

About Time

Chapter 1 ~Missing You

Jack quietly slipped his key into the lock and gently opened the door. He tip-toed into the elegant hotel room without making a sound. Erica had been out of town for the past few weeks promoting 'Kane Cosmetics'. She hadn't wanted to go to California, but Bianca couldn't leave Miranda, and Kendall had been battling the flu. So that left only Erica to go away for three very long weeks, leaving one very lonely Jackson behind. They had spoken on the phone everyday, and he missed her more than words could say. By the end of the third week, he thought, "Enough is enough!" And with that he asked Bianca to keep an eye on Reggie and Lily and hopped the next flight to CA.

Jackson didn't make a sound as he made his way closer to the bed. "My god she is beautiful when she sleeps," he thought to himself as he gazed at her. He knew that he had missed her, but he didn't realize just how much until he saw her lying there. He removed his shoes and jacket, and unbuttoned his shirt partially. He just wanted to watch her sleep and to be near to her. He had missed seeing her. Jack had missed her face and her smile. He missed seeing the way her eyes danced when she laughed. He had missed touching her skin and kissing her, but most of all, he had missed watching her sleep. He could spend all night watching her and still not want to take his eyes off of her. As he sat in the chair looking at her, he was overwhelmed with emotion. They had been through so much in their relationship, but as hard as the hard times were, they were worth it just to spend another day loving her.

He had intended to sit in the chair and watch her until morning. He knew that she had a busy schedule, and he wanted her to be rested, but the more Jack watched her, the more he wanted her. He needed to be close to her, to touch her. He noticed she was wearing the cream silk nightgown that he had given her for her birthday. He loved that color on her. He loved the way it lit up her eyes and made her skin look as if she were standing in the moonlight. Jackson looked at the clock. He knew it would be several hours until Erica awoke, and he couldn't wait that long to put his arms around her. Slowly and carefully, he removed the remainder of his outer clothes and climbed into the bed behind Erica, being cautious not to startle her. Lying on his side, he assumed their normal spoon position. As he wrapped his arms around her, he deeply inhaled her scent. "Has she always smelled this good?" he thought. He nuzzled his face in deeper to her hair and allowed his hands to feel the smooth, silky skin of her arms.

"Oh, how I have missed touching you, Erica," Jack said to himself. Erica, deep in sleep, was oblivious to her fiancé's presence, or the torture that he was enduring by trying not to wake her. Jackson grinned to himself, "How is it that she drives me wild and makes me want her desperately and she hasn't done a thing?" He realized that while he was using every bit of self control he had to let her sleep, she was probably dreaming of financial reports and ad campaigns.

"Oh, if you only knew what you did to me, Erica Kane," he said in a deep

whisper. With that, Erica began to stir. Noticing this, Jackson couldn't help but brush her dark hair off of her shoulders and began to lightly kiss her neck.

Erica thought she was dreaming, and if she was, she didn't want to wake up. She had missed Jackson so much, that she had contemplated going home the day before. But she knew if she didn't finish her appearances and meetings, that she would have to come back, and she couldn't bear having to say good bye to Jack again, even if it was for a short while. Jackson's kisses were intensifying, and his hands left their resting place on her arms and began to caress the curves of her side and her toned stomach.

Erica slowly opened her eyes and began to smile. She wasn't afraid or startled, she knew exactly who was lying beside her. "It wasn't a dream," she thought. She felt how passionate his kisses on her neck had become, and she reached back to touch Jackson's face. As Jack touched her, Erica's body began to respond to his touch, and she realized exactly how long it had been since Jackson had made love to her and how very much she missed him.

"Mmm," she moaned, turning over to face him. "This is quite a surprise."

Jackson looked her in the eyes and in a low husky voice that was uniquely his, said, "My god, I have missed you so much. Come here." With that, he kissed her with all the built up passion he had been trying to control. He placed himself on top of her as his hands brushed back her hair. Erica's hands gently made their way up Jack's arms and around his shoulders as she enjoyed the feel of his smooth and muscular arms. He began kissing her jaw, her neck, the top of her chest, and her shoulders as he removed the straps to her night gown. Erica's hands ran through Jackson's hair and she pulled his head back towards hers. The look in her eyes begged Jack for another breath-taking kiss, and he did not disappoint her. Slowly, yet passionately, Jackson began to show Erica exactly how much he had missed her and how much he wanted her. Both were lost in this amazing connection that was only theirs. They were engulfed by passion and love for hours. Few words were spoken, but much was communicated through their bodies and souls. Both exhausted from the night's activities, they lay there holding one another for what seemed like an eternity.

