

A Second Chance Part 1

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Loni was walking through the mall with Phyllis, her mother-in-law to be. She kept her eyes forward and refused to look in to the display windows because the reflected image in the polished glass of the display windows made her feel old and very unattractive. "Do I really look that bad? I'm only thirty and look a lot older," she said to herself. It was Springtime and the mall was hosting their annual bridal and fashion show. The main floor of the mall was jammed with tables for every manner of vendor needed to make the wedding reception a success. Disc jockeys, photographers, video companies were in abundance. There were dozens of representatives from every catering company and rental hall in the city. Limousine companies parked their newest rides in center court and their paint and chrome gleamed in the light. The tables for the florists and decorators had dozens of glossy pictures of the work they had done fanned out on the table along with binders full of more pictures. The travel agencies offered deals to exotic getaways for newlyweds looking for the perfect honeymoon destination. Phyllis had handfuls of literature from every table stuffed into a plastic bag given out at one of the first tables she stopped at. She then proceeded to stop at every table and took whatever they had to offer. Loni should have been excited as she was to be married in six months, but she could have cared less. Loni was only here because Phyllis had asked her to attend, otherwise she would have stayed home as she was not in the mood. Finally Phyllis stopped at a body and bath shop that was offering a major discount because of the big event. "I'm going in here, you can wait outside if you wish." "I'm going to go have a smoke." Her soon to be in-law fixed her with a disapproving look. "I thought you were going to quit? Brad does not like you smoking," she stated. "Until we get married, I am going to continue enjoying this vice," she responded controlling her anger. Loni headed to the smoking area located in one of the side hallways. As she walked, she noticed a large area enclosed by heavy curtains at the end of the center court. "That must be where the fashion show was being held," she said to herself and prayed that Phyllis didn't know about it and make her sit through it. As she smoked, she saw the bright colored light come on over the tops of the curtains amid a recorded fanfare of trumpets and drums. "Ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Kingston malls annual bridal and fashion show," she heard an unknown amplified voice say. "Now please give a warm welcome to our guest emcee. WLCW's afternoon drive time demon, Mr. Greg Alexander." Then she heard the emcee's voice and was so surprised that she dropped her cigarette. It was a voice that she knew better than any other voice in the world. She had heard it soft during pillow talk and loud when he was on stage. But not by that name. The voice belonged to Dan Logan and he had been hers many years

ago. She moved closer and tried to look through the opening to confirm what she had heard, but it was jammed with people. That's when she saw one of the pretty uniformed ambassadors and approached her. "When is the next show?" Loni inquired. "At 7:00PM," the uniformed lady responded with a smile. "Same emcee?" "Yes, isn't it exciting? We have him all weekend," she continued. "Is there a charge to attend?" "No, the show is free. You just have to be here early to ensure you get a seat." Loni thanked her and returned to the body and bath shop where she found Phyllis waiting. "Just how many cigarettes did you smoke?" she asked. "Do you mind if we cut this visit short? I am not feeling well." Loni fibbed "Probably just pre-marriage jitters," Phyllis said with a smile. "Probably," Loni responded forcing a smile on her face. "You go ahead and leave. I'm going to linger for awhile." Loni gave her a kiss on the cheek and headed for her car. She was glad that she insisted on meeting her there and not riding with her. Loni arrived at her apartment in record time and headed to the bathroom removing her clothes as she moved. As the warm water ran down her body, she asked herself one hundred questions. "How long had it been? Ten years? Fifteen years?" "Is he married or single?" "What are you thinking? You are engaged to be married." Wearing a robe and her hair wrapped in a towel she took a seat at the desk in her bedroom and dug out all her makeup. Brad didn't like her to wear a lot of makeup and to keep him happy she didn't, but tonight wasn't about him. She dried her hair and applied her makeup as she did in days long ago, then it was time for her to get dressed. She donned her softest and silkiest lingerie, another thing that was lost on Brad. To him it was just underwear and nothing to get excited about. Tan pantyhose were next before she headed to the closet. From the back she chose a business suit that had been hanging for too long. It was light blue in color and perfect for Spring. As she pulled the skirt up she had forgotten just how short it was and recalled that her first thought the day she tried it on was if Dan would think it was too short. She slipped on a pair of heels and then stepped in front of the mirror. She looked almost as stunning as she had so long ago. She blew the reflection a kiss before grabbing her purse and heading out the door. She arrived at the mall about a half an hour early and headed to the curtained enclosure. The seats were already filling up and she grabbed one in the back of the makeshift auditorium. As she sat and waited she asked herself more questions. "What are you going to say to him? Do you recall why you split up? Does he?." The overhead lights dimmed and a bank of bright colored lights came up and criss-crossed the audience and stage. She heard the same recorded voice that she had heard that afternoon greet the guests and introduce the emcee and that's when he bounded onto the stage. Wow, he looked even better than he did all those years ago. He had added some size to his arms and chest but had not gone overboard. His once almost jet black hair now had streaks of gray in it and it looked good on him. He moved around the stage gracefully as he called out the models. He made a few of them forget their decorum and laugh out loud at his comments, voices and facial gestures. That was Dan all right, the ultimate performer. In less than an hour the show ended. Loni headed toward the stage fighting the mass of people that were heading to the exit. As she moved she tried to think of something clever to say to him, but was unable to. She saw him surrounded by a group of very attractive ladies waiting for autographs so she slowed her pace. Finally he was alone and she approached. "Can I have an autograph?" was the only clever thing she could come up with.

He turned around with pen in hand and there was a long pause as his dark eyes locked on her gray ones. She half expected a sarcastic comment at her presence, so she almost fainted when he moved forward and took her in his arms and held her tight. "Loni," was all he said.