

Blood Ties A Broken Heart

Cassandra Hawke

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She halted her scan of the gathered mourners. He stood at the back of the crowd, different, but the same. She was attracted to, and yet repulsed by, the familiarity of his features. A barrage of emotion slammed into her chest, clenching her heart in a vice of anger entwined with unrequited passion. Only Regan's relentless grip on her arm ensured she stayed upright as her knees buckled under the unexpectedness of his sudden appearance. Her throat, already dry and rasping from grief, now burned with sandpaper dryness as she tried to swallow. She stared at him, mapping every contour of his beloved face, the tinge of gray at the temples, the new lines around his eyes. She wanted desperately to reach out and touch him, to feel the smoothness of his tanned skin under her fingertips, her body sizzling inside with unbridled sexual need. In her mind, she heard his voice, smelled his scent, and remembered the taste of his mouth on hers. Her chest clamped tight against the sobs that threatened to choke her.

A whimper of agonized misery escaped from between tightly compressed lips, and Regan squeezed her hand, thinking to comfort her in her grief. Beyond responding, she clutched frantically to the last threads of composure as she stared silently at him.

Ashford St. Clair, the love of her life, the destroyer of her dreams. Her beloved, who had turned his back on their love when he had very publicly put his sister before Rylee in a nasty tangle of horse doping, misguided loyalty and lies.

Then he was gone, farther back in the gathered mourners. She searched the unfamiliar faces surrounding her with a despairing need to find him, to catch another glimpse of the man she loved.