Jackson and Erica were not new to the power and passion that their love created, but both were surprised at the intensity that the previous few hours had contained. "Wow," Erica finally breathed in a whisper, as she snuggled closer to him. "I should go away more often." She couldn't help but giggle, as she was still experiencing the glowing after effect that she always experienced after a night like this with Jack.

"Mmm... Don't you dare!" Jackson said as he bent down for a soft, yet lingering kiss. "I have decided that you are never going to be away from me for this long again. You, my dear, are stuck with me for better or worse, for the duration."

"Promises, promises." Erica teased.

"Oh, I intend to make good on my promise," Jack said as he lightly traced the features of Erica's face with his fingers.

"Well, Mr. Montgomery, just how do you intend on doing that?" Erica asked with a grin.

“Well, Ms. Kane, I guess I am just going to have to marry you,” Jackson said in a deep sexy voice, “and the sooner the better. Then we can spend every night just like this one.” As the words left Jack’s mouth, he tugged on Erica’s waist until she was practically on top of him. Jackson leaned his head in for a soft and sensual kiss. As their mouths parted, Erica’s face took on a much more serious expression than before.

“You don’t know how much I want that Jackson.” Erica said, trying to keep the tears from falling. “All I want is to be your wife. I want your face to be the last thing I see at night, and the first thing I see each morning. I dream of falling asleep in your arms and waking up to these beautiful blue eyes.”

Jack could swear he felt his heart expand as he noticed the tears forming in Erica’s eyes. “I know, sweetheart, I know.” Jack whispered gently as he bent down to kiss the tear from Erica’s cheek.

“I just don’t feel complete when we are apart, and I hate feeling like half of a whole,” Erica said, not able to control the single tear that made its escape down her cheek.

Jack and Erica had decided to have a longer engagement than either had wanted, since their family was going through so many adjustments. Both were secretly wishing that they had been selfish and made the wedding their top priority. Bianca had just found out that Miranda was alive and was adjusting to being a new mom. Erica, Kendall, and Bianca had merged Enchantment and Fusion once Bianca regained control of Cambius Industries (now rightfully named Montgomery Enterprises), and had renamed the company 'Kane Cosmetics'. Lily had just been mainstreamed into high school and was finally getting comfortable with her new surroundings. Both Erica and Jack knew that another change could create an unwanted stress for all of their children. Therefore, as hard as it was, they had decided to wait until June to get married. This would allow Lily to finish her first year of public school without any major changes and would allow Jack and Erica's house to be completed and decorated prior to the wedding. Erica and Jack saw each other as much as possible, but lack of space at Jack's loft prevented the two from spending most nights together. And although neither would admit it, both were miserable at falling asleep apart.

“It won’t be much longer, baby,” Jack said.

“I know,” Erica whispered back.

“Well,” Jack said in a teasing voice, “we could elope, but we would practically be living on top of each other at the loft.”

Erica grinned at Jack's comment. “Well, Mr. Montgomery, explain to me how that is a bad thing”. Erica had 'that look' which Jack knew so well and loved so much.

“Have I told you lately how much I adore you?” Jack asked deeply.

“Not in the past few minutes.” Erica teased.

“Mmm... well, I guess I will just have to show you, won't I?”

With that Jack pulled Erica on top of him and began kissing her passionately. As Jack’s tongue began to explore Erica’s mouth, his hands began a journey all of their own, under the covers.

Just as Jack was about to make good on his promise, the phone rang. "Erica," Jack questioned her, rather annoyed, "who is calling you at this hour?"

"Oh," Erica said without missing a beat, "it must be Jon Luc. He is my back up, you know, in case things between us don't work out."

Jack couldn't help but be amused by Erica's evil grin. "Well, I suggest you answer the phone and tell French boy that his services are not going to be needed." Jack teased back.

"Hello," Erica said, answering the phone. "Oh, hi Bianca... Yes, Jack arrived several hours ago... Oh, okay... I will tell him... Love you too, sweetheart... Bye."

