

Excerpt from Mountain Joy

Back to the Future

“Get your mind out of the gutter, Skye,” her sister Storme grouched, “and pay attention to the phase-two color choices you have on your desk.” A dreamy smile crossed Skye Scrapper’s face as her thoughts turned inward. She found herself doing that more frequently now as her pregnancy progressed. She gazed out of the newly hung window of the Lodge without actually seeing the spectacular view of second growth hardwood trees. The old Lodge blended into it as if it, too, were part of the natural splendor and not a manmade feature.

“I said, “Get your mind out of the gutter, Skye.”

With a guilty start, Skye, heat warming her cheeks, said, “What? FYI, they’re not in the gutter.”

“Are, too,” Storme challenged.

“Are not,” Skye returned, then grinned.

“Your thoughts live in the gutter ever since you and Luke got your act together and got married.”

“Actually, I was recalling when you and I were caught skinny-dipping.”

“You were not,” Storme said.

“Okay, you’re right,” Skye agreed. “But remember when we three sisters met in Craig’s office to discuss Gram’s will?”

“That’s something I prefer to forget, Skye, and you know it.”

“Why? Just because you spilled hot coffee all over yourself and moi? You could have won a wet t-shirt contest, you know.”

“Just let this go, Skye.”

“Hmm, as I recall, you got what you deserved. Bolting in like that, scaring the bejesus outta me,” Skye said smugly.

A smile pulled at Storme’s lips. “That coffee was piping hot! We did a hot-coffee’s-on-us dance, grabbing napkins and trying to dry off.”

“Yup. Hearing the commotion, Craig hurried out of his office. He even whipped out his itty-bitty pocket silk, trying to help. I’m betting he felt you up. That was quite a free show you put on.”

“Stop it!” Storme grouched.

“Back then,” Skye continued, “you lifted the transparent fabric away from yourself, noticing Craig’s

eyes were glued to your chest. Stop gawking! you screeched. I'll never forget the look on Craig's face when you called him a gawking pervert.

"What I remember is he went back in his office, sat behind his desk, pulled open a drawer, and swallowed Jack Daniels straight from the bottle. In front of us, a lawyer drinking on the job!"

"All because of us. Poor Craig, then he had to gather his resources for round two with all three of us Weathers girls. That was the first time I've ever seen him slump in his chair. He just could not maintain his customary ramrod-straight posture. Not after that," Storme added.

Storme shook her head. "Nice try, Skye. Turning the tables won't cut it. Your smile was the smile of a ho in heat."

"Okay. I give up. I was thinking about Luke. I remember the old springs creaked as we fell into bed. His...uh...kisses were to die for. Glad I proposed," she said with a wink.

"You're lucky he married your ass. Tell me more. Dish," Storme said, practically salivating. "What happened?"

"So, I slanted my mouth over his like this..." Skye moved her lips, imitating her kiss...

"Gross, no more. TMI! Stop!" Storme put her hands over her ears, then backed away, hands outstretched as if she could fend off the details of her sister's lovemaking. "Now, I'm horny."

"While we're walking down memory lane," Skye said, "how about the time we took the prospectus and budget over to Craig's office? I clearly remember telling you Don't go near the coffee maker, Storme."

"Hardee har, har. That was so funny, I forgot to laugh. I was heading for the copier so we'd all have a copy of the prospectus."

"I wasn't sure that was a good idea... But did you listen? Nooo, you started the copier and pushed buttons."

"Nothing happened, so I pushed them again. Still nothing. Third time's the charm, right? So, I hit copy again. Nada. The stupid machine groaned. That thing came out of the stone age," Storme insisted.

"Maybe it was just warming up," Skye proposed.

Storme looked irritated. "It sure took its time responding to the commands."

"Yeah," Skye agreed, "when nothing happened beyond some whirring, you pushed the buttons again."

"I thought maybe I should hit collate and staple. The papers started flying out like popcorn. You could have helped me," Storme cried.

"I did, but you knocked over the fax machine in the process..."

"...which began making wheezing, gasping sounds as it spewed pages helter-skelter. Remember Sunny

jumping to catch a flyaway sheet and knocking over a vase of flowers? The papers were a soggy mess. Looked like paper mache.” Matching grins covered their faces.

“The look on Craig’s face was to die for. He’s so pulled together and orderly. My bad, you said.” The sister giggled, remembering Craig saying, Why am I not surprised? “He straightened his tie and buttoned his suit coat, gazing at the three of us, but his eyes rested on you, Storme. He had the hots way back when and you didn’t even get it.”

“It was hard to be business-like after that,” Storme admitted, “but enough of this walk down memory lane. Look at these phase-two colors, okay?”