

Excerpt: Christmas Island

Dirk leaned closer and nibbled her ear before nuzzling her neck. “Are you a hopeless romantic?”

That nuzzle sent shivers down her spine and heat everywhere else. She wanted nothing more than to put her arms around his neck and press herself against his hard, muscular body, but a group of tourists was approaching from a mini-bus that had stopped. Her ability to be wanton didn’t include public spectacles. Lake Wobegon morals were too deeply entrenched. Dirk leaned back to look at her. “You’re blushing. You are a romantic, aren’t you?”

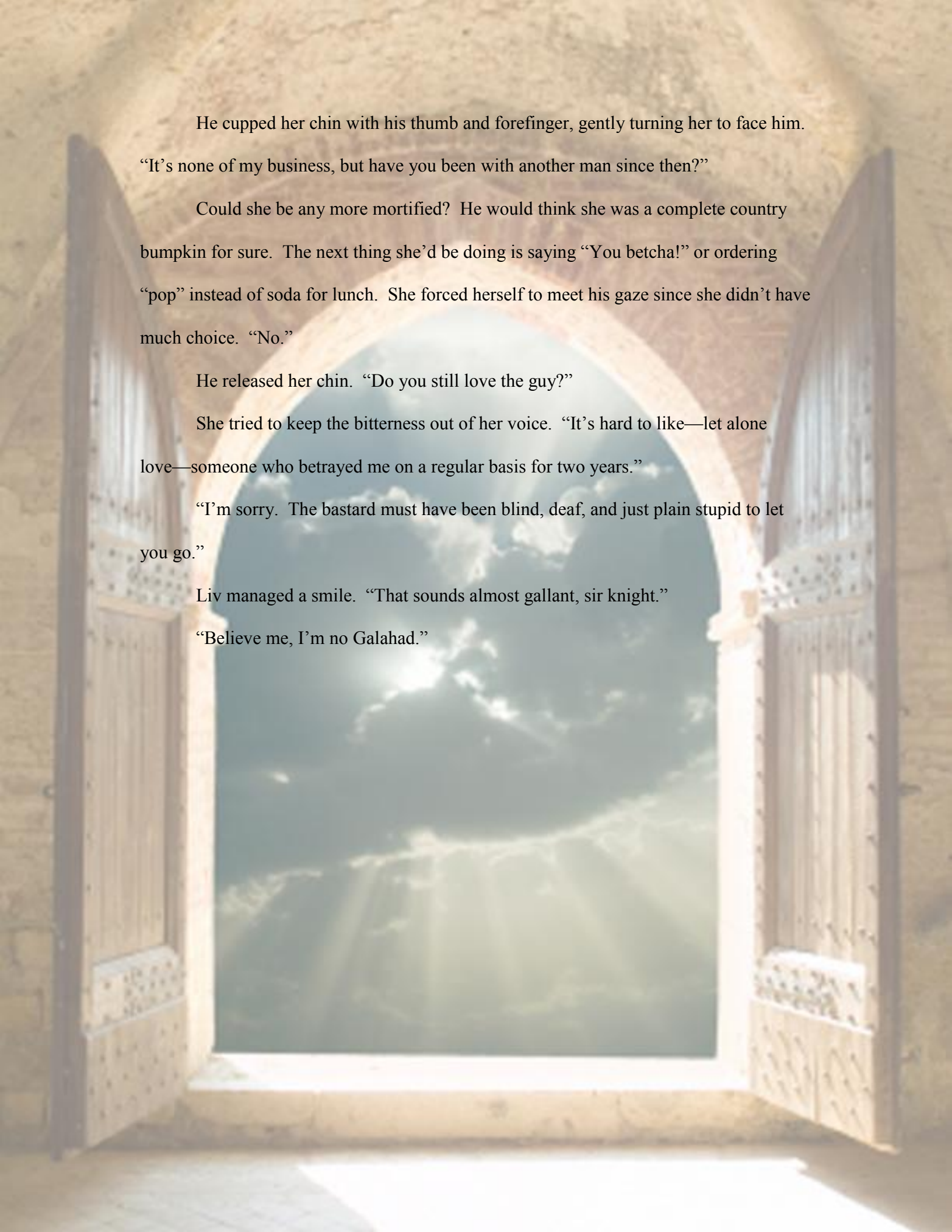
“Yes. I mean, no. I—I just—um, there are people here.”

He glanced at the other group. “They’re all watching the water.” Dirk put his hands on her waist, drawing her closer. “No one is going to care if we indulge in a kiss.”

Liv placed her palms against his hard chest, pushing at him even while her fingers gathered the material of his tee. “I don’t feel comfortable—” She felt her face flame. What twenty-first century woman was embarrassed to be kissing in public? Where was the Liv who wanted to get wild and *par-tay*? Geez, Dirk would really think she was a dork.

His hands dropped from her waist and he took a step back, studying her. “How long have you been divorced?”

Her face got hotter, if that was possible. She looked away. “Ten months.”



He cupped her chin with his thumb and forefinger, gently turning her to face him.
“It’s none of my business, but have you been with another man since then?”

Could she be any more mortified? He would think she was a complete country bumpkin for sure. The next thing she’d be doing is saying “You betcha!” or ordering “pop” instead of soda for lunch. She forced herself to meet his gaze since she didn’t have much choice. “No.”

He released her chin. “Do you still love the guy?”

She tried to keep the bitterness out of her voice. “It’s hard to like—let alone love—someone who betrayed me on a regular basis for two years.”

“I’m sorry. The bastard must have been blind, deaf, and just plain stupid to let you go.”

Liv managed a smile. “That sounds almost gallant, sir knight.”

“Believe me, I’m no Galahad.”