

A man with a beard is kissing a woman on the cheek. They are in a cemetery, with a gravestone and a bouquet of flowers in the foreground. The woman has a somber expression. Three wooden signs are hanging from the top of the frame.

HEARTS HAVEN

WOUNDED GRACE

TANYA STOWE

SEPARATED BY TIME
BROUGHT TOGETHER BY TRAGEDY...
A BITTERSWEET TALE
OF LOVE

Wounded Grace

by Tanya Stowe

“Lance, I’m so glad you’re here.”

“I doubt very much that you’re glad to see me, Madison. We have too much history and too many years of bad blood for either of us to be ‘glad’ to see the other.”

Her lips tightened into a thin line but she said nothing, just held the door wide and gestured him into the hall.

“You must have driven straight through. I know you must be tired, but it’s so good you’re here. We need you.”

We? Vivian had told him that Madison had moved to Heart’s Haven and they had grown close again. But somehow, that fact hadn’t registered. He couldn’t believe his sister had actually let the little barracuda back into her life. Vivian said Madison had changed, become more like her old self, but he hadn’t believed that, either.

Her straight hair curved around her face but was shorter at the back. She was slender, but not overly so. In fact, she’d put on weight since her Dallas days. She’d always been too thin, almost anorexic. She

looked good now, better than a woman of her age...or temperament,

His late wife, Gwen, had borne three children, was a grandmother, and proud of it. She wore their amazing life together in the shape of her body, and it had always been beautiful to him.

"I want to help, Lance, but I'm afraid I'm not much use." Madison seemed oblivious to Lance's circumspect inspection. "Andrew was so important...to me, to all of us."

Lance was surprised to see moisture glass her eyes as she turned away. But he wondered about the sincerity of those tears. After all, this was the woman who ten years ago pretended to be Vivian's best friend and assistant so she could systematically steal all of Viv's clients.

"Everyone's having such a difficult time. We need someone with a level head to keep us on track. There's so much to decide about the funeral..." Madison's voice faded away.

"And, of course, I know all about that." He hadn't meant the words to come out so sharp, but at least they had the effect of finally silencing Madison. She stared at him, the tracks of tears still on her cheeks.