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<Separate Paths>

by <Growing Desires>



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-Growing Desires

Chapter One

Abi and Carl met in school; they vaguely knew of one another but didn't really hang out much at that time. College was where the few hundred people from their school would narrow down to a smaller number as people started to drift apart as their lives ultimately were on different courses.

However, not Abi and Carl's.

Their story was only just beginning as it would turn out.

They shared the same class and in the first year they didn't say much more than a "Hello" it was the second year that their journey really began. The drop off from first year students in the class to second year was quite substantial and it left Abi and Carl only really knowing each other so they did what most mildly introverted people would do.

They sat next to one another.

It was only natural that over time they grew closer, there were hours of study in the library and even a few late-night cram sessions in a 24-hour fast-food place. They also had a mutual friend who shared both friendship groups with them from school. As social dynamics changed so did how they hung out.

At the end of the second year there was a big party with lots of new people from various classes in college but most importantly here, it was where Abi and Carl could mingle and hang out. With the added confidence of alcohol, Carl made his move.

He had enjoyed her company for quite some time and maybe it was his lack of girlfriend or maybe it was a genuine appreciation for Abi as a person, he drunkenly planted his lips on hers and Abi's appreciation of his character, help throughout the year and thoughtfulness in general meant that she reciprocated the gesture.

Abi herself was a rather lithe girl, always had been, she was hardly 105lbs and stood at a tiny 5'2, she wasn't some sort of ultra curvy bombshell that most men, including Carl, lusted over. However, Abi was kind, funny, smart and as it would come to fruition, very loyal, passionate and loving.

Carl wasn't anything other than average on the outside, he was pretty slim himself, not a massive amount of muscle about him. He wanted to change that, so he joined the gym. It was something he had wanted to do for quite some time, but he was a bit lazy in reality. Thankfully for him, he had a good motivator. Abi.

After they moved on from college they had spent a lot of time over the summer having their honeymoon period. They got together in June and thanks to a summer free from most commitments, they just went to the gym and hung out.

September would bring change and their first hurdle.

Abi and Carl were about to veer off down different career paths.

Abi was an academic person; she had always loved education, and she was dedicated and passionate about making something of her course and career. As a result, she decided to go to university.

Carl on the other hand was not an academic, he was gifted and lazy, he couldn't stand another minute of education, so when his results came through and the recruiter was suggesting he join Abi in university, he ultimately decided that it wasn't worth the crippling debt. Carl would stay home and get a job. The first few months he built up enough money to get a deposit so that he could move out and start renting.

It was here that their paths started to diverge.

The two youngsters had really hit it off during the summer, there was clearly a connection

between the two of them, they knew it wasn't just "Summer Loving" as his Mum had suggested, trying to help him break up with Abi instead of doing the long distance thing. However, Carl was much more committed and determined than even he realised.

They had a very deep and serious conversation about what to do and how to proceed but within minutes of starting the conversation it was clear to both of them that the other was very committed to the relationship and it would take much more than 400 miles to keep them apart.

Reality set in when Carl was driving back from Abi's university accommodation, it was a long drive home that made him realise all the things he was going to miss.

Long calls, texts and even video calls, if her roommates were out. These were the tools they had to keep the fire going. A few months into the year it was very quickly apparent that they would not be able to meet as often as they would like.

The coursework was relentless and tough, Abi's job was a requirement as she was in the big city now and any free time needed to be getting more money for her to be able to afford groceries. The gym membership almost went down the drain but Carl's offer of buying her things was always rejected except for her gym pass. He found it fun; they would go to the gym at the same time and although they weren't physically near, it still allowed them to feel close because they would share the details of their workouts and push each other.

Carl wasn't exactly free to get up to see Abi either, he had joined his father in his business, he was a glorified secretary but with his computer knowhow he was doing more than his fair share and even helping modernize an IT system that was probably out of date 15 years prior. This was a full-time job, business wasn't exactly great, so the pay wasn't amazing, as a result Carl needed to work in a bar on the weekends.

Time was not in their favour.

For now.

However, summer was coming around. Carl might've been very busy, but he knew that the first week after Abi finished University, it was time to take a break from work. He didn't care about the bar and thankfully he was replaceable. Carl's dad might've been a bit more reluctant to let his

tech whizz kid go but he knew about Abi, so he obviously agreed.

Abi

Hey, the train is pulling in... I'll see you soon!

Carl

I almost can't wait!

Abi

It's almost over... I've missed you so much.

Carl

Me too.

Carl put his phone back in his pocket and stood on the platform waiting for Abi to appear from the carriage. He wasn't sure what one it was, but he didn't have great visibility because he had to wait behind a barrier. He waited and waited and still couldn't see her. Carl was about to pick up his phone when he felt a tap on his shoulder.

He turned around and saw Abi, but before he could say anything his jaw hit the floor.

Abi had changed.

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