

Chapter One of When I Fell for You

“I’ll be there at nine sharp, Mrs. Watson.” Dr. Blake Harrison checked his watch to verify if that was even possible.

It was just after seven in the morning and patients had begun to call him. Normally, his administrative assistant handled phone calls, but a few patients, such as Mrs. Watson, paid high retainers for exclusive access to him. Luckily it wasn’t an emergency, but she was concerned about a mole on her upper arm that had appeared overnight. It was more than likely a wart for this wasn’t the first time. She was somewhat of a hypochondriac and called him about anything, including a paper cut once because she was scared it would develop into a staph infection. Once he rules out its nothing serious, Mrs. Watson always keeps the conversation going—offering breakfast or lunch—and brags about her granddaughter who she wants him to meet the next time the young lady is in town. Most times he’d stay if he didn’t have another appointment soon after because Mrs. Watson was alone after losing her husband a few years back.

After hanging up, Blake did a couple of lunges and leg stretches, hoping to continue with his morning jog along the beach, but his cell phone rang again blocking out the funky yet classic tunes of The Gap Band in his earbuds. When he’d decided to offer concierge services as an extension of his medical practice last summer, he had no idea it would be a huge hit so fast and expand from Brunswick—where his office was located—to St. Simons Island and the surrounding Georgia islands. He’d hired two more doctors for the practice and another one for part-time concierge services which was now Blake’s full-time gig.

After chatting with another patient, he started jogging again at a steady pace and was humming along with the music for ten minutes when it was cut off once more by the ringing of his phone.

Groaning, he figured he’d push the ignore option and send it to voicemail until he saw it was his mother. He always answered when she called unless he had a patient.

“Hello, Mom,” he greeted, jogging slowly in place.

“I wanted to catch you before you went on your morning jog.”

“Too late. I’m over here on St. Simons.”

“Oh ... that’s different.”

“Yep, wanted a change of scenery. Figured the beach would be peaceful.” *But the phone keeps ringing.* “Is everything all right?” he asked with concern. His mother wasn’t a morning person.

“Yes, just wanted to thank you again for the healthy heart workshop for my sorority’s tea. They had a splendid time on Saturday.”

“Happy to help.”

“You know Soror Darlene’s daughter is such a lovely young woman. Wasn’t that nice of her to cater the luncheon for free? She’s very giving ... like you. Perhaps you can invite her the next time you go to the homeless shelter. I noticed you had a second helping of her peach cobbler. She used Georgia organic peaches and made the dough from scratch. None of that store-bought, canned fruit filling.”

Blake chuckled as he knew where this conversation was going to end up. He was happy with his present life; however, his mother was ready for a daughter-in-law and more grandbabies. His two sisters had married straight out of college and both had two children. He was the oldest, and according to his mother, apparently behind at age thirty-eight. However, life for him had flown by rather fast since graduating from medical school. He’d placed his focus strictly on his career to the point of losing a few good women along the way because he didn’t place them first in his life.

He chuckled. “Mother, stop trying to play matchmaker. Yes, she’s a lovely woman, but I’m not interested.”

“I saw you two chatting and exchanging phone numbers ... I thought perhaps—” her voice trailed into a dampened sigh.

“She was asking me about a medical issue for her boyfriend whose phone number she gave me.”

“I just want you to settle down with one good woman and stop being such a playboy.”

Scrunching his forehead, he pushed the mute button on the phone and let out a long groan. He wasn’t a playboy, yet his mother swore he was because while he dated she hadn’t met any of the women since his last long-term relationship, which ended over two years ago. Blake didn’t see the point of introducing someone to his family unless it was serious.

Unmuting the phone, Blake made sure to not sound frustrated upon speaking. “Mother, you know I’m not a playboy. Nowhere near it. When I meet the one, you will, too.”

“Okay, dear. I just want you happy. Finish your jog.”

“Love you, Mother.”

“Love you, too.”

After hanging up, Blake pivoted on his heel and decided to jog back in the direction toward the parking lot of the Coast Guard Station beach where he'd begun. The conversation with his mother filled his thoughts, drowning out the music in his ears. They'd had the same discussion off and on for the past year even though lately it seemed as if it was every time they spoke. At first he assumed there was a medical issue she wasn't disclosing, such as her breast cancer returning. However, his father reassured him that wasn't the case and when it was time for her yearly physical exam, there was nothing amiss.

Blake practically had the beach to himself minus a few other joggers, but it had begun to fill with aerobics and yoga groups now that the sun had fully risen. It was early spring so the island wasn't full of tourists yet, but no doubt with spring break just around the corner followed by Memorial Day that would all change which meant a busy season for him. Last summer—after placing ads at hotels and with the island vacation rental properties—vacationers called him for medical services ranging from simple issues like allergies to diagnosing liver cancer.