Bianca had called to make sure that Jack had arrived safely and to let him know that Lily got off to school with no problems. She also wanted to let her mom know that Kendall was on the mend and would be taking over Erica's meetings in CA next week. Bianca couldn't help but notice that her mother sounded much more upbeat on the phone, than she had in the previous few weeks, and she suspected that having some uninterrupted time with Jack was the cause for Erica's change of mood. Bianca knew better than anyone what it was like to be apart from someone that you loved, and she also knew how Jack and Erica's romance had always taken a back seat to whatever drama seemed to be going on around them.

Chapter 2 ~ The Game

Jack and Erica had spent the better part of the morning sleeping off the exhaustion that their reconnection brought and were awakened by a knock at the door. "Erica," Jack groaned, "I thought I told you to tell French boy to leave us alone."

Erica, annoyed by the interruption in her slumber, whined, "Go Away" and threw the pillow at the door.

"Oh, that's going to make them leave us alone," Jack smiled and teased as he pulled on his pants and answered the door. The room service waiter pushed in a beautiful table set for two, containing all of Jack and Erica's favorite breakfast foods.

"You must have the wrong room, Sir," Jack said. "We didn't order breakfast." The waiter didn't say a word, just handed Jack an envelope that was addressed to him and Erica.

"What is that?" Erica asked as she dressed in Jack's shirt and joined him at the table.

"I don't know, but let's open it and find out." Jack began to read...

"Business can wait, but this has waited long enough. Eat up. You have a busy day ahead." Inside of the card was some type of clue. Erica took the clue and began to read...

*Be ready to plunge, as the sun starts to set,
Get dressed and don't delay,
There's a lot to do, the fun's just begun,*

Clue # 2 is on its way.

“Jackson Montgomery,” Erica couldn't help but grin. “What are you up to now?”

“I am not up to anything,” Jack replied. “I am just as confused as you.” The look on Erica's face told Jack that she wasn't at all convinced at his denial of guilt. “Trust me,” Jack continued, “my plans for this morning didn't include waking up at this hour, and they certainly didn't include getting dressed.”

“Well, if you didn't do this, who did?” Erica questioned.

“I don't know, but I guess we will have to wait for the next note to find out.” Jack stated.

“I am kind of hungry,” Erica grinned, “and this food looks delicious!”

Jackson couldn't help but tease Erica. “So, you worked up an appetite, did you?” Jack chuckled as he pulled Erica to him by the collar of his shirt.

“Mmm... I sure did,” Erica said with a sexy grin.

“You know I can't resist you when you look at me like that.” Jack said in a low voice as his mouth captured hers in a passionate morning kiss. As they broke for air, Jackson's kisses moved down Erica's neck as his hands began to unbutton the shirt she wore.

“Jackson,” Erica said in a breathy whisper. “If you keep kissing me like this, we won't get to eat, and we won't be ready when the second clue comes.” Jackson, rather annoyed, agreed with Erica. They decided to put their passion on hold as they began to eat.

Jack and Erica had finished their breakfast, showered, and gotten dressed, when there was another knock at the door. As Erica opened the door, she was surprised at what she saw. There was a full size poster of the Eiffel Tower with an envelope attached that read “Clue #2”. Jackson opened the clue and began to read...

*Paris is where it all began,
as fireworks lit up the night,
Make your way to room 731
as you prepare for your dreams to take flight.*

“Okay Jack, this is getting a little weird. What is going on?” Erica questioned.

“I don't know, sweetheart, I don't know. But I must say that I am intrigued.” Jack answered. Erica and Jack made their way to room 731. Attached to the door was an envelope which contained the key to the room. Once inside, Erica and Jack saw two garment bags & two over-night bags, both locked and containing the same note. The note read...

*Now it's time to separate, the mystery is almost done,
We hold the key to this next phase, as two will become one.
Your bags are numbered, that is where you'll go; the game has one more phase,
As the sun does set, and the breezes blow, to you, our glasses we'll raise.*

Erica and Jack looked at each other in utter confusion, thinking that the other was behind this little romantic mystery. Neither had a clue to who actually planned it. Both tried to open their bags to see what they contained, but the locks wouldn't budge. Just then a male and female hotel employee came in.

"Ms. Kane," the young woman said, "Follow me."

"I guess that means that I go with you?" Jack said to the young man. Jack and Erica, not sure of what was going on, said their good-byes. Erica gave Jack a not-so-quick kiss.

