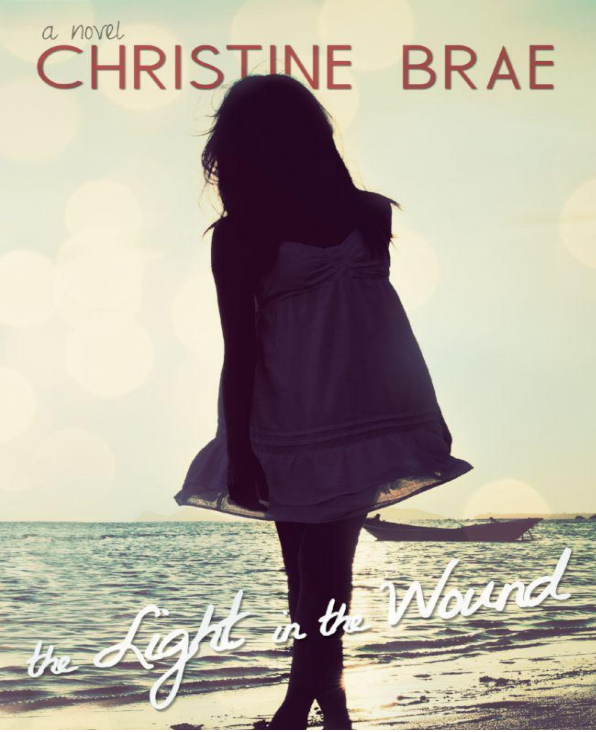


a novel

CHRISTINE BRAE



The Light in the Wound

*"The Wound is the Place where
the Light Enters You."*

-Rumi

CHRISTINE BRAE

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Also by Christine Brae
His Wounded Light

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION



For my husband. If I were to do this
all over again, I would still choose
You.

PROLOGUE

Ten Years Ago, January 20, 2002



I wake up and adjust my gaze to unfamiliar surroundings. It takes me a while to realize where I am.

I'm *here*. With him.

I try to move and find that I'm pressed against his chest, listening to the steady beat of his heart. His

arms are encircled around me, his fingers clasped together, locking me in. A sudden chill courses through my body, and I realize my clothes are still damp from last night's rain. His are too. From the light filtering through the shades I can tell that the brand new sun has just risen.

I sit up slowly. He opens his eyes but doesn't let go.

"I have to leave." I slip my arms above his and I kiss him. *Here I go again, memorizing him with my touch. Mole below his left ear,*

dimple on his right cheek.

“No.”

“We talked about this. I have to. We had last night.”

He shakes his head, “No, please. No.” His voice is calm, but wavering. He holds my face and traces my lips with his thumbs. We stay quiet for a while, and I get up to leave. He doesn’t stop me, but buries his head in his hands. This is the last image I have of him in my mind.

I have to get home.

Today is my Wedding Day.

CHAPTER ONE

The Present - Coming Home



*“Where are you going my
dear traveler,
Longing for the sea like a
fish?*

*You are in my heart wherever
you go,*

*Only that sea can quench
your thirst.”*

—Rumi

I stare out the window at the endless sky littered with clouds, some big and puffy, some thin and streaked, some resembling scattered dots of marshmallows. “Clouds are made up of wind, that’s why the plane ride can get turbulent whenever we enter a cloud,” I remember a pilot telling me once.

Once. When life was simpler,
uncomplicated. Or was it ever? If I
close my eyes long enough, will I
be able to see her face in the
clouds?

My chest starts to tighten and I
feel the anguish of my heart
breaking in two. Tears fall down
my face. I'll never ever see her
again. I'll never get to smell her,
touch her ... hug her. I haven't
heard her laugh in years. How can I
live knowing I will never see her
face again? **Never**. There is a

finality to the word that feels like a stab to my very heart. I clutch my chest in response. The physical pain. As if someone has just decided to jump on my chest, strangling me, suffocating me. Squeezing the life out of me. How on earth can I ever live through my sorrow?

I look over at my husband and our young son, fast asleep, seat belts on, blankets piled on top of each other. I reach into my purse, feeling for the bottle of anxiety

medication that I now need
whenever I embark on long,
transatlantic flights. Knowing they
are stowed away in my purse helps
to ease my worry. I just want to
know that those little pills will be
there for me if I need them. Such
irony. What happened to the girl
who vowed never to touch this
stuff? The girl who spent her whole
life living with someone who
depended on them day in and day
out? I didn't want my life to be
defined by pills. I promised I would

never be like her.

I take a deep breath and remember the night I got the call. Eddie was at his soccer match, trying so hard to score a goal. He was the cutest little boy, so happy, so carefree. Just a few days before, he had made a video for his grandmother at my request. Skipping and jumping and dancing around the living room, he held his big Nerf gun in his hand exclaiming, "Pretty Namy, don't be sick. Wait for me, I can't wait to meet you!"

He then stared at the camera and said as he cocked his gun, "Pretty Namy, wait for me, or else ..." I had told him how sick his grandmother was and how we had to rush home so that he could finally meet her.

Pretty Namy. That's what she made all her grandchildren call her.

The phone's incessant ringing stole my concentration as I rushed out of the indoor field to take the call.

"Hey, Eddie is having his tournament right now. I'll call you

back.”

“Isabel, she’s gone.”

“What? What are you talking about?”

“Isabel, Mom’s gone. She just passed away a few minutes ago. The nurse said she was sitting up last night telling her that soon you would be home and that she would finally be meeting Eddie. She started having difficulty breathing this morning and passed away.”

The next few days are a blur as I struggle to put my normal life aside

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