Slowing down, Blake placed his focus on the women's yoga class that was in the tree pose position. Their arms were straight up in the air with their hands clasped together. The ladies stood on their right leg as the left leg was bent at the knee with the foot resting on the lower, inner thigh. All of the women were focused and staring ahead at the ocean while soft relaxation music played from a nearby CD player.

One of the participants caught his attention immediately and it wasn't her loud, neon green yoga pants either. Her full, luscious lips, doe-shaped eyes, and cute little nose that graced her gorgeous face caused him to jog backwards to take in the beautiful scene before him. Her thick, jet black hair was pulled up in a messy side ponytail, and her honey-dipped skin glistened, sending his manhood to attention. The slight curve of her supple lips hinted she was aware of his presence yet she continued to stare straight ahead.

As much as he wanted to stand there all day and watch the poised beauty, he realized that wasn't an option when the instructor glanced at him with a stern expression for interrupting her class. Some of the women began to whisper, and a few even slipped off balance from their tree pose, but not the one whose dark, thick eyelashes fluttered over her gaze out to the sea. He

mouthed sorry to the instructor and gave a slight nod to the woman who sent his pulse on an adrenaline rush.

Chastising himself for not jogging along the beach sooner, he continued up to a row of benches in front of the parking lot and did a few cool down stretches while his eyes never left the scene before him. Their backs were to him now, but Blake was even more impressed by how the mystery woman's curvy hips and lifted butt rested in her yoga pants.

Checking the time, Blake sighed knowing if he didn't jump in his car at that second, he'd be late for his nine o'clock appointment and he needed to go home to shower. However, when the women changed poses, he sat on a bench and decided to take in the scene for a few more minutes. As The Gap Band's "Outstanding" crept through his earbuds, he had to admit the only woman in his view was indeed outstanding.

"That's right, ladies. Stretch as far as possible and hold your pose," Danielle Sampson instructed to her class of twenty women who struggled to hold their downward dog pose on the bumpy beach sand. She walked in between the ladies, offering assistance and complimenting them. "Doing a great job, Reagan."

"Thanks, Dani."

If we don't change positions soon I'm going to fall flat on my face, Reagan Richardson thought as she kept her eyes focused on the yellow rose on her pink beach towel. Her right hand wasn't lying as flat as possible even though she'd tried to smooth out the sand before laying out the towel. When she'd registered for the beginner's yoga class three weeks ago to relieve stress, she thought surely 'Yoga on the Atlantic' at seven on Monday mornings would be the perfect way. While it had helped with unwinding and starting out her week on a good note, Reagan's mind still drifted to wedding gowns, flower arrangements, cakes, and irritated bridesmaids who weren't happy with the color of their dresses. However, relaxation, being healthy, and staying stress free were her main priorities. Having lost her mother when she was only four years old because of a heart condition, she always feared it could happen to her as well. At age thirty-one, Reagan was a few years shy of the age when her mother had passed, and now that she was growing older, the thought of having the same fate scared her at times.

Exhaling in and out slowly as instructed, her focus was once more intruded by her thought process that wouldn't shut off and had unraveled her for the past few minutes. Reagan couldn't shake the handsome man who had jogged by moments before from her brain. She'd tried to keep her attention straight ahead on the family of dolphins swimming in the ocean while in the uncomfortable tree pose. But when the view was interrupted by the drop-dead gorgeous gentlemen with the amazing smile that jogged backwards just to stare at her, she nearly fell over. However, she didn't want to completely embarrass herself and fall head over heels in front of him. Instead, she stood firm in the sand to keep her balance until he was out of sight and then slipped out of the pose.

He had a lean athletic body with muscles stretching out the fraternity T-shirt and black jogging shorts which weren't doing anything to hide his toned thighs and butt. He wasn't overly tall. She figured right at six-feet which was a nice height in her opinion. Not too short or too tall but just right for her at five-foot-six. She laughed at herself for even being concerned about his height. It wasn't like she would ever date him, but she always preferred to kiss a man without standing on her tippy toes. Yet at the same time be able to rest her head on his chest if barefoot and not topple over him if she wore heels.

Goodness, Reagan wanted to turn in his direction to see where on earth he'd disappeared, but more than likely to the parking lot. She hadn't noticed him before as some of the early morning joggers were familiar to her. He was probably a tourist which meant it was highly unlikely that she'd ever see him again, but at least he'd made her smile for a moment with the amusing backward jog.

"That's it, ladies. Just ... a few ... more minutes," Dani stammered in a shaky voice. "And then ... one ... more ..."

