

## RELATIVE STRANGER

Sometimes the ones you think you know best are the ones you can trust the least. I found out the hard way that the man I loved more than anyone else in the world was the man who would let me down.

We drove through Starbucks for coffee on our way to the lake. We were going boating. Although I can't swim, I always feel safe with him. He is an excellent swimmer.

I wore a pair of tight-fitting shorts and a halter top. I knew I looked sexy and that I was turning him on as I stroked the inside of his thigh. He moaned and I smiled, glad that he always reacted to my touch.

A car ran a red light and pulled in front of us. He slammed the brakes, and our vehicle skidded sideways. I dropped my coffee on my lap spilling it everywhere. He fought to get the car under control and pulled onto the shoulder of the road as the fool who had nearly killed us kept going unaware he had almost caused a serious accident.

He pulled back onto the road as I tried to mop up the coffee that had spilled all over his car. I opened the console searching for tissues to wipe everything clean.

"Oh, my God," I squealed as I pulled the engagement ring from its box. It was beautiful. He has such great taste.

He pulled into the driveway, parked the car, and took the ring away from me putting it back into the box. "You've ruined my surprise." He grimaced as he placed the box back into the console.

"I'll forget I ever saw it." I beamed as my heart gripped my chest and threatened to leap from my body. I fought to breathe. He was going to propose.

He got out of the car, grabbed the picnic basket, and headed for the boathouse. He was in the boat and held up his hand to help me join him.

I sat in the seat next to him as he steered the boat into the deepest part of the lake. We haven't spoken since I found the ring. I feel awful about ruining his surprise.

"I'm sorry I ruined your proposal," I apologized. "Knowing you I am certain you had everything perfectly planned. I can't tell you how happy you have made me and how scared I have been."

He stopped the boat and let it ride the waves. "Why have you been scared?"

"Because I didn't know how you would react to my surprise. I was afraid to tell you that I am pregnant."

He glared at me, his mouth opening and closing but no words came out. His face was white as a sheet, and he was speechless.

He stood and walked the length of the craft then returned to me. He sat on the side of the boat and studied me.

"You assured me you were on the pill," he mumbled. "Why did you lie to me?"

"I didn't. I was on the pill, except for the first time. As I recall neither of us were thinking about birth control when that happened."

"The ring isn't for you," he gasped. "I don't want to marry you."

"Are you serious?" I screamed.

I don't know which hurt worse his declaration or my embarrassment at thinking he loved me. I hated him. I wanted him dead. In a blind rage I charged at him determined to push him overboard then drive away leaving him to drown in the lake.

Too late I realized he had dodged my attack, and I shot over the side of the boat into the cold, dark lake water. I can't

swim. I fought my way to the surface. “Help me,” I sputtered as I flailed in the water try to keep myself afloat.

He looked down at me and frowned. The lake sucked me back under the murky water. I fought to reach the surface again. As I broke the water and sucked in air, I saw the boat heading away from me. *The bastard is leaving me to drown.*