and the rest of me felt tired, bloated, and crappy. To be fair, all that started long before I hit the mall. Being eight months pregnant can do that to a girl. Make that an unmarried, pregnant girl. Of course, I'm no girl either, although it does seem like I stopped growing a lot sooner than the owner's manual told my parent's to expect. In her infinite wisdom, Mother Nature decided five-foot nothing was more than enough for Becky Miller to handle. So there's not a whole lot of me to pack around a baby who keeps getting bigger by the hour and seems anxious to climb out and look around. It's not like I didn't know better. This baby will be my second. My first, Kylie, is two going on twenty-five and can't wait to play with her baby brother. Knowing better and doing what's smart isn't the same thing. At least it isn't for me, not after falling in love with someone I may never see again. The baby's daddy, Matt Hampton, didn't know I was in love with him, much less pregnant. I wasn't, in love that is, not at first. We'd known each other forever; but then everybody knows everybody else out where we live. In high school, we fooled around a little, you know, making out in the back seat of cars, sneaking out of parties for a smoke, things like that. Then, at a college party, we both got wasted and did more than just make out. Matt and I never dated, even after that. Don't ask me why. Maybe both of us wanted the other to make the first move. Anyway, at the end of that semester I sort of quit, sort of flunked out of school. I didn't care. By then I was

engaged to a good looking, party animal named Stuart Litton. A few days before the wedding, Matt warned me about him. "Look, take it from me, Stuart likes to flash his family's money and put on a good show, but he's a sneaky creep and a running dumb-ass." "Matt, you sound just like my mother." "What'd she say?" "Stuart's best feature is being a self-centered jerk." "She's got a point. I'll add that to my list." Like an idiot, I ignored them both and married Stuart. Later that summer, Matt joined the service. Both he and my mother were right, of course. Being married was a blast, at first; but the fun and games became fewer and fewer. After Kylie was born, Stuart started drinking and things went from bad, to worse, to dangerous. When he gave me a black eye as an early Christmas present, I headed for home and safety. To her credit, my mother never said, "I told you so." She just hugged me, helped get Kylie settled down, and then cried when I told her my story. Before we turned in, she said Matt had also come home. "I'm afraid he has more than just a black eye. Seems he was wounded somehow and his left leg's in a cast." The next day, I drove to his parent's house with Kylie. After her usual two minutes of shyness, she climbed all over him. When I tried to stop her, he indicated he didn't mind. While tickling her ribs, he gave me a quick glance, gestured at my eye, and mouthed, "Stuart?" I nodded. He grimaced, shook his head, and then turned his attention back to Kylie. Both of them were having fun. I'd never pictured Matt playing with a baby. "You like babies?" "Babies are goodness," he said, while circling his fingers down toward my giggling daughter's tummy. "I wouldn't mind having a few pee-pots of my own, someday." While they played, I studied Matt. Back in high school, he'd been a good-looking, all-everything jock with a boyish smile and teasing attitude which seemed just a little cocky. A lot of girls had serious crushes on him. The Matt I now saw, while still blonde and handsome was no boy. The skin under his stubble wasn't tan so much as a hard, weathered brown. Tiny creases lined the corners of his blue eyes, and confidence replaced the familiar cockiness I once noticed in him. In other words, he was a man-and I wanted him. There was more to it than just sex appeal, but I didn't know what. The only thing I knew for sure was it'd been a long time since I'd experienced that delicious flutter of excitement in my stomach. Way too long. Next morning, I called to tell him I'd be coming by with a special Christmas present just for him. It was a weekday. His parents were at work and my mother was anxious to have Kylie to herself. Matt and I would be alone and, if I had my way, soon making love. I walked in through the back door, the way everyone in the country does. He sat on a stool in the kitchen next to an empty coffee cup, looking at the paper. He'd shaved, and looked more like the Matt I remembered. I'd worn my tightest jeans, but the old high school t-shirt he had on looked even tighter. If it hadn't been for that damn cast I might have jumped him right then. As it was, he gave me this sexy grin that almost buckled my knees. "Hello there, Becky. So what'd you bring me?" "It's a surprise. I hope you'll like it," I said, trying to remain calm while hurrying out of my new leather car coat and tossing it toward the nearest chair. I missed and decided it could stay on the floor. He grinned. "Sounds great. So what's my present?" I stepped past the cast, put my arms around his neck, and, in a voice I hoped sounded sexy, said, "Me. I'm your present." Just thinking about the kiss that followed still turns me on. Matt's upper body was bigger, harder, and more muscular than I remembered. It explained why that old high school t-shirt was so tight. However, his lips were soft and his tongue felt so incredibly smooth and sexy. If we

