

A Kiss is Just a Kiss
By Claudia I. Haas

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CAST:

EVA: (female) 35; respectfully dressed in dark colors

JAKE: (male) 35; respectfully dressed in dark colors

OCCASION: After EVA'S mother's funeral

PLACE: Eva's front porch

TIME: late afternoon spring day, small-town America

SYNOPSIS: EVA blurts out that she would like JAKE to kiss her and all goes topsy-turvy with recollections of childhood and a possible love found – and lost.

AT RISE EVA and JAKE are at the front porch of her home. EVA fumbles for her keys.

There could be a plant, a porch bench or patio chair or rocker. Or not.

EVA

I'd invite you in but -

JAKE

I understand -

EVA

Never been alone -

JAKE

It has its moments.

EVA

Darn! Why do I buy bottomless purses?

(EVA just empties the contents of her purse on the ground. They both bend down to pick all up. It's an eclectic mix in there: pick and choose or add your own – but do have a sandwich – and then maybe yarn, a tide stick, fabric grocery bags, shoes, water, batteries, an envelope of receipts, a screwdriver – a mix of things that are useful.)

JAKE

Let me -

EVA

Got it.

JAKE

Interesting mix – everything but the usual – no mirror – no hairbrush?

EVA

Just the essentials.

JAKE

A chicken salad sandwich? You still love chicken salad sandwiches?

EVA

That's definitely an essential!

(Pause.)

Kiss me.

JAKE

What?

EVA

Kiss me - Oh my! Oh my! What did I just say? Don't kiss me, Jake. Don't kiss me. I know you're married and all – and it wouldn't have meant a thing -

(They kiss - very sweetly and very awkwardly)

EVA (cont'd)

Once more...

JAKE

With feeling?

EVA

No! No feeling! It means nothing. It's just - a kiss.

(And there's a kiss. And EVA jumps away.)

What am I doing? My mother dies and three days later I'm kissing a married man!

JAKE

But – it means nothing –

EVA

I know.

JAKE

I've heard that sometimes after a loss – people look for physical comfort –

EVA

No comfort, no – not looking –

JAKE

Just to feel life –

EVA

No. That's not it.

JAKE

Then – what?

EVA

It's just – it doesn't matter.

JAKE

You ask me to kiss you and it doesn't matter?

EVA

It matters. Just not the way you think. I – should go in.

JAKE

Eva?

EVA

Thank-you, Jake. The kiss. It was important.

JAKE

Eva? Have you ever been kissed before?

EVA

Of course. No one grows up without being kissed.

JAKE

I mean kissed like that? Like this –

(And he kisses her from another angle.)

EVA

Not – exactly.

(Beat.)

JAKE

She was a good woman.

EVA

Pardon?

JAKE

Your mother. She was kind.

EVA

She could be a witch.

JAKE

Eva!

EVA

You're not supposed to say those things are you? I mean – not right after the funeral.

JAKE

You're tired.

EVA

She was the Kool-Aid Mom in the neighborhood – but at home – let's just say she was good at playing Judgment Day.

JAKE

I'm sorry.

EVA

Doesn't matter. I did what she wanted, right? I lived at home during college, became a teacher, continued to live at home, cared for her – until the end. I did all the right things, right?

JAKE

Yes.

EVA

So no one else can judge.

JAKE

And if you had it to do all over again –

EVA

- I wouldn't. Not any of it. It didn't help me and in the end – I didn't help her.

JAKE

Of course you helped her. You did every thing for her.

EVA

And because I did everything for her – she never had a life after my father died. No birthday lunches with friends - no camaraderie. Do you understand?

JAKE

I think I do.

EVA

I had such a crush on you.

JAKE

You didn't.

EVA

Growing up – I thought – maybe Jake would ask me to the dance. Maybe he'd take me to a movie – maybe –

JAKE

He'd kiss you.

EVA

Yes.

JAKE

I had no idea. Truth is – I had the hots for you.

EVA

No way!

JAKE

Way!

EVA

You sure kept it a secret. I mean Jake – you locked me in the art closet in 9th grade!

JAKE

'cause I thought I'd have my way with you in there -

EVA

But the janitor came in when I screamed –

JAKE

And I got detention. Remember when I threw my shoes down on your head in the gym?

EVA

Don't tell me that was another romantic move –

JAKE

It got your attention!

EVA

All I saw were the dance moves with Allie, Becky, Callie...

JAKE

I won't lie – those were happy times, you know?

EVA

No. I'm still waiting for my happy times.