

Kerri

Recaptured Love

by

Janet A. Nicolet

**TheEbookSale Publishing
Limerick, Ireland**

Copyright 2009 © by Janet A. Nicolet

©**All rights reserved.** No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publishers or author, except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.

First Edition

Cover designed by: Christina Sims

All characters and events portrayed are fictitious and any resemblance to incidents, or persons, living or dead, are purely coincidental. Any interaction with the characters is purely fiction.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

ISBN: 978-1-84961-004-9

**Published by: TheEbookSale Publishing
Limerick, Ireland**

Also available in print: ISBN 978-1-84961-006-3

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my four children, Cheri, James, Richard, and Lori for their love and support. They are truly God's gifts to me.

Acknowledgments

My heartfelt thanks to:

David Hanson and James Nicolet for their outstanding editing,

Bernice Riley for her editing support, as well as her gift of friendship,

Christina Sims for capturing the essence of the story in the cover design, and

Desiree Anderson, Sherry Anderson, Erik Byhardt, Pat Sabiston, Joyce Soares and Lisa Wilkerson, my critique group in Panama City, Florida, for their invaluable analysis and encouragement while birthing this book.

I appreciate Michael Lee and Bill Brooks of the U.S. Border Patrol, and Chelci Pittenger for sharing information in their specific field of expertise.

Last, but by no means least, I owe a special debt of gratitude to Richie O'Brien, publisher for RealTime Publishing for extending to me knowledge and support in the world of book publishing.

Other books by Janet A. Nicolet:

Vintage Years, *A Fulfilling Life After Divorce* 2007

Kerri, *An Incredible Journey* 2008

Order the Kerri series online at www.thebooksale.com or www.amazon.com

The author can be reached at: janbythebay21@juno.com

Chapter 1

At 4 a.m., the air, heavy with humidity like that in a steamy sauna, hung over the small central Texas town of Rancho Vista. DJ's alarm went off, causing him to jump out of bed as though shot out of a cannon. Standing there in his underwear, he looked around his pitch-black bedroom and tried to get his bearings.

Shaking his head to clear it, he sat back down on the edge of the bed. His shoulders slumped over, chin resting in his hands, his heart was pounding a mile a minute. Reaching over to his nightstand, he shut off the alarm that had continued to ring, *phew...glad it's only my alarm clock. I thought it was the tornado alert at school.*

Sleep had been hard to come by the past night. Tossing and turning woke him several times. In a quick move, his head reared back causing him to sit up tall, "Hey, what day is it, anyway?"

"It's Friday," came a drowsy voice from the bed across the room. "Thanks a whole lot for waking me up."

"Sorry, Andrew. Go back to sleep." He had completely forgotten about his new stepbrother, now a roommate.

DJ's eyes blinked several times as he walked to the bathroom. Then, throwing his fist into the air, he proclaimed, "I'm leaving today!" He had anticipated this day for weeks.

Turning on the shower, he mumbled, "Hope Uncle Cal doesn't oversleep. It would be awful if we were late meeting up with the others." Stepping into the shower he lathered himself with his favorite smelling body wash, shea butter, which he thought smelled like coconut and caused

his teenage mind to always drift off to thoughts of food. Shaking his head, he brought himself back to reality, *guess I'd better hurry up*. He continued to allow the pulsating water from the shower head to beat against his back a moment longer. It felt so good. *I could stay here for forever, but I'd better get a move on.*

One at a time, family members emerged from their bedrooms. Kerri, DJ's mom, knocked on his younger sister's door, "Sissy, time to get up."

DJ's new stepfather, Joey, yawned as he continued buttoning his shirt while walking toward the living room.

Still rubbing her eyes, Sissy appeared in her doorway, "Why do I have to get up this early?"

"We're going to sit down to breakfast as a family before DJ leaves," said her mother, unlocking the front door and reaching down to pick up the morning paper from off the porch.

Sissy closed her bedroom door, a deep frown upon her face *what's so special about DJ leaving. I'm glad he's going to be gone for a while.*

Within moments, Andrew, Joey's twelve-year-old, came out into the hallway and slowly made his way to the living room. "DJ's alarm woke me up. Don'tcha think this is kinda early to get up?"

"It's early," agreed Kerri with a grin, reaching over to ruffle his hair.

Jerking his head back from her hand, Andrew said, "DJ's the one who's leaving, so why do I have to get up this early?"

