

Stride on Serena

How do I describe Serena Dial? She's the woman I turned my life upside-down for.

When I met her, she took my breath away. She does that to men wherever she goes. She's got raven hair below her shoulders, emerald green eyes that don't miss a thing, and a tough, muscular build that she works like hell to keep in shape. If you look closely, you can see a few age lines in that beautiful face. She's a little closer to forty now than to thirty. She hates when I mention that.

The connection between us was electric and physical, but the more I get to know her, the more I appreciate what a sharp cop she is. She's got great instincts. She's tough and fearless on the street. Sometimes I wish she'd pull back, because she's always trying to prove herself. I've already lost one woman in my life when she was too young. I don't want to lose another.

Serena has ghosts in her past. It took a long time for her to tell me about them. She's like me, someone who builds a wall around her emotions. The more time we spend together, the more the wall crumbles for both of us. I don't know if we're ready for the emotions to come spilling out.

For Serena, the ghost is abuse. When she was a teenager, her mother wound up in the grip of a life-stealing addiction to cocaine. Her mother moved in with a drug dealer who made Serena his personal whore. She escaped, but you don't escape that kind of past overnight. It takes a lifetime.

When she moved to Vegas, there were other things that happened to her. She inherited her mother's addictive genes. She lost a close friend named Deirdre. Serena won't talk about it, even now. I wonder what she's hiding.

Do we have a future together? I hope so. I know that I love her the way I loved my first wife, and I think she loves me, too. But we're from different worlds. You wouldn't expect to find a bear in the desert, or a scorpion in the north woods. Can a cop from Duluth and a cop from Vegas really make it work together?

Serena's been alone for a long time. She still has a lot of pain in her past and a lot of questions to answer about herself. I plan to be there when she comes out the other side, if she still wants me.