

Love's Renewal (Steel City Stories)

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Love's Renewal

by

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"Mom! Are you home?" Stacy shouted as she came through the front door of her parents' home.

"Back here, dear," her mother, Susan, called.

Following the sound of her voice, Stacy walked to the kitchen.

"Why does it always seem like I find you in the kitchen, Mom?"

"Because it's next to the family room, dear."

Stacy looked her mom up and down. Susan was standing at the counter flipping the pages of a cookbook from what Stacy could see. Going closer to her mom, she wrapped one arm around her shoulders for a quick hug.

"I haven't seen you for awhile. Have you lost weight? You know you don't need to diet. You're perfect just as you are."

Susan smiled at Stacy as she returned the hug slipping one arm around her daughter's waist and squeezing. Meanwhile, her other hand reached up to massage the shoulder Stacy had just squeezed.

"No, sweetie. I'm not dieting, but I do think my clothes are looser than they have been. What brings you by?"

Stacy frowned. Mom's not dieting, but she feels a little bony. Of course, she's always been on the lean side. Maybe it just has to do with getting older.

Pulling back and looking at her mother, Stacy continued her thoughts. Not that you could see she's getting any older. I just hope I look so gorgeous when I'm her age.

"I was out running errands and thought I would stop by to see you. I've been so busy with the end of school events and preparing for my annual Memorial weekend party, I haven't had much time to see you or Dad."

Stacy felt like a small, loved child again as her mother patted her on the cheek.

"Oh, sweetie. We know you have so much going on with three children in school. We understand. Besides, your dad has been spending a lot of time up at the Springs with his business. You wouldn't get much chance to see him anyway."

"Dad does seem rather tied up with his work. I tried touching base with him a week or so ago, and he couldn't talk but a minute before going into some meeting. I was hoping he might be here today."

"In the middle of the week? Sweetie, you should know better than that. These days, your dad is even working on weekends."

Stacy felt her lips pucker.

"At his age? Why does he need to work so much? Shouldn't you two be thinking about retiring and spending more time together?"

Susan laughed.

"Honey child, we are older than you, but we aren't dead. I don't think your father has any

intention of retiring any time soon. Maybe never. He loves his work. You know that. Besides, he's working on starting a new business and that keeps him busy."

"But what about you? Don't you want more time with him?"

"Of course, I would love to spend more time with him. But you know I'm busy with my groups. I have a meeting this afternoon to discuss the fundraisers for the end of summer. Tomorrow is the library group and a luncheon and so on. We're both busy."

Stacy rolled her eyes and then quickly peeked at her mother to see if she had noticed. Her mother was looking at her with her eyebrows raised.

Darn! I'm just as bad as my own kids.

"Well, do you have time to share some lunch? I thought we could run down to MacAlister's Deli."

"You know, sweetie, that I would love to spend some time with you. But I didn't sleep well last night, and I want a nap before going to my meeting. Can I take a rain check?"

Leaning over to kiss her mom on the cheek, Stacy said, "Of course, Mom. Promise me you'll come to my party, and I'll be on my way."

"Don't I always come? I'll even try to drag your father there."

Stacy laughed. She knew her father loved making connections at her parties as much as anyone else she invited. Such parties weren't just to celebrate the coming of summer. They were a place for people to network.

"Good! Do that, please. I'll phone you with the details when it's all worked out. I'd better get on my way. Still have a ton of things to see to before the kids are out of school."

"Be sure to give the children our love. I look forward to seeing them at your party. Please tell them that."

"I will. Bye!"

Susan watched Stacy as she left the room. She heard the front door open and shut. Picking up the cookbook she had been looking at, she walked over to the family room recliner and sat down.

I wish I could get over this bug that is hanging on. I slept fine last night, but I'm still so tired. This is getting annoying and making it hard to do all I want. This is the wrong time of year to be sick like this.

Pushing the recliner back so she could stretch out more, Susan closed her eyes. She was soon asleep.

Susan and George walked around to the back of Stacy's house where all of her outdoor parties took place. Susan glanced up at George who was walking beside her as she held his arm and

smiled at what a good looking man he was even at 60. He still had dark hair that was only highlighted by gray at his temples. He still worked out every day and played different sports on the weekends as weather and his businesses allowed. She squeezed his bicep to feel the firm muscle which drew his attention.

Smiling up at him, she said, "I was just thinking of how the kids think we are getting old, but you have never looked better."

A huge grin grew on his face. He stopped their forward motion and placed a hand on her cheek rubbing his thumb back and forth gently under her eye. Then he patted her cheek.

"What do kids know? You're still as gorgeous as the day I met you."

They started toward the party already well underway again.

"Look, there's Rick. I wanted to talk to him about a project. You going to be OK?"

Susan laughed.

"Of course, dear. I want to see the grandchildren anyway. Go ahead. I'll see you when you're ready to go home."

Patting her arm, his attention was already on Rick and whatever project he had in mind. Susan shook her head. She knew he had already forgotten she was there or that he was at a party where he was supposed to be having fun.

Heading for the play area set up for the children, Susan blinked at the glare from the sun. Reaching the play area, she stood by watching the children play and run screaming as they chased each other. The sun seemed to get brighter and brighter. She called over her grandchildren, gave them all a hug, and let them return to their friends.

Shading her eyes didn't seem to be helping, and the pain increasing at her temples told her a headache was starting to come on. She headed for the house. Going inside, she sighed at the immediate relief from the glare of the sun, but the pain and pounding in her head increased.

She wandered into the family room and sat down just as Stacy was walking into the room herself.

"Mom, why are you in here? The party is outside."

"Sweetie, the sun seems too bright. The glare is hurting my eyes, and now I have a headache. This is going to be a hot summer if the sun is this strong and it's this hot already."

"A headache? Do you want to lie down in the guest room?"

"I think I'll just try to sit here for a while where it's not as bright. If it doesn't get better in a bit, I might try laying down."

"Do you want me to tell Dad? Do you need to go home?"

"Oh, goodness, no! Your father has networking to do. He wants to talk to Rick about some kind of project. Let him visit and do his thing. And you go on to your guests."

"But, Mom, if you need something ..." *

Included in the collection Love's Holiday Joy at
[amazon.com/Loves-Holiday-Steel-City-Stories-ebook/dp/B00HG4NJZ6/](https://www.amazon.com/Loves-Holiday-Steel-City-Stories-ebook/dp/B00HG4NJZ6/)

This sweet short holiday novella, a pleasant lunchtime read, continues the stories of the inhabitants of Steel City. This is a boomer romance with the indomitable Stacy pushing things along.

"Don't you love Mom anymore?" Stacy asked.

Life has played a cruel trick on Stacy's mom, Susan. Her whole life has had to change, but her husband hasn't made any changes to adapt. Will this be the end of their marriage? Or can they find a way to renew their love again as the holidays approach?

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