never stopped kissing it would have been too soon for me, except if we didn't get down to some serious loving in a big hurry, I was going to make like Blanche Dubois and rip that damn t-shirt off him. Matt's lips brushed against mine. "Let's go to the living room." My eyes popped open in surprise. "Not your bedroom?" "Single bed," he said, giving his cast an explanatory thump. We headed for the living room. I remember grabbing a big afghan off the couch and spreading it out on the carpet. The next thing I recall was Matt interrupting a very thorough job of licking and sucking my nipples to look up at me. "Becky Miller, you do have the most delectable boobs." By then my sweater and bra were off and I was sure my jeans and panties were about to follow them. A few small logs crackled in the nearby fireplace. The lights on the big cedar Christmas tree were turned on. Just like me. I stroked his short, blonde hair and grinned. "Don't give me that, crap. We both know I'm an original member of the Itty Bitty Titty Club." "Size don't mean jack-shit. I've always told you that." Matt circled a nipple with the tip of his tongue. I shivered with pleasure. "Quality means a lot more than quantity. Believe me, yours are first-rate. In fact, while these prime samples of female flesh may not be the biggest, they are, without doubt, still the finest pair I've ever had the pleasure of enjoying. I don't mind having small breasts. In fact, I prefer mine to the big udders most guys seem to go nuts over. That's just as well. Even after having Kylie, there was little change in mine. At most, they went from hard-fried eggs to sunny-side up. Matt's gentle teasing and compliments reminded me how sweet he could be, and how much I wanted him. "If that's what you think, then there's more than just your leg that needs attention. Lay back and let me deliver the rest of your Christmas present." Matt grinned and reached for my jeans. "Well, if you insist; but you're way too overdressed for gift giving." That problem corrected and wearing nothing but an eager smile, I knelt beside him and pulled off that damned tight shirt. Then I helped him roll over onto his back. We paused to touch and look at one another. To my surprise I didn't feel self-conscious, perhaps because his body fascinated me. There was a scar I'd never seen before on his shoulder. I traced its jagged, discolored length. "How'd you get this?" "Oh, that? I fell." That was bullshit, of course. If he didn't want to talk about it, that was okay with me. Talk was not what I wanted right then. I leaned over and kissed him. It was another good one, but nowhere near enough. I covered his face with more and then nibbled on his ears and neck. After running my tongue over the scar, I worked my way down his hard torso, taking my time and sampling various parts along the way. When my lips reached the waistband of his sweats, I found myself staring past it at a very big bulge and feeling this incredible sexual rush. With that cast in the way, getting those sweats off became a two-person operation. Even with his help, it wasn't easy. The first couple of times I tried to tug them down, they caught on that bulge. By untying the drawstring and lifting the waistband, I exposed the problem, so to speak. His cock was long and thick and bobbing in anticipation. I bent over and ran my tongue up the hard shaft then slipped my lips around the smooth head and took my time sucking it into my mouth. I began with slow strokes, then picked up speed while taking all I could, and loving every last inch. I'd zoned out by then, so it took a second to tune in on his voice. I could tell he was struggling to keep it calm. "This is, uh, in-fucking-credible. The thing is, unless you want a messy snack, you better back off. Climb on top and we'll finish together." It was a sweet, even considerate, suggestion but this was fun. I removed the glistening cock from my mouth and licked the

