

EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER THREE

A DREAM

The man emerged from the lake, his white bathing trunks dripping, his long hair streaming. He brushed back his tangled, silver locks.

It was Mason – alive and healthy. Mason with a smile on his tanned face.

Sabrina tried to run to him, but couldn't. Why did her limbs refuse to work?

She opened her mouth to shout his name...and nothing came out. Her voice had failed her as well.

Mason walked up and kissed her gently on the forehead. He smelled like the wind on a summer day, after a cool, refreshing rain. “Darling, I’m so pleased you’ve come. I’ve been looking forward to seeing you again.”

“Mason.” Sabrina forced the word out. It sounded like a whimper.

“I hope you’ve been well since I went away. Come, let’s take a stroll around the lake.”

Some feeling had begun to return to her arms and legs. Her body tingled all over.

They moved slowly at first, with Sabrina gripping Mason’s arm for support.

“Remember our long, leisurely walks on the beach?” he asked, looking down at her fondly.

Sabrina nodded. She felt the tears welling up in her eyes, and was afraid to speak.

They ambled along in silence until the sun began to set. Its fiery reflection seemingly transformed the still lake into a vast pool of blood.

Mason stopped walking and turned to face her. He took both her hands in his and said, “I’m sorry, dearest, but it’s time for me to go.”

“No, stay.” Sabrina couldn’t stop the tears from flowing any longer. “Stay with me just for tonight.”

“I want to desperately, Sabrina my love, but you know I can’t.”

She pulled away and unfastened the silver chain from around her neck.

“Please take this,” she said, her voice tearful. “It belongs to you.”

The ring slipped off quickly into the palm of her hand.

“How sweetly sentimental.” Mason accepted the wedding band and moved closer to the crimson-colored water, his back to her. “But you still don’t understand, do you, darling?”

He hurled the ring out into the middle of the lake, shattering its smooth mirrored surface.

“We don’t need these anymore,” he said. “We’re free now.”

Sabrina was shaking. She dropped the silver chain in the sand.

Without even a backward glance, Mason walked into the shallow lake. It had turned from red to black.

“Don’t go yet, *please*.” Sabrina followed him into the cold, murky water. The skirts of her beloved wedding dress became soaked and heavy. They wrapped around her legs, tripping her, slowing her down. “Mason, wait. Wait for me, please!”

She finally reached him in the knee-high water, and grabbed hold of his arm. He turned around and she clung to him, sobbing, with her head on his bare chest.

“Don’t leave me again,” she said, gasping. “I miss you. God, I miss you so much.”

His arms held her tightly.

“I’m right here,” he said.

Sabrina stopped crying. She nearly stopped breathing. That wasn’t Mason’s voice.

She slowly lifted her head off the man’s chest – and looked up.

Jeremy smiled.

Before she could move away, he leaned down and kissed her tenderly on the mouth.