































His attention was still on the cabins, but mine was on him. What was going on with me? I had known this guy for years, ever since we were little kids. We hadn't always been close, but the year we were both fifteen, I had been hired as a caretaker for his dying father, and we had come to know each other well. Almost immediately our friendship moved into a romance, one that was all-consuming. But then my parents sat me down and expressed their concerns—that we were too young, that he was Mennonite and not Amish—so out of respect for them, Zed and I had agreed to cool things down and keep our relationship purely platonic after that. It took some time, but eventually I really did grow to think of him as a brother. To my relief, when I later explained that to my parents, they took me at my word and had trusted us to keep it that way ever since.

Now here I was, no longer a child of fifteen, seeing this man in a way I hadn't in several years—as a love interest, not just a friend. We were so much alike, he and I, and so very compatible. As my mother liked to say, Zed was just so *easy*, so loveable. A truly good guy to the core. Our relationship had only grown stronger since, and I enjoyed and appreciated him more than just about any other person on earth. In every sense of the word, he was my best friend.

But was he just a friend? Or something more? At the moment I wasn't sure. For some reason, I found myself wanting to embrace him—but not like a hug between buddies. With shocking clarity, I realized that the embrace I yearned for was the *romantic* kind. I wanted to be held—tightly—by this tall and sweet and handsome man, to be taken into his loving arms. *Just* friends?

Not hardly.

Stunned, I stepped back and turned away, hoping that the range of emotions I was feeling hadn't shown on my face—or that if they had, he hadn't noticed.

“I'm going to take a closer look,” I mumbled, and then I began walking as quickly as I could toward the cabins. With each step, a new truth pounded in my head like a drum.

I didn't just love my best friend Zed.

I was *in love* with him too.