smooth head like an ice cream cone. Then I glanced up at him and winked. "Thanks, but I really don't mind the taste, well, not too much. So, I think I'll finish what I've started. Besides, I've never done it that way, you know, on top." "Are you shitting me?" "I shit you not," I said, between long licks. "But all those guys you dated, and that jerk you married?" Matt and I had always been confidants. There were few secrets between us. He knew I never cheated on any of my boyfriends but the rest of the time, well, that was different. "The back seat of a car kinda limits your possibilities. And Stuart's the macho type who always wants to be in charge." "Damn. I warned you he was a running dumb-ass. Come on up here, lady, and let me teach you a thing or two." With Matt's help, I managed to straddle his middle, only to jump right off and wrap the cast in his sweats. That thing hurt. Once back on top and in position, I slowly lowered my bottom, savoring the feel of his cock burrowing into me. The further I sank, the deeper it penetrated. When the last few inches shoved their way inside, I let out a sigh of total pleasure. Damn, but that felt so good. We stayed still at first, sharing the sensation, then Matt began rocking his hips as much as the cast allowed, driving even deeper inside me. I responded to the pressure by leaning forward, putting my hands on his shoulders, and pressing my hips down to meet his upward thrusts. Either Matt's a great teacher, or I'm a quick learner. Maybe both. I soon set the pace, pumping up and down his long, hard shaft, and loving every minute of this new experience. My body raced toward a much needed orgasm. When it struck, I jerked upright, gasping at the sudden pressure inside my pussy. I leaned forward. Matt caught me and pushed me back. He cupped my breasts, squeezing them and twisting the nipples while forcing me to stay erect. Maybe it was the position, but one climax followed another. My body seemed to contract around Matt's unyielding cock as I moaned in pure animal bliss. After that, I heard a strangled grunt and felt the warm flood of Matt erupting deep inside me. For a few, perfect moments, we were frozen in a lover's knot of passion and release. Then we both collapsed and I pitched forward onto his chest. It seemed a good place to be. I wanted nothing more than to stay there, feeling his heartbeat slow while my body moved to the rhythm of his breathing. Matt broke the silence. "Personally, I think you look a lot more like a cute elf than old Santa Claus. But I do love your Christmas present and the way you delivered it." After that we were together almost every day. Since his parents both worked, we spent most of our time at his house, although we did go out on dates. I'm sure everybody in town figured they knew what was going on between us. After all, everyone in our town not only knows everyone else they usually have a pretty good idea what their fellow citizens are doing. I never heard of anyone so much as raising an eyebrow, much less objecting. In fact, I think our parents, like everyone else, approved. Still, Matt and I knew it was just a brief affair, nothing more. He would return to the service, I'd go back to college. No strings attached. That's how things had always been between us. That's how I thought it'd always be. Then I fell in love with him. It had been coming on for some time, but I wouldn't admit my feelings. All that ended the night he beat up Stuart, my soon-to-be ex-husband who had done the same to me, twice. It happened right after I filed for divorce. We were at a club with some friends. Matt still had his cast on, so we just listened to the band while the others danced. That's when Stuart came over to our booth and started carrying on. Matt never moved when Stuart leaned over the table, trying to get closer to me. He just told him to go away. When Stuart, drunker than usual, ignored him and kept

yelling at me, Matt hit him several times, real fast, just how and where I'm not sure. Stuart let out this funny, gurgling noise and sank to his knees beside our table. Matt put a hand on Stuart's shoulder and must have done something, because I saw Stuart grimace. Then Matt pulled him a little closer, and asked, in this dead-calm voice, if he was ever going to bother me again. Stuart's a big guy and, believe me, he's strong. I saw fear in his eyes and he mumbled, "No." "That's good," said Matt. "Cause if you do, next time will be for real." From then on, I was hooked on Matt. All my life, I'd felt in total control around men. It's not my looks. I'm no great beauty, but most guys don't seem to notice. I'd like to think my eyes and smile are the reason. Maybe those do play a part, but mostly it's my butt and the fact I'm a total flirt. All that ended when Stuart beat me up, especially the horrible, scary second time. That night, he slapped me so hard I staggered back and knocked over a big, ceramic lamp. The sound of it shattering on the hardwood floor woke Kylie and she started crying. Stuart turned from me and headed for her room, yelling that he'd shut the little bitch up. Somehow, I beat him to the door. It cost me a black eye, but at least I had his attention again, and I knew how to keep it. Thanks to that last punch, I was already on the floor. I got to my knees and reached for his zipper. Stuart stopped yelling. When I began blowing him, he sighed and leaned against the wall. After that, the only sounds were my slurping and groaning like all this had really turned me on. Thank God, Kylie soon stopped crying and went back to sleep. Stuart was drunk, of course, so