

Cabe and Rebecca - A Scorpion Story

By Kate Simon

Cabe had only been in the center a few times. He'd reviewed reports of course since the hospital put him on the board. Amanda's center had done amazing work in the time it had been open. It was becoming what Kate had promised, a place of hope.

He'd been surprised when he'd gotten the call from Rebecca. She told him she'd been hearing so much about Amanda's center that she wanted to see it for herself. She said she felt ready to see it.

Cabe had been equally surprised when Kate told him she wouldn't be coming with him. She felt it was something he and Rebecca should see together, without her.

He stood in the lobby, trying to convince himself he wasn't nervous as hell. Rebecca walked toward him looking as cool and polished as ever. Since it was a Saturday she was dressed more casually than the last time he'd seen her. Today she wore khakis and a beige camp shirt. He extended his hand and kissed her cheek. "Hello, Rebecca. How are you?"

"I'm good, and you?"

"God," he thought, "Could their conversation be anymore stilted?"

"I'm good, Rebecca." He caught her glancing down at his left hand. "Kate and I got married two months ago." Rebecca gave him a smile he knew she reserved for placating difficult clients.

"Congratulations," she said.

"Thank you. Shall we get started?"

He'd had the center prepare a copy of the last report to the board for her. She wasn't a board member, despite Kate's offer, but he wanted full disclosure.

They'd toured the center for about thirty minutes looking at the exam rooms, play rooms, nurses stations. The chief resident explained some of the groundbreaking treatments were taking place but Cabe suspected that Rebecca wasn't hearing any more of it than he was. When the resident was called away and they were left alone.

"It's wonderful, Cabe. It's everything you said it would be," she said.

"I'm glad you pleased. We've tried to..." he stopped speaking when he saw the stricken look on Rebecca's face. He turned to see a young girl about six years old with

long blonde hair walking down the hallway. She was holding her mother's hand as her father pushed her IV behind her. The girl looked at them as smiled.

"Hello," she said.

"Hello," Rebecca replied in a shaky voice.

"I'm going to the playroom. They have Legos."

"That's great, sweetie," she said as she grabbed for Cabe's hand.

"How's she doing?" Cabe asked.

Her pretty young mother gave them a big smile. "Really well. the doctors say she can come home soon. Are you here for someone?"

Cabe shook his head. "No we were just taking a tour."

"I don't know what we would have done without this place," said the father. "We didn't have any insurance, and, well, it wasn't good. Then our doctor referred us here." The young man looked at his little girl and smiled. "They told us today she's in full remission. I'll be able to walk her down the isle."

Cabe tried to smile at the young man.

The little girl pulled on her father's hand. "Daddy, come on. I want to play with the Legos."

"Yes, sweetheart." He looked at Cabe and Rebecca and smiled. "We have to go."

Cabe saw the look on Rebecca's face and knew she was as close to losing it as he was. He pulled her into an empty exam room and closed the door. He pulled her close just as she dissolved into tears.

"I'm sorry, Cabe," she said as she grabbed some tissues from the counter.

"There's no need to apologize."

"They really are doing wonderful work here," she said.

He nodded and reached for the hankerchief in his jacket.

"As much as things have changed, there isn't a day goes by when I don't think of Amanda," she said.

"Me too," he replied, his voice choked.

"I didn't think I would survive it," she whispered.

"What?"

"After she died I prayed to God to take me too."

"Oh, my God, Becky." He tried to hold her but she pushed him away.

"No." she yelled. "It's too late for that. I needed that twenty years ago."

"Becky."

"Stop calling me that. You don't get to call me that anymore." Her tears were flowing again. "You weren't supposed to sign them," she whispered.

"Sign what?"

"The divorce papers. You weren't supposed to sign them. You were supposed to come back to me." She yelled as she pounded on his chest. "You were supposed to fight for me. I wanted you to fight for me but all I did was give you an out." She pushed him away. "You were a coward."

Cabe gasped. He had felt like a coward all these years but it broke his heart all over again to know Rebecca thought he was too.

"After Amanda died you gave up on everything including us. I knew you were drowning in grief and I tried to reach you. But the harder I tried the further you pulled away. You walked away from me. You stopped loving me."

"Becky, no.."

"I've been married to a wonderful man all these years. A good man who loves me and is always there for me. We have a wonderful daughter and a wonderful life but it's never been enough, because of you, you bastard!" She sighed as she looked at him. "I could never let you go. I could never stop loving you the way you stopped loving me."

Cabe put his hands on her shoulders. "Becky, you're right. I was a coward. I was drowning in pain and I let you, the most important person in my life, down. When you served me with the papers I thought I deserved it, I had it coming. I knew I was no good to you and I thought it best to let you go. Everything you said is true except for one thing. I didn't stop loving you. I've never stopped loving you."

"Cabe," she whispered. She reached up and gave him a soft kiss.

"Becky, we can't"

"Hush," she said as she pulled him close and kissed him again.

Twenty years disappeared and he kissed her. Kissed her the way he should have and didn't. He held her close and tried to make her feel the love he'd always had for her and always would.

He pulled back and looked into the face of the woman he'd loved all those years ago. "Becky..."

"No Cabe. Don't say anything." She grabbed some more tissues and checked her reflection in the steel soap dispenser. "I need to go home to my husband and you need to go home to your wife."

"Rebecca, I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have..well I shouldn't have."

She looked at him and sighed. He saw all the tension flood out of her. "No, we shouldn't have, but I'm not sorry. You gave me back something I thought I'd lost. It was real what we had together." She walked toward him and put her hand on his still pounding heart. "It still is." She reached up and gave him a last kiss. "I can live with that now." She opened the door to the hall and looked back. "Goodbye, Cabe." She closed the door behind her, leaving him alone.

"Goodbye, Becky," he whispered.

He had no idea what he was going to say. Kate could read him like a book and she would know something was wrong. He tossed his keys on the kitchen counter and found her sitting on the deck staring out at the ocean. She knew already. She knew before he did that something would happen. When she saw his face her suspicion was confirmed.

"Kate, I...,"

She held up her hand. "Stop. Don't tell me anything that I won't be able to forget." She paused and took a breath. "All I need to know is the reason you're here."

Cabe's heart nearly stopped. This couldn't be happening. He sat down on the deck chair next to her.

"All I need to know is are you here because you want to be, because you need to be, or," she reached for his left hand and touched his wedding ring. Her voice choked. "Are you here because you have to be?"

Cabe took her hand in his and pressed it to his chest. He knew the next few words were more important than any he'd ever said, including his wedding vows. "Katie, I am here because I am so in love with you I can't imagine, don't want to imagine one day of my life without you. Your love saved me. I'd been completely alone for twenty years. You brought me back to life. I'm here because I need you more than my next breath. You're

my world."

Kate gave him a soft smile as a tear fell down her cheek. He reached out to wipe it away.

"Okay then," she said. She pushed herself to the side of the deck chair and patted the cushion beside her.

Cabe sat down next to her and put his arm around her shoulder. "I love you, Katie girl."

"I know."