

LET ME LOVE YOU AGAIN

by Anna DeStefano

EXCERPT

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR: Trust is at the heart of LET ME LOVE YOU AGAIN. Trust and family and love, and how hard believing can be when you've been disappointed so many times. And yet, love is the way through it all—trusting in love to be enough, when everything else could fail. The heart of our Selena and Oliver (and Camille's) happily ever after hinges on that soul-deep kind of trust that's so hard to believe can be true. Take a look...

"I can't believe you're leaving," Selena said, holding her daughter in her arms, "now that we've finally..."

"No finally." Oliver smiled down at them. "That's why I texted, to be sure we got to talk before I left."

I can't go without holding you again, his message had said. Both of you.

He curled her and Camille against his heart. "I won't ever surprise you like that again."

"Surprise me?" Selena sputtered. "The Dixon prodigal son making a break for it, now that his Father of the Year is on the mend? I'd be surprised if you're not trending on local social media. Someone would have made sure to tell me if you hadn't."

"But I wanted to." Oliver's lips brushed Selena's forehead. He kissed Camille's, too, then eased away, leaving behind traces of peppermint and...one of Marsha's cookies. "And I'm not running this time. I've already talked with my family about it."

"I know." Selena gave him another quick kiss. A subdued Camille looked sleepily back and forth between them. "Bethany stopped by."

"Really?"

"She'd heard from Dru about your sprint back to the city. Dru told her about Camille, too. Bethany found us at the hospital before Camille was discharged. I turned around and she was standing in the doorway, staring at Camille like she was seeing her for the first time."

"I know how she feels."

Selena watched the corner of Oliver's mouth kick up and reveled in how much he wanted Camille to be his. "But it still could be just—"

"Wishful thinking?" Oliver asked. "But I don't mind wishing now. Do you?"

Selena shook her head, a little afraid of how close the dream felt while she was standing there watching him leave. She looked down at the ground and the muddy silk slippers she'd thrown on yesterday along with the change of clothes she'd snatched from her closet after she and Oliver made love.

Oliver's finger tipped her chin back up. "The past is just one part of our story, Selena. There's so much more we could be, if we're ready to figure out the rest together."

She nodded. "Everyone's lives could have been so much easier if I'd trusted you years ago."

"Maybe." He leaned against the side of his truck—a city man with a carefully-combed-for-once city haircut, in jeans and a T-shirt and looking as if he could command any boardroom, anywhere, just the way he was. "Or maybe this is exactly how it was supposed to play out. We've both come back from where we thought we should be. We've learned a lot about what we don't want. Now we're ready to make the choices we didn't know how to when we were kids."

Will their second-chance love be a dream come true?