



## Everlasting (Kissed by an Angel)

By Elizabeth Chandler

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**There's always a price to pay for love. The second book of an all-new arc in the *New York Times* bestselling *Kissed by an Angel* series!**

Ivy should be ecstatic that her formerly dead boyfriend Tristan is back on earth with her, but the life of a fallen angel is never easy. Tristan has been cast down in the body of a murderer, and the police are after him. Now, there's only one way that he and Ivy can be together: They must clear him of the murder.

But when it becomes clear that there are darker forces at work—that Tristan and Ivy are still paying the price for Ivy's miraculous survival of the car crash—the star-crossed lovers have more at stake than ever before. And one of them may not be alive much longer....

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Elizabeth Chandler is a pseudonym for Mary Claire Helldorfer. She is the author of the Kissed by an Angel and Dark Secrets series. She lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

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Everlasting

## One

“INCREDIBLE!” CHASE EXCLAIMED, HIS GRAY EYES assessing Ivy with mock admiration.

Ivy, Will, and Beth squeezed together on their picnic blanket to make room. Chase had arrived at the last minute, claiming a place on the bayside beach among the Fourth of July revelers. Somehow, he always seemed to find them.

“Last year your boyfriend was murdered,” Chase went on, his eyes bright with amusement. “This year you hook up with a cold-blooded killer. That’s quite a dating résumé for a nice girl like you!”

Ivy wanted to tell him off; instead, she shook her head as if she could hardly believe how badly she had been deceived. “It’s horrifying! I was totally fooled by Luke. I never thought he was capable of violence.”

“It was obvious to me,” Chase replied.

Will, who had been aimlessly drawing in the sand, threw aside the stick he’d been using. He lifted his head, his brown eyes narrowing with dislike. Ivy knew why.

Chase had been curious about the stranger who had washed up on Lighthouse Beach and skeptical about Luke’s amnesia. But it was Will who had repeatedly warned her that a guy found badly beaten and unconscious, who claimed he had no idea how it happened, probably had a dark past. Ivy had attributed Will’s warnings to his habit of being protective of her. When she had ended her romantic relationship with Will, she’d chalked up his actions to jealousy. But in the end, Will’s decision to report Ivy’s new love to the police had appeared to be the right one. Luke McKenna was on the run, wanted for strangling his ex-girlfriend.

“It’s over now,” Will said. “Let’s drop the subject.”

“I was just thinking—” Chase persisted.

“It’s over!” Will snapped.

Ivy knew that, given what Will and the others didn’t know, Will’s anger with her was justified. The fact that he was able to keep it down to a simmer and continue to work with her at the Seabright Inn was evidence of his strong character. Last summer, when Tristan had died, Will had risked his life to save Ivy from Tristan’s

murderer, Gregory. As far as her friends knew, Ivy had recently broken up with Luke because she had been deceived once more by a “cold-blooded killer.”

“It’s not over,” Beth said.

Everyone turned to her.

“He will have revenge.”

The skin on Ivy’s arm prickled. Was Beth talking about Luke—or Gregory?

“Luke got his revenge when he strangled that girl,” Chase replied. “He’s on the lam. If he has half a brain, he’s far away by now.”

Luke McKenna was far away, Ivy thought. He had drowned the night Tristan crawled to shore in Luke’s body. But where was Tristan?

Ivy prayed he was somewhere safe, a place where the police would never find him and charge him with Luke’s crime. But safety meant he was far away from here, far away from her. She ached as much as she had the first time she had lost him.

Withdrawing from the conversation, Ivy gazed out at the dark water of Cape Cod Bay. Now and then a small flare discharged, brightening the outlines of a barge laden with fireworks. People impatiently checked the time on their cell phones and watches. Finally, a bright missile shot up from the barge, and every face turned toward the sky.

“Oh!” the spectators exclaimed in one breath. Color exploded against the night sky, bright red bars ending in a circle of stars. Ivy watched the fireworks’ falling sparks: pure bits of light suddenly going dark and drifting into nothingness.

Why was Tristan inside Luke’s body? she wondered. Lacey claimed that Tristan had fallen the night he used his angelic powers to give life to Ivy. Was he a dark angel now? Ivy’s heart rebelled at the thought. Tristan had acted in pure love. Her stepbrother, Gregory, had acted with jealousy, greed, and deadly anger. Last summer, trying to murder her, he had killed Tristan instead. For a time, Gregory had pretended to grieve with and comfort Ivy. He’d acted the part of loving older brother with her younger brother, Philip, just to get to her. If Gregory had had his way, he would have killed them both. It was Gregory who had died and become a demon, not Tristan.

