

APRIL BOOK ONE



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by Michelle Scott



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Cast of Players

Kevin Black, AIA: Apprentice architect at Phillips and Waters Architects;

Wendi Yamens: Kevin's wife and college girlfriend;

Elizabeth Adams: ASLA, landscape architect at Phillips and Waters Architects;

Mr. Oliver Phillips, FAIA: Founder of Phillips and Waters Architects;

Peter Waters, AIA: Principle designer at Phillips and Waters Architects;

Helen Collins: the receptionist, secretary, and girl Friday at Phillips and Waters;

Noah Rashalem AIA: Illustrator and interior designer at Phillips and Waters;

Susan Marshall: A cosmetic laser technician;

Connie: A friend of Susan's;

Duke Martin: An out of town client;

Janet Martin: Duke's wife;

Robin Gardner: A home brewer; and **Jill Lovejoy:** An attorney

CHAPTER I: January, Portland Oregon

Rain beat against black window. It rained all through the cold January weekend. Between Friday and Sunday night the gray clouds over Portland Oregon dropped an inch of water. It was dark at 4:30 in the afternoon, and the sun wouldn't come up until 8:30 in the morning.

Kevin sat in a chair, in a darkened room, his hands holding his face, tears streaming down his cheeks. He'd tried to control his grief, but had given-in to the pain the moment Wendy walked out the door. He was ashamed of his tears, but they wouldn't stop, like the relentless rain.

At least I didn't cry in front of her, he congratulated himself. With that thought the tears slowed.

His moment of calmness was shattered as the realization that she was really gone shook his thin frame. His long hair fell across his face and slowly matted there as the blonde locks soaked up his tears.

I wish I could hate her! Kevin thought, knowing it was impossible. Wendi had been his best friend for six years. She'd been loving and supportive. *At least until yesterday.*

Two flights below, sitting in a green Subaru Forester, still parked in front of the three story restored Victorian, Wendi was bent over the wheel, her own body shaking, tears covered her face, her knuckles white where they were wrapped tight, around the wheel.

The car was filled with the last of her possessions but it wasn't much, even considering that this third trip in the Forester completed the move of everything she thought of as hers.

Except Kevin. Yes, he is mine. He loves me, probably more than anyone ever has, or ever will! He's mine and I just threw him away. How could I! How could I hurt my sweet Kevin? She sobbed, knowing she'd done what she must, yet also knew she was more selfish than she'd ever admitted.

Her thick curly red hair shook with her whole body as

her self-recrimination continued. *I shouldn't have taken the car! God! Kevin paid for it. But I'll need it, and he won't. He goes ever where on his bicycle.* Another sob shook her as she remembered the first time she seen Kevin.

She was starting their sophomore year at the University of Oregon. It was a crisp fall day in September. Wendi had moved into the Belmont Club, a cooperative house. As her parents were backing out of the driveway, leaving her on her own for the academic year, she waved to them from the porch. She saw her mother wave back, trying to smile.

I'll see them at Thanksgiving and Christmas, shed promised herself. Wendi felt bad that her parents were unhappy, but was thrilled to be on her own.

As Wendi was about to go inside when she saw a girl with long blond ponytail, walk out of the house carrying the most elegant bicycle Wendi had ever seen. She turned to get a better look. The blonde was five-foot six-inches tall, and lean. The bike was between them, but Wendi could see enough to be disappointed at the stranger's flat chest.

The blonde was wearing Lycra bike shorts and a baggy bicycling shirt. In a single effortlessly motion she set the bike down on the driveway, pushed off, mounted the bike and turned into the street. The bicyclist moved smoothly and gracefully. In a moment the figure merged with the twenty-mile-an-hour traffic and vanished.

Wendi remembering going inside and asking her new roommate, Gwen, a junior who'd lived in the house the year before; "Who the blonde with the long ponytail was."

Gwen didn't know, at first. Only when Wendi described the bicycle did Gwen laugh, explaining, "That wasn't a girl! That's Kevin Black, he's an architecture major! He is sort of pretty, but he's a guy. If you're interested, he likes girls. But remember, he's an architecture major, they're tough to date; they work late every night and all through the weekend. The girls I know who date them call themselves 'architecture widows' because they never see their boyfriends."

Wendi knew, at that moment, she was in love. It had

taken her six years to fully understand why she'd felt then that she must have Kevin Black in her life.

Gwen's prediction had proved only partly true. Kevin was interested in girls, at least he was very interested in Wendi, and he made time to spend with her. Although she had spent more nights alone than she liked, Kevin made it up to her by proving to be a warm friend and an attentive lover.

And I've trough him away!