"Andrew. That's enough," said his father. "I don't want to hear you talk to Kerri like that again."

"But, Dad."

"That was disrespectful. Now apologize to her."

"It wasn't disrespectful. I was just telling the truth."

Glaring at Andrew, "THAT'S JUST ABOUT ENOUGH, YOUNG MAN. Now apologize to Kerri."

“I’m sorry, Kerri.”

Kerri smiled at him, hoping to defuse his irritable attitude. “Apology accepted. Andrew, I’ll tell you what. You can crawl back into bed as soon as DJ leaves. How does that sound?” She looked over at her husband, to get his approval, and he winked back at her.

Andrew yawned and nodded his head in agreement, still a bit uncomfortable with his recently acquired step-mom.

“Sissy, please give me a hand in the kitchen,” said her mother.

Sissy’s answer, after hearing Joey’s reprimand to Andrew, turned out to be not as *unpleasant* as she felt. Instead, she merely said, “Okay.” But she thought, *I really want to go back to bed. There’s no reason for me to get up just because my brother is going away.*

Joey stayed in the living room helping DJ go over the checklist of items he would need for his trip. His church youth group was heading to Mexico for a ten-day mission trip helping to renovate a building, making it into an orphanage.

“I think you’ve got everything,” said Joey, checking off the last item and laying the list on the coffee table.

“Hope so.”

Joey reached for his wallet, “Here’s a little extra money just in case you run short. Your mom and I are very proud of the way you’ve handled everything, especially that you earned your own money for this trip.”

“Thanks. It turned out easier than I first thought it would. If Uncle Cal hadn’t hired me to help him build the garage for Grandpa’s neighbor, I don’t know what I would have done for money. But, do you know what?”

“What?”

“The best part is that I learned a lot about building stuff from Uncle Cal. Hopefully some of it will come in handy while I’m ‘south of the border’.” Beginning to walk

away, he turned back and said, “I also think it’s great that Uncle Cal is going with us.”

Watching DJ leave the room, Joey thought, *it must have been hard for DJ growing up without a father in the house. He seems to be all right with me as his step-dad, but I guess only time will tell. I think this trip would be good for him.*

The overpowering aroma of bacon frying drifted throughout the house. Kerri, preparing the pancake batter, laid the spoon aside and walked to the doorway of the kitchen and called, “DJ, you ought to call your Uncle Cal to make sure he’s up. He worked all day yesterday on that shed for your grandparents and he just might oversleep.”

“Okay, Mom. I thought about that earlier, but I got busy.”

“Kerri, can I help you in the kitchen?” asked Joey.

“No thanks, sweetie. Sissy and I have it under control.”

He walked into the kitchen, poured himself a cup of coffee and sat down at the breakfast table, enjoying being near his new bride.

A little over two years ago, Kerri Sanders and Joey Ramirez met while attending classes at the local community college. They went together during that time, but enjoyed very few real dates, since Joey worked evenings and weekends at an electronics store.

Another factor that kept their romance from developing any faster was that each had carried unresolved emotional baggage into their relationship.

Kerri’s regretful marriage to David left her seeing herself as unworthy of a *good* man’s love. During her courtship with Joey, her biggest issue with him stemmed from his not wanting to go to church. He skirted the issue

every time she invited him to go with her, never giving a good reason for his refusal.

Joey, on the other hand, was unaware that the bitterness he held toward God for his wife's death from a car accident had left emotional scars. The root of that bitterness had gone very deep. Those feelings were contrary to his years growing up, as he was a happy child always looking forward to attending Sunday school and church with his grandmother.

For months after his wife's funeral, he slept very little and had nightmares bombarding his mind about her accident. During those long nights he found himself asking God, "Why? Why? She was such a good woman. Why did you let her die?"

Resolving those issues *did* come in time for both Kerri and Joey, but only after each had accepted the fact that they did have a problem and reached out for help.

Finally the happy wedding day arrived for the two. She found herself ecstatic that her whole family was in attendance, unlike the day she married David.

Her first wedding took place at the home of a justice-of-the-peace, with only two friends in attendance as witnesses. All four were clad in blue jeans and tee shirts.

Kerri cried almost to the point of hysteria, as the two drove from the wedding ceremony to the tiny one-bedroom trailer that David had rented in a shabby run-down mobile home park on the outskirts of town. The events that took place that day were not at all like what she had envisioned as a young girl growing up.

