

**KATE'S DILEMMA EXCERPT:**

Liam couldn't believe it. Talk about an ugly duckling turning into a swan. Her snub nose with its sprinkle of freckles was all that saved her face from perfection. The combination of auburn hair and tall lissom figure must attract men wherever she went, yet she was blushing like a schoolgirl, as if unused to male attention. Wide eyes were watching him with wariness at odds with the luscious fullness of her mouth. The dress she wore graced perfect curves, a slim waist, and full breasts.

The beauty she'd become stunned him. This truly magnificent creature, he surmised, was totally unaware of the effect she had on people. At a good five foot eight she was above average height and moved with the grace of a ballerina. And those large luminous eyes were something else.

Viola told them, on one of her visits, that her sister's looks had set many a male heart thumping. Liam secretly scoffed at that—but now could see exactly what she meant.

Liam backed off at the look that came into her eyes, his inbuilt bachelor's antennae going into action, when she murmured, "Why thank you," flashing him a brilliant smile that sent his libido into over-drive. "Viola was very sick, as you know, and this break will do her the world of good. I gave up my flat to stay with her, and she wouldn't come without me." Her shoulders lifted in a shrug and the small movement entranced Liam. There was an innate grace about everything she did, be it moving a limb or a lip. "It was nice of you to invite her."

Liam grinned at that, not missing the way her eyes settled on his mouth. Could she be as stunned by her reaction to his every move as he was by hers? "I have had many epithets bestowed on me in my time, Katie, but nice has never been applied to me before."

Her mouth curved in a soft smile.

"It's amazing, the difference between you and Viola. People must find it hard to believe that you're sisters." Liam remembered hearing that from Viola.

Liam knew that Viola's mother died when she was eight and her father remarried practically straight away. Four years later Kate was born. Apparently Viola's mother had been tiny, but Kate inherited her own mother's height. Viola told them once that when Kate was ten they'd been the same height but then, as Kate shot up, she'd been her sister's defender.

"You could say that." Her nose wrinkled charmingly. "When I was fourteen and fifteen, plump and gawky, I was very envious of her fragility."

"But when this miraculous metamorphosis of yours took place you could hardly have been envious then, Katie. You've grown into a very lovely woman," he drawled.

Her mouth moved, and his stomach did a somersault as she licked those inviting lips. For a moment she stared mutely at him.

"I could get to like these compliments," she said huskily.

"You're not going to tell me you aren't quite used to them. Many men must have admired you."

"How's Viola really coping without Charlie?" he asked, thinking it wise to change the subject.

Sadness clouded her eyes. "I think it's getting better. I liked Charles. Although I must be honest and admit I resented him at first. But once I saw how he loved and cherished Viola I grew to respect him."

"He was a good man." Liam swallowed. His own grief still weighed heavily on his heart.

"Yes." She paused, as though realising his distress. "Did you design this house?" Her beautiful eyes wandered over the kitchen. "It's a lovely home."

Liam looked around, seeing it in a new light. "Do you really like it? I designed every detail down to the last brick. I guess it's the materialisation of a dream." He knew he sounded like a proud parent praising his favourite offspring, but couldn't help it. "Do you still paint?"

Kate was astonished again. Her painting was something he'd ribbed her about, too. "Mm, I still like working in watercolours. How about you? Still dabbling in oils?"

"Yes, I still paint." He jabbed a long finger in the air. "You can see my amateurish efforts filling the walls."

"Amateurish?" Kate chuckled. "Please don't be falsely modest on my behalf."

He shrugged, grinning. "I have little spare time now, unfortunately. One has to pay for success, and in turn it gives one back monetary success." His sigh was exaggerated.

"Yes, it must be hard being rich as well as successful," she agreed.

He winked mischievously. "Come, I'll take you to my studio." He waved a hand for her to precede him from the kitchen.