Reagan wanted to break her pose to peek at Dani because her words were staggered and breathless. She'd only been walking around and assisting; plus, there was a breeze yet she seemed as if she was flushed. Reagan was concerned for her instructor whose summer wedding she was in the process of planning.

As Dani passed her once more, Reagan whispered, "Are you okay?"

"I'll make it. We're almost ..."

Dani's voice trailed off as she collapsed right next to Reagan.

“Oh my goodness!” Reagan screeched as she stooped to Dani’s side along with the other women. Dani was conscious as she tried to sit up, but fell to the sand once more while mumbling that she was okay.

“Stand back, ladies. I’m a doctor,” a man’s deep voice commanded as he knelt beside Dani with a black bag, which he immediately opened and pulled a stethoscope out of. Turning his head, he rested dark brown eyes on Reagan. “What’s her name?”

Reagan’s heart skipped a beat as she realized it was the handsome jogger from earlier but now wasn’t the time to be in awe over him. “Danielle. Her name is Danielle.”

He placed his attention on Dani as she continued trying to sit up. “No, stay still, Danielle,” he said in a calm, soothing voice. “I’m Dr. Harrison and here to help. When was the last time you ate something?”

“Last ... night. I was running late this ... morning ...”

“Are you hyperglycemic?”

“Yes ... I thought I’d be okay until after the class.”

“Does anyone have any snacks or fruit in their tote bags?” he asked, glancing around.

One of the women scurried to her bag, unpeeled a banana, and handed it to Dani.

Reagan held Dani’s hand and spoke encouraging words while Dr. Harrison tested a prick of blood from her finger with a blood sugar tester.

“Yep, its low. Do you have any other health issues I need to know about?” he inquired, checking her temperature with an ear thermometer and then her pulse as she snacked on the fruit.

“No. No. Usually I’m on top of this, but lately I’ve been busy with adding on more yoga classes and stressing over my upcoming wedding.”

“Well, I understand. However, your health is very important. I’m sure your future husband will agree.”

Dani gave a half smile and a nod. “Yeah, he would.”

“I suggest resting if possible for the rest of the morning and eat a full meal. Do you have someone to drive you home?”

“I will,” Reagan volunteered.

He turned to Reagan once more, but this time instead of the concernment for Dani, it was replaced with the intriguing stare he’d presented earlier to her. A smile smoothed across his chiseled face and Reagan couldn’t help but smile back almost on demand. The man had ruffled

her feathers, causing her to not be able to concentrate because she'd had an inkling he was still somewhere nearby checking her out. Apparently, her assumption was correct, and she was grateful he could help Dani.

They both stood at the same time while some of the ladies continued to comfort their instructor.

“Perfect ... um ... Ms. ...?” He held out his hand to her as his eyes gripped onto hers tight.

For a moment, she was oblivious to her surroundings as his intense gaze held her in a hypnotic state as if he was waving a pocket watch in front of her. “I’m Reagan ...” She paused, sliding her right hand into his while concentrating to keep her voice steady. His palm was warm. Comforting. Almost familiar, as if he’d caressed her body before, and a burning sensation washed over her skin at the erotic thought. “Reagan Richardson.”

A knowing smile inched up his left jaw. “Ah, *you’re* Reagan Richardson.”

He squeezed her hand before letting it go. Her normal reaction would be to shove them in her pockets, but unfortunately her yoga pants didn’t have any, so she clasped them in front of her. Heat penetrated Reagan’s cheeks and a gulp wedged in her throat, but luckily she sounded normal upon speaking.

“You act as if we know each other.” *Trust me, I would have remembered meeting a handsome man like you.*

“We spoke briefly over the phone once. Zaria Braxton planned my New Year’s Eve Bash. Her husband, Garrett, is one of the partners at my practice.”

“Oh, *you’re* Blake Harrison,” she realized, remembering she did speak with him pertaining to the rules for the massive fireworks display he wanted to have at the party. “Zaria and Garrett always speak very highly of you. I heard the party was a success.”

“It was over the top. Zaria did far more than I expected.”

“Of course. Precious Moments Events is first-class every time.” A nervous sensation rippled through her body at his closeness and she stepped back. Men rarely made her nervous, even the drop-dead handsome ones like Blake, yet there was something enduring about him.

“Well, I may need one of you to plan my parents’ 40th wedding anniversary. My sisters and I are, but ... um, I think we could use some professional reinforcements.”

“No problem. We can do that.” She glanced over at Dani who was breathing easy again and chatting with the ladies. “Well, thank you for helping Dani. I’m going to whisk her home now.”

Reagan noted a solemn, reluctant expression cascade over his face as if he wanted to continue chatting and it tugged at her because she didn’t want to leave either.

Reaching into his back pocket, Blake pulled out his wallet and sifted through it until he slid out a business card. “If you ever need any medical concierge services, I’m your man.”