it took forever to get him off. When he finally came, he patted my head, I swear I'm not making that up, then stumbled over to the couch and went to sleep. A few minutes later, Kylie and I were heading home to my mother. Anyway, since then, I'd get these panicky feelings when around guys Stuart's age. Not Matt, of course. I always felt safe with him. I noticed the difference the day Kylie and I went to visit him. After what he did that night at the bar, my anxiety around other men eased and my nightmares about Stuart ended. I was almost my old self again. That's when I realized I'd fallen in love with Matt, big time. My problem was how to convince him he loved me. The following week I drove him to the nearest Army post to have his leg checked. Afterward, he came out with a new cast which only covered his leg from the knee down. It was still awkward, but a huge improvement. We stopped on the way home and made love. It was great. He got on top without any problem. I loved it, and I loved him. When we got home, he told me he wasn't just going back to the service. I knew he served in a Special Forces unit and couldn't talk about where he'd been or what he did. I thought all that was over. He said the Army had cleared him to go back to wherever he'd been when wounded. He felt responsible for the deaths of two friends. "I trusted someone who betrayed us. My friends are dead- he's alive." I thought I was going to have a breakdown. This wasn't fair. I still hadn't convinced him he loved me and now I might lose him forever. What scared me most was the absolute certainty he didn't give a damn whether he lived or died, just so long as he killed the other person first. My reminder that he was an only child seemed to be what gave him any second thoughts about his intentions. I begged him to think of what his death would mean to his family. I knew he wouldn't budge and that I might never see him again. After Christmas, he went back to the service to spend some time at a desk job while getting his leg in shape and preparing to return to his old assignment. Meanwhile, I re-enrolled in college, waited for him to come home on leave before shipping out, and went over my very limited

options. My mind kept telling me he'd be okay. In my heart, I knew his next trip home could be the last time we'd ever be together. Unless you expand the part about his friends and what he actually did wherever he was, it's hard to picture any peril here. That's why I decided that, while I might never have him, maybe I could have his baby. I know it sounds crazy, but I wasn't doing it just for me. Mostly it was, of course, but if he didn't come back, his parents, whom I dearly love, would at least have a grandchild. Maybe that would ease their grief, make that, our grief. It never crossed my mind that he wouldn't want the baby, not after watching him play with Kylie. I wasn't so sure how he'd feel about me, though. Maybe it'd blow our relationship. That was a risk I was willing to take. So when Matt flew in on a two-week leave prior to going back to wherever the hell that other guy was, I met him at the airport with a big smile, and a body that was all his and free of any trace of birth control pills. Instead of driving home, we headed for the swankiest hotel in town. The moment the door to our suite closed, Matt wrapped me in his arms and we kissed. When our lips parted, I gave him my best, coy smile. "Do you mind me not bringing you a welcome back present?" "Oh, but you did," he said, gently squeezing my bottom. "I was the envy of every guy in the airport." We kissed again, but this time his hands went to work on my clothes. I'd worn a white silk blouse as a halter-top. He untied the knot holding it together. When it fell open, he cupped my breasts, and I shivered with pleasure. He leaned down and took a nipple into his mouth. It felt as if his lips were touching my entire body. Just when I thought I could take no more, Matt began using his tongue to trace an erotic path down toward my stomach. He knelt and teased my belly button while unzipping the very short shorts I'd picked out just for him the week before. Moments later, I felt them slide down my legs. He watched them fall, then let his gaze travel up my body. I'd worn no underwear, thinking that might seem extra sexy. The look on his face told me he agreed. I stroked his short blonde hair. The gesture broke his trance. Still kneeling, he tugged off my platform shoes and then pressed his head against my quivering stomach. "Damn, but I've missed you." The emotion in the voice of this man I loved so much had me fighting back tears. I tried to pull his head even tighter against me. "And I've missed you. Oh God, how I've missed you." The next thing I knew, Matt stood with one very startled Becky Miller cradled in his arms. "Matt, what are you doing?" He gave me that smile I never could resist. "Can't take a chance on you getting lost on your way to bed." To be held in the arms of the man you love while