"I guess I will see you at sun set." she said looking over her shoulder. With that, both Jack and Erica went to their designated locations.

Chapter 3 ~ The Mystery Revealed

Erica couldn't believe her eyes when she walked into the room. She was greeted by Kendall, Bianca, Miranda, and Mark. "What is going on?" Erica asked, stunned.

"Well, Mom," Bianca began, "Today is your wedding day." All the clues, the attire that her family was wearing, the garment bags, it all made sense. She was moved beyond words as she sat on the bed. "Mom, you and Uncle Jack have put your life together on hold for too long. We insist that you stop this nonsense about a long engagement and get married." Bianca stated very matter-of-factly.

"But..." Erica began.

"But nothing, Mother," Kendall said. "We are adults; we can take care of ourselves. Let us worry about us, and you just be happy."

"Erica," Mark began, "I flew here for a wedding, and I am not leaving disappointed."

As the shock began to wear off, Erica realized that in a couple of hours everything that she had dreamed of could come true. She was overwhelmed by love for Jack and her family. "Thank you," she managed to whisper through her tears, "thank you so much."

As Jack entered the room, he could hardly believe his eyes. He was greeted by Reggie, Lily, and Greenlee. The look of shock on Jack's face was priceless as Reggie laughed. "Yo J, we got you good, huh?"

"What... what are you doing here?" The words barely stumbled out of Jack's mouth. It was obvious to everyone in the room that he was completely stunned.

"It's your wedding day, Daddy," Lily said with a smile.

"Excuse me?" Jack said with confusion in his voice. "Greenlee, do you mind telling me what is going on?"

"Bianca decided that you two have put off getting married long enough," Greenlee said with a grin.. "And since I wrecked the first wedding, I figured I

should help pull this one off. The clues were my idea. So, what do you think?"

"Are you telling me," Jack began, "that the three of you and Bianca flew all the way across the country, set up this little mystery game, and planned a wedding in less than 24 hours?"

"Yea, J. And what is more amazing is that Kendall and Greenlee didn't scratch each other's eyes out in the process."

"Whoa, Whoa, Whoa," Jack began as things were starting to make sense, "Kendall *and* Bianca are here?"

"Yep." Greenlee answered. "They are with Erica, along with Mark. But Binks is going to kill us if we don't get you ready and have you in position on time."

"Yea, J, who knew sweet little Binky could be such a slave driver," Reggie chimed in. "Uh, sorry Lily, that means she wants things done on time and with no messing up." he added quickly.

Jack chuckled, "I think she gets that from her mother."

Chapter 4 ~ Ceremony at Sunset

The sun was just beginning to set and there was a warm breeze coming off the ocean. There was a beautiful archway set up on the beach, and it was decorated with twinkling lights and roses. A carpet of rose petals had been carefully laid to make a perfect path for the bride as she walked down the aisle to meet her groom. It wasn't a big ceremony, just the family, but it was perfect just the same. Jack looked beyond handsome in his tux with his beautiful blonde hair lightly blowing in the breeze. He was joined by Reggie and Mark at the archway, as he anxiously waited for a glimpse of his bride. One by one, each of the ladies made their way down the rose petal aisle. First, Greenlee made her way down the aisle, then Lily, then Kendall, who was holding Miranda. Each wore a stunning strapless deep purple gown with their hair swept up, and each carried a bouquet of fresh lilies. Jack was confused as to where Bianca was, as the Wedding March began to play. Then he looked up and saw the most breathtaking sight. Jack had tears in his eyes as he caught a glimpse of Erica and Bianca, arm in arm. His mind flashed back to 16 years earlier, when he had first fallen in love with Erica. He could see Erica holding Bianca as a baby just as clearly as if they were still that way. Jackson, overwhelmed with love for his family, could barely breathe.

Erica was a vision. Her hair was swept up with gentle wispy curls hanging down. Her gown had tiny straps, and the silky fabric clung to her curves. The full length, backless gown came to a point at the small of her back. To Jack, she was an angel. It seemed like an eternity before Erica and Bianca made it down the aisle. Tears began to trail down Erica's cheeks as she looked at Jack. He was amazing. She still felt like she was dreaming every time she looked at him and saw him looking back at her with such love in his eyes. What she had done to deserve such an amazing man was beyond her. He loved her. He was her heart, her soul mate, her other half. She wasn't whole without him.