The thought of a coughing fit on the spot crossed her mind, but she shoved it aside. However, the way he said ‘I’m your man’ had her envisioning him as such, causing her to remember Zaria stating that when you meet a man you’ll know within the first five minutes whether you only like him for a friend, to date, just sex, or more. This was the first time Reagan thought of more and her skin prickled with tiny goose bumps.

“Thank you, Dr. Harrison.”

He ran a sultry gaze over her once more, and hesitated as if he wanted to say something else but changed his mind. “Nice meeting you, Reagan.”

After he checked on Dani, said good-bye to the ladies, and strolled to the parking lot, Reagan was able to breathe again.

Blake read over the blood test results from a patient who’d had slightly high cholesterol and was relieved that the levels were back to normal. Thanks to changing his diet and exercise without the need of medication, Blake hoped that the patient would stick to the regiment considering his wife was ill and had been overcome with worry. Picking up the phone, he called with the good news and promised to stop by their home later that week.

Checking his watch, he realized he had a few more minutes before he had to leave for his next appointment at noon with a patient on Jekyll Island. Closing his eyes for a moment, Blake was transported back to earlier that morning and meeting the lovely Reagan Richardson. He hated like hell that he couldn’t stick around longer to chat with her and was even more upset that he’d didn’t ask for her private number, but he understood she needed to take her friend home. He’d found a number on the Precious Moment’s website for her, but when he called a voicemail greeting with another woman’s voice stated they were closed. He didn’t bother leaving a message considering it was a business number, and while he did want her to assist with his

parents' dinner party, he didn't want to discuss business with her. He wanted to ask her out and not over a voicemail that more than just her had access to.

He figured he could jog by again next week to see her, but a week was too long of a time to wait. By then some other man could've met her, asked her out, and she'd fallen in love by then. Nope, that couldn't happen.

Scooting his chair away from his desk, Blake headed toward the door and across the hall to Dr. Garrett Braxton's office.

"Hey, man," Blake greeted, leaning on the door jamb. "You have a minute?"

Garrett nodded as he sipped his coffee and motioned for Blake to sit in the brown leather chair in front of his desk. "I have a patient waiting in the exam room but Jessica is with him at the moment drawing blood." He closed a file he was reading over. "What's up?"

Blake shut the door and slammed into the chair, noticing that Garrett had cut his fro down to a low fade since he last saw him on Friday.

"I met Zaria's cousin, Reagan, this morning. Why haven't you introduced me to her? She's the most beautiful woman I ever laid eyes on."

Garrett's eyebrows rose along with a sly grin. "Ah ... I see." Crossing his hands on the desk, he leaned toward his friend. "That would explain the extra bounce in your step when you arrived earlier."

"What do you know about her? Is she seeing anyone? I checked her ring finger so I'm assuming she's not engaged. I'm not one for stealing someone's woman, but she's the type that's making a brother give it some thought."

"You're in luck," Garrett joked. "She's single, but ..."

"But what? She's a psycho?" he asked, slapping his knee. "Damn. Maybe I could overlook that this one time."

"No. She's a sweetheart, but has a habit of dumping men early in the relationship. I don't think any man has lasted longer than six months with her."

"That's because she hadn't met me yet."

"Zaria thinks it's because Reagan's father left her mother right before Reagan was born and has daddy abandonment issues. He's barely in her life now. I think she's scared of being hurt and breaks up with them before they break up with her. But hey, maybe you'll be the one to

make her fall. If not, you can always date Mrs. Watson's granddaughter, or worse ...someone on your mother's list." Garrett cracked a sarcastic smile.

"Don't remind me. I had the pleasure of seeing more pictures of the granddaughter today over breakfast. She's cute, but I'm not interested. Anything else about Reagan?"

"She can cook. Remember the office Christmas party and Zaria brought the Shepherd's pie? Reagan baked it."

"Mmm ... it was delicious. I do love a woman that can throw down in the kitchen."

"So are you going to ask her out?"

"I didn't ask for her number ..." he said, kicking himself for that misstep.

"You're slipping, bro. Reagan has a new number, and I don't have it yet. Just call Zaria." Checking his watch, Garrett stood and swiped his white coat from the back of his chair. "They're together right now for their weekly brunch meeting. I'm sure she won't mind. She's always saying how she wants Reagan to find a good man."

"I'll do that before I leave for Jekyll." Standing, Blake headed toward the door with Garrett. "Thanks, man."

"No problem. I'll give Zaria a heads up. Let me know if Reagan says yes."

Blake frowned as he opened the door and stepped into the hall. "If? You mean *when* she says yes."

"Haven't heard you talk like this in a long while about a woman."

"Hadn't met the one yet."