he carries you to the bed where the two of you will make love and you may, with luck, become pregnant with his child, is beyond erotic and so damn romantic. After lowering me onto the bed, Matt followed me down until his fully clothed body pressed firmly against mine. A hard bulge pushed against me, sending jolts of sexual pleasure racing through me. With a feeling of total contentment, I wrapped my arms around Matt, relishing the feel of his big, powerful body. We kissed for what seemed like hours. It was body-to-body, lips-to-lips, and man-to-woman. Our tongues, lips, teeth, and mouths fused into a single organ of love and need. Matt broke the kiss and positioned himself astride my middle. He didn't say anything, just gazed into my eyes as he removed his shirt. While he tugged at his t-shirt, I fumbled with his belt. It was one of those strange military ones. Before I could figure it out, he got off me and stood by the side of the bed. His clothes soon lay in a pile on the floor. The look on his face left no doubt what he wanted. That expression, and the sight of his muscular body with its broad chest,

powerful thighs and swollen cock, was way too much for me to resist. With a shudder of anticipation, I reached out for what was about to give me the passion, the pleasure, and maybe even the baby, I so desperately wanted. Matt slid into bed and our nude bodies touched. Once again, he pressed his lips against mine while his fingers roamed over the contours of my breasts, hips, and then my thighs. When his hand slid up and covered my mound, I heard myself gasp and felt my body arch up to meet his touch. All of my senses came alive. The feel of Matt's fingers, the taste of his lips, the sight of his blatant need, the clean, masculine aroma of his flesh, even the sound of his breathing intoxicated me. After a last kiss, he began feasting on my flesh like a starving man gorging himself at a banquet. He took his time on my breasts and throbbing nipples until I was on the verge of an orgasm. Then he stopped and began kissing his way down until he was nibbling on my oh-so-sensitive inner thighs. In one slow, smooth motion his tongue teased its way up from there until it slipped inside my boiling snatch. It felt so damn good. Still, I wanted more. I wanted, needed, to be totally possessed by this man. We'd been apart for what seemed like ages. No way could I wait any longer. "Now Matt. I need you, now." He looked up and studied my face, then nodded. Once again, I experienced that deliciously erotic moment when the tip of his cock touched me. Then he paused with it waiting at the opening to my churning pussy. After one more kiss, we surged towards one another and our two bodies melded into one being. We worked together in a harmony of love and passion. The familiar feel of Matt's hard cock inside me was pure joy. For me, that room and bed were my world. No time existed but now. Most of all there was no one other than Matt, the man I loved. He'd soon be leaving me, but right now. . . Desire, need, lust, longing, plus a totally unrestrained love pounded through every fiber of my heaving, writhing form. I'd even stopped thinking about getting pregnant. I wanted nothing more than to keep making love with Matt for the rest of the day-for the rest of my life. The moment Matt entered me, I began racing toward an orgasm I'd been dreaming of for weeks. The one I got was long, and awesome, and left me tingling. Though stunned by the exquisite ecstasy, my hips kept gyrating in rhythm with Matt. My climax seemed to trigger his own. He slammed into me with savage thrusts as I held him tight and savored the moment. He let out a loud groan and buried himself deep inside my hot, convulsing pussy. I luxuriated in the feel of his thick shaft throbbing as he filled me with his seed. Afterward, we lay together, Matt still inside me, our moist bodies entwined in a lover's knot. We'd soon make love again. For now, he seemed sated, tired, and content. I was all of those, plus incredibly happy. Don't ask me how, but I was certain I'd just become pregnant. Now, eight months later, I am very pregnant, frazzled from Christmas shopping and I don't know if Matt's alive or if he's, if he's not. It's been two months, three weeks, and five days since I last heard from him. He warned me that might happen. Still, if he could, wouldn't he...? For about the millionth time since he left, I reminded myself that while I might not have Matt, at least I had his child, his son. "Matthew Hampton, Jr.," I whispered, smiling at the sound. Then I heard myself continuing, "Only child of the late Matt Hampton," and started crying. "This seat taken?" I didn't look up, just shook my head, and kept searching for a napkin. Someone pulled out the chair next to me and sat. "Is the food here that bad, or are you just sad to see me?" Who the hell is this idiot? I glanced that way at him glanced in their direction, and found myself staring at someone who looked just like, Matt Hampton.