A cascade of colors brought her back to the present. Purple splashed over brilliant green, gold spilled over purple. The sky is raining fire, she thought. She turned to look at Beth and caught her breath: Her best friend gazed back at her, fire and darkness in her eyes. A series of booms drew Beth’s attention. A finale of garish explosions bathed Beth’s upturned face in a sinister radiance.

It was over; smoke hung heavily over the still bay. A moment of silence was followed by applause and a blast of boat horns. People around them stood up, talking excitedly about which firework was their favorite.

“I’ve seen better,” Chase said as they crossed the beach toward Wharf Lane. “In Jackson Hole—”

“Life must be a continual disappointment to you,” Will observed, “since you’ve always seen and experienced

something better.”

Chase shrugged. “Why pretend? I dislike false modesty. Don’t you, Elizabeth?” he added, draping his arm across Beth’s shoulders.

Beth slid out from under his arm, and he laughed. The more Beth tried to get away from Chase, the harder he pursued her. Initially, her reunion with a boy she had known since middle-school summers on the Cape had left Beth in awe. Somehow gawky Chase Hardy had morphed into a tall, broad-shouldered guy with sea-mist eyes and dark curly hair. He could have dropped out of any one of the romances Beth liked to write. But since the night of the séance, Beth had changed, withdrawing from him, from Ivy, from most everyone but Will.

Watching Chase and Beth together, Will frowned. Ivy wondered if it was his dislike for Chase or his surprise at Beth’s behavior that prompted his reaction. The old Beth, the most sensitive person Ivy knew, would have let a cobra rest on her shoulders if she feared she might otherwise hurt its feelings.

For the last week Ivy had kept her discovery about Beth’s secret, hoping she was wrong—knowing she wasn’t—looking for the right moment to talk with Will about their friend. In retrospect, it seemed so clear: Beth, a natural medium, would be the easiest mind for Gregory to slip into. Still, everything about Beth, her voice and softly rounded face and feathery sweep of light-colored hair, was gentle. It was only when Ivy dared to look into Beth’s darkening eyes that she could believe Gregory was present in her friend.

Chase fell into step with Will as they started up Wharf Lane, discussing movies. Ivy walked beside Beth, who kept her face averted, as if she were interested only in the dark hedges and stone walls that lined the narrow road. The lane ended at Route 6A, where a large Victorian house occupied one corner and an old church perched on the other. Will had parked in the pebble lot behind the church.

“Hold up,” Will said, pausing at the edge of the lot. “I want to take a look at this place.” An artist, he was always on the hunt for interesting landscapes and buildings.

They followed him as he circled the church. It was small, with just three sets of elongated double windows on each side, steep rooflines, and triangular dormers. A square bell tower anchored the corner of the wooden building, its high porch covered by a trussed roof forming the entrance to the church. The wood that sheathed the bell tower was laid in narrow bands, the first story running horizontally, the second vertically, with the boards below the bell cut in wavy lines as if an expert baker had iced the blocky tower with a delicate knife.

The church’s doors were locked—Will tried them. Chase stood at the bottom of the steps, looking bored. Beth backed away from the building, her arms folded and shoulders hunched as if she were cold.

“This isn’t a church anymore,” Ivy said, reading a lawn placard. “They’re raising money to restore the building and use it for community events.” She walked back to where Beth stood and gazed upward into the tower’s shadows, seeing a faint outline against the night sky. “It looks as if it still has its bell.”

““Ask not for whom the bell tolls,”” Chase quoted in a fake British voice. ““It tolls for thee.””

Beth glanced over her shoulder apprehensively, then her eyes rose to the bell. “It will toll when it’s time,” she said softly.

“John Donne, seventeenth-century poet and homilist,” Chase continued. “He’s talking about how we don’t

see our own connection to other humans, how each person whose life has been lost is our loss and—”

“I see it,” Beth said. Then she added so quietly only Ivy could hear, “Soon. The bell will toll soon.”

The skin on the back of Ivy’s neck felt cold. Sometimes, when Beth “saw” things, she foresaw them. Was she speaking as herself or for Gregory? Was she seeing his plan? Was someone going to die soon?

Ivy laid a hand on her friend’s arm. “Beth—”

Beth shook it off and walked away, taking the long route, circling the church counterclockwise back to the car.

“Angels protect her,” Ivy prayed. “Angels protect us all.”

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