Later that afternoon, several of David's buddies joined them at the trailer and the rest of that evening they sat around the trailer drinking beer and watching football on TV. It turned out to be the first of many days that Kerri would feel so alone.

Many nights thereafter in bed alone, with David out drinking, she could hear her parents' voices saying, "*Kerri,*

do you really want to go through with this wedding?” or “Kerri, have you really prayed about this, and know that God approves?” That’s when the tears came, as she knew she had fallen short of her parents’ aspirations for her - and also for herself.

Her brother, Cal, had admonished her several times about her impending marriage to David, which only drove a wedge in the relationship between the siblings. She remembered him saying, *“Kerri, you’re smarter than this. What’s happened to you? You’ve turned to stinkin’ thinkin’.”*

“Oh, sure. You’ve always done everything perfect, huh?”

“Not everything, but I sure wouldn’t deliberately throw my life away like you’re going to do,” commented Cal.

Now, years later as she stood in front of a mirror after putting on her wedding dress, Kerri waited for the ceremony to begin. Peering into that mirror she said, *“Kerri, yesterday is gone. Today is a new day and you are going to focus on it. Hopefully, you no longer look through rose-colored glasses.”*

Making a couple of turns around to look at all sides of her dress, she cocked her head as she looked in the mirror and thought *I really don’t look too bad for a 34-year-old mother of two. I sure hope I’m like my mother and age gracefully.*

She knew in her heart that today would be different, as she had her parents’ and siblings’ approval, but most importantly, God’s approval. That meant everything to her.

Joey, fidgeting with his hands first behind his back and then folding them together in front of him, stood with the minister to his left and Kerri’s brothers, Cal and Ken, his attendants, to his right. The three young men looked handsome in gray suits, white shirts, and lavender silk ties.

Joey looked down at his Mom sitting on the front pew, and gave her a big smile.

She, in turn mouthed, "I love you."

He grinned back.

The four men watched as Kerri's sister, Cathy, followed by Kerri's daughter, Sissy, moved in the familiar wedding cadence with the music, both in lovely lavender chiffon dresses.

Tommy and Sharon Evans, Kerri's parents, generously paid for the wedding. They were more than anxious to see their daughter have the happy and memorable wedding she always wanted.

Kerri emerged from an anteroom, wearing a knee-length ivory chiffon dress with a wide lavender satin sash, in keeping with her chosen color scheme. The color of the dress emphasized her beautiful auburn hair that fell to her shoulders.

She carried her mother's small white Bible that was adorned with a large orchid. The Bible was the traditional something *borrowed*, but also stood for something *old*. Her mother had carried that Bible when she wed Tommy, some forty years earlier.

The blue garter worn by her sister-in-law, Cindy, on her wedding day, became the something *blue*.

The something *new*; her beautiful ivory dress.

Kerri stepped into the doorway of the open French doors that lead into the chapel. Before walking down the maroon-carpeted aisle with her father at her side in his wheelchair, she leaned over and kissed him on the forehead, and whispered, "Daddy, thanks for everything."

Tears in his eyes and with a choked voice, he whispered, "I love you."

A horrible car accident two years earlier, while living in Seoul, Korea, left Tommy crippled, but not completely immobilized. All the time growing up, Kerri saw him as her

hero, having spent twenty-four years in the Army, and distinguishing himself in the Vietnam War.

The two started down the aisle to Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*. When they were only a few feet away from the altar, Joey, overcome by her beauty, took a deep breath and let it out slowly, *She's gorgeous*.

The sad memories of Kerri's first wedding faded away as exciting new memories were being made at that very moment.

Just three weeks before the wedding, Joey and Kerri found a home to rent that was a few blocks from the college she attended. Kerri's apartment had been suitable for her and her two kids, but with Joey and his son, Andrew, coming to live with them, it was imperative they find a three-bedroom home. The well-landscaped front yard and the fenced-in backyard with a large patio drew the pair to this particular home.

Several of their friends helped move Kerri's furniture and household goods to the new home just days before the two became husband and wife. Kerri, DJ, and Sissy moved in and unpacked, hoping to have their new home halfway settled before the wedding.

Everything was changing in Kerri's life, and unknown as to what the future held for the newlyweds, she could only believe that with Joey at her side and God leading the way, it would be good.

But would that be too much to ask?

End of Sample

Purchase here:

http://www.thebooksale.com/zen-cart/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=89&products_id=462