"Mom, Uncle Jack, for 16 years you have loved one another," Bianca

began. "For 16 years, you have been trying to get to this point. We all thought that for you to wait another minute was a waste of the precious gift that God has given you. Very few people get to experience the kind of love and devotion for one another that you have, and it seems like it is wrong to put your future on hold any longer. Originally, Uncle Mark was supposed to walk you down the aisle, Mom. But since I have been here from the very beginning of your relationship, and Grandma isn't able to be here physically, I thought I would do the honor for both of us." Bianca paused and then continued. "I have learned so much from both of you. I've learned how to love, how to really love, even when the odds are stacked against you. I've learned that what is meant to be will be, even if at times it looks impossible. I've learned that there is no substitution or replacement for true love, and it is never too late."

As Jack and Erica faced each other with tears in their eyes, they heard the minister say, "Who gives this woman to be married to this man?"

Bianca smiled through her tears and replied, "Her mother and I." She turned to Jack. "Uncle Jack, I know that you will take care of her, you always have." She then turned to her mother. "Mom, Uncle Jack loves you beyond measure. He loves every part of you and has never given up on you and your love. Accept his love, totally and completely. Trust that he will always be there. Trust that you do deserve his love." With that, Bianca slipped Erica's hand in Jack's and took the bouquet of fresh cut roses from her hands.

As the minister began the reading of the traditional vows, Jack spoke up. "If you don't mind, Reverend, I would like to do this alone. I have waited forever to say these things and I know them by heart." He turned to his bride. "Erica, mere words can not describe my feelings for you. To say 'I love you' seems like an understatement. My heart was created to love you. I was created to take care of you and protect you. When I think about my life ahead, I can't imagine a day without you. You complete my soul. You own my heart, my whole heart, and you always have." There were so many more things that Jack wanted to say, but the overwhelming feeling of emotions made him feel as if he were going to explode. The tears that he once thought he was too macho to shed now flowed down his cheeks freely.

Erica knew him like she knew herself and she knew that as much as he wanted to continue, he couldn't find the words to fully express how he felt. "Jackson," Erica began. "You know me, all of me, and for whatever reason, you love all of me. You touch a part of my heart and my soul that has never been open to another person. To think of life without you is impossible. I don't think I would exist without you. You make me feel safe and secure; you make me feel loved and worthy to be loved. You are what I have always searched for. You, Jackson Montgomery, are my home."

As Erica and Jack stand there gazing at one another, Jack spoke, "I, Jackson, take you Erica to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until we are parted by death. I promise to cherish you, to love you, and to take care of you."

Erica reached up and brushed the tears from Jack's cheek. "I, Erica, take

you Jackson, to be my wedded husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until we are parted by death. I promise to cherish you, to love you, and to take care of you.”

By now the happy couple only had eyes for one another and had forgotten that they were proclaiming their undying love in front of their entire family. Jackson took Erica's face in his hand and slowly bent down to kiss her. Both were quite surprised to hear that someone objected to their kiss. “Excuse me,” the minister nervously said, “but it's not time to kiss the bride yet. We still have to exchange the rings.”

Jackson and Erica both looked down in embarrassment and Jack began to laugh, “Sorry, Reverend. I just couldn't resist.”

Reggie and Bianca handed the minister the rings and he, in turn, handed them to Jack and Erica. “With this ring, I thee wed.” Jackson said with a smile as he slipped the ring on Erica's left hand.

“With this ring, I thee wed,” Erica said with tears streaming down her face.

“By the powers vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife,” the minister said. The family cheered as did a large posse of people watching the intimate ceremony from down the beach.

“Jackson, you may now....” Jackson's lips had already begun their descent to meet Erica's before the minister even finished his sentence. Jackson had kissed Erica thousands of times before, but there was as much magic and spark in this kiss as all the other kisses combined. Erica's lips parted and her fingers threaded through Jack's blond hair as the kiss began to intensify.

“Yo, J,” Reggie began, laughing. “Hey, don't you know that's what the honeymoon's for?”

Both Jack and Erica began to laugh as they noticed several waiters making their way to the beach with glasses of sparkling cider and a small, but very decadent wedding cake.

Once everyone had a glass, the family gathered around the happy couple. Bianca smiled, raised her glass and announced, “I would like to propose a toast...Mom, Uncle Jack...It's about time!”