For maybe the first time in my life, I'm speechless. Just breathing was hard enough. Before I could think of something to say, he leaned over and kissed me. It was soft and gentle, and seemed to last forever, which was still way too short for me. Nothing made any sense. "What are you doing here?" He smiled. "Glad to see you, too, Miss Miller." Then it registered. "You're alive!" I threw my arms around his neck, burying my face against his chest, and really started bawling. At first I didn't want to look up. The face I saw might not be Matt's. He wasn't due home for another four months. This could all be a dream. Then I recognized the hardness of his body, his special smell, and his gentle touch as he stroked my hair. When I dared to look, all I can think to ask is, "Really, what happened?" "I quit." "You can't just quit-can you?" "In a way. My mission was accomplished. My time was about up. I passed on re-enlisting and told the brass I had personal business to attend to. So now I'm using up my accumulated leave until the discharge is processed." "Am I that personal business?" "Damn straight. I got a message a few weeks ago from old Dad. Don't ask how. Anyway, he filled me in on how things have been, well, developing since I left. He said you were way too good for me, and that while there may have been a few bastards in our family, they were all self-made men, not accidents of birth." "He shouldn't have done that. This was no accident," I said, touching my belly. "I don't want you here because you feel sorry for me." "I don't, honest. I'm, I'm just..." To my amazement, Matt looked away, but not before I saw a tear roll down his cheek. After a moment, he wiped a hand down his face. Then he turned back and gestured toward my protruding middle. "You love me that much?" "I do." Once again, he looked away and then turned back. "Maybe I've always loved you. I don't know-could have just been teenage lust, I suppose. The moment you and Kylie walked into the house last year, I was hooked. And that was a problem." "What problem?" Matt's smile came back as he took my hands in his. "The problem of my going back. We went over all that and you were right about my being selfish. It was something I had to do. The thing is, I didn't want to leave you with a bunch of promises and, to be honest, and I didn't want thoughts of you waiting for me messing up my mind." I didn't understand and probably never would, but I nodded. "Dad understood and didn't let me know about you and the baby until after it was all over. That took a lot longer than I'd counted on. He was right to wait. Because since then, you, and the baby, and Kylie and just life itself, that's all I can think about. I had to get out. I want life now, not more death, and it's because of you, because I love you. God, how I love you. Becky, will you please marry me?" For the second time in my life I was speechless. All I could do was smile and nod. Then we hugged and I cried, all the while grinning like a kid on Christmas. We kissed, and it made the first one seem like a chaste peck on the cheek. When we came up for air, I patted my very big belly. "I'm afraid it won't be much of a honeymoon." "That's all right. I'm counting on having a long life to make up for lost time. When's the baby due?" "Well, if your son will wait that long, around Christmas." "A boy, around Christmas." He seemed pleased with the idea. "And we're not even Jewish." "You're an idiot. But I do love you." "And I love you, too. Always will. Remember last Christmas, when we first made love and I said I liked your presents and the way you delivered them? Well, I still do." He paused, letting his big hands gently caress my belly. "It's just that I never counted on such a special Christmas present this year." Naturally, I started crying even harder and pressed his hands tighter against me. The baby picked that moment to kick. Matt laughed,



then stood and helped me out of my chair. "I believe we've just gotten a not too subtle hint from our son to get moving on this marrying business. Where's the nearest jewelry store? We need to buy some rings." "Wait. My mother will be back soon. We need to wait for her." "No problem. I called last night to say I was coming in, but you were giving Kylie a bath. Your mother answered the phone and told me to take a cab from the airport to the mall and meet you in the food court. She said we might want some time alone to talk things over and that she'd show up later." As always, my mother had been right. And for once, I was very, very glad.