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Upmarket Women's Fiction

TIDES OF REMEMBRANCE

by

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PROLOGUE

Steadying herself against the teak railing, Eleanor Hughes stood near the bow of the towering ocean liner as it sliced through the blue-gray waters of the Atlantic, much like the ship she and Richard had sailed aboard on their honeymoon forty years earlier. Remembering, she stared out at the vastness of the ocean swells while gulls shrieked overhead.

Eleanor smiled, softly caressing the arm of her favorite cashmere sweater, which her beloved Richard had given her as the salt-tinged air blew across her silver wisps. Knowing he was watching, she felt his strength wrapped around her, his voice still calling out to her as the swelling tides of emotion began to engulf her.

To Eleanor, meeting Richard must have been ordained by God. His strength and humility first caught her attention as a freshman in college. Eager to become an independent young woman after growing up under the watchful eyes of protective parents, Eleanor's goals and dreams were reasonable: get her degree, travel, and meet someone who would protect, be loyal, and adore her. Richard, a quiet, unassuming basketball recruit from far western Kentucky, was looking for someone who would simply love him for who he was.

Gripping the ship's railing even tighter, Eleanor glanced at her wedding band as she breathed deeply, inhaling the past and replaying their years together like scenes from a film. She remembered their first kiss, their college years, marriage, and their daughter. Kate was a beautiful contradiction, full of joy, rebellion, and sincerity, and Eleanor loved her more than she could ever know.

Over the ship's intercom, the Captain's accented voice announced, "To all of our cruise guests, the weather tonight and the seas ahead remain calm underneath clear skies," briefly interrupting Eleanor's thoughts.

Even though her ship was sailing in calm waters, Eleanor knew the rough seas she and Richard had managed to sail through. She remembered the turmoil of America in the late sixties, while she and Richard remained sheltered within the world they had created at Mount Nebo College.

Although they faced unforeseen tides of separation and disappointments through the years, Eleanor and Richard's love and devotion to one another braved each one. Could she have gone through life facing each of these things by herself? Maybe, she thought, but Richard remained at the heart of the memories she treasured most.

Wiping tears from her hazel green eyes, Eleanor knew that tonight she had come here for one reason. She had made a promise to herself that if Richard were to die before her, she would honor him and their love by doing something that no one else would understand.

Eleanor, now climbing up on the ship's railing, heard a familiar voice.

"Mother?... Don't!" Kate screamed.