In the darkened condo's living room, Kevin continued to softly cry. *If she'd tell me why! After six years together, and three married, to divorce me, and not give a reason! I thought we were fiends, and that she respected me enough to be honest.*

Kevin remembered Wendi saying she needed her freedom, she loved him, but they'd married too young.

True, Kevin was only twenty-four, and Wendi a few months younger, still they'd been so sure of each other when, still in college, they married.

His parents died in a car crash when he was in high school. The money he'd inherited allowed him to marry, with the means to finish school, and more.

The summer job that Kevin had through his five years of architecture school promised to turn into a carrier. A promise that was fulfilled when Oliver Phillips, the firm's senior partner, came to his graduation and asked him to move back to Portland and join the firm. Wendi had done well too. Her degrees in art and advertising had landed her a job with the trendiest advertising firm in Portland, Webster and Kenton. After school they'd lived on less than they made, and saved the checks Kevin's parent's estate would continue to send him for life.

The exception to their frugality had been the one bedroom condominium in trendy Northwest Portland they'd bought with cash. It was in a three story Victorian apartment building that had been rehabilitated; less than a half-mile to the Wendi's Pearl District office, and less than a mile to the Goose Hollow offices of Phillips and Waters.

In the months since they'd moved to Portland Kevin knew they'd been happy. Wendy had been promoted, he'd become the firm's in-house architectural-engineer, and their every night and weekend together had been blissful, at least for Kevin. Peter Waters, the firm's designer, had mentioned that they were thinking of making Kevin a partner when he got his architectural license.

Now, out of the blue, Wendi told him, over breakfast, that she was moving out and filing for divorce. That terrible moment was thirty-six hours in the past. She'd packed that afternoon and moved out that evening. Coming back three times in their year-old Forester to finish.

Kevin had begged her to talk things over. He'd protested that the condo was Wendi's too, and maybe he should be the one to leave.

Wendi had put her finger softly over his lips.

"No, Kevin. We bought the condo with the money you inherited. I'd feel terrible if I stayed here and you left. It's yours. You picked it out and decorated it." Kevin tried to argue but Wendi just repeated herself.

"The condo and the furniture are yours. I like it, but I can be just as happy somewhere else. I won't disrupt your life more by making you move. Besides, I found somewhere else yesterday."

"You've been planning to leave me! For how long?"

She smiled softly at him, her thick red hair forming a halo around her face. "I've been thinking about it for several months. Each day I rejected the idea, but then it comes back. Friday, Marge, told me about a nice studio apartment a friend of was moving out of. Right then I knew, I'd take it."

She sat down and continued, gently trying to sooth the pain she saw in her husband's face. "It's not you, Kevin. I love you as much as I did the day we married. It's me. I need to be on my own for a while, maybe a long while. I've got to figure out who I am, before I can decide to be with anyone. Even someone as sweet as you."

He'd wanted to hug her, but she saw it in his eyes, and

held her hand up. "I've made up my mind. My moving out is the right thing for us both. I need to find myself, and you shouldn't be with someone who is exploring the things I feel I must."

"Wendi, is there someone else?" He hesitantly asked.

She shook her head, "Not now, Kevin, no – that wouldn't be fair to you. But there will be. I plan to date. I won't do it as your wife. That's why I'm filing for a divorce."

"Later, Wendi, after you have been on your own, might you come back?"

She almost began crying when he said it, and he'd realized that the conversation was as hard on her as it was on him.

"Kevin, I'm not going to come back. You need to know that. I won't have you pining and waiting for your ditzy wife to get her head together and then come home to you. I want you, no; I need you to know that we will not be together again, at least as a couple. I hope that in time we can be friends again.

"You see, Kevin, if you were waiting for me to come home and saw me with someone else, it would torment you. We've had a really good time together. I want us to part now, with as little anger as possible; that way the memory of our good times won't be clouded."

"But you've only taken your clothes!" He protested, "If we're separating I can't live with not being fair!"

"What I took was more than fair, Kevin. I took half the money out of our joint savings and checking accounts on Friday. That's a tidy sum. Besides, I have my own accounts. Over the last two years I've saved nearly all of my salary. All I spent was a few hundred on clothes. Kevin, with what I took, what I have, and my salary I'm well off. Don't even think about my taking any of the money you have saved, or your inheritance.

"I feel terrible about leaving you. That's why it took so long to make up my mind. I'm breaking my marriage vow to cherish and care for you. That's why I need you to have everything we bought with your money. I'm betraying you, and

I hate it. I won't steal from you too."

"But, Wendi, you didn't even take all your cloths."

She held up her hand, "I took what I like. I'm leaving the others for Kim. If she doesn't want them send them to Goodwill."

"It's Kim, isn't it? You're leaving because of her! I should never have let you know about Kim!"