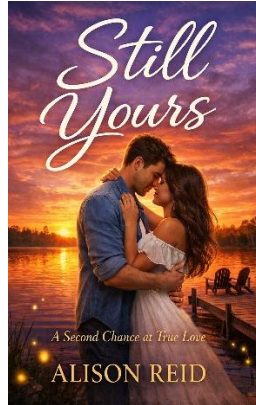


Still Yours

by Alison Reid



Kiera had no chance to process his words.

One heartbeat—and then his mouth was on hers.

It wasn't gentle. It wasn't hesitant. His kiss came hard and hungry, like a dam breaking after years of restraint. The shock of it jolted through her, leaving her breathless. She went still, not from fear, but from the dizzying heat of it—the sheer, unexpected force behind his desire. She hadn't braced for this. She hadn't braced for him.

Her instincts kicked in fast. She clenched her teeth, turned her head, her hands pressing against his chest in protest. “Andrew—”

But he didn't retreat. His body remained taut with purpose, holding steady rather than pinning. One hand lifted—not cruelly, but firmly—to guide her face back toward his. His touch demanded, not dominated, and his mouth never strayed far, hovering just close enough to steal her breath.

The door at her back left her nowhere to go. His body was all around her—shoulders, chest, hips—heat pouring from him like fire through her thin dress. The scent of him wrapped around her: spice, sweat, something darker. Her senses reeled. He was too close. Too much.

She opened her eyes, searching for escape—but he was already there, staring back at her with storm-grey intensity. Not cold. Not calculating. Determined.

She shut her eyes again. It didn't help.

His hand slipped from her jaw and drifted downward, tracing her spine in a maddeningly slow caress. Each vertebra his fingers passed made her shudder. Her back arched in response—unbidden, unwanted—and her breath caught in her throat.

A sound escaped her—a soft, helpless thing. She hated it. Hated the way her body reacted, the way heat pooled low and heavy despite the battle raging in her mind. But she couldn't stop it.

He shifted slightly, adjusting the angle between them, and the slide of their bodies stole what was left of her breath. His other hand came to rest at her hip, anchoring her, steadying her. His mouth returned—gentler now, coaxing instead of demanding. He brushed kisses across her sealed lips, teasing, tempting, tasting her resistance with the patience of a man who already knew she was slipping.

And when she faltered—just for a moment—he took it.

His tongue swept into her mouth in a slow, claiming stroke that shattered her control.

A strangled sound rose from her chest, half fury, half want, and still, she didn't pull away.

She couldn't.

No one had ever kissed her like this.

No one had ever undone her like this.

Desire surged—hot, reckless, and terrifying. Her hands betrayed her first, sliding into his hair, gripping the hard line of his jaw. She kissed him back—

fiercely, brokenly, as if punishing him for all the years she'd spent pretending she didn't still want him.

He groaned low against her mouth, deepening the kiss, pulling her tighter, until she could feel every inch of him pressed against her.

Her thoughts splintered. Her pride burned away in the heat. There was only him—his hands, his mouth, the deep, dark pull of everything she swore she didn't need.

And then—

He tore himself away.

The absence hit her like a slap. She staggered, dazed, breathless, her hands still fisted in his shirt.

Her lips were swollen. Her body trembled.

She looked up at him.

And froze.

His eyes were cold now. Shuttered. There was no heat, no emotion—just the calculated distance of someone who had gotten exactly what he wanted.

It hit her like a blow to the gut.

He had humiliated her.

Deliberately. Completely.

Her face flushed, shame flooding her so fast she thought she might be sick. She opened her mouth to speak—but no words came. Just the echo of his kiss, still burning on her lips, and the awful realisation that he'd done it to prove a point.

To remind her of the power he held.

“I hate you,” she choked, her voice trembling. “You’re disgusting.”

He didn't flinch. Not a flicker of remorse touched his face.

“Probably,” he said, his tone emotionless. “Still, for a moment there, you seemed very eager to take your stepmother’s place in my bed.”

He stepped back, freeing her. Instinct took over. She struck him across the face, her palm stinging with the force of her fury. He didn’t try to stop her. He even smiled, a dark, amused curl of his lips that chilled her to the bone.

“Was that disgust for me or disgust for yourself?” he asked dryly.

He turned to the door, his gaze drifting over her, dismissive and lingering. She could feel the angry flush on her cheeks, the heave of her chest, the humiliating awareness of how swollen her lips felt, how sensitive her breasts were beneath the silk of her dress.

“Very nice,” he murmured, sardonic. “But don’t pretend to be an angel, Kiera.”

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