

# Blaze

by: Viki

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The blaze lit up the black early morning sky as I rushed through the crowd trying to find her. My heart was in my throat. What if she is still in there? What if she had been asleep when the fire started?

My god.

What will I do?

We had fought last night. The worst fight we've ever had and I had stormed out, suitcase in hand, informing her that I would be spending the rest of my time here in Cabot Cove at the Hill House. The row had been childish and foolish on both our parts, but something both of us had been afraid of. We both knew that after years of living alone, living together – albeit only for a few weeks here and there – would be a big adjustment. Neither of us had realized that so much had bottled up inside of us until we started shouting at each other earlier.

All over a spilled cup of coffee on a page of her novel.

“Jessie! Jessie!” I have to find her. She has to be alright. As I continue to shout her name and push through the crowd, I'm stopped by a hand on my arm.

“She's over there, George. She's fine.”

Looking down at Seth, I close my eyes at the understanding I see written on his face. “She,” I start and have to stop to swallow passed the lump in my throat. “She wasn't in the house was she?”

“No, she wasn't home. She was with me.”

“Oh.” I sigh and look out, seeing Jessica for the first time. She's standing, her arms wrapped around herself, staring at her beloved home

as the fire licks away at the structure. "I suppose she told you what happened."

"A'yuh. She did. And she also told me that it was her fault. She's been pushing herself too hard. I've scolded her I don't know how many times in the last few months, but she won't listen. This book has really been hard for her to finish on top of her schedule of book signings for the last book. She's wore herself to a frazzle, and tonight her control shattered. You were the unfortunate recipient of the outburst."

"I have to go to her, Seth." I whisper, my gaze still on the woman I love.

"Go on. She's going to need you more than ever now. Everything precious to her was in the house." Seth smiled at me when I looked down at him. "Everything but you."

Smiling back at him, I turned and made my way to Jessica, scowling at one of Sheriff Metzger's deputies when they tried to stop me. "I'm a friend of Jessica Fletcher's. I'm going over to be with her." My tone was enough to get the young man to move. Finally near her, I stopped, my heart in my throat at the sheer heartbreak I saw on her face. It ran deep, so deep that I could feel it amidst the heat radiating from the fire burning across the street.

"Jessie," I whispered as I stepped closer.

"Gone, George. Everything. Every picture of Frank. Everything," she whispered.

"I'm so sorry, Lass," I tell her gently as I wrap my arms around her and draw her back against me.

"Why did this happen? All these years I've lived in this house and left to travel around the world for my books," she paused and shuddered. "Why now?"

"I don't know, Lass." Holding her a bit tighter, I rest my head against hers. "I'm just so very thankful you're safe."

Turning in my arms, I feel her shaking as she buries her face against my chest. "Take me away, George. I can't bear to watch anymore."

"Alright, Lass. We'll go back to my room at Hill House. You can take a shower and clear away the sooty smell."

"I don't have any clothes," she murmured as I turned us away from the scene, slowly leading her down the street toward the hotel.

"That's alright. You can wear a pair of my jim-jams."

“Jim-jams?” she questioned as she looked up at me. “Pajamas you mean?”

I give her a smile. “Yes, pajamas.”

“I’ve never heard them called jim-jams before.”

Kissing her head, I pull her a bit closer as the breeze picks up, wafting more smoke our way and making us cough. “I don’t often use the term but thought you might need just a bit of silliness.”

“Oh George.”

“Here we are.” I inform her as I open the door. “I was in such a rush I didn’t lock the door.”

“No one locks doors around here anyway.”

“Go on now, take a nice hot shower.”

“George?”

“What is it, Jessie?”

“Thank you.”

“For?”

“After the fight we had, I was sure you would never speak to me again, yet here you are...taking me in and taking care of me.”

“Jessie,” I sigh as I move to take her into my arms. “Our row was stupid and due to the fact that you’re overly tired and I’m a stubborn Scot. I love you. When I saw the fire and realized it was from your house,” I pause and take a deep breath to control the quavering in my voice. “I was so afraid you were trapped in the fire. So afraid that I’d lost you.”

“I love you.”

“I know you do, Lass.” I watch her walk into the bathroom and close my eyes...thankful that the blaze hadn’t taken away our chance to apologize and hash out the things we’d said to each other during our fight. I don’t think I could survive losing her without having a chance to say I’m sorry.